

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 1913**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

## QUESTIONS.

## COLD STORES AT ROMA STREET.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*), for Mr. Bouchard, asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. What was the amount of the accepted tender for the refrigerating plant for cold stores at Roma street, Brisbane, in accordance with the Government specification?”

“2. What was the total amount paid to the contractors in respect of the said refrigerating plant?”

“3. Was the contract completed within time specified?”

“4. If not, was the penalty provided for in the contract, or any penalty, enforced—(a) If so, what amount; (b) if not, why?”

“5. From whom is the electric current obtained for operating the refrigerating plant at Roma street?”

“6. What is the price per unit paid for the electric current actually used for driving the refrigerating plant at Roma street?”

“7. What amount has been paid per month for electric current?”

“8. What is the total amount paid for current since the installation of this plant?”

“9. What profit, if any, or loss, if any, has been made in running the said cold stores since its opening?”

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

“1. £7,875.

“2. £7,812 10s. 9d.

“3. Yes.

“4. See answer to No. 3.

“5. Brisbane Tramways Company, Limited.

“6. 1½d. up to the first 25,000 units, 1d. per unit over that for January and February. For March and April 1d. per unit all round. From May to date 1d. per unit from 6 a.m. to midnight, and ½d. from midnight to 6 a.m.

“7. Average £198 to 30th September, 1913.

“8. Total amount paid for current up to 30th September=£1,787.

“9. Up to 30th June, 1913, there was a loss on working expenses of £629.”

## LONG LEAVE IN PUBLIC SERVICE.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) asked the Chief Secretary—

“Is it a fact that when an officer in the public service applies for long leave, any previous sick leave that he may have had (the sickness not being caused by his own indiscretion) is deducted from his long leave if granted, thereby penalising the officer for being sick?”

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) replied—

“No.”

## STATISTICS RE STATION-MASTERS.

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

“What is the percentage of station-masters in each class in each division of the State—(a) North; (b) Central; and (c) South?”

MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER, 1913.

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

## PAPERS.

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

Third Report of the Workers' Dwellings Board for the year ended 30th June, 1913.

Report of the Under Secretary for Public Works and Government Architect on his tour through Europe, Great Britain, United States of America, and Canada.

Annual Report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

[*Mr. Payne.*

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“(a) Northern Division—

Class 1.—5.63 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Northern division.

Class 2.—4.23 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Northern division.

Class 3.—16.90 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Northern division.

Class 4.—47.89 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Northern division.

Class 5.—25.35 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Northern division.

“(b) Central Division—

Class 1.—5.45 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Central division.

Class 2.—7.28 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Central division.

Class 3.—9.09 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Central division.

Class 4.—34.54 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Central division.

Class 5.—4.64 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Central division.

“(c) Southern Division—

Class 1.—4.18 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Southern division.

Class 2.—10.23 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Southern division.

Class 3.—15.35 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Southern division.

Class 4.—40.94 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Southern division.

Class 5.—29.30 per cent. of the number of station-masters in Southern division.”

RAILWAY WORKSHOPS AT NORTHGATE.

Mr. KIRWAN asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. Was Northgate the only available site for the establishment of the workshops of the district engineer and the signal and light engineer?

“2. How is it proposed to transfer workmen rapidly when required to attend to repairs generally carried out by this department, if the train service only is to be the means of transport?

“3. Is he aware that inconvenience and delay will occur regarding the obtaining of stores, and will it not also involve extra cost in handling, loading, and unloading?

“4. Was the change of site from Roma Street to Northgate made on the report of the head of the branch; if not, on whose recommendation was the change made?

“5. Is it the intention that the present site is to be a permanent one?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. By train.

“3. Stocks of stores will be held without involving extra cost.

“4. Yes.

“5. Yes.”

BRISBANE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

Mr. HUXHAM (*Buranda*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“1. Is any friction existent between the department and the trustees of the Brisbane Grammar School?

“2. What is the nature of the friction (if any)?

“3. Does the friction (if any) arise from the amount of fees to be paid for State school scholars who qualify for admission to the Brisbane Grammar School as from the beginning of the coming year?

“4. Is it a fact that the trustees of the Brisbane Grammar School have declined to accept sixteen guineas per annum for those who qualify, as per question No. 3, and are demanding twenty guineas per annum for each pupil winning State scholarships?

“5. Is it a further fact that, failing in getting the twenty guineas per pupil per annum, the trustees have decided to resign their trusts?

“6. Will he table the correspondence arising from the above questions?”

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

“In answer to the hon. member's question, I beg to table the correspondence.”

DEEP-SINKING SCHEME AT CHARTERS TOWERS.

Mr. WILLIAMS (*Charters Towers*) asked the Secretary for Mines, without notice—

“Will he lay on the table the report of the board of inquiry into the deep-sinking scheme at Charters Towers, and move that the paper be printed?”

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

“In answer to the question of the hon. member, the report and evidence are now in the printer's hands, and I shall be pleased to accede to his request.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*): Mr. Speaker,—I ask leave of the House to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Treasurer be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: During the discussion on the Estimates in Committee, the hon. member for Flinders made a comment with regard to the employment of someone named Story, who, he said, was a relative of mine in the Mines Department. I replied, by permission of the Committee, that no such person was employed in the Mines Department,

Hon. W. H. Barnes. 1

as far as I know, nor had I any relative of that name. That is quite correct. But I followed it up by making a further statement—namely, that no one related to me was employed in the service of the Government at all. I subsequently found that there are some relatives of mine who are teachers in the service, and I desire to make the correction.

### MOUNT EDWARDS TO MARYVALE RAILWAY.

#### MOTION TO GO INTO COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. T. Paget, *Mackay*), it was formally resolved—

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

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed connecting line of railway from Mount Edwards to Maryvale, in length 27 miles 78 chains.

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

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The motion is a formal one.

### MINERS' HOMESTEAD LEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

#### THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*), this Bill was read a third time and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

### SAVINGS BANK AGENTS.

On the motion of Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*), it was formally resolved—

“That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing—

1. The number of persons acting in the capacity of Savings Bank agents.

2. The number of deposits received by agents for the half-year ended June, 1913.

3. The number of deposits paid by agents for the half-year ended June, 1913.

4. The total amounts—(a) Deposited with; (b) withdrawn by agents during the half-year ended June, 1913.

5. The total amount of postal note expenditure by the various agents for the year ended June, 1913.

6. The salaries or allowances paid to agents.

7. The number of agents in the remote districts supplied with iron safes.”

[*Hon. W. H. Barnes.*

### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

On the PREMIER proceeding to move the motion standing in his name for the suspension of the Standing Orders—

Mr. THEODORE: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. I would like a ruling from you as to whether you are properly in the chair, seeing that we have passed a formal resolution that you “do now leave the chair,” in very explicit terms. I would like your ruling whether you should not have immediately left the chair and allowed the House to go into Committee to consider the resolutions?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Chillagoe will know that motions on the business-paper, which are allowed to go as “formal” are disposed of before ordinary business is proceeded with. The motions to which “Not formal” have been called, are then taken in their turn. That is the usual parliamentary practice.

At a later stage,

The SPEAKER said: Hon. members, I wish to correct the ruling which I gave in reply to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Chillagoe. I find that I decided it without consideration. The position was that after the motion moved by the Hon. the Secretary for Railways had been accepted by the House as “formal,” I should have left the chair. I apologise to the House, and now call the Order of the Day, Government business, notice of motion No. 2, Mr. Paget.

### MOUNT EDWARDS TO MARYVALE RAILWAY.

#### COMMITTEE—APPROVAL OF PLANS.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, in moving—

“1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed connecting line of railway from Mount Edwards to Maryvale, in length 27 miles 78 chains.

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

said: I desire to say that this is a question that has received a great deal of attention, not only at my hands, but also at the hands of the Commissioner for Railways. It is a question that has been before the public for the past thirty years, and before entering into a discussion of the Commissioner's report, which has been presented to Parliament, I think it would be advisable that I should give something of the history of the movement—that is, the history of what is termed “the *via recta*,” the movement to connect the great South-western area of Queensland with its nearest port of export—Brisbane. This arose before 1833, but in 1833 Mr. Surveyor Lethem started to make trial surveys of the different routes from Warwick to Ipswich. He made one survey from a point near Rosewood running along the Liverpool Range on what is known and spoken of in Mr. Stanley's report of 1835 as the “1 in 66” route, and that is the route of which Mr. Stanley estimated the cost, comparatively—very comparatively, I

may say—at £955,875. Mr. Lethem also made a survey of the route, the plans of which now are being discussed—that is, the route from Munbilla via Mount Edwards and Spicer's Peak to Maryvale, and the comparative cost of that, including, of course, the Munbilla to Mount Edwards section and the Warwick to Maryvale section, and the cost of bringing the then Harrisville line up to the standard grade was £529,625. Mr. Lethem, who now is Chief Surveyor, spent some two years in that locality, making these trial surveys. Mr. Stanley, who then was Chief Engineer, reported on 30th September, 1886. I have no doubt that members have copies of this report or have studied it, and I do not propose to refer at very great length to it, but I just wish members to hear what Mr. Stanley said of this proposed direct route to Warwick. Mr. Stanley says, on page 2—

“LINE VIA MOUNT EDWARDS AND FASSIFERN.”

“Although opposed on the score of economical working to the general introduction of steeper gradients than 1 in 50, I am of opinion that where an exceptional difficulty such as the ascent of the Main Range has to be overcome within a reasonable limit of cost, the use of an abnormal gradient is perfectly justifiable, provided it is confined to one particular section of the line where special auxiliary power can conveniently be applied in working the traffic, especially as, in this case, I believe the extra cost of working, if capitalised, would represent but a small proportion of the saving effected in the cost of construction. This principle I have clearly admitted in dealing with the question of gradients in my report of the 28th January, 1879, on economical railway construction.”

Mr. Stanley goes on to report on the various routes that had been suggested, and winds up by saying this—

“CONCLUSIONS.”

“After carefully weighing the merits of the various schemes proposed for the direct line, both in respect to the engineering features, the probable cost and future working expenses, as well as anticipated traffic, I have no hesitation in advising that the route via Campbell's Plains, Spicer's Peak Road Gap, Mount Edwards, and Fassifern should be adopted.

“The reasons which led me to this conclusion may be briefly summarised as follows:—

- 1st. The large saving in the first cost of construction, amounting to £426,250 or, if allowance is made for the construction of a branch line to Rosevale, a saving in the ultimate expenditure of £345,175.
- 2nd. That against this saving the extra cost of special locomotive engines to be employed on the Main Range section, together with the capitalised value of their working expenses, will not exceed £32,500.
- 3rd. The shorter length of unproductive line in respect to local traffic compared with the route to Rosevale.

4th. The shorter length of railway to construct, the lesser magnitude of the works involved and consequently the greater rapidity with which the line could be completed.

“A map is attached descriptive of the various lines referred to in this report.

“I cannot close without acknowledging the able manner in which the various surveys connected with this important undertaking have been effected by Mr. Surveyor Lethem. He has had a task of no ordinary difficulty to perform, and to the energy and perseverance displayed by him is, I consider, chiefly due the successful issue of the field operations.”

Those were Mr. Stanley's opinions. A number of requests were also made by the Warwick residents during 1883 and 1884 for the construction of the railway. On the 15th December, 1884, the then Colonial Treasurer, the late Sir James R. Dickson,

[4 p.m.] moved that the sum of £500,000 be granted by way of loan for the extension of the line from Ipswich to Warwick, and said, “The line proposed was estimated to save 54 miles in the distance between Brisbane and Warwick as against the line at present open, via Toowoomba,” and that it would bring the Southern border in direct communication with the seaport. Of that £500,000 there has been expended £6,981 in surveys. Although that sum was voted on the Loan Estimates, yet I find that the £90,156 which the Warwick-Maryvale line cost has not been debited specifically against the £500,000 vote. That, of course, does not matter very much, but I thought I would just bring the matter under the notice of the Committee. In 1886 Mr. Kates desired to know whether the plans of the first section would not be tabled that session, and again in 1887 he made a similar inquiry. The answer of the Minister was that the plans were not yet ready. In 1890 plans were prepared for the section from Munbilla to Llandawke, in length 19 miles 30 chains, at an estimated cost of £131,637; but for some reason or other they were not presented to Parliament. About the same period parliamentary plans for a section of 17 miles were prepared, but, although diligent search has been made, we have not been able to trace those plans in the Railway Department or to find out which route the plans were prepared for. The matter is one which is nearly thirty years old, and for some unknown reason the plans cannot be traced. But the fact remains that in 1890 plans were prepared for presentation to Parliament for a line from Munbilla to Mount Edwards. The matter then lapsed. In 1899 Sir Arthur Morgan requested a resurvey of the route with the view of adopting the rack system. Then the people slept on their rights for ten years, and in 1904 the proposal was again revived, and the Bremer Valley route was advocated by those who were interested in the line. It is probable that I then said—I have not looked up my speech—that the 1 in 66 route had been finally abandoned and it was beyond the financial power of the country to build the railway by that route. Although thirty years ago a comparative estimate was made of the cost of the line and the figures were given as £559,000, it must be remembered that the estimate was made without taking out the

*Hon. W. T. Paget.]*

quantities, as would have to be done if parliamentary plans were presented. I am certainly of opinion that the line could not be built by that route for that money now, so that it is extremely probable that in 1909 I said that route had been abandoned, and that the 1 in 33 route would be adopted when the Government were prepared to ask Parliament to approve of the proposal. The question then arose as to whether the Bremer Valley route, that is, the route from Rosevale upwards, could not be connected with the 1 in 33 route, which is at the foot of the Range. A survey of the Rosevale route was made by Mr. Southerden. If that route were adopted we should be in no better position as regards the 1 in 33 route than we should be if we constructed the line from Munbilla to Mount Edwards, which has always been looked upon as the direct route.

Mr. STEVENS: It would open up fresh country

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; a line from Munbilla to Mount Edwards will also open up fresh country. However, that was the position in 1909. In 1910-11 the officers of the department made various inspections. On the 30th September, 1911, a section of the via recta, the line from Warwick to Maryvale, in length 18 miles 27 chains, was officially opened by the present leader of the Government. The Premier then made the announcement that the plans of the remaining link from Maryvale to Mount Edwards would be placed before Parliament the following session, provided they could be got ready. It was proposed at that time to ask Parliament to approve of another link, from Munbilla to Mount Edwards, and the Premier accordingly made that announcement. I also made the same announcement. But circumstances arose which rendered it impossible to prepare the plans for submission last session, and they have been submitted this session. In 1911 Parliamentary approval was obtained for the construction of a further section of the line from Munbilla to Mount Edwards, in length 15 miles 27 chains, at an estimated cost of £90,156. Perhaps hon. members will recollect that rather a peculiar position arose with respect to those plans. They were introduced by myself, with a proposal to lay the line with 42-lb. rails, as the line from Warwick to Maryvale was laid with 42-lb. rails. When introducing the proposition I said it might be advisable that the line should be laid with 61-lb. rails if that were possible when it was proposed to build the link between Mount Edwards and Maryvale. A peculiar position arose, which had never arisen before—that is, the Legislative Council sent the plans back to us with the proposition that the 61-lb. rails should be substituted for the 42-lb. rails, and this was agreed to by the Assembly. When the Premier and myself and many other hon. members were at Maryvale—we had ridden over from Munbilla across the Range—I then said that I would ask the Commissioner to instruct Mr. Surveyor Lethem, the chief surveyor, to have a thorough re-examination made of the 1 in 33 route with the view of obtaining, if possible, some route with a better grade, and in March, 1912, in carrying out that promise, Mr. Surveyor Greensill started out to make that survey. I may say that Mr. Surveyor Greensill is one of the most trusted officers of the department. He has been in the department for many, many

[Hon. W. T. Paget.

years, and is a thoroughly competent railway surveyor. On the 17th May, 1912, Mr. Bell, the chief engineer, reported as follows:—

“From Mr. Greensill’s remarks it will be gathered that the 1 in 33 gradient on the ascent of the Range must be adhered to if the cost of construction is to be kept within reasonable limits. The alternative route for the 1 in 33 gradient shown on the lithograph in dotted red, would, of course, involve the adoption of the Bremer Valley route from Lanefield, instead of that from Munbilla via Mount Edwards approved by Parliament last session. If, however, this question is still open, it would, I think, be advisable to have a trial survey of this alternative route so that an estimate of cost could be prepared.”

That alternative route has been surveyed, connecting with the 1 in 33. Mr. Bell’s report goes on—

“In connection with this matter I would refer you to Mr. H. C. Stanley’s report of the 13th September, 1886, on the direct line to Warwick, wherein he estimated the cost of a line via Spicer’s Peak Road Gap and Rosevale, being that shown in blue on the lithograph, and marked 1 in 66 survey, at £955,875, as compared with £529,625 for the line via Mount Edwards and Fassifern to Munbilla. Of course, the cost of either of these will be very much higher now, owing to the rise in the cost of material and labour, but the saving would also be proportionate to the increase of price.”

Then Mr. Bell goes on to say—

“The following figures show that there is very little difference in distance in the various routes of which surveys have been made:—

Brisbane to summit of Range via Munbilla=79 miles 44 chains.

Brisbane to summit via Lanefield and 1 in 66 survey=79 miles 45 chains.

Brisbane to summit via Lanefield and Llandawke=79 miles 60 chains.

“The above routes are shown upon 2-miles lithograph herewith.”

In 1912 we made further investigations with the view of reducing the grade from Ipswich, via Munbilla, Mount Edwards, and Llandawke, to the ruling gradient we are trying to adopt now on the main lines—namely, 1 in 75, and on the 24th September, 1912, I gave instructions to the Chief Engineer to push on all inquiries and the re-survey so that plans could be tabled during the 1913 session. We are still carrying on the re-survey, and, of course, one can quite understand—hon. members know what Range country is—that on the Main Range it is exceedingly difficult, as in places a man has to be held down by his shoulders when using the theodolite, or the theodolite held up. This is going on every day, and therefore we cannot wonder that Mr. Lethem was two years on that Range country making his survey in the eighties.

Mr. LENNON: Not a good place to make a railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If we wish to get into the interior of Queensland we have to cross the Main Range, and we have crossed the Main Range right

away from Toowoomba up to the Cairns Range at Barron Falls. In 1913 further investigations were pushed on and a survey is being made, if possible, to obtain a better grade on the Range portion than 1 in 33. On the 18th August this year, Mr. Bell reported to me that a 1 in 40 route was being surveyed from Readvale to Spicer's Peak. Chief Engineer Bell reported that it was possible that a 1 in 40 grade might be found, and Mr. Bell, at that time, in reporting to me said, that owing to the extremely precipitous nature of the country, and the very deep ravines and gorges, that necessarily the cost would be greater than the cost of the 1 in 33 route. We then proceeded with that survey so as to get all the information we possibly could, and that survey, as a matter of fact, is not yet completed. Mr. Bell says—

"This survey is being made by Mr. J. B. Grant with the object of getting a better gradient than that of 1 in 33 from Mount Edwards, and it is anticipated that the easier grade of 1 in 40 on straight will be obtained. It will traverse much rougher country, however, and the construction will consequently be very much greater, so that the question to be considered will be whether the increased cost of construction is worth the reduction in cost of haulage and maintenance."

Instructions were issued for the plans to be finally prepared, which I had the pleasure of tabling last week. In September, the Commissioner being away in the North, I discussed this matter with the Deputy Commissioner—as to whether it was possible for the route which is known as the 1 in 33 to be straightened out to 1 in 40, and Mr. Pagan, after that conversation, very kindly gave me this memorandum—

"Referring to our conversation yesterday morning about the plans for the via recta, I am of opinion that it would be better if we could secure a 1 in 40 grade than 1 in 33 for the 12 miles or so which forms the Main Range portion of the route, of course lengthening the line by some 2 or 2½ miles and correspondingly increasing the cost. It is true, as Chief Engineer, I laid out the Herberton Range at 1 in 33, but the traffic could only be small, and it was therefore necessary to keep down the capital cost, but this via recta is another proposition altogether. If for monetary or other reasons this cannot be done, I consider that at least two level or nearly level portions of say ½ a mile each should be provided, for two reasons—viz.—

(1) In the case of any getaway of a train through the driver losing control, such levels would give him some distance to regain control.

(2) No doubt it is very difficult to keep an engine in full steam for 12 miles consecutively on a full load, and what might be called a 'breathing space' is an advantage both to the driver and fireman.

If this is not provided the load must be kept down to what an inferior driver or fireman can do."

I thought I would read that memorandum because Mr. Pagan was Chief Engineer for many years, he has been Deputy Commissioner for two and a-half years, and he

1913—7 v

is a gentleman who is not opposed to steep grades over ranges where the monetary consideration steps in.

Mr. FOLBY: What about adopting the rack system?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I propose to give a little information about the adhesion or rack system, from which it will be seen that the rack system has been adopted in quite a number of railways where the grades are steep. The danger of the system is a thing that can be eliminated from consideration in this case, because we have the most up-to-date brake system in the world, so that, although we have grades of 1 in 33, accidents very rarely occur on those grades. I looked up this question really for my own information, because I was not aware at the time that Sir Arthur Morgan had brought the question up in 1899 till the papers were looked up. I find that the rack system is in operation on the railway from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria, and the line carried an enormous amount of traffic during the Boer war. The rack system is worthy of consideration, if not of adoption, but of course it means that trains cannot proceed at any great speed over the rack, and it means that, unless we put down a rack that is superior to anything of the kind in the world, we shall have to break up the trains into two, which, of course, is undesirable. There would, however, be an appreciable saving in expense, which would, of course, be counterbalanced by the extra cost of dividing the trains and also somewhat by the extra cost of haulage. I find that Mr. Lethem reported on the matter in 1903 in these terms—

"As mentioned in my memorandum of the 24th ultimo, the cost of construction could be considerably reduced by adopting a rack line down the Range, as we should then be able to get off the rough country so much sooner, but the long tunnel at the summit would still be required, and the through distance to Warwick, which I have previously estimated as 7 miles further than by the surveyed route for the adhesion line, would only be reduced by 2 or 3 miles.

"The character of the country to be served by the line is, however, a most important factor in the case, and the considerations advanced in the latter part of my report of 17th March, 1888, on this aspect of the question appear to settle the matter. There is not the slightest doubt but that the surveyed route via Fassifern and Millar's Vale Creek would open up the largest area of land suitable for profitable occupation, supposing the large estates to be repurchased by the Government or subdivided by the present owners.

"Considering, therefore, that the surveyed route will give the shortest through distance, even with an adhesion ascent of the Range, and which would be reduced by 6 miles with a rack incline, that it is the least costly to construct, and that it would ultimately gather the most wayside traffic, I have no hesitation in recommending that it be adhered to when the time comes for the line to be built."

That is the report of the Chief Surveyor on the proposal now before the Committee.

Hon. W. T. Paget.]

I thought it advisable to get some information about the rack system, and I accordingly asked Mr. Sexton, the Deputy Chief Engineer, to look the matter up for me, and see what would be the saving in the cost of construction by not contouring round the Range in order to get the necessary height. He reported—

“The attached statement shows many of the rack railways in operation in the world, giving grades, lengths, weights of engines and trains, costs, etc. With regard to your remarks as to insertion of rack upon present 1 in 33 grade proposal between Mount Edwards and summit of range, I find that a rack might be inserted between 23 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles point and 29 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles point; length of rack, approximately 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  mile; gradient, 1 in 10. This would cut out 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles of present survey. Rack cannot be commenced further eastward on present survey than 23 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles, as that point is the highest in the locality. Rack might be extended 1 in 10 grade from 23 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles back towards Mount Edwards, say for about 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles, and fresh survey possibly from that point to Mount Edwards on 1 in 50 grade. It might also be extended westward from 29 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles for about 1 mile, possibly enabling fresh survey on to summit of 1 in 50 grade. This approximate 3 miles of rack would shorten present survey about 6 miles.”

I find that there are a number of rack railways in the Hartz Mountains, in Germany. The steepest grade is 1 in 16.6, and the length of incline is 4 miles. They carried last year 80,000 passengers and 170,000 tons of goods over those lines. The system is also in existence in Bosnia, New Zealand, Styria, South America, Japan, and various other countries. With respect to the objections to the 1 in 33 grade in Queensland, quoting from the “Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institute of Civil [4.30 p.m.] Engineers,” volume 120, issued in May, 1885, without giving hon. members a great number of railways, I find the following amongst others:—on the Darjeeling Railway, Himalayas, which has the adhesion system, the gauge is 2 feet, the steepest gradient 1 in 28, and the length of the incline 40 miles. The La Guaira-Caracas Railway, Venezuela, has the adhesion system, with a 3-foot gauge. The cost of construction is £25,000 per mile, the steepest gradient 1 in 27, and the length of incline 23 miles. The Mexican Railway, Mexico, has the adhesion system, with a 4 feet 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches gauge, the steepest gradient is 1 in 25, and the length of incline 14 miles. The Callao-Oroya Railway, Peru, has the adhesion system, with a 4 feet 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches gauge, and the cost of construction was £31,960 per mile. The steepest gradient is 1 in 25, and the length of incline 100 miles. So that, in speaking of the length of line running over a range where, necessarily, our funds will permit us to do it if we wish, it can be seen that this 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles with a gradient of 1 in 33 compares favourably with many railways that has been built on the adhesion system in other parts of the world. We will now come to the Commissioner's report. In approaching this report, I desire to just make a statement in a few words, respecting what I was told last week. I was told last week by the hon. member for Warwick that it was said—I do not know

[Hon. W. T. Paget.

by whom—that I had written that report. I hope I am not misquoting the hon. member.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You are rather reflecting on the hon. member.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not casting a reflection on the hon. member; I am only just saying what I understood he told me. I do not desire to pass any reflection on the hon. member. All I desire to say is that this Committee has approved, during the years that I have had the honour of being the Minister for Railways, I think, of some thirty-four railway propositions, and I think I am quite correct in saying that of the whole of the Commissioner's reports that I have presented to this House I do not think I have seen one of them until they have been presented to me as the printed report to be presented to the House.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is the Commissioner's report to this House, and it would be a most unjustifiable act on my part or on the part of the Government to attempt to influence the Commissioner in any shape or form in connection with any report that he places before the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is not presented to me, but to this House, and I do not think I need say any more about it. I will say this: that when the Commissioner presented his report to me there was no man more astonished than myself. I knew that the Commissioner, from a discussion that we had had—as we must have upon the various proposals that may be submitted by myself as Minister to the House—I knew that the present Commissioner for Railways, unlike the late Commissioner, did not approve of the *via recta*. I knew that he did not approve of the building of what he thought, and what is reported to be, a route that will take traffic away from the present railways. I knew that he thought that; but I will say this: that when he presented this report to me, it was much more adverse in its terms than what I understood it would be.

Mr. MURPHY: It was a staggerer.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Kennedy says that I am going to ignore it. It is my business in presenting these plans to the House, in conformity with an undertaking practically which has been before the people of South-western Queensland for thirty years, to do the best I can. (Hear, hear!) I hope hon. members will forgive me, but it is a very invidious position for a Minister to be placed in, when he knows that this statement is being made.

Mr. RYAN: Who is making such a statement as that?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I cannot find out. It is possible, and I acknowledge that it is possible, that those who are most interested in the construction of the *via recta*, in order to enable them to get their produce more economically to market, whether it be the oversea market or the home market, must necessarily have felt extremely disappointed at the tone of the Commissioner's report.

Mr. RYAN: The Commissioner's report seems to say that the time is not yet ripe.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In 1908, when introducing the plans of a line from Warwick to Maryvale, I made use of these words, which are reported in "Hansard," volume cii., page 681—

"I may also state that this will practically be the first section of the proposed via recta that we have heard so much of for so many years. When the via recta is built the overland journey to Sydney will be shortened by 60 miles—that is to say, Warwick will be brought 60 miles nearer to Brisbane by rail."

And, again in 1911, when introducing the Munbilla to Mount Edwards Railway, I made use of these words in "Hansard," volume cx., page 2624—

"The plan of the railway that I have the pleasure of proposing this afternoon is a line in an agricultural district, but it is also another section of what is called the via recta."

So that it will be seen that the idea in my mind, and in the mind of the Railway Department, was that the via recta should be what is called the Munbilla-Mount Edwards route—

"One section of that railway was brought by myself before the House some few years ago—from Warwick to Maryvale—which has now been completed and is open for traffic. The question of the via recta has been before the country for many years, and now that settlement is so far advanced and the traffic on the railways is so enormously increased, I think it is rather a good thing for the Committee to approve of a railway being built from Munbilla to Mount Edwards."

I go on to say—

"If laid with 61-lb. rails the cost would be increased to £90,156—about £7,000 more. If the Government propose, in the near future, to ask Parliament to approve of the construction of a railway along the 28-mile gap between Mount Edwards and Maryvale, then it will be advisable to put down 61-lb. rails in the first instance."

Let us take the Commissioner's report which is dated 4th November, 1913, and is presented to both Houses of Parliament. The Commissioner says—

"The Range is then ascended by following up a spur, which is the longest one available at this part of the Main Range, and which offers the best facilities for the purpose. Even by adopting a maximum ruling gradient of 1 in 33 on straight it is not possible to follow the top of the spur. It has, therefore, been found necessary at 23 miles to tunnel through it, and, turning back along the other side, make a complete circle so as to again attain the summit above the tunnel."

The Commissioner kindly and thoughtfully attached a plan to his report.

Mr. COYNE: It is a very poor plan.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is only just to show the general direction. I thought the plan was rather informative. I would point out that some years ago—shortly after I came into Parliament—I was very keenly interested in the building of light lines of railway, because in my own district there were 200 or 300 miles of 2-ft.

railway built for the various mills to carry very large quantities—large tonnages—of stuff during the six months of the crushing season. In order to get all the latest information I could on the subject, I bought a book specially dealing with the subject of light railways. It goes very fully into the question of building light railways over ranges. I forget the name of the author now, but I can recommend the book to hon. members who are interested in light lines of railways, and they might read it with profit. Although in the case of the proposed line we are now dealing with, the line has to ascend and come over on top of itself by tunnelling, and then come through on a complete circle in order to get on to the higher ranges, I would point out that in this book I read there was a full description of what is known as the Darjeeling Railway, which actually loops the loop several times on its 2-ft. gauge. I understand that it has been found to be so successful with the light gauge that it has been decided to replace it with the standard gauge. The Commissioner in his report goes on to say—

"Grazing country is traversed almost throughout, and, owing to the country being steep and broken for the greater part of the route, there is very little prospect of any productive settlement taking place."

That is quite true. As is the case with most of our rangy country, unless it is basaltic, it is not of a suitable character for settlement. The Commissioner goes on in his report to say that he estimates the cost of the line at £389,384, which is equal to £13,906 per mile. To this must be added rolling-stock, which he estimated at £20,000, and the cost of rearranging Warwick Station, which he puts down at £15,000, making a total estimated cost of £424,384. Although the interest on this amount at 3 per cent. would amount to only £12,732, for which the ratepayers in the railway district are responsible, it has been considered advisable that the railway district shall extend from the foot of the Range right out to the west of Dirranbandi. Warwick is also included in the area and also the line to Wallangarra. The whole of the country that can be benefited by this section is included in the benefited area, and the railway district has been superimposed by other railway districts for the reason that there are people there who will benefit by the lessened expense of some 57½ to 58 miles of haulage for all time. I may say that I am working under the 1906 Act, which we are bound to do until it is repealed.

Mr. MAY: You should stick to that Act.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then the Commissioner goes on to say—

"The average annual receipts from this traffic, based on the figures for the last five years, is as follows:—

	£
Inwards	125,269
Outwards	123,706
Total	£248,975

and I estimate that quite 50 per cent. of this traffic will be conveyed over this section, which will mean a loss to the general railway revenue of 57½ miles of freight, less 15 miles, the rebate at present allowed. It is highly probable that by shortening the distance to Brisbane, for stations on the South-western border

Hon. W. T. Paget.]

of the State, traffic which now goes to New South Wales and which from its geographical position rightly belongs to the port of Brisbane, may be secured to the Queensland railways, but it is not possible to estimate what such traffic will amount to, as there is no certainty of its being diverted from its present channel."

There is one line which will specially benefit by this linking-up, and that is the line from Maryvale to Dirranbandi, and the line from Warwick to Wallangarra will also benefit in a minor degree. There is no doubt that the proper policy to pursue for this or any Government, or this or any other Parliament, is to extend that south-western railway. It has not been possible to pass any further section than 40 miles from Dirranbandi up to the present time, but I say unhesitatingly that the proper policy to conserve the Queensland trade for Queensland is to extend that south-western railway.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COYNE: It is a pity that you do not apply that principle to the south-western portion of Queensland as well as the southern portion of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am speaking of the south-western portion. I am speaking of that portion leading from Dirranbandi. The Commissioner continues—

"The Southern mail train will naturally go by this route, as there would be a saving in the time on the journey of 1 hour and 40 minutes; but, in my opinion, it will also be necessary to run a daily mail train up and down from Brisbane to Warwick via Toowoomba, which will connect with the Sydney mail train at Warwick. Such a service means an additional 81,113 train miles run in the year, which, at a cost of 3s. 8½d. per train mile, represents an expenditure of £15,124 per annum."

What I would like to point out is this: Will not the constant expansion of trade and the expansion of settlement generally warrant these trains being run, if this link is built—as I believe it will be built?

Mr. GRANT: What expansion can you get between Warwick and Toowoomba that you have not now? Where is the room for it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is a pertinent question. The whole of that land is settled, but I do think that the Darling Downs farms are capable of being very much more cut up than at present. That is what I have always had in my mind.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Evans goes on to say—

"It is consequently anticipated that it will be made the mail train route between Brisbane and Sydney."

And he goes on to report against this proposal, and says that he thinks that the mail route will be through the Southern border of Queensland either via Kyogle and Beaudesert or Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads. At the present time these lines are not within measurable distance, and this saving

[Hon. W. T. Paget.

of distance is within measurable view, if the Committee approves of the passing of this link.

Mr. COYNE: What is your opinion?

Mr. BERTRAM: Hear, hear! You have talked for about an hour and a-half, and we do not know your opinion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You will allow me to give you the information first. You will get my opinion. There is no question about the policy or my opinion. During 1912 this question of connecting South Brisbane with the border by means of a 4 feet 8½ inches line and the running of a mail train via Kyogle or Tweed Heads was referred to myself by the Chief Secretary, and I took considerable trouble in order to try if possible to get the fullest information about it, and what I found was this: I said—

"I therefore submit the following figures for your information and consideration:—

	Tweed	Beaudesert	
	Route.	Route.	
	Miles.	Miles.	
(1) Brisbane to Grafton ...	233	...	188
S. Brisbane to Sydney	663	...	618
	Via Recta Toowoomba and W'garra W'garra		
	Route.	Route.	
	Miles.	Miles.	
Brisbane to Sydney ...	663	...	725

The foregoing shows a saving of 5 miles only on the Tweed Heads route, as against our via recta route.

(2) The mail train running times to Sydney should be approximately—

A. Tweed Heads route 69 miles 3 feet 6 inches, 594 miles 4 feet 8½ inches, twenty-three hours, equals 28.8 miles per hour.

B. Tweed Heads route if 4 feet 8½ inches line constructed from South Brisbane to Tweed Heads, 663 miles, 4 feet 8½ inches, 22 hours, equals 30.13 miles per hour.

C. Via recta route, 176 miles 3 feet 6 inches, 492 miles 4 feet 8½ inches, 25 miles, equals 25.7 miles per hour.

D. Present route, via Toowoomba and Wallangarra 233 miles 3 feet 6 inches, 492 miles 4 feet 8½ inches, twenty-seven and a-half hours, equals 26.4 miles per hour.

Showing a saving by the Tweed Heads route of two hours with mixed gauges and three hours with broad gauge throughout as against the via recta route.

Of the 311 miles line to connect West Maitland with Grafton there are 33 miles completed, 148 miles now under construction, and 130 miles not yet started.

"A comparison of passenger fares credited to Queensland on present basis, on number booked and on existing rates Brisbane to Sydney—total on last year's passenger lists, 20,148; total fares, £27,803—would show an annual loss on same number of passengers as actually carried last year by—

Tweed Heads route of £18,369;

Via recta route of £4,008.

And if the broad gauge be constructed to the Southern border a further charge

of £26,250 for interest at 3½ per cent. on cost of construction, making a total loss of £44,619 per annum, and for what gain?"

I would like to point out that the estimate made by the Chief Engineer to myself for the construction of a 4 feet 8½ inches line from South Brisbane to the Southern border was put down approximately at £700,000.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: On the line that you have already?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; it would be quite necessary not to attempt to broaden the 3 feet 6 inches gauge. It would be necessary to build a new line of 4 feet 8½ inches gauge from South Brisbane to Tweed Heads or Kyogle.

Mr. GILLIES: A new track?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Our 3 feet 6 inches branches run off the present line.

Mr. KIRWAN: You cannot dislocate the whole traffic.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; You cannot dislocate the traffic. The Commissioner goes on to say—

"To adopt a route on which there are 13 miles of grade equal to 1 in 33 on the straight is, in my opinion, a retro-grade step, seeing that during the last three years a sum of about £115,000 has been spent in the State in reducing grades and taking out 5-chain curves."

Those are, of course, the views of the Railway Commissioner. To a certain extent they must be the views of every member on both sides of the House, but it would be very, very much better, if events permitted, to build 1 in 66 grade over this range, but financial reasons must be considered. And might I say that if a hungry man cannot get salmon to eat, but has to content himself with herring, better for the hungry man to get herring than wait for the salmon, because he might wait for such a long time that before the salmon comes he will die. The position, of course, is this: That, from a railway point of view, it would be very, very much better to have a line built over the Range with a 1 in 66 grade. It would be better for us to get 1 in 40 on the present route. It might be flattened out a little. The only practical proposition we

have before the department is [5 p.m.] the 1 in 33 route, and that is within measurable distance of the State's financial ability. The Commissioner goes on to say—

"I am afraid that the reduction of rates to districts served by the via recta will induce those served by the present route to clamour for a corresponding reduction of rates which, if granted, will further reduce the revenue, without providing a corresponding fall in working cost."

How can anybody possibly clamour for a reduction of rates? If people are 130 miles away from their port they must pay for 130 miles of haulage. If the Committee accept this proposal, the people in the South-western portion of the State will be able to get more economical transit, as there will be a saving of 42½ miles of haulage. Surely they are entitled to that, more especially in view of the fact that it is those people who will have the responsibility of meeting the interest on the cost of construction. Mr. Evans further says—

"Looking at the matter from a railway standpoint only, I do not consider

that the time has arrived when such an immense sum should be expended in constructing a line to compete with the one already in existence."

There is no question but the Commissioner's report is quite adverse to the proposal from a railway traffic point of view, but there are broader aspects of the matter which should be considered. There is the broader aspect of serving and opening up that big territory that we have along the Southern border, and of giving the producers who are there—from Maryvale to Dirranbandi, and from Warwick to Wallangarra—lesser haulage charges for their produce than they pay at present. That will be accomplished by shortening the route at present in existence, and that can only be done by the Committee approving of this connecting link in the via recta. On the Bremer Valley route there would be about 17 miles of line which would be unapproachable for local traffic; there would not be a station on that distance.

Mr. STEVENS: What grade is that? The 1 in 66 grade?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The 1 in 66 grade, or even the 1 in 40 grade. When I was in the district in August last, with the Chief Engineer and Mr. Lethem, we had not the fullest information on that point, but those officers were then under the impression that there would not be a railway station for 22½ miles. On what we may call the unapproachable length of the 1 in 33 route, there are about 8 miles unapproachable by local traffic, so that there is an appreciable saving in connection with the approachability of the Range portion of the route, whichever way the line may go. In favour of the proposition to which I am asking the Committee to say "Yes," there is the fact that there are settlers in Moogerah and Clumber, which run to the left, practically to the south of the 1 in 33 route, who will be served by this route, and who will be served by no other route. In asking hon. members to say "Yes" to this proposition—which is what I think they should do—I would point out that the estimated loss in freights and fares should be set off against the broader policy of conserving Queensland's trade for Queensland ports, and assisting the people residing in the Southern part of the State and still further on to get more economical transit. I do not think the passing of this link will prejudice the building of the line from Lanefield to Rosevale, or the six agricultural lines which have already been approved by this House. They must be started when money is available, and they must be completed before the construction of this link can be entered upon.

Mr. GILLIES: When do you expect to build those six agricultural railways?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I expect to get to work on them as soon as ever it is possible—as soon as we have got the money. The distance from Brisbane to Dirranbandi via Toowoomba is 425 miles, and from Warwick to Dirranbandi 256 miles. The saving in haulage cost from Brisbane to Dirranbandi which will be effected by this proposed connection is 13.41 per cent. On the 169 miles from Brisbane to Warwick, the saving in haulage cost will be 33.74 per cent.

Mr. LENNON: Whose figures are those?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have drawn these out myself.

Mr. LENNON: They are not the Commissioner's?

Hon. W. T. Paget.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; I have drawn out these figures myself. The capital cost of the 294 miles from Maryvale to Dirranbandi, according to the Commissioner's report for 1913, is £786,533; the average capital cost of the 64 miles from Warwick to Wallangarra is £671,872; that makes a total capital cost for the lines that are affected by this proposed link, of £1,458,405. The estimated expenditure on the link including the regauging of the Fassifern line, which must, in any event be done, and the rearranging of the Warwick Station, is £424,384, equalling 29.11 per cent. of the extra expenditure to complete the system and to crown the far-sighted scheme of the late Mr. J. F. Thallon, late Commissioner for Railways.

Mr. COYNE: Will you have to purchase any land for railway purposes?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. As a matter of fact the Commissioner informs me that this line runs through practically all Crown lands.

Mr. COYNE: What about the Warwick Station?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I spoke to the Deputy Commissioner—the Commissioner, unfortunately, is indisposed and has been unable to be at the office the last few days—this morning with respect to this sum of £15,000 for rearranging the Warwick Station, and I said as we had done a great deal of rearranging at Warwick quite recently I thought that expenditure was unnecessary, and he pointed out that with the running of three or four extra passenger trains a day it would probably be necessary to make some further accommodation. Unfortunately I have taken up a great deal of the time of the Committee this afternoon, but I thought that as this proposition was of such very great moment, not only to the Southern part of Queensland, but to the whole of Queensland as a national policy, I might be forgiven for making a very clear explanation of the proposition. From the information that I have given, hon. members can easily see that I am not in accord, from a policy point of view, with the Commissioner's railway point of view. I do not agree with him from the railway point of view. I say we should consider this question from a broad standpoint—that it is necessary in view of the constantly expanding traffic.

Mr. RYAN: The question is, is it the most necessary line? That is what we have to consider.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think that with the constantly expanding traffic that is coming down that Range, it is not advisable to duplicate the Toowoomba Range line at very great expense and still keep these people 58 miles further from their port than they should be. The very much more economical way, the better way, and the more statesmanlike way is for the Committee to approve of this link in the via recta. I offer it to the very careful consideration of the Committee and trust that they will approve of the proposition.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I very heartily congratulate the Government in having introduced this long-looked-for section of perhaps the most important railway that has ever been suggested, or at any

[*Hon. W. T. Paget.*

rate suggested for a great many years, in Queensland. Furthermore, it is a pleasure, too, to congratulate the Minister upon the very great thoroughness with which he has gone into this matter and for the amount of information which has been conveyed to us. I feel sure that few members of this Committee could have had any idea that such thorough investigations were being made of the various routes that from time to time have come up for discussion. I suppose no railway has interested, or will interest members of this Committee to a greater extent than this railway. It is of infinite importance to the great Western trade, to the South-eastern Downs, a matter of infinite importance to the port of Brisbane and to the people right along the line to Wallangarra, and, generally speaking, it should commend itself to members of the Committee. Indeed, for a great many years the entire residents of Brisbane, Ipswich, Fassifern, Cunningham, and Warwick have supported this line, and chambers of commerce and the various local authorities interested have passed resolutions in favour of the line, all showing that the united opinion of the people in the districts interested is entirely in favour of the proposal which is now before the Committee. While the building of the via recta has been on the cards for thirty years, possibly the urgency of the railway has not been so apparent until within the last twelve years. As plans of the various sections of the via recta railway and the great border railway have been introduced, invariably, as the Minister has pointed out, references have been made to the via recta, and especially was that the case with the Mumbilla-Mount Edwards section and with the Maryvale section—they were all referred to as being part and parcel of the via recta railway. Members of this Committee are aware of that fact, and, as their unanimous support was given to those sections when they were introduced, it is only natural to expect that that support will be again accorded on this occasion. I admit that in connection with the Great Western Railway we might not have done all we could wish—we might not have secured all the trade that was hoped for, but, notwithstanding this, the results have proved that the border line has been good business to Queensland. Dirranbandi has been reached none too soon, as New South Wales is now within 2 or 3 miles of Mungindi, which is just opposite to Thallon, and we may thank the late Commissioner for Railways, the present Secretary for Railways, and the present Premier, as well as the late Premier for having been far-seeing enough to go ahead, as suggested by Mr. Thallon, and secure to Queensland the border trade. Last year the border line carried 6,039 bales of wool, 18,069 cattle, and 125,628 sheep, showing that good business has resulted from the pushing out of that line. The great bulk of those people will benefit by a saving in the cost of the carriage of goods and in passenger fares to the extent of from 57½ miles to 90 miles. Some few will not participate to the same extent, but the great majority will. The Committee will better understand what this connecting link means when I tell them—and I am not referring to the vast territory beyond that now served by the railway—that the line will serve an area of 29,000 square miles of country, or 18,660,000 acres. It will serve an area greater than the whole

of Tasmania; greater than Denmark and Holland combined; greater than Switzerland and Belgium together; it will serve an area equal to one-third of the size of Victoria. The benefited area suggested by the Commissioner emphasises the truth in a stronger way than anything I could say, for he suggests a benefited area extending right away from Engelsburg to Dirranbandi, and again to Wallangarra. This area contains 31,000 people, and the country is stocked as follows:—Horses, 53,000; cattle, 256,000; pigs, 23,000; and sheep, 1,557,000. This country—large enough for a kingdom in itself—produces the best of products, the finest of stock; the fleeces from its flocks top the market; it produces grain of the very finest quality; the fruit of its orchards is the pride of Queensland. It possesses very great natural and climatic advantages, and yet the report we have had from the Commissioner for Railways would seek to deprive the inhabitants of these districts—these toilers—of their true geographical right. It would seek to doom the majority of them to travel from 57½ to 90 miles unnecessarily, and to continue to filch from them in freights one-third and in fares 50 per cent. more than they should have to pay. I submit that the Commissioner, in his report, has failed utterly to realise the position. He has overlooked completely the history which has been given us to-day, by the Minister, of the border railway. I am sorry to say that he seems to have overlooked the policy of the department which he represents, and seems to have in view the fixing upon the people burdens which should be removed. The Committee has to face to-day the question of the completion or the non-completion of the work the country has set out to do, and which has been going steadily on for the last twelve years. Ten years ago the Commissioner might have come down with a report so condemnatory as that which he has recently submitted on this proposal, and New South Wales could then have stepped in and annexed the trade. But not so now; and I appeal to this Committee to act in the interests of Queensland. The Commissioner's opinion—which many are disposed to pay heed to—should not be heeded. It should not be allowed to interfere with the aims and ambitions of the department and of the Government in pressing out and securing the trade of the West. Even now the department only holds its trade by making various reductions. I find that very large reductions are made in order to retain the trade that has been secured. On many lines of goods concessions are made on the ruling rates which really more than cover the 57½ miles of carriage to which the Commissioner has referred. The *via recta* and the border line have for years been considered as one. Perhaps it is well that I should read from the report written by Mr. Stanley to show that as far back as 1886 he regarded the two lines as one—

“Apart, however, from the question of local traffic, the importance of the direct line to Warwick, in connection with the future through traffic between Queensland and the Southern colonies, cannot be over-estimated, seeing that its construction will effect a saving in the through distance of nearly 60 miles, as compared with the existing line *via Toowoomba*. But what I submit to be of equal, if not greater, moment is the fact that,

combined with the contemplated line from Warwick to St. George, it would be the means of securing for this colony the traffic along the South-western border, which otherwise would in all probability be drawn towards New South Wales.”

Prior to this the £10,000,000 loan was passed, and the line has since been built both westward and eastward from Warwick. In 1895 Mr. Thallon reported upon the border line, and I think the Committee, knowing that Mr. Thallon was an extremely far-seeing man, would like to hear what he said when writing on the Warwick to Warrego River Railway—

“This direct line to Warwick is an important factor in determining the route of the new line proposed to secure Queensland trade to Queensland ports. That it will be made in the next generation, if not by the present, I have not the slightest doubt, and I give the following reasons in support of my view:—It will shorten the journey to Sydney by two and a-half hours, and this saving will be of much more importance when the Central district has been connected with Brisbane by rail. I look to the connection with the Central district for a great accession to our revenue from intercolonial passengers, because people who do travel will travel oftener when the fatigue and time and consequent expense of the journey have been reduced, and many will travel then who travel not at all now on account of mal-de-mer. I prefer the Warwick route because the distance from the seaboard to the rich district south of St. George and Cunnamulla is shorter than *via Charleville* or *Yeulba*. The distance *via Charleville* to Cunnamulla will be 618 miles, but, as it will be necessary to go south of Cunnamulla to make sure of the trade, we may put it down at 650 miles. The distance *via Warwick* to the Warrego would be 568 miles, and, if the Ipswich-Warwick line were constructed, only 500 miles. . . . I am strongly of opinion, therefore, that our additional railway should run east and west—not north and south—and so secure the trade to Brisbane for ever and ever. . . . The residents of the St. George and Cunnamulla districts would doubtless be as well served by an extension of the New South Wales lines from Narrabri and Bourke, and they would probably cost less. Possibly that will be done if the long-talked-of federation comes about, but the port of Brisbane would, in that case, lose the trade for ever, and it is not to be thought of by Queenslanders.”

Mr. Lethem reported at the same time—

“With the advent of federation, and the consequent abolition of differential rates, and the construction of a direct line to Warwick, which is certain to be built sooner or later, it would undoubtedly open out the largest area of country in New South Wales and Queensland.”

The policy of building railways east and west has been followed, and we all know that the various sections have been introduced as part and parcel of the one railway system, and I think I am justified in saying that Mr. Evans appears to have been

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

unmindful of the policy of his department, and in consequence this Committee should not take any notice of his recommendation on the present occasion. The development and permanency of the border trade itself which is now coming to Brisbane depends upon this line, and we know in the past, from the action of the chamber of commerce, how Brisbane merchants are alive to that fact. If we had to reply on one argument alone, that argument would be ample, and we would fail in our duty to the State if we did not pursue the work which was overtaken when the first section towards the border was opened, and if we did not follow the policy which was laid down by that far-seeing man, Mr. Thallon. The report deals with the interstate traffic; it gives first and only place of importance to that. There is no doubt that this traffic has grown, and it is worthy of some notice. In 1900, the number of passengers for the year was 27,798, while in 1912 the number totalled 48,706, or, in four years, an increase of rather more than 75 per cent. Mr. Evans seems to think that this will go by the Tweed, or by Kyogle, but I am inclined to think that during the summer months the mountain route will be preferred. Even if we had the Tweed railway built, with the information before us to-day, so ably moved and so fully given by the Secretary for Railways, when the huge cost is considered, and when no funds commensurate with the expenditure will be forthcoming, it is extremely doubtful if we are going to meet a railway running via the Tweed or via Kyogle quite as early as we expect, and it seems bad business to encourage the construction of a line which is going to yield so little result. About 10 per cent. only of the passenger fares will come to Queensland, whilst via Wallangarra the country will continue to enjoy some 25 per cent., at any rate, of the passenger fares. I would like to note this fact: That on the 3rd September last, returns, at my instance, were laid on the table, showing that since 1834 the districts of which Warwick is the centre paid in railage no less a sum than £3,154,304. The department stated that the approximate proportion of the through traffic was 50 per cent., which is, therefore, £1,577,304. Now, to come by a roundabout route, an allowance of 15 miles has been made, as pointed out by the Secretary for Railways, but there still remains a charge of 44 miles, and which worked out is equal to one quarter, or £394,000.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (continuing): Seeing, however, that no 15 miles allowance is made in passenger fares, and that the railway was constructed years before 1824, it is evident that the districts of which Warwick is the centre have paid in excess railage during that period a sum approaching not less than £500,000. Is this a just impost? Is this House going to perpetuate a wrong of that description? Is it going to carry that kind of thing on indefinitely? We pay every day one-third more than we should pay, according to mileage rates, on our goods, and we pay 50 per cent. on all passenger fares. That will be seen if I just state the passenger fares as they are to-day. The first class is £1 6s. 1d.; by the via recta route it will be 17s. 6d. The second class is 16s. 10d.; by the via recta route it will be 11s. 3d. I want the Committee to notice that in this

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

question of shortening of distance by 5½ miles they are dealing with one of the best, most fertile, and most stable portions of Queensland. We have to remember that out of the 344,420 acres of land under cultivation in Queensland, no less an area than 222,997 acres is in the area which will be benefited by this railway. In addition to that, last year the district of Warwick alone produced about one-fifth of the whole of the wheat grown in Queensland, whilst Warwick and Cunningham combined produced no less than 62.83 per cent.; approximately two-thirds of the wheat produced in Queensland last year was produced in the area that will be benefited by the construction of the railway now before the House. The regret is that not a word in the report is said in the direction of summing up the advantage which the via recta will be to thousands of farmers, graziers, dairymen, and orchardists who have been kept back for years by having to pay these excessive rates. Is the difficulty encountered by a grade of 1 in 33, over 12 miles of country, to stand in the way of the rapid development of a great area of country? I take it that that answer has been given fully and convincingly by the Secretary for Railways. Regarding the grade of 1 in 33, Mr. Stanley reported in 1886 very convincingly, and made light of the undertaking to construct it. He said—

“Although opposed on the score of economical working to the general introduction of steeper gradients than 1 in 50, I am of opinion that where an exceptional difficulty such as the ascent of the Main Range has to be overcome within a reasonable limit of cost, the use of an abnormal gradient is perfectly justifiable.”

And then he went on to say—and this was not read by the Minister—

“I propose to meet the difficulty of working this incline by providing specially powerful locomotive engines to assist trains in ascending. It has been suggested by the locomotive engineer, in order to secure the advantage of using heavier engines than can conveniently be placed on the 3 feet 6 inches gauge, that a second line of rails should be laid outside the ordinary ones on a wider gauge. This, I consider, would answer admirably, and, although it might not be necessary to resort to such an expedient at first, it would, I think, be well to keep it in view in designing the works, so that it could be adopted at a future time if the development of the traffic should render the use of additional power desirable.”

The bell indicated that the second portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I will take the other five minutes. It seems to me that the grounds of objection on which the Commissioner relies are really more technical than otherwise, and no one can complain that the Commissioner should bring under the notice of his Minister and the House the facts which he has done; but what I do complain about is that he failed to look around and to grip the fundamental position. He indulged, as the Minister seemed to indicate, in no wide outlook; he fixed his thoughts alone on the 12½ miles of a mountain climb. He associated himself alone with the evanescent side of the question—namely, interstate traffic. This, he said, is likely to go by another route. It is to be

regretted that the Commissioner failed on this occasion to fix his eye upon the permanent, the lasting, the growing thing which had, and which has to do, with the great Western trade. The report fails, except in the weakest fashion, to connect the via recta with the border trade, which is practically, what was expected of it, one of the best paying lines in Queensland. It seems to me incomprehensible that the Commissioner should have failed on this occasion to take a much wider outlook on the question. I remember that I had several talks with the late Mr. Thallon on this question, and nothing excited him so much as the opportunity which this State had of pushing her railways west. There was no enterprise that he entered into with such force and such vim as the idea of conserving Queensland's trade for Queensland ports. "When you first go into that Western country," Mr. Thallon said, "you strike a province as big as Scotland." It may be an area of inferior country, but on going further out you strike another province as big as Scotland, which is good country. I feel sure that something must have happened to Mr. Evans when he dictated that report, because the report is so unlike him. He usually takes a big, broad, practical view of things, but, in this instance, he seems to have lost sight entirely of the greater things which have to do with this matter. He has taken the least of the three great questions which have to do with the construction of the via recta, and that is the interstate traffic, but he overlooks a matter which is of much greater importance to us, and that is the great border traffic. We have already spent huge sums of money on that border railway, and we will have to spend more on it. It would simply be a scandalous waste of time and money if we did not go on with that border line. However, it is pleasing to hear that it is not the object of the department to stand still, but to take that railway right out to the Warrego, and so enjoy the great trade which will flow from that source. The concern of Brisbane and Brisbane merchants should be how to lay hold of that border trade and how to keep it. There is only one way of doing it, and that is the way pointed out by the late Commissioner Thallon, by Mr. Kidston, by the Secretary for Railways, and by the Chief Secretary. The only way of securing and retaining this border trade is to build this last link of the via recta, and also by lengthening the border line. I hope the Committee will view it in this way—that there is absolute danger to Brisbane and to the whole State if in any way heed is given to the recommendations of the Commissioner for Railways. If Brisbane merchants show indecision and neglect, and the Railway Department show indecision and neglect—

The bell indicated that the final portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If they fail to view this matter with that statesmanlike policy which the question demands—

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Then one day Brisbane will wake up to find that it is too late.

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): I listened to all that the Secretary for Railways had to say, and heard all his statements, and I wish it to be distinctly understood that I am not in any sense opposed to the via recta, nor do I wish to delay the construction of the line by one hour. We have been informed by both the Premier and the Minister for Railways

that, although a promise was given that the plans would be tabled this session, the construction would not be forwarded by the passing of the plans this session, and the construction of the line would have to take its turn with the other lines which we have passed. On these grounds, then, I maintain that there is nothing gained by the House, at this late hour of the session, rushing these plans through. What I do maintain is that by deferring the matter for a time—say until next session of Parliament—the officers of the Railway Department will have an opportunity of probably finding a better route than they have up to the present been able to discover. When introducing a deputation from my electorate to the Minister for Railway a few weeks ago on this question, I mentioned to the Minister that it had been suggested to me that a better route could be found. I mentioned that the route through Cunningham's Gap had been spoken of as being 5 to 10 miles shorter than the route the plans of which we are asked to adopt this evening. I am informed that this other route has never had a serious investigation by officers of the department. Then, I noticed a letter which appeared in the "Brisbane Courier" some time ago from a resident at Maryvale. This writer said—

"The only alteration which would do any good to me personally would be to take the line from the present terminus at Maryvale up the north branch of Glengallan Creek, tunnel through some 60 chains of the Main Range at the head of Bell's Creek, thence down the Bremer Valley, thereby shortening the distance some 10 or 12 miles. This would pass through my property, but as this route seems to have quite escaped the notice of the surveyors (why, I am at a loss to understand) it is now too late to advocate it."

The writer of that letter said he did not wish to delay the construction of the line, and neither do I. Without delaying the construction by one hour, sufficient time can be allowed the surveyors and engineers of the Railway Department to make further investigations of the country, and see if anything can be gained by adopting this other route.

The PREMIER: What is that route known as?

Mr. STEVENS: I know nothing of it except what I read in the "Courier." I drew the Minister's attention to the letter. It appeared in the "Courier" on the 7th of last month.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was the letter from Woodley Yorston?

Mr. STEVENS: Yes. When I spoke about the letter to the Minister, he said it was a strange thing if a new route could be discovered that one of the railway surveyors did not discover it. The Minister discounted that statement, however, when, during his reply to the deputation, he said that on the North Coast line where he himself resides there were deviations being made, and that anyone would wonder how the surveyors overlooked the better route in the first instance.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There are deviations being made all over the State.

Mr. STEVENS: Seeing that these deviations are being made it is a very strange thing that the railway surveyors did not find them out originally. If that is the case in plain open country, is it not very much more likely to be the case in difficult country like

*Mr. Stevens.]*

the Range? I maintain that it is very much more likely that a route of this sort should be missed by the surveyors than that they would miss the best route in open country. I think the Committee generally—at least, those who know anything about the bush—will understand that a bushman who knows this country intimately would be the best man to point out to the surveyors where to look for the best route through this country. The Commissioner's adverse report on this grade should, I think, cause the Committee to hesitate before they accept the plans of which the adoption has been moved by the Secretary for Railways. I quite agree with the Commissioner that to build a trunk line on a 1 in 33 grade is a retrograde step although I do not agree with him in his general condemnation of the *via recta* as a principle. But I think it must be agreed that every precaution should be taken, every care should be taken, to find a better route and avoid the 1 in 33 grade if it is at all possible. But my principal objection to the adoption of these plans is not affected by the 1 in 33 grade or any other grade. My chief objection comes when you get down the Range, because I maintain that from there the route should come down the Bremer Valley to Lanefield rather than by Munbilla and the Fassifern line to Ipswich, causing the construction of a line 13 or 14 miles longer over country which has already a line and has had one for the past twenty or twenty-five years. The Minister, when speaking to his motion, mentioned that some two years ago a line was surveyed from Lanefield to Llandawke—that is, to the foot of the Range, to the 1 in 33 grade.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Three different routes.

MR. STEVENS: A survey was made from Lanefield.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is so.

MR. STEVENS: But up to the present time, although I have been harassing the department at very frequent intervals for months past, I have not been able to obtain an estimate of the cost of that line on that survey, and I maintain that the Committee have the right to know what the cost of a line in that direction will be before they adopt the plans of the line before the House.

MR. RYAN: You want more information?

MR. STEVENS: We want more information. I maintain that we have the right to demand more information. The Fassifern people have enjoyed the benefits of a railway for the past twenty or twenty-five years, whereas the people of the Bremer Valley and Rosevale have been promised a railway for that time, but up to the present time, their hopes have been deferred and they are apparently no nearer to the construction of a railway than they were twenty years ago, although the Minister says that the passing of this line will not necessarily prevent the building of a line to Rosevale. But why should two lines be built if one line can be built more economically to carry the whole of the traffic better and also serve those people who have been languishing for a railway so long? I maintain that the Committee have the right to this information before they pass these or any other plans.

MR. RYAN: You are not asking us to vote against the line?

MR. STEVENS: I am not asking anybody to vote against the principle of the *via recta*.

[*Mr. Stevens.*]

I have an amendment to the Minister's motion, which I intend to move, and which I trust the Minister will see the wisdom of accepting. I think it is a very reasonable amendment indeed, and, as I say, there is nothing to be gained so far as I can see, in point of time, in putting through the plans this session, whereas a very great gain might accrue to the country through having this matter deferred for a few months in order that further investigation might be made and possibly a better route through the Range found and, at any rate, a line adopted from the foot of the Range to Lanefield, a new line, which, I maintain, can be built at less cost than the line from Munbilla to Ipswich can be renewed. I do not intend to labour this question. I think it is a plain common-sense proposition. The Minister has gone very elaborately into the history of the proposition, omitting only the fact that I have mentioned—the cost of the connection from the foot of the Range to Lanefield. The plan, which has been on view here for the past few days, one would naturally suppose would show all the surveyed routes, but it does not show the route that I have mentioned, and which the people of the Bremer Valley maintain should be the line on which this *via recta* should be built. Why it has not been shown I do not know, and why the estimate of the cost has not been obtainable I do not know, but it is a fact that up to the present, the estimate has not been obtainable although I asked for it many months ago and I have been constant in my reminders to the office. The amendment which I wish to move is as follows:—

“That the question be amended by the omission of all the words after the word ‘that,’ where it first occurs, with a view to the insertion in their place of the words ‘in the opinion of this Committee, the consideration of the plan, section, and book of reference of this railway from Mount Edwards to Maryvale, should not be proceeded with until further inquiry has been made by the officers of the department, with a view to finding a better route, and that a further report be submitted to Parliament.’”

I think that it will be admitted that that is a very reasonable amendment.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Grayson will support that. (Laughter.)

MR. STEVENS: I am not asking anyone to vote against the *via recta*, and I hope that the Minister will see the wisdom of adopting the amendment.

MR. RYAN: How long do you want it postponed?

MR. STEVENS: I am not naming any time. I do not know that any time should be named, and I do not think it would be at all necessary to postpone it beyond the next session of Parliament. My own idea is that nine months, at any rate, would be amply sufficient for the investigations, and certainly would be sufficient for the information as to the line from Lanefield to the foot of the Range to be made available to the Committee.

MR. RYAN: You have no intention of being obstructive in any way?

Hon. R. PHILP: Not like you were.

Mr. STEVENS: I have no intention of being obstructive. In moving an amendment to the motion I do not wish to obstruct the via recta in any shape or form. It is principally with the connection below the Range that I am concerned. I

[7 p.m.] believe it is desirable that further investigation should be made with the object of finding a better route over the Range. I maintain that from the foot of the Range the line should come down the Bremer Valley, because it would serve the same people as the Munbilla route would serve—namely, the residents of the Fassifern Estate—better than the Munbilla to Mount Edwards line would serve them, and would at the same time serve the people of Rosevale and the Bremer, who have been promised a railway for many years. It was admitted by Mr. Stanley, in his report, that it was necessary to build that railway, and the Minister himself admits that it should be built.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: From Lanevale to Rosevale.

Mr. STEVENS: Then, why not cross the road to the foot of the Range? The reconstruction of the existing line will cost more than the new line I have mentioned. It has been said that in any case it will be necessary to reconstruct the Fassifern line. I believe that is true to a certain extent, also that the grades of the section between Ipswich and Harrisville will have to be reduced. But that is a very different matter from building a new line from Ipswich to Munbilla to carry mail trains and the heavy traffic which will come from the South-western district. For the purpose of carrying that traffic a new line will have to be built from Ipswich to Munbilla, and the cost of constructing that line will be very heavy indeed. I do not know whether members of the Committee are aware that the present line from Ipswich to Harrisville crosses the main road from Brisbane to the West on an unprotected level crossing.

The bell indicated that a further portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. STEVENS (continuing), said: I imagine that neither the Minister nor the Commissioner will contend that a main trunk line should be carried over that road, and to avoid it a very expensive viaduct will be necessary in order to carry the line over the street and allow the traffic to go under the railway. There are many reasons why the line should come down the Bremer Valley, and I maintain that the Committee are entitled to more information as to the probable cost of a railway by that route than is at present available. The Minister gave elaborate information with regard to every other route, and members of the committee, judging from the hon. gentleman's remarks and the map hung on the wall, would imagine that we have only two alternatives—namely, the 1 in 33 route and the 1 in 66 route—which would cost something like £1,000,000 to build. That is not correct, and the Minister knows that perfectly well. My reason for moving an amendment to the motion is to give the officers of the department time to further investigate the matter; and to submit further information to the members of this Committee. I beg to move the amendment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): In seconding the amendment I have no idea whatever

of voting against the principle of the via recta, but simply desire to secure the best route possible. It is well known now that if those who built the line to Toowoomba had had the same knowledge of the Main Range as the department possesses at the present time they could have shortened the distance over the Range by 10 miles, and we do not know that the same thing will not happen with regard to this railway. There may be places on the Range where better crossings can be obtained than those now adopted.

Mr. GRAYSON: Have you been over the route?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am going by the Commissioner's report. Although the Commissioner for Railways stood very high in the estimation of every member of the House, I think his credit has gone up 50 per cent. since he made his report on this railway to the House. It is a well-known fact that both parties in the House—the Labour party and the Liberal party—are in favour of the construction of this line, and I think the Commissioner is to be complimented upon his report, which states exactly what he thinks. I am not against the railway. I had decided not to vote against it, but when I saw the report I thought it would be better to try and obtain another route. I do not wish to obstruct the line in any way, but there is no urgent need for it. It is admitted that it cannot be constructed for a year or two. Now, let us see what the charges are. We are told of the heavy rates they have to pay, and that there is a danger of the New South Wales trade going to Sydney. There is no danger whatever. Let us see what the rates are. From Wallangarra to Brisbane, for wheat and barley they pay 11s. 6d. per ton, and for hay and chaff 15s. 9d. per ton; and from Toowoomba to Brisbane, 8s. 10d. per ton. They are carrying the New South Wales produce 123 miles for 2s. 8d. per ton. Does not that show that they are doing all they possibly can to get the trade for Brisbane? What profit is there in carrying stuff 123 miles for 2s. 8d. per ton? It does not pay for the axle grease. Those farmers in New South Wales are competing with our farmers, and I do not see why the Railway Department should carry their stuff that cheaply. From Warwick to Brisbane the rate is 10s. 6d. per ton for wheat and barley, and 12s. 2d. for hay and chaff; and from Toowoomba 8s. 10d. That shows that every consideration possible has been shown to the farmers in that district. There is no reason why the via recta should be constructed at once, and the most advisable thing to do is to delay the line in order to get more time to select the best possible route. For that reason I am seconding the amendment.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): I listened very attentively to the speech delivered by the hon. member for Rosewood, and with not so much interest to the speech of the hon. member for Drayton. The hon. member for Rosewood advocated that the via recta should be constructed via the Bremer Valley, and it appears to me that this is a Kathleen Mavourneen amendment—it may not be built now and probably not forever.

At thirteen minutes past 7 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under Standing Order No. 11, I call upon the hon. member for Bremer to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. CRIBB thereupon took the chair.

Mr. Grayson.]

Mr. GRAYSON: The hon. member, in moving the amendment, stated emphatically that he was in favour of the construction of the via recta, but he wound up by proposing an amendment that the line be delayed until the matter had been further investigated. There is no one in the Committee who knows better than you, Mr. Cribb, that the line has been under consideration for the last thirty years. Mr. Lethem, the officer in charge of the Railway Survey Branch, who is the greatest railway surveyor we have in Queensland, was on that range for over two years surveying the via recta, and during those two years, with the assistance of many others, he tried to discover the best route over the Main Range for a direct line from Warwick to Munbilla. I know for a fact that during the time Mr. Lethem was making his survey several of the leading residents of Warwick and district went to the Main Range, and camped out there several nights, and assisted Mr. Lethem in every possible way to discover a better route than the one through Cunningham's Gap, and, after a careful investigation of the different gaps in the Main Range, particularly Emu Vale, Killarney, and Cunningham's Gap, Mr. Lethem came to the conclusion that the only reasonable opening through the Range was via Munbilla and through Spicer's Peak Gap. The hon. member for Rosewood has been advocating the construction of a line from Cunningham's Gap down the Bremer Valley. We have Mr. Stanley's report before us, and, in the face of that report, it is inconceivable to me that the hon. member for Rosewood should move such an amendment. Mr. Lethem spent two years on the present route and Mr. Stanley, who was then Chief Engineer for Queensland Railways, also travelled over the different routes, and prepared a report, which was submitted to Parliament. That report is before us in black and white, and Mr. Stanley states that the line via Spicer's Peak and Gap road, via Rosewood and Rosevale, would cost £955,875, and that a line via Mount Edwards and Munbilla would cost £529,625—a difference in favour of the route selected by the Minister for Railways of £424,350. I would like to know, in the face of those figures, why the hon. member moved the amendment he has moved this afternoon. Has the hon. member no consideration whatever for those who are included in the benefited area? Is it likely that those who have to bear the brunt of any deficiency that may occur in the working of this line are going to consent to the extra expenditure of £424,350 for a line down the Bremer Valley? I must congratulate the Minister for Railways on the able way in which he has laid the case for the via recta before the Committee this afternoon. He deserves every praise, even from those members who are opposed to the via recta, for the clear and distinct way in which he laid the matter before the House. (Hear, hear!) The Minister for Railways, in speaking about the Bremer Valley route, stated that the men who surveyed the route from Cunningham's Gap via Spicer's Peak reported that for 22 miles on that route the department would not only be unable to erect railway stations but that they would be unable to erect a railway siding; the country is so steep and precipitous that it would be utterly impossible to erect either a railway station or a railway siding for 22 miles.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; I never said anything about a railway siding.

[Mr. Grayson.]

Mr. GRAYSON: The hon. gentleman said also that the line would be unapproachable for local traffic. I have travelled over both routes, and I say emphatically that the 22 miles that the Secretary for Railways referred to would not feed a bandicoot. It is not even second-class pastoral country, and there is not an acre within a reasonable distance that would be suitable for agriculture. I admit that when you reach Rosevale there is a fine bit of agricultural land. After inspecting the different routes, Mr. Stanley said that the Rosevale people were entitled to a light agricultural line, and I am sure no hon. member would object to such a line being built to Rosevale. I am sure that I would not.

Mr. HODGE: Why not the via recta?

Mr. GRAYSON: The via recta through the Bremer Valley, owing to the enormous extra expenditure, is entirely out of the question. Is it likely that the guarantors in the benefited area would agree to pay interest on the additional £424,000 that it would take to construct the line by that route? As one who knows the character of the country, I contend that the land along the proposed route is much more suitable for agriculture. There is splendid agricultural land from Sandy Creek to Munbilla. The Secretary for Railways and, I believe, the Premier have travelled over the route, and they were very much taken with the character of the country. Then, at Engelsburg there is one of the oldest and most prosperous settlements in Southern Queensland, and the via recta will pass through that district. In my opinion the only question for the Committee is whether they shall approve of the plans that have been tabled. I think the amendment is simply meant to delay the construction of the via recta.

Mr. STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. I distinctly stated on several occasions when I was speaking that I had no intention of delaying the construction of the via recta for one hour. Is the hon. member in order in imputing to me a desire to delay the construction of the line?

Mr. GRAYSON: I was simply giving my opinion. It seems very strange to me that the residents of Rosevale have only now awakened to a sense of their responsibilities. It is only within the last month or two—after the proposed line has been prominently before the public for thirty years—that they have discovered that they have a right to have the line constructed through their district.

Mr. RYAN: Are you suggesting that the amendment is not *bonâ fide*?

Mr. GRAYSON: When the hon. member for Rosewood was speaking, I heard the leader of the Opposition interject a very pertinent question, which the hon. member declined to answer. The leader of the Opposition asked the hon. member how long he intended to delay the construction of this line, but the hon. member for Rosewood omitted to answer the question.

Mr. STEVENS: That is not true.

Mr. GRAYSON: I would ask the leader of the Opposition whether he did not ask the hon. member that question?

Mr. RYAN: Yes; I asked the question.

Mr. GRAYSON: I hope the hon. member for Rosewood will be more careful about

accusing me of making untrue statements I heard the leader of the Opposition ask that question.

Mr. STEVENS: And did I not answer him?

Mr. GRAYSON: No.

Mr. FOLEY: He said the inquiry would take about nine months.

Mr. GRAYSON: I have been a member of this House for ten years, and never during the whole of that time have I ever heard an hon. member propose an amendment to defer the construction of a line, the plans of which had been tabled—particularly a line like this, which has been before the people of Queensland for nearly thirty years. Twenty-eight years ago £500,000 was appropriated in the £10,000,000 loan for the via recta by the Griffith Government, but, through some political manoeuvring, we have been deprived of the line up to the present time. If there was a necessity twenty-eight years ago for the construction of the line, how much more necessary is it now that it should be built? Here is one reason why it should be built now. When the money was voted for the construction of the line there was not one-fifteenth or one-twentieth of the population on the Darling Downs that there is now, owing to the settlement and development of the district. Mr. Lethem in his report stated that, if the large freehold estates between Warwick and the Range were repurchased and thrown open for selection, there would be every necessity for the construction of the line. Well, all the estates that Mr. Lethem referred to have either been repurchased by the Government and thrown open to selection, or else cut up and sold by the owners, and every acre has been taken up. This is not a Warwick line; it is a national line. It is a line that will be used by interstate passengers from all over the Commonwealth. It will mean a saving of two hours' travelling for every one of them between Warwick and Brisbane. Then we have a line constructed from Warwick to Dirranbandi, a distance of 256 miles. I remember, in 1900, when Mr. R. J. Gray, the then Commissioner for Railways, visited the district and submitted a report regarding the necessity of constructing a railway from Warwick to Goondiwindi. Mr. Gray was then Commissioner for Railways in Queensland, and he reported against the construction of a line from Warwick to Goondiwindi. Since then a line has been constructed from [7.30 p.m.] Warwick to Goondiwindi, which has been paying 5 per cent. for the last three years. That goes to prove, to my mind, that even Commissioners for Railways can make mistakes, and I am afraid that the present Commissioner has made an error in submitting the report which he has in connection with the via recta. I remember, when the Goondiwindi line was tabled, that members who were then in opposition said emphatically that if that line was passed and constructed it would not pay for the grease for the wheels. During the last three years the line has paid 5 per cent. and, fortunately, the line has been further extended from Goondiwindi to Dirranbandi, and I was very pleased to hear the Minister for Railways state this afternoon that it was the intention—it was the settled policy of the Government—to extend that line a greater distance in the near future.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where from?

Mr. GRAYSON: From Dirranbandi to the Warrego River.

Mr. MURPHY: What about the other railways that have been passed?

Mr. GRAYSON: The construction of that line demands that the via recta should be constructed. At the present time, the New South Wales Government is constructing a line from Moree to Mungindi, and in two years it will be completed. Mungindi is only 40 miles from Thallon, and as soon as the line is constructed to Mungindi there is just a possibility that we may lose some of our pastoral trade in the southern corner through the pastoralists using that line, whereas if the via recta was constructed, and a saving of 57½ miles effected, there would be no fear of our conserving our border trade in South-western Queensland.

The bell indicated that the second portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. GRAYSON: I have another five minutes. That is the only possible way of conserving our border trade. There is another matter I would like to refer to. It has been stated that the residents of the south-eastern portion of the Downs have had an allowance of 15 miles, but notwithstanding that allowance we are still paying extra railrage on 40 miles for passenger fares and goods. During the last few years the primary producers in the south-eastern and the south-western portions of the Downs have had to pay full rates on agricultural produce. There has been no allowance whatever to the farmer or grazier on any produce that he consigned from Warwick to Brisbane, and the same applies to other districts. Then, I would also refer to the distances. Killarney is geographically 80 miles from Brisbane, and by rail 195 miles, and they have to pay railrage on 195 miles. This is a handicap on the farmers in the south-eastern portion of the Downs, and the only way to alleviate the difficulty is to build the via recta. If the line was built, there would be a very large area included in the benefited area. Some of the richest and best land we have in Queensland would be included in the benefited area, so that the Government in introducing this railway need have no fear whatever that the guarantee will not be forthcoming, if there is any deficiency in running the line. I have no hesitation in supporting the line. It is a line I have always taken a great interest in, and I must compliment the Premier and the Secretary for Railways on introducing the proposal. After waiting thirty years it is high time that our hopes should be realised. I object to the amendment in every shape and form. In my opinion, it is moved simply and solely with the object of shelving the proposal. If the Bremer Valley wants a railway, by all means let them have the railway they are entitled to. The figures I have laid before hon. members should be quite convincing that it is out of all reason to construct a via recta by the Bremer Valley. The extra cost is quite sufficient to put the Bremer Valley out of the question.

Mr. FOLEY: It would save a distance of 10 miles.

Mr. GRAYSON: I am glad the hon. member interjected. It is nothing of the kind. The saving in distance by the Bremer Valley

*Mr. Grayson.]*

route would only be 1 or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile, as the Minister said this afternoon, and that would be a very expensive  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's full time had expired.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): I am rather awkwardly placed in regard to the proposal to construct the so-called Via Recta Railway. I remember that three years ago I happened to be at Warwick, attending some big function. Everyone knows what takes place at banquets. (Laughter.) The Warwick people, of course, are very enthusiastic in regard to the via recta. In fact, I may say the via recta is the Nirvana of Warwick, and that the people have a sort of beatific vision that once the via recta is constructed all their worldly troubles will be at an end. (Laughter.) Consequently, in that atmosphere, and these things being put to me in this seductive, enthusiastic manner, I said, certainly, I was in favour of the via recta.

The PREMIER: You still are?

Mr. LENNON: No; I am not—most emphatically not. Indeed, even were I friendly or favourable to the so-called via recta—I repeat the “so-called,” because if anybody can say it is the straight way from Warwick to Brisbane—

The PREMIER: It is the most direct.

Mr. LENNON: A more tortuous, and more corkscrew business I have never seen planned out for a railway line.

Mr. MURPHY: It is like looping the loop. (Laughter.)

Mr. LENNON: It reminds me of a dog trying to eat its own tail and swallowing itself. (Laughter.) The best illustration I can give of it is that it is like a spiral staircase.

Mr. GRAYSON: What about the Cairns Railway?

Mr. LENNON: I do not think that the Cairns Railway would have been constructed where it is if we had had sufficient time to discover a better route. That is what we want in this connection—more time. We want more information. If there is anything else we want after that it is more information, and after that again, more information; and it is because I think we want more information that I cheerfully support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Rosewood. The Minister for Railways took a great deal of pains to tell us what Mr. Stanley said, what Mr. Lethem said, and what Mr. Thallon said. I have a high regard for their opinions, and as for Mr. Thallon, I was personally acquainted with him, and I think a lot of his opinion. But I do not think any more highly of their opinion than I do of the opinion of the present Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Charles Evans.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LENNON: In the absence of a public works committee, or something of that kind, which was a principle which members on this side wanted to have affirmed by the Government, we have to look to the Commissioner for Railways for advice and guidance on these matters. In this case the Commissioner condemns the railway root and branch. No one can say that he even said that it might be built under any conditions whatever. He condemns it from stem

[*Mr. Grayson.*

to stern. If we cannot accept the advice of our expert—the man whose opinion we all regard with appreciation—if we cannot accept his advice, then I say that we do not want a Commissioner for Railways at all. If we cannot be guided by him, then we do not want a Commissioner. We recently discussed another railway in this House—a proposal to alter the route of the Great Western Railway—and it was stated that it was recommended on the advice of the Commissioner. We decided to accept his advice on that occasion, and quite right, too. I advocated something like that myself when the original Bill was going through, and I was pleased we accepted the Commissioner's advice. We have had other railway Bills rushed through this House just as the Minister for Railways wants to rush this proposal through. I refer particularly to the Port Alma Railway. Does anyone say that it was good business to pass that railway? Will anyone get up in this House and uphold the way the Port Alma Railway was rushed through this House? I am loth to oppose the construction of any railways that are going to open up country, but I am opposed to some railways, and I opposed the Port Alma line.

The PREMIER: It is giving satisfaction to people in Central Queensland just now.

Mr. LENNON: It will never give satisfaction. I regard the Port Alma line as a political fraud. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) And I regard this railway as a political fraud. (Hear, hear!) This railway has only been brought in by the Government for the purpose of catching votes from the Darling Downs bunch.

The PREMIER: I was merely saying that the Port Alma Railway is giving satisfaction just now.

Mr. LENNON: Here are a number of men who have a railway line running right to their very doors, and they want another line. You can pick out half a dozen places in Queensland which would like a shorter route to Brisbane. There is the line to Gympie. Gympie would like another line giving a shorter route to Brisbane. Rockhampton, perhaps, might find a shorter route to Brisbane than the present line. We have a railway to Warwick passing through Toowoomba and traversing that magnificent territory known as the Darling Downs. Although it might cost a little more to carry their goods by that route, as the hon. member for Cunningham said—

Mr. G. P. BARNES: £500,000 more.

Mr. LENNON: How would they like to have to do as they do in some other places—get out and walk. (Laughter.) That is what they have to do in my electorate. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: Where is that?

Mr. LENNON: The Premier asks, “Where is that?” He does not know where my electorate is. (Laughter.) In my electorate we have not got one single inch of Government railways, yet this Government pretends to be working for the benefit of the whole State and supports such an absurd proposal as the via recta.

The PREMIER: Three years ago you were an ardent supporter of the via recta yourself. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: And didn't they cheer you. (Laughter.)

Mr. LENNON: I have had some expert advice since then. I did not know much about the matter then. Commissioner Charles Evans knows more about it than I do, and I prefer to be guided entirely by the advice he has given. His advice is quite good enough for me, and as I only want to do the right thing, I will stick to the Commissioner's advice. This Government started to build the North Coast Railway. They are building it in straggling sections from Rockhampton towards Mackay, from Mackay to some place southwards, and from Mackay to some place northwards, but they are not building any of the line at all in what is absolutely the most fertile spot in Queensland.

The PREMIER: That is not the question before the House.

Mr. LENNON: I am giving that as an illustration to show the crass stupidity of this Government in dealing with railway matters. I am just showing the wonderful facility that this Government have for blundering.

The PREMIER: I think it would be a distinct blunder to build a line along the coast just to carry sugar and bananas which are carried at present by steamers.

Mr. LENNON: The hon. gentleman would rather carry cream, but what would suit him best of all to carry would be soft soap. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: You used it yourself at Warwick on that occasion. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. LENNON: If it happened that there was not a railway to Warwick at the present time, and that it had been thought to be inaccessible by rail owing to the mountain Range there, and if, say, the hon. member for Warwick discovered that a route could be found over Cunningham's Gap to Warwick, then, under those conditions—if there was not a railway already there—I would view it in a different light altogether. The Warwick people ought to be satisfied with the railways they have got. I am satisfied that the people of Queensland think that the Warwick people are very well served with railways at the present time.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is 60 miles out of the way.

Mr. LENNON: There are scores of places in Queensland which are languishing for railways at present. They have no railways at all, while Warwick has a number of railways. Warwick at the present time has the line to Killarney, and the line to Inglewood, which has since been extended to Thallon and Dirranbandi. I suppose the next thing we will hear will be that Warwick will want a railway in a direct line to St. George. I would not be surprised if they did not want to build a railway to the moon, or something of that sort. (Laughter.) There are a number of matters referred to by the Commissioner in his report. He refers to the fact that the sum of £123,561 was spent in duplicating the line between Brisbane and Toowoomba. If the *via recta* had been necessary that money would not have been voted, because it would not have been wanted.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are wrong.

Mr. LENNON: He was right, because the Commissioner said that 50 per cent. of the traffic that went to Toowoomba would go by

the *via recta*, and there would have been no need for the Government to have committed itself to the expenditure of this money. The Government have committed themselves in railway expenditure right up to the eyes, and they ought to redeem their promises. But they must go slower in these matters. Most of the lines are like the so-called *via recta*, and were built as if they were indispensable to the country. This line is not indispensable. It is a show line. (Laughter.) That country is particularly well served at the present time.

The PREMIER: What do you mean by "a show line"?

Mr. LENNON: I will refer to a passage in the report of the Commissioner where he says—

"The summit and upper slopes of the Range may be occupied for residential purposes to some extent on account of the salubrity of the climate."

Does not that show that it is a show line? It shows that it is just the sort of place for a residence for some real toffs. (Laughter.) They will be able to live in the high places and have extensive views of the country.

The PREMIER: What about the country between Murphy's Creek and Toowoomba?

Mr. LENNON: There are not many residents between Murphy's Creek and Toowoomba—not sufficient to justify a railway. That is all show business, all make-believe business. Why, the thing which the Chief Secretary sneered at, as being not a good paying freight, is the thing of all others that pays best, and the Chief Secretary of Queensland is actually sneering at the idea of carrying sugar on his railways.

The PREMIER: Mr. Cribb will recognise that that is not the question.

Mr. LENNON: The Hon. the Chief Secretary sneered when I said that they have no line in the Ingham district, and that railways were being constructed from Bowen and Mackay and Rockhampton, although they have no land in those districts to be compared with that fine stretch of land between Cairns and the Tully River. The land from the Tully River to Cairns is the richest stretch of tropical land—of sugar land—in Australia, and I defy any person in this House or outside it to prove to the contrary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Chief Secretary said that the produce there can be carried by water.

Mr. LENNON: Would they carry sugar to Babinda Mill by water? They will make a canal to the Russell River next, so as to avoid carrying sugar on the railways. Construct a railway and then build a canal to compete with it, as they build tramlines in Brisbane to compete with our railways! There are many things that have been already quoted in this report, and I do not want to weary the House by repeating them, but there are two or three things that I want to mention that justify delay. All that the hon. member for Rosewood has moved is that the matter be delayed until further information is supplied to this House.

The PREMIER: He does not object to the *via recta*; you do.

Mr. LENNON: That does not alter my argument. My objection to its passing—an objection based on the superior knowledge

*Mr. Lennon.*]

of the Commissioner—is no reason why I should not support the amendment. But if the amendment be defeated, I should go straight out against the *via recta*.

The PREMIER: That is emphatic, unmis-takable.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. LENNON: I put myself in the position that at a function at Warwick I was led to express myself in favour of the *via recta*. (Laughter.) But the man who is fixed with the responsibility of reporting on these things—who is paid a high salary for his services, who is the only expert we have to advise us—has reported against it, and I am quite satisfied to be guided by that gentleman, and I am quite satisfied that I should be in very good company in doing so. The Commissioner puts the estimated gross cost of building this line at £424,384, and then there is another £100,000 to be spent in reducing grades, and another £10,000 for the same purpose on another short section, making a total cost of £534,384. Now, I ask hon. gentlemen whether they think they are justified in entering upon this fresh—which shall I call it—not investment—

Mr. MURPHY: Expenditure.

Mr. LENNON: This fresh expenditure of over half a million of money in the present state of the finances? Is it opportune, supposing it was a good proposal? I think it is not. I think it is most inopportune, and anybody who voted for it in the present circumstances would be guilty of something approaching a crime, and, therefore, as I am not inclined to be criminal, I am going to save myself in that respect. Three per cent. on the cost of construction, exclusive of working expenses, means £12,732, and are the people of Inglewood and Dirranbandi and other districts, are they really aware of the responsibility they are undertaking? Do they mean to pay the money? That is what I want to know. They mean to shirk it. And that was shown when hon. members on the other side particularly were trying to be relieved of the guarantee. We know very well that the people who want this railway are ardent and persistent advocates of doing away with the guarantee principle. In view of that, and the running of two daily mail trains to Warwick, the Commissioner—and I agree with him—thinks that the people of Toowoomba will clamour for a continuance of the mail train by that route. That will cost an extra £15,124 per annum. Who is going to pay that? The general taxpayer will be called upon to pay that, and he will be called upon to pay for the other too.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the revenue from those trains?

Mr. LENNON: In the case of a depreciation in revenue, in the case of the railway yielding no very large net profit, that is going to come out of the pockets of the general taxpayer too. The hon. gentleman cannot bamboozle me by any such things as that. Then, it will cost £3,000 per annum for what is known as banking—I would call it double-banking—(laughter)—but, of course, the Commissioner is a better authority than I am—but the cost of extra engines on that range to carry these loads over the Range will cost another £3,000. Who is going to pay that? Will the people within the benefited area come along and pay that?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Look at the revenue lower down.

[Mr. Lennon.

Mr. LENNON: I would like to know whether anything is due in respect to the guarantee on the Maryvale line. What an oppressive silence over there! (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; it is being collected.

Mr. LENNON: Is it not apparent from their deathly silence that there is a big shortage and no one wants to pay it? They are shirking it.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is being levied.

Mr. LENNON: I say that this is a proposal that this House should bump out without delay.

The PREMIER: The amendment?

Mr. LENNON: The hon. gentleman recalls me to the fact that I am not speaking to the amendment, for which I thank him. Bump out the amendment? Certainly not; because I have in the course of my short remarks shown the hon. gentleman and all others in the room how anxious I am to have more information, and if we carry the amendment we place the obligation on the shoulders of the Commissioner and those who work under him of supplying that further information. I know very little of the Bremer Valley, but I think it is a pretty level stretch of country.

The bell indicated that a further portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. LENNON: I will take another five minutes. And by making a line in that level country it may mean a steeper line when we come to continue it up the Range. These are matters that can be dealt with only by engineers. Those people have waited a long time for their line, and I think they might wait a little longer, till this Committee get the information they are entitled to. The Warwick people have not been treated so badly as the Normanton people. They were promised a railway to Clonourry twenty-five years ago, and they have not got it yet.

Mr. MURPHY: The House passed it.

Mr. LENNON: The House passed it, and I have some of the material stacked on the banks of the Normanton River.

Mr. MURPHY: That settles me. I cannot vote for the *via recta* now.

Mr. LENNON: I am glad to hear it. The Bowen people were promised a railway costing £300,000 to the Reid River, and it was passed by the House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was never passed.

Hon. R. PHILP: Oh, no; the House never passed it.

Mr. LENNON: I think it, too, figures amongst the lapsed votes.

Hon. R. PHILP: It never passed the House.

Mr. LENNON: I am open to correction in that regard. I am not a very positive man; I am always open to be shown by a good authority, such as the Commissioner for Railways, that I am wrong and I bow to the hon. member's decision in this respect and admit that I am wrong. But there are other places which have [8 p.m.] been promised railways and have never got them, and yet here is a railway which is to be constructed because it was promised thirty-five years ago, before this State undertook the huge job

of constructing the Great Western Railway and other railways which have been started by the present Government.

The PREMIER: Why do you use the word "job" in connection with those railways?

Mr. LENNON: I do not use it in any sinister sense; I use it in the sense of work. Those great works were not thought of at the time this railway was promised to the Warwick people. With those great works on hand, those who are at the helm of the ship of State should pause and consider before submitting a proposition like that before the Committee lest they run the ship on the rocks, but if they go on spending £500,000 on other works similar to this one, if they have time enough they will certainly run the ship of State on the rocks ere long.

The PREMIER: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has certainly gone a great deal further than the hon. member for Rosewood. The hon. member for Rosewood moved an amendment to the effect that there should be further delay in this matter, but the hon. member for Herbert says, "Don't do it at all."

Mr. LENNON: Until we get the further information.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Rosewood merely desires that there shall be a deviation from a point in the proposed line going down the Bremer Valley. I do not think that anybody who has studied this matter doubts the wisdom of making the via recta. Succeeding Commissioners except the present Commissioner and succeeding Governments have regarded its construction as essential.

Mr. LENNON: Will you move that the services of the Commissioner be dispensed with?

The PREMIER: Certainly not. On one occasion a Minister for Railways said he proposed to vote against a motion which he submitted, and he did so. I do not intend to discredit Mr. Commissioner Evans in the slightest degree because he has made such a report as that which is before the Committee. I say all honour to any officer who will honestly make known his convictions as Mr. Evans has done, but in my estimation he is wrong. This via recta will secure a body of trade from New England which is not now possible. For many years past that trade has been very largely increasing. Ever since the day of federation the increase of trade between New England and the Downs proper has been intensified, and so has the trade between the New England district and Brisbane. The people in many parts of New England regard Brisbane as being more their port than Sydney. It is true that this connecting link of railway will cost a considerable sum of money, but, in my opinion, it will secure a large amount of trade which will absolutely compensate for that cost, and it will annex the trade of a very large territory.

Mr. HAMILTON: Is your motive to annex a portion of New South Wales?

The PREMIER: No; I want to hold our own trade along the border, and to secure something from across the border. It is perfectly well known that the late Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Thallon, acted against the wishes of the Minister for Railways for the time being and carried the present line nearer the border than the Minister wished. The hon. member for

Balonne knows perfectly well that the Minister of the day wanted the line to go nearer Nindy Gully—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A big mistake.

The PREMIER: I think so now. The Commissioner thought otherwise, and events have proved that Mr. Commissioner Thallon knew more about the business than most of us.

Mr. LENNON: It may prove to be the same in Mr. Commissioner Evans's case.

The PREMIER: Possibly. From the day the line started out from Warwick for Thane the via recta question was settled. The result of constructing this line will be an all-round advantage. The hon. member for Rosewood, in moving his amendment, said he believed in the via recta, and did not wish to delay its construction a single day.

Mr. LENNON: A single hour.

The PREMIER: A single hour, or a single minute, if you like. But the hon. member for Rosewood contended that once the line has traversed the Range and come to the foot of the Range it should not take the course indicated in the motion. I have been over that route out from Mumbilla and Engelsberg and up over the Range. I have also been up from Rosewood to Mount Arthur. I know the country between Mount Arthur and Rosewood. One fact impressed me, and it was first brought to my notice by the hon. member for Carnarvon. That is the fact which has been referred to by the Minister, and to my mind it settled the route. Of course, the hon. member for Herbert would not have it at all. The influence of the champagne party of three years ago has vanished from him, and he now says, "Away with the thing altogether."

Mr. LENNON: Don't forget the promise you made at the same time.

The PREMIER: And we are carrying it out. The hon. member for Carnarvon, who has a knowledge of the territory, drew my attention to one fact. The route indicated by the Minister for Railways to-night traverses, as my colleague pointed out, 8 miles of comparatively waste country. The route advocated by the hon. member for Rosewood goes for 15 or 20 miles through extremely inferior country, along which there would be no railway station, because the line would be unapproachable.

Mr. RYAN: When do you propose to start this railway?

The PREMIER: Not for some considerable time yet. I consider it should not be started until the other section has been completed.

Mr. RYAN: Then if the amendment was carried it would be no detriment.

The PREMIER: In that matter I am quite prepared to allow that the hon. member is right. In 1911 we passed the plans for a railway from Mumbilla to Mount Edwards. It has not been started yet. I am sorry it has not been started. The only reason for it is that we had too many irons in the fire. That is all about it. But it is about time that this vexed question was settled. For the last quarter of a century it has been agitated, and at last the report of the Commissioner has been presented, and the Minister has moved his motion.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The pressure is greater now.

The PREMIER: Yes; the pressure of need, the pressure of trade, the pressure of advantage. (Opposition laughter.) I say we will not start it for twelve months, for more than one reason. First of all, we have to complete the other section, and then we have not provided the wherewithal to do the big business indicated here. I observed, in going up that route, that there are two considerable valleys which, at any rate, will be served by this railway line, and which could not be served by the other route referred to by the hon. member for Rosewood. He is perfectly right in advocating that neighbourhood. I only regret that he has taken the course he has, because there is no earthly reason other than the want of cash why this district and Mount Arthur should not be served by a railway. It is very excellent country and will have its turn.

Mr. RYAN: You say want of cash?

The PREMIER: Yes; want of cash. I wish the loan chest was as replete as would meet all necessities upon it. There are many necessities, but, unfortunately, it is unable to meet all requirements. The Chief Surveyor in 1903—that was the last important move before this motion before us—had no hesitation in recommending the route, and anybody who, without any prejudice at all, will look into the matter, will recognise that the route indicated by the Minister for Railways is the most useful. Therefore, I hope that there will be no longer delay in having it made known that the Assembly approves of the plan before us, and the construction will be started upon as soon as convenient arrangements can be made.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*): Fortunately the matter of railway construction is not a party question. It is very pleasing to see that there are hon. members on the other side of the House who can take an independent view just as there are members on this side. They have a free hand to arrive at any conclusion they may think fit with regard to what particular railway shall be approved or otherwise. In this case, personally I have no doubt, and I have been for a long time convinced that sooner or later a connection must be made between Munbilla and Maryvale. I am quite satisfied that that will come about. The Railway Commissioner, whose report we have before us, gives the same conclusion, but he says—

“Looking at the matter from a railway standpoint only, I do not consider that the time has arrived when such an immense sum should be expended in constructing a line to compete with one already in existence.”

It comes back to what I have heard advocated from this side of the House while I have been in it with regard to the manner in which railways are brought before this Committee. There is no reliable system by which we are supplied with the information which we should be supplied with when we are asked to pass votes involving hundreds of thousands of pounds. Here we are to-night asked to vote for the expenditure of between £500,000 and £600,000, and the only responsible report before us is the report of the Commissioner for Railways, and he says, “Don’t.” That is the position. When the Great Western Railway proposals were before this Committee, we asked for more information. We desired to have them delayed and referred to a committee. It was not done. The Government said, “There is the

Commissioner’s report. He is the responsible officer, and because he reported that way you must vote for the railway.” Now, the same report is before us, and we are asked to take no notice of it. Although, personally, I favour that line, still we have to regard ourselves here as trustees for Queensland, and the issue before us is this: Are we justified in passing this railway to spend somewhere between £500,000 and £600,000? Is it the most necessary railway to be built in Queensland? That is the issue as far as it presents itself to me. The position that we are in now emphasises itself more strongly than I have seen it emphasised yet in this Committee—the necessity for a Standing Committee to deal with such matters and to bring down a report that we may rely upon. The hon. members for Warwick and Cunningham have had an opportunity afforded them on more than one occasion of supporting such a proposal as that. In fact, there is a contingent notice of motion now on the business-paper in my name, to move—

“That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of the insertion of a new clause after line 30 on page 11, and that it be an instruction to the Committee that they have power to insert these provisions for the constitution of a parliamentary committee on railways proposed to be constructed, and to make a consequential amendment in clause 78.”

If we had such a committee and this railway had been submitted to them, we would have had something reliable to go upon. By the fact that that piece of machinery is not provided, possibly Warwick, and west of Warwick—Carnarvon and Dirranbandi—we find that these railway proposals are in danger, because the hon. member for Rosewood in doing his duty—I questioned him several times when he was moving his amendment to satisfy myself that there was nothing obstructive in the amendment—that he really and genuinely wanted an inquiry made with the view of finding a route that is better than the one proposed in the plan and book of reference—because we have not that machinery we find ourselves in the position we are in. I do trust that the Government will see the necessity in the very near future of making an alteration in this matter. It is too important a matter that we are asked to decide against the report of our responsible officer, the man whose duty it is to report—we are asked to brush it aside and to vote for this proposal. When the amendment was moved I asked how long did the hon. member propose to postpone the consideration on this matter, because I thought if the postponing was intended in any way to prevent a direct vote being taken on the matter, I certainly would not favour such an amendment, and I had in my mind to rise and ask for a pronouncement from the Minister or the Premier as to when this railway would be started if passed, so that I could ascertain whether the carrying of the amendment would place the railway in a worse position. The Premier, when speaking, said, in answer to an interjection from me, that it would be at least twelve months—we would be at least through another session of Parliament, and possibly two or three years. What is the difference between making this inquiry and not doing so? We will have another session of Parliament. The people interested in the matter must bear in mind that the Government have no intention of going on with the railway—that they do not intend to start it for twelve

[*Hon. D. F. Denham.*]

months, and possibly longer. It seems to me to be the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee, whether this amendment is voted for or whether the railway is voted for, and I should like to hear some pronouncement from the Minister under the circumstances showing that the proposal is in practical danger. There is no advantage in passing the railway now, because the Government are not going to go on with it—they are simply getting it passed, possibly to satisfy those people crying out for it, and there is no business in it. I want to see some business in the proposition, and if we pass this railway it should be gone on with, otherwise let us have the inquiry made that the hon. member for Rosewood asks for. If I thought I was endangering the proposal by supporting the amendment, I would have very seriously to consider the position.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You may be endangering it.

Mr. RYAN: The hon. member must bear in mind that there are members of this Committee from all parts of Queensland, and all they have to go on is the Railway Commissioner's report. We have no proper Standing Committee, and we are asked to vote in the dark. I am thinking not only of my own vote on this matter, but of the people who are interested in having this railway constructed, and I can see that the thing may be defeated because not sufficient information has been brought before the Committee, and if it is defeated I hold that I am not responsible for the defeat of it, because the Premier says he is not going to start for twelve months at least, and possibly for two years. What sort of position are we in now? I think it is one that calls for some definite pronouncement from the Minister, so that the people will know exactly where they are.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have made it.

Mr. RYAN: I do not believe in passing railways simply for the purpose of saying to people, "There, you have your railway," and it may remain unbuilt for ten or twenty years. I know the plans, sections, and books of reference of various railways in different parts of Queensland were approved by Parliament twenty-five years ago, and they are not constructed yet. Is it going to be the same with the *via recta*? Let us know what business there is in the proposal, and then we shall be in a position to come to a vote.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*): I intend to oppose the amendment, because I do not consider that it is necessary for us to defer the construction of the *via recta*. I may be twitted with the fact that I have voted on previous occasions for the appointment of committees to inquire into railway proposals, but I feel that I am quite justified in opposing the amendment and voting for the main question. From my experience of the railways of Queensland, I am perfectly satisfied that the *via recta* is more necessary to-day than ever it was in the past. In support of that belief, I may refer hon. members to the extension of our Western lines and to the building of branch lines and feeders to those Western lines. The whole of the traffic from those lines must come over the Main Range. That is where the congestion of traffic will take place, and it would cost too much money to duplicate the line over the Range, because there are so many tunnels; and, even if we

duplicate that portion of the line, the necessity for the *via recta* would not be done away with. The border line must be extended. I am sure that not a single member who voted for the construction of the line to Dirranbandi ever meant it to stop there. Now, what is the good of extending that line if it is not with the object of opening up the country along the border, connecting it with a market, and conserving the trade for Queensland? The further that line is extended to the west, the greater becomes the necessity for building the *via recta*. The further west the line goes, the more trade we will get which now goes to Sydney. Another reason for constructing this line is that it will reduce the distance from the west by 57½ miles, and that is a big consideration when we remember that a railway is built for all time. I have not the slightest hesitation in voting for the *via recta*, when I think of the future development of the Darling Downs and the Western country, and also of the development of our oversea markets. I was sorry to hear the Premier say that, even if the plans are approved of, the construction of the line will be deferred for an indefinite time. If it is a good proposal, why should the construction of the line not be proceeded with at once? The Premier ought to promise, if the plans are approved of, that the proposal will be tabled and passed next session. The hon. gentleman and the Secretary for Railways have both made promises in connection with the construction of the *via recta*.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The promise is being carried out now.

Mr. LAND: The people who listened to those promises did not imagine that they were to be carried out in the indefinite future. Another thing to be borne in mind is that next session will be the last session of this Parliament, and how does the Premier who made those promises know that he will be here after the next election to carry them out? And, if they are not carried out, they are broken promises. I consider that the hon. gentleman ought to promise to-night that, if the motion is passed, he will carry the proposal through next session.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I think that the Committee should reject the amendment to delay the passing of the plans. For many years the question of the construction of this railway has been before the country. It has been considered by the officers of the Railway Department, and the department has been steadily working up to the completion of the *via recta*. We have the recommendations in favour of the line of men like Chief Engineer Stanley and the late Mr. Thallon—men who were held in high regard for their ability and knowledge of railway matters. It will be noticed that the plans, sections, and books of reference which have been tabled adhere to the original recommendation of Mr. Stanley, and very rightly so, too, because a spur runs in a westerly direction into the Main Range, presenting the least engineering and economic difficulties. I contend that the Committee is morally bound to support the motion for the construction of this connecting link, because, when they passed the Munbilla to Mount Edwards line, also the passing and construction of the Warwick to Maryvale line, it was on the distinct understanding that those lines were going to form a part of the *via recta*.

Mr. Bell.]

Again, when the railway was being extended from Warwick to Dirranbandi, I think the late Mr. Thallon referred in every report to the necessity for constructing this link. The responsibility rests upon this Committee of forging that link, and thereby keeping faith with the people of Queensland. The policy of various Governments and of the Railway Department has been to build this line, and a good many of us regarded the tabling of these plans and the passing of the motion as just a matter of form. We have all realised the necessity of having this link forged, and this connection made between the south-western part of Queensland and the port of Brisbane. I should like to point out another reason why this line should run from Mount Edwards to Maryvale. Mr. Stanley, in his report in 1885, said—

“This route has been proposed with the object of avoiding the mountainous and difficult country traversed by the trial survey along the eastern slopes of the Main Range and reducing the ascent to a distance of from 10 to 12 miles.”

You will notice that Mr. Evans, in his report, also refers to that subject—

“The Range is then ascended by following up a spur, which is the longest one available at this part of the Main Range, and which offers the best facilities for the purpose.”

I do not think that anything can be gained by delaying the passage of these plans. The hon. member for Rosewood has moved an amendment to further delay their passage, but he does not say for how long—it may be for years or it may be for

[3.30 p.m.] ever. I claim that my personal knowledge of this Range is not second to that of any hon. member. I have lived my life in the vicinity of these ranges. I know all the spurs, and, in fact, the Range has become part of my very existence. Looking at the Range as a whole, the spur which runs from Mount Edwards to Mount Mathieson, in a westerly direction, presents the least engineering difficulties. I might state that Mr. Lethem, for over two years, was trying to find a better route down the mountain. He tried following the Range to the south, but he discovered that owing to the precipitous nature of the Range he could not find a better route, and he would have to follow right round the base of the Range and come down in the Teviot Valley. That would not lessen the distance to a very appreciable extent. We follow this Range in a northerly direction, and the same thing applies. It would be possible to get almost any grade on this Range from a northerly direction, but at a very considerably increased cost. The Range is very precipitous here; we would have to travel right along the face of a precipice, and when you get towards Castle Mountain the Range is of a very precipitous and broken nature. Large ravines run down the mountain sides, and it will be a very costly business to put a railway line across these gorges. It would only be feasible to construct this line from the head of the working railway. It would be absolutely impossible to get the sand or concrete necessary to build bridges in order to cross these ravines up to the work from any other point. It would be impossible to get sand, gravel, or other materials required for the building of these bridges in the vicinity. This line

[Mr. Bell.

running down the base of this slope in a northerly direction, I might state, will pass through the guarantee area of the Munbilla to Mount Edwards section. In moving that the passage of these plans be delayed, I take it that the hon. member for Rosewood does so with the object of furthering the interests of the Bremer Valley route.

Mr. FOLEY: What about his statement that it would save 10 or 12 miles?

Mr. BELL: It is impossible to shorten the distance. The shortest distance is by the spur running from Mount Edwards towards Maryvale; that is the shortest distance in which the line could possibly be constructed. In running up the spur from Mount Edwards to Maryvale, it will benefit the greatest number of people. On the right-hand side we have the splendid district of Tarome, one of the best districts in Queensland.

Mr. HAMILTON: How far is that from this railway now?

Mr. BELL: About 20 miles. On the left-hand side we have the Moogerah Valley. All this country is being taken up at the present time. The Tarome and Moogerah country was part of the Fassifern Estate; it is fast being settled, and the settlers are going in for more cultivation each year. Last year the potato crop in the Tarome Valley was about 7,000 bags, and they are increasing the crop next year, and they are going in for lucerne growing as well as in the Moogerah Valley. If the line followed down the slopes of the Range in a northerly direction towards the Bremer Valley route, it would be impossible for those settlers to get to this line. It is about 17 miles from Mount Arthur up to the point where it crosses the Range, and it would be impossible to have a station on the whole of this section; but on the present route it would be possible to have three stations. I do not want the Committee to think that I am in any way opposed to the Bremer Valley people getting their line; I certainly am not; but, as a part of the via recta, it is not feasible. In moving this amendment the hon. member for Rosewood—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He wants an investigation.

Mr. BELL: For the last thirty years investigations have been carried on by some of our railway officials, and up to the present they have not been able to improve upon a gradient of 1 in 33. A great deal has been said about the cost. I might point out that in crossing the Main Range this is absolutely one of the cheapest lines in Australia. I should like to quote the mileage cost of some of the existing lines. From Brisbane to Gowrie Junction it was £25,720 per mile.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then you have all the land resumptions in that.

Mr. BELL: From South Brisbane to Manly it was £14,368; Cairns to Mareeba, £29,824. In the other States, the line from Penrith to Bathurst cost £31,368 per mile; Homebush-Waratah, £36,004; and Melbourne-Bendigo, £48,315. That was the broad gauge; but there is not that difference in cost between the two. This line is going to cost a little over £13,000 a mile and I think it is one of the cheapest lines which crosses a main range in Australia. Contrast, also, the cost of this range railway with those in other parts of the world, such as the Rocky Mountains, the Alps, and other

difficult mountain sections. The Range here would not be considered a fair-sized spur to one of those mountains. Great stress has been laid upon the engineering difficulties. The spiral on this route has been mentioned as a very difficult engineering feat; but on the St. Gothard Railway there is a double spiral, like a pair of spectacles, and the line crosses itself inside a tunnel. A great deal has also been made about the question of curves. The curves on the line are of a 5-chain radius. On the Toowoomba Range until recently they had 4½-chain curves, so that nothing can be argued against this line in the matter of curves. I give Mr. Evans every credit for bringing forward his report as he has done. Although we cannot agree with it in every way, still he is placing the position before the House and before the country from his point of view. But, as the Minister for Railways pointed out, it is a circumscribed point of view. The Commissioner is looking at it from the point of view as to how it is going to affect the revenue of the railways. We want to deal with this question on a much broader and more national basis than that. Is it fair that the people living west of Warwick and those living in the south-west of Queensland should be burdened forever with this extra 57 miles of railway. There was a return presented to this House on the 3rd of September last, which showed that the sum of £3,124,314 was earned by the railways in the vicinity of Warwick, and 50 per cent. of that money was paid on the traffic from Warwick to Brisbane and beyond, totalling £1,577,157. The return also showed that through having to pay on that extra 57 miles the people in that district had to pay an excess of £550,000.

Mr. HAMILTON: What did it cost to earn that sum?

Mr. BELL: I do not know what it cost to earn it, but that is the sum the people there paid in excess through having to pay for the extra 57 miles of railway. That is an injustice to the people of Warwick and the South-west. If we build this line we will conserve to Queensland the trade of the South-west, which rightly and geographically belongs to Queensland.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. BELL: New South Wales is also bearing this fact in mind, and is pushing on the northern extensions of her railways. It is the intention of the Railway Department to construct the border railway out to Tuant, and when it gets to Tuant the distance from Tuant to Brisbane and Tuant to Sydney will be about the same, and the construction of this line will be the means of securing the trade that justly belongs to us.

Mr. MAY: You have not got the line to Tuant yet.

Mr. BELL: The Sydney traffic seems to be largely in the Commissioner's mind, according to his report, but that question should not weigh with us at all. It does not matter if the traffic to Sydney goes via Wallangarra, via Tweed Heads, or via Kyogle. It is the border trade we are thinking about, and this link must be forged to conserve to Queensland the trade that belongs to it. I hope the Committee will not delay passing the plans by accepting the amendment. There is no good to be gained by doing that. We have been investigating it for thirty years, and up to the present this

is the best route available. We should not turn it down because of the grades. Engineer Stanley did not think it a bad principle to have a short section with a steep grade, provided you could have sufficient power to help the engines up the steeper pinches. Until quite recently the grades up the Toowoomba Range were such that it required extra engine-power to help them to get up, and there is no reason why the extra engine-power should not be employed in this case. I hope the Committee will consider the matter carefully and dispassionately before casting a vote that will perpetuate an injustice on the people of Warwick and South-western Queensland.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): It is quite true that this railway has been before the country for thirty years, but this is the first time that the plans of the *via recta* have been tabled in the House. This is not a party matter, and we should vote either for or against the proposal on its merits. We ought to consider first whether this line ought to be built. We have to consider whether we should build a double line of rails to the Darling Downs. In its present form I shall vote against this railway. If we pass this railway we will be putting £500,000 on 28 miles of railway, and we are putting the burden on people least able to stand it. Besides, £500,000 spent in other parts of Queensland would build 100 miles of railway where there are no railways at present. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. HAMILTON: And some of the lines have been passed.

HON. R. PHILP: And some of the lines have been passed. I cannot understand the Government trying to pass the plans this session, and saying that the line will not be constructed for another twelve months. It is quite true that when the line from Mumbilla to Mount Edwards is built then this gap will have to be linked up, but that time has not yet come. We should not spend £500,000 in building 27 miles of railway to one district. There has been a good deal of talk about the border trade and about New South Wales taking our border trade. We will not lose the border trade at all. We have got the line to Dirranbandi, and it must get all the trade on one side of the railway, and a good deal of the trade on the other side. While we have Queensland undeveloped we should not seek to get trade from another State. (Hear, hear!) We do not want this bogey raised about the New South Wales trade. The first proposal to build the *via recta* was made in 1884, when it was to run through to St. George, and the money was passed in a loan Bill, but it was not until 1900 that anything was done towards building that railway. I was Premier when the first plans were tabled for that railway. The Minister for Railways, Mr. John Murray, tabled the plans for the railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek in 1900—sixteen years after it was first proposed. Sir S. W. Griffith, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and others would not tackle it. They recognised that we had one line—that to the Darling Downs—over the Range. I was Premier when the first section of the Warwick to Thane's Creek line was introduced. But speaking then I said that I was not in favour of building the *via recta*; I thought it was a luxury. I then was in favour of building a line from Warwick to Goondiwindi, and I thought that the line farther

*Hon. R. Philp.]*

west should go from Dalby. But, at all events, it went from Goondiwindi and through to Dirranbandi. We are pushing on the line to Dirranbandi, and if the Government tables the plans for a line from there out west. I would rather vote for them than I would vote for this line now. I think it would do much more good to the country than this. And, with respect to the benefit that the line is going to be, I say that there is no place that is going to benefit more than the city of Brisbane; and, before I undertake to vote for a line of this sort, I want to see Brisbane in the benefited area as well. (Hear, hear!) I have always contended that Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville benefited more by the extensions of the railways west than anywhere else.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: And if there is a strong feeling in Brisbane in favour of this line, let it be included in the guarantee. You are asking people who have guaranteed their line at Dirranbandi to guarantee this line over the Range, a line which everyone knows will not bring any extra traffic by itself. Warwick has done very well in the matter of railways. They have a railway from Wallangarra, a railway from Maryvale, a railway from Dirranbandi, and a line from Killarney, and I think, at all events, that Warwick should have a rest. Besides, I do not think it will benefit Warwick very much after all. It certainly will reduce their own rates somewhat, but there are plenty of places in Queensland which have no line at all, and I certainly think that we should cater for them first.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: And I think that we ought to remember that the traffic from the Downs pays less towards our railway freight than other places—timber, coal, and produce, and up to the present time I do not think that Warwick has suffered so much. To ask that we should build two lines to one place, when there are places without any lines at all, is, I think, asking too much.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: I think it should be deferred till next session, at all events, and if the Government bring in the line then—if the metropolitan members are so anxious to get it—let them help to guarantee it. Why should they escape? There is not a town in Queensland that has benefited so much by railway construction as Brisbane.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: At the present time, so far as I know, there is not a guaranteed line affecting Brisbane, and I think that we should make the whole of Brisbane, and of Ipswich, too, Mr. Cribb, which you represent, pay towards the guarantee. The Minister must admit that the 28 miles by itself is not going to pay. And, besides that, we have the Commissioner's report, certainly not a very favourable report. He is not enamoured of this line. He says that, at the present time, it should not be built. It may be built later. When I can see a couple of million people on the Downs and there is so much traffic that they want another line, perhaps, I will support it. But when everybody is calling out for railways all over the State, and when the Government say themselves that they cannot touch it for twelve months, why pass the line at all? I

[Hon. R. Philp.

do not think you will find the people of Dirranbandi and Inglewood very anxious to guarantee it, and I do not think that the traffic will be so much as it is thought. I certainly think that we should get all the traffic on one side of the line and some from the other side of the line, but not all. We will get all the Queensland traffic, and I maintain that we are not justified in catering for the traffic of any other State. We have plenty to look after for ourselves. I sympathise with the Warwick people. They have been expecting this line for a long time, but I think we should remember that this is the first time that the plans of the via recta have been tabled; and I think hon. members should consider, especially in view of the report of the Commissioner, whether this is going to be for the benefit, not only of Warwick, but also of the whole of Queensland. I think that there are plenty of lines which will benefit us much more than this line. Everybody knows that money is not plentiful with the Treasurer at the present time, and later—when we have completed the Mount Edwards-Munbilla line—there will be more in the coffers. We have a lot of lines passed but not started. I can only under these circumstances vote for the amendment, and if the motion goes to a division, I should vote against the plans unless some alteration is made in the benefited area.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): I think that if there is anything that would tend to induce a member to vote for the amendment it was the statement of the Premier that there is no danger of the line being built this side of twelve months, and very little, as he knows, of its being built this side of five years.

The PREMIER: I did not say that. Twelve months, I said.

Mr. HAMILTON: No; but that is if the Government are going to carry out their promises to other portions of the State. I say that this money could be better spent in other portions of the State, not in tabling new proposals, but in carrying out proposals that have already been passed by Parliament, proposals on which the Government went to the country at the time of the last election. They are railways that will tend to develop 500 times the country that this line will open up. There is one line that was passed just before the last election, that from Winton to Springvale. When that line was passed, the House was told that these Western lines would be started simultaneously in the different sections. Have the Government carried out the promise that they made then? No; they have not. They are carrying out the extension from Charleville, and they are carrying out in a very slipshod manner the extension from Blackall, but they have not started that line in the Winton district. It is time for them to table more railway proposals when they have carried out the lines passed by this House. The Premier says that this line will annex new territory, meaning that it will annex a part of New South Wales. Is that a Federal spirit? Is it not better for us to try to develop our own State without meddling with New South Wales?

The PREMIER: It will secure our trade.

Mr. HAMILTON: There is a big lump of our own that we have not got yet.

The PREMIER: This will help to retain it.

Mr. HAMILTON: I say that a big lump of the trade in the Winton-Springvale corner that belongs to Queensland is now going to South Australia, and that there are hundreds of square miles of territory that would be put under sheep if it were built, but are now under cattle. I believe that the time will come when the *via recta* will be justified. It is not justified when the Premier tells us that they have no intention of going on with it, and when we know that they cannot go on with it. The time has arrived when every railway proposal will have to run the gauntlet of criticism in this House.

The PREMIER: This is, is it not?

Mr. HAMILTON: We know that in regard to the guarantee system, repudiation is in the air. The very persons who are asking for this railway are those who voted to repudiate that system.

The PREMIER: A deputation this morning told me that they would pay 3 per cent. gladly.

Mr. HAMILTON: They have said that in regard to nearly every railway that was tabled. "Give us the line," they say, "and we will pay the guarantee." But having got the railway, they try to get out of the guarantee. What is this guarantee worth? So soon as the line is completed, they come along, and have a deputation to the Premier, and bring all the influence possible to bear to get the Government to repeal the guarantee.

At 9 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. HAMILTON: The Commissioner, in his report, says the interest at 3 per cent. on the cost of construction will be £12,732 per annum. We know very well that the Government cannot get money at 3 per cent., and that they propose to offer 4 per cent., so that a few thousands will have to be added to that £12,732. Evidence was given by railway experts before a Select Committee which recently sat, and among them was Mr. Amos, who inspects railway routes and reports on them to the Government. Mr. Amos said that the very first line which should be built in Queensland is the line from Winton to Hughenden to connect the Central and Northern systems.

Mr. GRANT: Mr. Evans said the same thing.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes; Mr. Evans said the same thing. Then, there is the Dawson Valley line, which was passed by Parliament, started by the Government, and then stopped, and there are sections of the North Coast line still unconstructed. There are enough railways passed—railways which the people are anxiously waiting for—to occupy the attention of the Government for the next five years, without this *via recta* proposal. The expenditure on the *via recta* will be very heavy—too heavy, not only for the people in the district, but also for the State in the present condition of the finances of the country. I listened to the remarks of the hon. member for Fassifern, and it seemed to me that this line will not open much country. The people in his district are only a few miles from a railway, while in the district I represent there are people who are 200 and even 300 miles from a railway. Those people should receive consideration as far as railway construction is concerned before those who have a railway at

their door. The Government have only brought this proposal down in the dying hours of the session as a sop to certain people.

The PREMIER: To carry out a contract.

Mr. HAMILTON: Why, then, do not the Government carry out the other contracts they have made? How can the Minister say he is carrying out his contracts when the Government have not started some lines already passed, and yet submit this fresh proposal?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: One hundred and twelve miles have been opened since July.

Mr. HAMILTON: There are several long lengths of railways which the Government have never touched. The Duches line has been carried to the mines, and there it has been stopped, whereas if it had been taken 8 or 9 miles it is possible that it would have received a good deal of live stock trade from the Northern Territory. There are plenty of avenues in which the Government can spend money without entering into fresh obligations of this kind. The people whom this railway is to serve have railway communication with the coast now. As far as shortening the distance between Warwick and Brisbane is concerned—that is not the motive which has induced the Government to table this railway. It is merely brought in because a lot of pressure has been brought to bear upon the Government by the people of Fassifern and Warwick, and the Government are hoping in their hearts that it will be defeated, but they want to save their faces by being able to say that they tabled the line. But they have no intention of starting the railway.

The PREMIER: Count heads, and we will carry the resolution into effect.

Mr. HAMILTON: Let the hon. gentleman start some of the railways which were passed years ago. I shall vote against this proposition, not because I want to defeat the *via recta* railway, as I believe the time will come when that line will have to be constructed, but I say that, in view of the present conditions of the money market, and the fact that the Government have not started railways already passed, they should not have submitted this proposition to the Committee at this juncture. I shall support the amendment to postpone the matter. Notwithstanding the fact that two or three reports were made on this railway by previous Commissioners, we have a report from the present Commissioner, and he is dead against this proposal. The hon. member for Warwick advised hon. members not to take any notice of the Commissioner's report.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He only dealt with one aspect of the question.

Mr. HAMILTON: When the Commissioner's report in connection with other lines was tabled the hon. member did not say that members should take no notice of it. Why? Because the reports suited him. If the Committee cannot take the Commissioner's report, to whom are we to look for guidance in such matters? I do not blame the hon. member for Warwick or the hon. member for Fassifern in trying to get railways in their districts. It is their duty to try to get railways in their districts, but it is also the duty of other members to try to get railways in their districts, and see that they get fair play, and I shall vote for the amendment.

*Mr. Hamilton.]*

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have already made my statement with respect to the motion, and I desire now to say a few words with reference to the amendment of the hon. member for Rosewood, who proposes to delay the matter. The hon. member for Rosewood stated that one route which had been written about by Mr. Woodley Yorston would save some 10 or 12 miles in construction.

Mr. STEVENS: I did not say that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Woodley Yorston said—

“The only alteration which would do any good to me personally would be to take the line from the present terminus at Maryvale up the north branch of Glengallan Creek, tunnel through some 60 chains of the Main Range at the head of Bell's Creek, thence down the Bremer Valley, thereby shortening the distance some 10 or 12 miles. This would pass through my property, but as this route seems to have quite escaped the notice of the surveyors (why, I am at a loss to understand) it is now too late to advocate it.”

I understood from the hon. member that that was the route he desired we should inquire into. I take it that the reason for the amendment is to revive the old battle of routes. The question is whether we should determine that the remaining link of the via recta should be approved or whether it should not. As a matter of fact, this very route via Cunningham's Gap, that the hon. member referred to, and which Mr. Woodley Yorston wrote about, was brought under my notice by a deputation that waited on me four or five weeks ago, and I questioned then whether a new route could be discovered that would save 10 miles in 28 miles. This very route was examined by Mr. Lethem before he started the survey of both of the routes from Ipswich to Warwick in the year 1883. The fact is, instead of being a tunnel of 60 chains only through Cunningham's Gap, it would require a tunnel of very much greater length, and if that tunnel was built from the direction of Warwick, it would be found, owing to the extreme declivity on the east of the Range, the route would be absolutely impracticable. I give the hon. member credit for not thinking and not hoping and not desiring to postpone the consideration of this question, for, as the hon. member for Cunningham said, “It may be for years and it may be for ever.” I give the hon. member credit for wishing to postpone this question for only one year.

Mr. STEVENS: You are not quoting me correctly.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member himself gave me the date of the “Courier” newspaper in which this letter appeared, and I have read from the “Courier” of the 7th October, where this letter from Mr. Woodley Yorston appears. When I made my statement to the Committee this afternoon I endeavoured to give the fullest information, and I distinctly stated that Mr. Southerdon had made a survey from Rosevale to the foot of the Range. In introducing the second section of the Munbilla to Mount Edwards Railway in 1911, which was approved of by the Committee, I said that my opinion was that that was the second section of the via recta, and

[Hon. W. T. Paget.

I also stated as plainly as possible, that this connecting link which we are now considering was the connecting link between the two sections that had been placed before Parliament by myself and which had been approved of by Parliament, the first section of which was built and officially opened by the present Premier on the 30th September, 1911. Even the hon. member for Warwick, who, of course, naturally is an enthusiast in connection with the question of the via recta, sometime ago brought up the question of a better grade by what is termed the “1 in 33 route,” and he suggested to the officials of the Railway Department that this could be obtained by driving a very much longer tunnel than is proposed in the present proposition. But what happened? When the officials of the Railway Department came to inquire into the matter, they found they would have to drive a tunnel under the bed of a certain creek, which was impracticable. These are matters that have to be relegated to the experience and knowledge of the railway surveyors and railway engineers. I would like to remind hon. members that this is not a promise. It is an undertaking that has been given to the settlers in that portion of the State for the last thirty years. The promise was given when the £10,000,000 loan was passed in 1884. The present Premier gave a distinct promise that the plans of the via recta should be tabled last session. That I was unable to carry out as the responsible head of the department because the information was not completed, and that promise has been carried out by the tabling of the plans this session, and I think this is a proposition that members may well give every consideration to before voting against it, and I also think hon. members should not allow such a big proposal as this to be side-tracked by an amendment such as the one before the Committee, but get to the substantive motion and say to the country whether they believe that this link in the great national line should be completed or not.

Mr. HODGE (*Nanango*): I intend to support the amendment for several good reasons. One reason is the fact that some few years ago I represented that part of the State, and during that time the people in the Rosewood district were very keen about the promises that had been made to them years ago about the via recta starting at some point about Rosewood. There is another good reason why I intend to vote against the passing of these plans and book of reference, and that is the Commissioner's report. I think it is decidedly unfavourable, and if we cannot trust the Commissioner who is placed in that responsible position—if we cannot place reliance on his report, what is the use of him being there? If we are not prepared to trust his report, which involves the expenditure of £500,000, why has he been reappointed for a term of two years? The Commissioner has gone very carefully into this matter; he knows the whole district from A to Z, and from what we know of what has occurred in the meantime between Murphy's Creek and Helidon—at any time you could go there during the last ten or fifteen years, and you would see anything from 100 to 150 men working there gradually cutting down the grade on that railway. It is a well-known fact that there is a report, verified by a competent engineer, stating that there is a gradient of 1 in 44 as against 1 in 33. If that is the case, I do not see what

there is any violent hurry for rushing this motion through. This so-called direct route is as crooked as a dog's hind leg. It is all spiders and spirals, and those spiders and spirals will cost as much as some of the lines I am asking for in my district, where we can settle people on the land, of which there is no possibility along the route of this railway. Another objection to the proposal is that it is to start at Mount Edwards, where there is no railway in existence. We all know that several railways have been approved of, but so far they have not been commenced. There is one such in my electorate, the plans for which were passed two years ago, but they have not even turned the first sod yet, and I question very much whether they will turn the first sod of the Munbilla to Mount Edwards Railway within the next twelve months, so that there is absolutely no necessity for this violent hurry in connection with this line. We should give the amendment due consideration before we commit the country to an expenditure of £500,000. The amendment is entitled to consideration, and the hon. member for Rosewood is to be complimented on bringing the matter before the Chamber. The route supported by the hon. member is no new thing. Seventeen or eighteen years ago, when the late Sir Hugh Nelson was Secretary for Railways and the present hon. member for Bremer was member for Rosewood, Sir Hugh Nelson went up to the district and he practically promised the people that the Bremer Valley line would be constructed, and it was anticipated that the line would be started in the very near future. There is another reason why the amendment should be given due consideration, and that is that the people between Ipswich and Boonah are already served by a railway, which practically goes through the whole of the agricultural land in the district. On the other hand, the people between Rosewood and Cunningham's Gap are living in an agricultural area which is not within 20 or 30 miles of a railway. The Commissioner says that it will be necessary to expend £100,000 to reconstruct the line between Ipswich and Munbilla, and that sum would enable the Bremer Valley line to be built under proper conditions, giving railway communication to the people in the district I have mentioned. Those people have been settled there for thirty years, and, although they may have done fairly well, they would have done considerably better if they had possessed the advantage of railway communication which is enjoyed by others. I am perfectly satisfied that the Government have no intention of going on with this line straightaway. They merely want authority to build the line, and, that being so, I do not see why there should be all this objection to the amendment. The Government bring in a proposal at this late hour of the session to build a paltry railway like this, when there are real good districts that are languishing for want of railways and they are not getting them. This is merely a proposal to stave off things, and I do not think it fair, because, when we went to the country at the last election we were given to understand by the Government that certain railways would be pushed out into agricultural districts. There is one proposition that has been hanging fire in my own electorate ever since I have been in this House, and the £100,000 that will be necessary to reconstruct

the line from Ipswich to Munbilla would be more than sufficient to open up some of the best country in the Burnett and settle people on the land. Absolutely no settlement can take place in connection with this line. I say without fear of contradiction that, if the line is left unbuild for the next fifty years, the population in the district will not increase by 10 per cent. I intend to oppose the passing of the plans and to vote for the amendment.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): I represent an electorate that is more concerned in this *via recta* question than any other electorate in Queensland. I also know the benefited area perhaps better than any other hon. member, as I have been over it from one end to the other, and I can give reasons why the *via recta* should be gone on with as soon as practicable. I was glad to hear the hon. member for Balonne speak in favour of the motion, because the hon. member's electorate is more concerned in the *via recta* than any other electorate, except my own. In the past a number of the people about Mungindi and right away out to Cunnamulla did their business with New South Wales. The border line to Thallon and Dirranbandi was constructed with a view to securing the trade of that portion of Queensland to Queensland. We supply those people with police, schools, and everything else, and we naturally thought we were justified in trying to secure that trade, and we have secured it during the last two or three years. But we would not have secured it if New South Wales had not had a Public Works Standing Committee. When Queensland mooted the idea of running a line out along the border, the Public Works Standing Committee of New South Wales inspected the country between Moree and Mungindi, and on their return they reported against the construction of a railway there, with the result that the line has been hung up at Moree for a number of years. The consequence was that Queensland was able to get her railway out and secure the trade of that part of the country. New South Wales has since seen that she made a mistake, and has pushed on the railway, and in a few days the line will be opened from Sydney right through to Mungindi, and I am almost afraid that we shall lose the trade we have already secured unless we build the *via recta*. The distance from Brisbane to Mungindi *via* Toowoomba is 426 miles, made up of 386 miles of rail and 40 miles of road. The distance by the *via recta* will be 386 miles by train, from which must be deducted 57 miles, leaving 329 miles.

Mr. MAY: What is the distance to Sydney?

Mr. GUNN: The distance from Newcastle to Mungindi is 427 miles, so that even when the *via recta* is built the distance will be about the same as from Mungindi to Brisbane; you would only be then on equal terms. At the present time the balance is in favour of New South Wales.

[9.30 p.m.] I do not think one State should take trade from the other, but I think that the trade should go to its natural port, and I think that the natural port of that district is Brisbane, and not Newcastle or Sydney. The New South Wales railway system goes out in the shape of a hand. First of all, their system touches us at Wallangarra. The next place where it interferes with our trade is at Inverell, which is about 60 miles from Texas; but the State of Queensland

*Mr. Gunn.*]

goes much nearer to Inverell than that. When I was up there not long ago I saw carriers bringing goods to Inverell, and if we do not take care we shall lose that trade, and very shortly too, because they are thinking of making an extension from Inverell to Ashford, which is much nearer the border. There is another railway which we will have to build very shortly, and that is the railway from Ingiewood to Texas. It will save a mine which keeps the whole township going, and be the means of securing that trade for all time. A part of it now goes to New South Wales. If you go further along the border you find that the railway has run up to Moree in New South Wales. It goes nearer than that, to a place about 50 miles from Goondiwindi. That will interfere with the Goondiwindi traffic, and we shall have to be careful that some of that traffic does not escape us. If you go further along the border than Mungindi you come to Hebel, which is about the same distance from Collarondabri and Dirranbandi. The distance from Hebel via Toowoomba is about the same distance as from Hebel to Newcastle, and if we do not get the via recta we are likely to lose the trade about Hebel. Then, further on, there is Brewarrina, which is not in the influence of the Newcastle line, but of the line which goes from Bourke. The Brewarrina line draws a lot of trade and commerce from Queensland. Then you go further on to Bourke, which also draws trade from Queensland—from Wooroorooka and further along the border—and if we do not extend the border line we will continue to lose that trade. It is no use extending the border line unless you have the via recta, because, when you get to Cunnamulla or Wooroorooka, you will have the same distance from Sydney as from Brisbane. You must remember that these people are in the habit of doing their business with Sydney, and it is hard to wean them off Sydney. You will have to give them cheaper rates than they can get from Sydney, or you will not get their trade. It is of vital importance to Queensland, not to rob New South Wales of her trade, but to conserve the trade that legitimately belongs to Queensland, and to serve the people who are Queenslanders. At the same time, we cannot help it if some of the New South Wales trade comes to us. I think it is very likely that we will get a bit of the New South Wales trade which geographically belongs to us—that is, between Wallangarra and Glen Innes. There is a considerable amount of grazing going on there. Not so long ago, I met the manager of the Deepwater Station, who told me that as soon as the via recta was built their trade would go by it. I would be very sorry to advocate the building of a railway to take the trade away from New South Wales, but, geographically, it will be much nearer to us, and we shall most likely get it. With reference to the battle of the routes, I think my clients and the people along the border are not concerned about the battle of the routes. They are all about the same distance, and if we were to wait till the battle of the routes is fought out we might never get our railway, and I think we are quite justified in taking the chance when we get it. This is the first time that the via recta has been tabled, and I hope the House will pass the line. It will do my constituents good if the line is built. Stanthorpe is the principal place for growing English fruits in Queensland. A large number of settlers there are

[Mr. Gunn.]

doing well, and in that particular it is second to none in Queensland, and perhaps as good as any in Australia. It is very necessary that the luscious peaches, cherries, and other perishable fruit of that sort, should get to market as quickly as possible. We want to send our fruit, not merely to Brisbane, but over seas, and if it reaches Brisbane in a damaged condition it cannot be exported over seas. Stanthorpe has an excellent climate, and a number of people go up there and spend their holidays, and this line will make the distance shorter. Of course, I do not expect the House to spend half a million of money in building railways for the sake of the climate, but that is an inducement. I spoke about the Texas trade. It is a ticklish trade, and if we are not careful we will lose it. It is perhaps not a very big thing, but it is to that district. Texas grows more tobacco than the rest of Queensland.

Mr. MURPHY: Would it not be better to run a railway out there?

Mr. GUNN: We want the railway there. (Laughter.) If that line was tabled I could prove that it would be the most important railway line in Queensland. (Laughter.) Then there is another phase of the question—that is, the duplication of the main line as far as the Main Range. I think that is a very necessary thing, no matter whether you have the via recta or not. There is a tremendous lot of cattle coming in from the Western districts, and it is imperative that they should go in as quickly as possible. On a single line, where they have to pull up at so many stations, there is no end of delay. I do not see how it is possible to duplicate the lines through the cuttings and tunnels over the Main Range. I hope that those who have surveyed this via recta proposal will have planned it out in such a way that the line can be duplicated. I am convinced that when the border line goes right away to the south-west corner it will intercept the cattle that now go to Adelaide, and if they come down straight to Brisbane you will want a line which is duplicated. With reference to the benefited area, I think it is quite right that all those who are going to benefit by this line should contribute towards the tax.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Would you include Brisbane?

Mr. GUNN: I should like to see Brisbane not included the same as the other benefited areas, but taxed to some extent, because if that trade goes to Newcastle or Sydney it will mean a loss to Brisbane. It would not be fair to charge Brisbane the same as those in the benefited area, because Brisbane also gets some trade from Charleville and other lines. The via recta has been before the country for a long number of years, and if the surveyors have not found the best route by this time they ought to have done so. After reading the reports of Mr. Stanley and others, there is no reason why the House should not come to a conclusion on this matter and either vote for the via recta or throw it out; but I warn the House that if they do throw it out they will lose a lot of trade belonging to Queensland.

Mr. GRANT (*Fitzroy*): If this railway had come before us a year ago, even if we had this report from the Railway Commissioner, I would probably have voted for it, because I consider it

is a railway that is certain to come. The trade out there will necessitate the building of that line eventually. But we must go by the Commissioner's report now, and, judging by that report, I do not see how anyone can vote for the line. Since I have been in Parliament I never saw a line introduced with such an adverse report from the Commissioner. The Railway Commissioner is our expert. The Secretary for Railways said that he only looked at the matter from the railway point of view, but I would like to know what other point of view could he look at it from? He is there as the custodian of our railways, and we have to look at it from the railway point of view this time, because this is purely a railway that is going to help another railway. It is not going to bring in fresh trade at all, although we have been told that we are going to lose trade if we do not pass it. What about the railway from Longreach to Winton? Such a line as that would be a serviceable line in drought time. How are we going to preserve our stock in drought time by removing them from one part of the State to another unless we link up our different systems, such as from Longreach to Winton.

MR. HARDACRE: This money would build that line twice over.

MR. GRANT: Yes; four or five times over. The line from Winton to Longreach could be built cheaply, because the rails could be laid on the ground, as there are no engineering difficulties at all.

MR. MAY: They are only 60 miles from a railway on each side.

MR. GRANT: There is no line in Queensland that has been so strongly advocated as the line from Longreach to Winton.

MR. MAY: Only a few pastoralists.

MR. GRANT: Nonsense. There is not a section of the community that has not advocated that line. The pastoralists and other men out West, the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, the Railway Commissioner, Chief Engineer Amos, and others advocate the Longreach-Winton connection, while the Commissioner said it was one of the first lines that should be built. We overlook a line like that, and yet we are asked to pass this enormously costly line.

MR. HARDACRE: We could build the line from Blair Athol to Charters Towers.

MR. GRANT: That has also been advocated strongly, as it would revive the Charters Towers field in that it would provide them with cheap fuel; but I am not asking for that line at all. We are all interested in railways in our own districts, and we will be debarred from getting any railways at all if we pass this line.

MR. G. P. BARNES: Suppose everyone plays the same game?

MR. GRANT: So they do. Self-interest always comes before disinterestedness. If this question depended on the speeches of the hon. members in that district, then there would not be a member who would not vote for it. (Hear, hear!) The hon. members for Warwick, Fassfern, Carnarvon, and Cunningham all made excellent speeches in favour of the building of the line, not merely in the House, but outside as well, as they have always been advocating it. But we

have to look at it from a different point of view altogether. We who have railways in our own districts must push our claims first. We have, in my district, Alton Downs, a magnificent agricultural district, where thousands of acres of Government scrub soil is waiting for settlers. There is no hope of getting that line passed. Then, we have Mount Lecom, between Rockhampton and Gladstone, in the electorate of Port Curtis, where there are hundreds of selectors today. There is no hope of getting that line if we pass the *via recta*. I do not know if those who advocate this railway have made a tactical move in getting the Government to introduce this railway and leaving all the rest of us out of it. The hon. member for Maryborough wants a railway in his electorate, the Tinana deviation, and I sincerely hope he will get it, because others, like myself, who travel to Rockhampton and other places further north would be glad to see that deviation built, as it would mean we would get to Rockhampton sooner by half an hour or an hour. The Secretary for Railways said he could get over the difficulty in this line by using rack engines. I do not think the Railway Department want any more experience with rack engines after their experience on the Mount Morgan line.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say that.

MR. GRANT: The Minister knows that it would be a costly proceeding to go in for a rack engine for this line. The rack engine was used on the Mount Morgan line through a mistake of Mr. Stanley's. Mr. Stanley saw the rack engine used in Switzerland for conveying tourists up the Alps, and he thought it would be a splendid thing to try it on the Mount Morgan line. But they had to carry thousands of tons of stuff up the Range near Mount Morgan, and that was an entirely different proposition altogether. They have four rack engines stationed at Moonmerra ready to pull engines up the Range, and they can only carry a small tonnage at a time, and as thousands of tons are carried up that range it has been a costly experience for the Railway Department.

MR. MAY: That railway pays well.

MR. GRANT: Yes; and it would have paid much better were it not for the rack engines used at Moonmerra. We do not want to go in for a rack engine here. There is no doubt that the Sydney traffic will go *via* the coast in future.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not for many years.

MR. GRANT: And it will be years before it will go by the *via recta*. The House desires more information about the matter at the present juncture, to see if the surveyors can find a better route. A grade of 1 in 33 is far too dangerous for a line with much traffic. For that and many other reasons I am going to vote for the amendment.

MR. MAY (*Flinders*): The *via recta* has always been strongly advocated since I have been in the House, but we have never had matters put before us in so lucid a form as they have been by the Commissioner for Railways. We know that when we have capital cities like Brisbane and Sydney, that those living between the two capitals carrying on business there, want the quickest and surest railway accommodation that they

*Mr. May.]*

can get. The people in England think a great deal of their fast trains from London to Glasgow, and from London to Edinburgh, and, naturally, the people out here want quick communication between Brisbane and Sydney. I have been in favour of the line ever since I have been in this House; but when we find that the route mapped out is such that we have to go 9 miles to reach a point 2 miles away, as the crow flies, rigmarolling, looping the loop, with a lot of curves and sinuosities—(laughter)—I think that we might have some information as to whether there is not a better route. It is a question whether a proper survey was made. I have seen in foreign countries, more than in Queensland, how such deviations might be saved. Of course, I am not an expert, but it is worth consideration, and even if we had had the elevation marked on this small 40-chain plan that is attached to the Commissioner's report, we might have had a better conception of the route. If it were a question of building the *via recta* or leaving it, I should say, "Build the *via recta*," but the Premier and the Minister for Railways have told us that it is a line that will not be proceeded with for another twelve or fifteen months—at any rate, not till next session—and there is plenty of time before next session during which a better survey might be made of the route or the routes from Mumbilla to the Range or along the Bremer Valley, whichever is found to be the better. We are asked to vote half a million of money on a project which I believe is laudable and a good project, but we have been promised other railways by the Minister and the Premier, including some for our Northern districts, and they have not eventuated yet. There is the line from Cloncurry to King's Hole, and the further extension to Mount Cuthbert, but no more than the trial survey has been made yet. This is a line that I have advocated for years.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Then vote for it.

Mr. MAY: I am speaking of the line from Cloncurry; it is 42 miles to King's Hole, and another 36 miles or so to Mount Cuthbert. And these lines are just the same as the Duchess and Mount Elliott lines. They have paid right away, they have paid very much better than anything that you have in the South.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MAY: I cannot help it, Mr. Stodart. (Laughter.) We do not get a chance to speak on the Railway Estimates, because they will go through en bloc, and I thought that was a good opportunity of getting in a word about the Mount Cuthbert line. (Laughter.) I do not wish to detain the House. I am fully in favour of the *via recta* being passed—

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Then vote for it.

Mr. MAY: I shall not vote for it until I have seen fresh plans and specifications to see if it cannot be done more cheaply than according to the present proposal. I believe that the time will come when we will not have to strike through the Main Range to get to New South Wales, when we should be able to strike through the MacPherson Range and have a railway to Kyogle.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then, the MacPherson Range is no bar?

[Mr. May.

Mr. MAY: It is a bar. You will have to go through a half-a-mile tunnel. That is a big bar, I admit, but these things will come in time, especially as it will be about 600 miles to Sydney then in place of 680. I mentioned the route three years ago, so soon as the railway was passed from Casino to Kyogle, but I was laughed at. I said then that the line from Kyogle to Beaudesert should be taken into consideration. The time is coming when a great part of the trade of what are known as the New England provinces will come to Brisbane, whether it is the trade from the coastal areas or from farther inland, such as from the districts near Inverell. Under the present circumstances, I prefer to give a little more time for the consideration of the proposal before the House, and therefore I shall vote for the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): As this is a proposition which affects a very important portion of my electorate, I feel that I must in duty bound give some reasons why it should be accepted.

Mr. RYAN. The amendment is before the House.

Mr. MORGAN: I understand that practically the discussion of both the amendment and the proposal is taking place on one of them, to save time as much as possible. There is no doubt that Queensland, as a State, has gained considerably by the construction of the line from Warwick to Dirranbandi, which has been the means of bringing into Queensland a great quantity of wool and stock which previously to the construction of that line had been going to New South Wales. In order to counteract the loss of that trade, New South Wales has recently built a line from Moree to Mungindi, and that will be opened in the course of a few weeks, I understand. That has been done to regain trade from that portion of New South Wales, and also to try to capture or recapture trade from Queensland that used to go to New South Wales before the border line was built. This *via recta* means shortening the distance to Brisbane for that trade by 57 miles. At the present time the railway mileage from Brisbane to Dirranbandi is 425 miles. If the *via recta* is constructed that distance will be lessened by 57 miles, thus reducing it to 368 miles.

Notwithstanding that the New South Wales Government have constructed a railway from Moree to Mungindi, the distance from Mungindi to Sydney is 487 miles, and if the *via recta* is built Mungindi will be 119 miles nearer Brisbane than Sydney. It may be said that if wool or wheat is kept a day or half a day longer on the railway it will not suffer, but a saving in distance as far as carriage is concerned means a great advantage in connection with fruit, butter, and live stock. It is a recognised fact that the less distance live stock, such as cattle and sheep, have to travel by the rail the better it is for those animals, and that they arrive in a much better condition than they would do if they had 57 miles further to travel. We are having one of the largest meatworks in Australia established in Brisbane, and in order to keep those works going it will be necessary to bring stock into Brisbane from places where stock has not been brought from previously. The construction of this line will have the effect of bringing stock here

from portions of New South Wales as well as from places on the Queensland side of the border. It will also be a benefit to those engaged in the butter and fruit industries. There is a proposition on foot now to establish a butter factory at Goondiwindi, and it will eventually become an accomplished fact. Goondiwindi is a long distance west of Brisbane, and as the success of a butter factory depends upon the export trade the quicker the butter is brought to Brisbane and placed in the ship's hold or in cold storage the better. This remark also applies to fruit. The Stanthorpe district is recognised as one of the finest fruit-growing districts in Queensland, and if the fruit grown there can be landed in Brisbane two hours sooner than it is at the present time it will arrive in much better condition than it does now, and both growers and consumers will benefit. It has been stated that a considerable amount of money has already been spent in duplicating the line between Brisbane and Toowoomba. As a result of that there has been an alteration in the time table, which has reduced the time between Brisbane and Toowoomba by nearly an hour. Owing to the construction of numerous lines off the Southern and Western line, such as the Dalby-Tara Railway, the Dalby-Bell Railway, and many other railways, an increasing quantity of live stock and produce from the West is brought over the main line; and I am satisfied that in a few years the whole of the line which is now being duplicated will be needed to carry the produce from the soil between Toowoomba and Charleville and Cunnamulla. With regard to the proposal to delay this matter, it is quite true that the Commissioner's report is not favourable to the construction of the *via recta*, but, as has already been stated, it is the duty of members of this Committee not to consider the matter from a purely financial point of view. Reports of the Commissioner for Railways have been turned down in the past, and in some instances it has been justifiable to take no notice of his report. I certainly admire Mr. Evans for the report he has sent in with regard to this particular railway, provided that it is a conscientious report, as no doubt it is, because there has been a great amount of agitation in favour of the line, and the Government are pledged to it. I do not blame the Commissioner in any shape or form, but I do not think that the Committee should be altogether guided by his report. This matter has been before the country for twenty-five or thirty years, and the railway will have to be constructed some day or another. After repeated surveys, the proposal has been placed before this Committee. I do not say that a better route cannot be discovered, but I do know that endeavours have been made to discover a better route, and they have not succeeded. If there were two routes before the Committee I would support the one which I thought was the most economical and which would give the most satisfaction. But there is one route before us, and as I have pledged myself to a portion of my electors to support any proposition brought down by the Government as far as the *via recta* is concerned, I should be failing in my duty if I did not vote against the amendment.

Mr. TROUT (*Enoggera*): If I were to study my own feelings in this matter I would vote against the amendment and for the *via recta* railway, but I am not here to study my feelings. I am here to consider this

as a business proposition, and as a business proposition I am not prepared to pit my judgment against the report of the Commissioner for Railways. I consider the report of the Commissioner for Railways is one of the most condemnatory reports that it would be possible for a Commissioner to bring in. Again, there are numbers of places where railways are required more than the railway now before the Committee. It has been said that this railway has been talked of for a number of years. It has been talked of by a number of persons for the last week or so, and, although it may be said that Brisbane is strongly in favour of the *via recta*, let me say at once that I have not come in contact with one person in Brisbane, since the Commissioner's report was published, who did not say that this was a big undertaking. "It is an undertaking that is going to cost half a million of money, and on the face of the Commissioner's report, I do not see how the Government are going to carry it" nor do those persons consider that it would be wise under present circumstances to carry it.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: They did not look at it all round.

Mr. TROUT: I am only stating matters as I find them. So far as the Commissioner's report is concerned, I consider that it is perfectly disinterested, that he has no object in view other than putting the facts before the country, and in face of those facts I cannot see how any person can vote for the *Via Recta* Railway. I have said that it is going to cost £500,000. That is a fair amount of money for this Committee to commit itself to. It may be said that we are not going to build it straightaway. I am one of those who do not believe in passing any railway unless I can see there is a fair prospect of that railway being built. I think, in the past, there has been too much appealing certain districts and certain members by promising railways that have never been completed. It is not good business. It is not sound business; and, taking into consideration the fact that the whole of the money for railway purposes has been earmarked, and that we cannot expect to build any further railways until we get a further loan, I would like to ask whether this amount of money is going to debar other places from getting railways that they would get if this railway is not passed? How much money do we expect to be able to borrow in the future? Do we expect to be able to borrow sufficient money for this and to carry on all other railways that are required at the same time? I question it very much. At any rate, I take the responsibility of voting in favour of the amendment, and if the amendment is not carried I certainly must vote against the *Via Recta* Railway.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: With regard to the remarks of hon. members who have spoken, I believe that if they submitted a matter of grave business concern to an officer of theirs and received such a sham report, such a bare, thin report as this, in connection with so great a matter, they would return it at once to him or dispense with his services.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: It is a very honest report.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: An honest report would have dealt with the matter through

[*Mr. G. P. Barnes.*]

and through. He should have looked at it through and through and considered every possible question that had to do with this great matter.

Mr. RYAN: You are not helping your case now.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I want to appeal to this Committee as a Committee of business men and also to their patriotism. This is not an ordinary matter. There is no other line in Queensland that can compare to this. You might have other lines of railways that will wait, but this is the one and only strategic railway in Queensland. It is running along our border, and we find that New South Wales are putting up five lines to that border which will draw our trade as well as their own wherever they can get hold of it, and here we have not the pluck and we have not the business acumen to go out and seize what really belongs to us. Really, I am surprised at the attitude of hon. members, especially of some of the business men of Brisbane who will benefit to a greater extent than anyone else, and they should give this project their full support.

Mr. RYAN: It is unfortunate that you should accuse the Commissioner of dishonesty.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I did not do so.

Mr. RYAN: That is the impression you gave.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If I did that I am extremely sorry. I say the Commissioner has not dealt with the matter in a full and thorough way. The whole of what the Commissioner says in regard to this project, except when he condemns it, is this—

“It is highly probable that by shortening the distance to Brisbane for stations on the south-western border of the State, traffic which now goes to New South Wales, and which from its geographical position rightly belongs to the port of Brisbane, may be secured to the Queensland railways, but it is not possible to estimate what such traffic will amount to, as there is no certainty of its being diverted from its present channel.”

Compare a statement like that with the statement made by Mr. Thallon some years ago when he invited and urged the inhabitants of Queensland, if they wanted that trade, to hurry out and get it, and he placed it before the country as the very highest prize they could have. On the 30th June, 1911, I said—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not speaking to the amendment. The hon. member has not alluded to the amendment in any shape or form.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am speaking to the amendment, and my argument is that it is manifestly unfair and unbusinesslike to introduce an amendment of this nature, that is going to stay our one great strategic line and delay its construction and thereby cause loss of trade to the Railway Department and loss of business to Queensland. A great deal has been said about the duplication of the line to Toowoomba. That has been placed before the Committee as an argument against the *via recta*, and it was understood at that particular time that that expenditure would in no way interfere with

[*M. G. P. Barnes.*]

the rights the border line and the south-west had to direct railway construction. I wrote to Mr. Thallon, and I received the following reply from Mr. Steer, in a letter dated 30th September, 1909:—

“He (the Commissioner) is confident that in the near future a direct line from Brisbane to Warwick must be adopted to accommodate the traffic to and from South-western Queensland. The policy of securing the South-western traffic is, in Mr. Thallon's opinion, vital to the commerce and port trade of Queensland. The duplication of the line (Ipswich-Helidon) suggested in the annual report will not conflict with the necessity of future development in this respect.”

I also addressed a telegram to the then Premier, and I received the following wire from him:—

“This is a State matter as well as a local matter. Success to our extension west of Goondiwindi depends largely on it.”

He explained to me several times afterwards that, when more urgent work was completed, attention would be directed to this line. The hon. member for Nanango referred to the Commissioner's estimate of the cost of reconstructing the line from Ipswich to Munbilla, and said that the amount mentioned by the Commissioner would build the Rosevale line. Mr. Evans says £100,000 is his estimate of the cost of that work, but it is doubtful whether it would cost that much. Mr. Stanley's estimate of the cost of the section between Warwick and Maryvale was £4,500 per mile. The actual cost of constructing that section two years ago—notwithstanding the increased cost of labour, and notwithstanding the considerable wash-aways and other things that took place—was £4,549 per mile. On that score I prefer to accept the estimate of Mr. Stanley, made twenty-eight years ago, that the cost of reconstructing the line from Munbilla to Ipswich would be £57,500 as against the round figures thrown down by the present Commissioner.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And for which figures he is dependent on the Chief Engineer. Don't forget that.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: When Mr. Stanley's estimate came out correct in the one case, I think I am fairly justified in accepting his estimate in the other case. I hope the good sense of the Committee will lead them to vote against the amendment. This is no parochial or local matter. Apparently there are some hon. members who will not vote for this railway because they are not getting the railways they want. Are we going to commence playing that game—“You vote for my railway, and I'll vote for yours?”

Mr. RYAN: That is unfair.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am glad to say that this project stands on quite a different footing to others, and is essentially a proposal to build a line having in view the highest interests of the people of Queensland.

Mr. WELSBY (*Merthyr*): After hearing the oration and the peroration of the hon. member for Warwick this afternoon, in which he spoke of the consequences to the city of Brisbane if this railway was not

passed, and after hearing the speech he has just delivered, I could not help thinking how hard the hon. member fought for a certain Bill which I and a few friends were fighting against. He said that that Bill was purely a Bill which concerned the city of Brisbane, and now he says that this railway concerns the city of Brisbane, and is not purely a Warwick matter. Sometimes men employ men and trust them to give faithful service in return for a guarantee of employment and a high salary. As was remarked by the hon. member for Nanango, recently the Commissioner for Railways was reappointed for a further term of two years, and, now because he has made a report about this line, he is turned down by the hon. member for Warwick. At the conclusion of his report, the Commissioner states—

“Looking at the matter from a railway standpoint only, I do not consider that the time has arrived when such an immense sum should be expended in constructing a line to compete with the one already in existence.”

Mr. G. P. BARNES: His predecessor wrote very differently to that.

Mr. WELSBY: Times have altered in the last five years. We are now asked to vote for a line which the Commissioner estimates will cost £424,000; but then he puts another £100,000 on to that, and another £10,000 on to that, and he uses the word “approximate.” I feel sure that the line will cost more like £600,000. The Premier spoke about a guarantee, but how is this guarantee to be carried out? If we spend £600,000 in building a line for the good of the city of Brisbane, we want a certain return from it, and I, like other hon. members, cannot see that this line, which is like a dog's hind leg, is going to open up country. We want to build lines to open up agricultural country. Unfortunately, the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and I have no grievances, or I might talk a great deal more than I do; but here we are asked to spend £600,000 in building a line which will save passengers to and from Sydney 1½ hour. That is a serious expenditure to undertake. I appreciate the position of the hon. member for Warwick; but, if this railway has been before the country all the time, and there is still such a difference of opinion about it, I think we should pause before we proceed any further. We are on the eve of 1915, when we have to find several millions, and are we justified in going to London and borrowing £600,000 or £700,000 for a line that is not required? I have no axe to grind. If you want to shorten the distance between Sydney and Brisbane, why not go down by Beaudesert? Fares and freights may be cheapened by the construction of that line but, then, as the Commissioner says, immediately that is done, the people along the present line will want a reduction in their fares and freights. After all, as to the guarantee of 3 per cent., will 3 per cent. pay the Government for the loss there may be on the construction of the railway? I do not think so. I would much prefer to spend £600,000 in opening up agricultural country. I am in favour of the amendment, and against the Bill itself.

Mr. GILLIES (*Eacham*): When the proposal originated from this side of the House some time ago for the establishment of a

public works standing committee to inquire into all railway proposals, members on the Ministerial side [10.30 p.m.] pointed out that we had an efficient and responsible Commissioner—a man who had risen from the ranks—and that there was no need for members of Parliament, without any practical knowledge, to inquire into railway proposals. The Commissioner possessed the confidence of the Government. The Commissioner now makes his report, and because it is not altogether in accordance with the promises they made to the electors, they tell us that the report should be lightly brushed aside. I should like to know where the consistency comes in. The hon. member for Murilla said that he had the greatest admiration for the Commissioner, and gave him credit for the courage of his opinions, but when those opinions came into conflict with the promises the hon. member had made to the electors, the report should be lightly brushed aside. The Minister told us this afternoon—and we were told the same thing when the Wee Macgregor and Mount Mulligan line went through—that the passing of this proposal was going to have no effect on the completion of the agricultural lines already passed by Parliament. When the Premier was speaking on the Wee Macgregor line, I interjected, and asked if the passing of the line would have any effect on the two agricultural lines in my electorate, and he replied that my own common sense should tell me that it would have no effect at all. Since then the Premier has promised the people at Cedar Creek that the line would be completed this year. To show the effect the Mount Mulligan line had upon those agricultural lines, I want to tell the Committee that though the people had been promised by the Premier that the line would be carried out during the present year, I have repeatedly called upon the Commissioner for Railways to get a surveyor for that line, but was told that they could not do it until the Mount Mulligan line was completed. We have the same statement from the Minister for Railways—that the passing of this line will have no effect on the six agricultural lines that have been passed by Parliament.

Mr. RYAN: That is because they do not intend to go on with them.

Mr. GILLIES: Possibly that is true. I am quite convinced that the selectors in my district are fast losing heart, and losing confidence in the repeated promises of the Government. Dealing with the question of resumption, I notice that the Commissioner says in reference to this line—

“*Resumption of Land.*—I do not consider that the resumption of land will be a very expensive item, as a great deal of it is of poor quality, and there is also a considerable area of Crown land at present set apart as timber reserves for railway purposes.”

Speaking of the particular lines I am concerned in, every inch of the land there is of the best quality, and all Crown land. The men along the route of these lines are selectors who are paying—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not speaking to the amendment.

*Mr. Gillies.]*

Mr. GILLIES: I am showing good reasons why the amendment should be carried.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think so.

Mr. GILLIES: If I am not, I will have to bow to your ruling, but I was pointing out that there is no sense in passing a line like this, unless the Government intend to go on with the construction. If they do go on with its construction they are breaking faith with the selectors in my district. It is nearly two years since Parliament passed those lines, and the selectors are paying large prices for the land. There are nearly 700 selectors, and their fate is wrapped up in the construction of these two lines, and I say that they have been turned down by the Government. We are told that this Government is the friend of the farmers, and I want to see some evidence of that by their sincerity in carrying out the construction of agricultural lines. I would like to read some extracts from letters from selectors in my district, but I presume I shall not be in order in doing so, pointing out that the Government have neglected to carry out their promise, which neglect is criminal. They have come from the other States and England, and have taken up land—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GILLIES: I will bow to your ruling, but I was very anxious to get this in.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The settlers in the guarantee have not paid their liability.

Mr. GILLIES: If the Minister had carried out his promise, the line would have paid, but he stopped the line before it came to the best land, and as a natural consequence the part that is built has not paid.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am reminding you of your responsibility.

Mr. GILLIES: I would like to know whether the guarantors in the Maryvale district have toed the mark and paid their guarantee. The Minister is anxious to take the last penny out of men who have paid fancy prices for land in my district. Very good reasons have been offered why the amendment should be carried. If we are not going to listen to the report of the Commissioner for Railways, what are we going to do? Are we going to discharge him? Are we going to let the Minister tell us what lines are to be built without listening to the report of his responsible officer? Members who are advocating this line and who say that the Commissioner's report should be lightly brushed aside, are associated with a Government which reappointed the Commissioner for a further term of two years. If they are going to be consistent—if they say this report is not worth the paper it is written on—then I presume they will take some steps to discharge Mr. Evans. I have every confidence in Mr. Evans, and the report reflects the greatest credit upon him. He knows it will not be popular with the Minister and a number of his supporters. I think the Committee will be guided by the report, and will carry the amendment.

Mr. ADAMSON (*Rockhampton*): I would like to have a few words, but will not detain the Committee very long. I am exceedingly

[*Mr. Gillies.*

reluctant to say anything against the proposal before the House. On different occasions I have promised to support the viarecta railway, and, personally, I believe it is a railway that must come, at any rate, within a few years. But after this report by the Commissioner which has been laid on the table of the House I am forced to cry "Halt!" While I would like so much to fulfil my promise to some friends in the Fassifern district, I feel that to do so would be altogether unfair to other parts of the State. I recognise that at the present time there are a number of very important railways hung up. Although the Minister for Railways told me that there are some railways in the Rockhampton district which were to be pushed on, they are still hanging fire. There are fewer men working on these railways than I was led to believe by the report which I received from the Railway Department. The North Coast Railway from Rockhampton is hung up, the Dawson Valley Railway is hung up, the line between Blackall and Windorah is practically hung up—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Those statements are absolutely incorrect.

Mr. ADAMSON: You said that you were going on with the line from Yaaraba to St. Lawrence, but you are not going on with it at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You knew it was necessary to complete the Alligator Creek Bridge first.

Mr. ADAMSON: I want to be fair to other parts of the State, and that is why I say that we should look this question fairly in the face. This proposal is to spend £600,000 on this particular section. When I remember the other lines that are hung up; when I remember that the Winton-Longreach line has been recommended as one of the most important lines to be constructed, and that it is not introduced; when I remember how difficult it is to get money—the Treasurer has told us over and over again that he could not get the money to push on these things—when I remember that we have £11,000,000 of loan money falling due in 1915, even though I want to be fair to the people living in the South-western district, out by Dirranbandi, and whilst I want to help the people in that portion of the State, still I feel that if I voted for this proposal at the present time I would be doing a wrong thing. I am therefore going to support the amendment.

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

AYES, 23.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Grayson
" Barnes, G. P.	" Gunn
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kessell
" Bell	" Land
" Bertram	" Macartney
" Blair	" Mackintosh
" Bowman	" Morgan
" Caine	" Taget
" Crawford	" Petrie
" Cribb	" Tolmie
" Denham	" White
" Douglas	

Tellers: Mr. Caine and Mr. Morgan.

## NOES, 39.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Lennon
" Barber	" Luke
" Bebbington	" Mackay
" Bouchard	" May
" Bridges	" Murphy
" Corser, B. H.	" O'Sullivan
" Corser, E. B. C.	" Payne
" Coyne	" Philp
" Fihelly	" Rankin
" Foley	" Roberts
" Forsyth	" Ryan
" Gilday	" Stevens
" Gillies	" Swayne
" Grant	" Theodore
" Hamilton	" Trout
" Hardacre	" Walker
" Hodge	" Welsby
" Huxham	" Williams
" Kirwan	" Winstanley
" Larcombe	

Tellers: Mr. Mackay and Mr. Stevens.

## PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Allan and Mr. Somerset.  
Noes—Mr. McCormack and Mr. Hunter.  
Resolved in the negative.

A blank having been created,

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted.

Mr. RYAN: I rise to say a few words at this stage, not so much on the insertion of the particular words as to express the hope that the Government will see the necessity of having some better system of bringing information before this Committee than has been adopted in the past. I believe that the proposal was absolutely endangered by the fact that the only expert evidence we had was the report of the Commissioner for Railways, and we had members getting up in Committee and speaking against it. The people who were supporting the proposal had only themselves to blame for not having some proper system of inquiry by which to have information brought before the Committee, so that we may decide wisely for Queensland. Not long ago we passed the Great Western Railway Bill, and we had shortly afterwards to introduce a measure that was referred to in Committee, to have the route altered. Here we have this proposal postponed to-night on account of the same thing. I hope that the Government will take steps in the near future to prevent this sort of thing happening again.

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

## AYES, 39.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Lennon
" Barber	" Luke
" Bebbington	" Mackay
" Bouchard	" May
" Bridges	" Murphy
" Corser, B. H.	" O'Sullivan
" Corser, E. B. C.	" Payne
" Coyne	" Philp
" Fihelly	" Rankin
" Foley	" Roberts
" Forsyth	" Ryan
" Gilday	" Stevens
" Gillies	" Swayne
" Grant	" Theodore
" Hamilton	" Trout
" Hardacre	" Walker
" Hodge	" Welsby
" Huxham	" Williams
" Kirwan	" Winstanley
" Larcombe	

Tellers: Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Williams.

## NOES, 23.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Grayson
" Barnes, G. P.	" Gunn
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kessell
" Bell	" Land
" Bertram	" Macartney
" Blair	" Mackintosh
" Bowman	" Morgan
" Caine	" Paget
" Crawford	" Petrie
" Cribb	" Tolmie
" Denham	" White
" Douglas	
Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Bertram,	

## PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. McCormack and Mr. Hunter.  
Noes—Mr. Allan and Mr. Somerset.  
Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. RYAN: I see now that the sense of the Committee seems to be in favour of this amendment with a view to getting the necessary information placed before it. I should like to have some statement from the Minister as to what his intentions are with regard to getting that information. Of course, we know that the explanation of the Chief Secretary was that there was no intention of going on with the line for twelve months at least. I should like to have some statement of that sort, because I know that persons interested in the matter wish for something of the sort on an occasion such as this.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. the leader of the Opposition exhibits quite a laudable curiosity.

Mr. RYAN: Don't get annoyed, now.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not annoyed in the slightest. All I desire to say is that the investigations that have been proceeding for the past two years by the officers of the department will be proceeded with in accordance with the wishes of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BERTRAM (*Maree*): In expressing my regret at the result of the division, I want to say that I am satisfied that, so far as the Government is concerned, this railway business is all fireworks.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. BERTRAM: When I find hon. members such as the hon. member for Nundah, one of the Government "whips," voting against the Government, I am satisfied that the whole thing is fireworks, and there was no sincerity in it. (Dissent.)

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Nonsense!

The PREMIER: I must protest against such a gross allegation.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: There never was a motion brought before the House with more sincerity than this.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: And my impression is that the motion has been defeated largely because it stood alone this session as the one railway proposal.

Mr. RYAN: That is not giving much credit to members, you know.

The PREMIER: I know quite well the motive which has actuated members in voting against the proposal. Members who are disappointed at not getting railways in their

*Hon. D. F. Denham.]*

own particular districts have said that they could not support the *via recta*.

Mr. RYAN: Bad generalship on your part.

The PREMIER: It may be bad generalship, and in any case the motion has been long delayed. However, "It's no use crying over spilt milk." The motion that further investigation should proceed has [11 p.m.] been carried, and those of us who believe in the *via recta* will have those investigations carried out in the hope that one day we shall see the construction of the line consummated.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BERTRAM: Notwithstanding what the Premier has said, I am still of the opinion I expressed a few minutes ago, that if the Government were absolutely sincere in this matter they would have seen that their followers voted with them.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Nonsense! and other expressions of dissent.

Mr. BERTRAM: I am expressing my opinion. When it was a question of raising the salary of an Under Secretary by £100 we know that there was a lot of dissatisfaction on the other side, and—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order.

Mr. BERTRAM: I only want to say that, had the Government been absolutely sincere, I am satisfied from past experience that they would have seen that their followers supported them in this matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has already said that three or four times.

Mr. BERTRAM: Surely I am in order in pointing out that in my opinion the Government are not sincere in this matter. I was giving reasons for my conviction that had the Government been desirous of passing this matter through the House, they would have seen that their followers supported the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have told us that about six times already.

Mr. BERTRAM: I remember the opinion expressed by the Premier when a deputation from the Railway Bridge League waited upon him. The hon. gentleman said that if it resolved itself into a question of spending £200,000 on a bridge across the river to connect North and South Brisbane or spending that money in helping the agricultural districts—

Mr. BOUCHARD (*South Brisbane*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in addressing the Committee in the manner in which he is now doing?

Mr. BERTRAM: I shall only be a moment. The Premier answered that deputation that if it resolved itself into a question of spending £200,000 on a railway bridge across the river or spending it in opening up agricultural districts he would have no hesitation in spending the money in opening up agricultural districts. Yet, here is a proposal involving the expenditure of £600,000, and supporters of the Government have voted against it. I am satisfied that had the Government been desirous of putting this matter through, it would have gone through to-night.

HON. R. PHILP: As a supporter of the Government I deny the assertion made by the hon. member for Maree.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[*Hon. D. F. Denham.*]

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. member does not know much about the forms and practice of the House. Railways have always been non-party questions, and I have always voted on railways irrespective of party; I have never followed the party in such matters. There is no one in the House who has had his railway proposals voted against more than I have. I should advise the Government, if they wish this line to go through, to get a guarantee from Brisbane and Ipswich attached to the proposal when they again bring it before the House.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I wish they would.

HON. R. PHILP: Unless they do that, the proposal will probably be defeated again. How can 28 miles of railway costing a million of money pay? It is quite impossible. I hope that all railway proposals will be brought forward as non-party questions.

Mr. BOUCHARD: I very much regret that the hon. member for Maree has seen fit to make the statement he has just made to the Committee. It is one of the basest statements I have ever heard in this House.

Mr. BERTRAM: It is my honest conviction.

Mr. BOUCHARD: It has been contended in this Committee for many years past that railway proposals should be strictly non-party questions. And when members choose to exercise their own judgment in such a matter and vote as their consciences dictate, for them to be accused in the manner in which the hon. member for Maree has accused them is most scandalous. I can assure you, Mr. Stodart, that to-night I asked my leader, the Premier, whether he was keen upon this railway, and he said, "Most keen; I desire to see it carried." Notwithstanding that statement—having heard certain arguments against the proposition—I exercised my own judgment and voted against the proposal which my leader wished to have carried; and I say it is scandalous on the part of any member to hurl such an accusation against the leader of the House as that made by the hon. member for Maree.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACKINTOSH (*Cambooya*): In consequence of the opinion I have held for years with regard to the *via recta*, I intended to be present and speak and vote in favour of this proposal. The Premier and the whip of this party, thinking that I might not be down in time to-day, sent me two telegrams—I do not know whether the whip knew that the Premier had sent a wire or whether the Premier knew that the whip had sent one—but I received two telegrams asking me to be down in time to take part in this debate and to support the motion. I met a gentleman in Toowoomba on my way down, and he asked me why I was in such a hurry to come to Brisbane. I told him that I intended to be here to have a say in this matter and to vote in its favour. My reason for getting up now is to say that the Premier and the Government, individually and collectively, are heartily in favour of the "*via recta*."

Question, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

#### RECEPTION OF RESOLUTION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I beg to move that the resolution be agreed to, and, in moving this motion, I would like to add a word or two to what has been said in connection with the proposal. I think the position is unique in connection with the railway proposals that have been considered by the Committee, and I wish to give this assurance that the investigations, the purport of which are now in the resolutions, shall be carried on by the officers of the Railway Department in deference to the wish of this House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER, in moving—

“That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended for the remainder of this session as would otherwise prevent (a) the receiving of resolutions from the Committee of Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed in that Committee, and (b) the passing of Bills through all their stages in one day.”

said: To-morrow we shall take the Estimates, and, as it is the final day for dealing with the Estimates, we shall be able to go on with other business at 10 o'clock to-morrow night. I then propose that we shall take the resumption of the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Rockhampton for the division of Queensland into three States. I understand that the hon. member for Rockhampton desires to have twenty minutes to speak in reply, and I am perfectly agreeable that he shall be allowed that time, and then we may proceed to a division. Wednesday will be devoted to the reception of resolutions from Supply; and—following the practice which has been laid down for the past two years—then an Appropriation Bill will be passed through all its stages. So far as my knowledge goes, it looks as though we would have very little difficulty in cleaning up in the remaining two days left for this week.

Mr. KIRWAN: What about the Elections Bill?

The PREMIER: The Elections Bill will be cleaned up, all right. (Laughter.) I do not propose, unless it be found convenient, to go on with the Jury Bill.

Mr. LENNON: Who is making the mess that wants cleaning up?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Opposition. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: The course of business might very well be brought to a conclusion on Friday night. Of course, if it cannot be, then we shall have to meet again next week. So far as I can see there will be no other Bills to introduce. The Bill with reference to which I gave notice this afternoon, will only be a formal one, so far as I am concerned. We do not propose to do other with it than propose the first reading. The only other Bill to deal with will be the Appropriation Bill, and as the Committee will have dealt with the whole of the items

arising out of the appropriation, and having authorised the appropriation, I suppose that will be merely a formal matter. I had hoped that the *via recta* discussion would have ended earlier so that we might have given some time this evening to the resumption of the discussion on the second reading of the Cane Price Boards Bill. I do not know whether it is wise at this late hour to proceed with that matter, but if not I suggest that time might possibly be given to it on what we may regard as private members' afternoon on Thursday. I am in the hands of members as to whether we shall stay till a late hour in the morning or whether they prefer to take it on Thursday. As I have said, to-morrow the business will be the departmental Estimates, final day, and the next day will be the reception of the resolutions; and I observe on looking at last year's "Votes and Proceedings" and also "Hansard" that the resolutions were agreed to at an early hour, because subsequently all the stages of the Appropriation Bill were completed on the same evening and other business was taken as well, so that it is quite possible that on Wednesday afternoon at an early hour the resolutions will be completed.

Mr. THEODORE: That is mere conjecture.

The PREMIER: I am quite in the hands of the Committee. They have till 10 o'clock. The Standing Orders provide that, but I am only trying to consult the best interests of members. I am quite willing to stop here till a later hour, but I think possibly "sweet reasonableness" might obtain and we may just as well complete the whole of the business without sitting late.

Mr. RYAN: I rise, not to oppose the motion, because I understand it is necessary to have a motion in this form in order to clean up the business at the end of the session, but as the Premier, in speaking, referred to the Cane Price Board Bill, I claim permission to say a word with regard to that. It is a measure that I would like to see a division taken on, and although it is inconvenient perhaps to sit late, still I would rather see us go on to-night and dispose of the second reading of that Bill, and, if necessary, the Committee stage, so that there will be a chance of getting it to the Legislative Council before the House rises. I desire to speak on the measure myself, but I am quite prepared to forego that right and have a division taken because I regard the principle underlying the measure as a sound one, even though I do not agree with all that is in the measure. Still, I would like to see it passed through the second reading and Committee stages, if possible, before we adjourn.

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the House do now adjourn. I have arranged with the hon. member in whose name the Sugar Cane Price Boards Bill stands, to take it as first business on Thursday afternoon.

Mr. RYAN: I am sorry indeed that the Premier has moved, "That this House do now adjourn," because it simply means that this Bill, which I am very anxious to see dealt with, will be shelved.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

*Mr. Ryan.]*

Mr. RYAN: If we leave it till Thursday afternoon there is no possible chance of getting it completed, and I am rather inclined to divide the House on the question whether we adjourn. I think this business should be gone on with, and let us come to a division on it, and let the people know whether the Government are sincere or not. If we allow it to go till Thursday afternoon it will be thrown overboard, and I strongly protest.

Mr. THEODORE: It seems to me some further explanation of this procedure on the part of the Premier is required by the House. Everyone knows, when we reached a certain stage in the discussion on the Sugar Cane Price Boards Bill, the Premier said he would defer further discussion until immediately after the *via recta*. It was understood that immediately after we came to a decision with regard to the *via recta* that the second reading of the Sugar Cane Price Boards Bill would be voted on. We know there are several supporters on the Government side who are against the Bill, and the Premier seems to be studying their interests more than the interests of those who are in favour of the cane price boards.

The PREMIER: I rise to a point of order. I call your attention to Standing Order No. 33, which distinctly lays down that there shall be no debate on the question "That the House do now adjourn."

The SPEAKER: The point of order raised by the Premier is strictly accurate. It was merely with the idea of facilitating business that I allowed the hon. member to make a few remarks. On the point raised, the deputy leader of the Opposition is out of order.

Question—That the House do now adjourn—put; and the House divided:—

## AYES, 38.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Hodge
" Barnes, G. P.	" Kessell
" Barnes, W. H.	" Luke
" Bebbington	" Macartney
" Bell	" Mackay
" Blair	" Mackintosh
" Bouchard	" Paget
" Bridges	" Petrie
" Caine	" Philp
" Corser, B. H.	" Rankin
" Corser, E. B. C.	" Roberts
" Crawford	" Stevens
" Cribb	" Stodart
" Denham	" Swayne
" Douglas	" Tolmie
" Forsyth	" Trout
" Grant	" Walker
" Grayson	" White
" Gunn	" Williams

Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. B. H. Corser.

## NOES, 22.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Huxham
" Barber	" Kirwan
" Bertram	" Land
" Bowman	" Lacombe
" Coyne	" Lennon
" Fihelly	" Murphy
" Foley	" O'Sullivan
" Gillay	" Payne
" Gillies	" Ryan
" Hamilton	" Theodore
" Hardacre	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Bertram and Mr. Murphy.

## PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Allan. No—Mr. McCormack.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 11 o'clock.

[Mr. Ryan.