

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST 1914

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST, 1914.

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

ANSWER TO ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I this day presented to the Lieutenant-Governor the following Address:—

“To His Excellency the Honourable Sir Arthur Morgan, Knight, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Queensland and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia, and President of the Legislative Council of the said State.

“May it please Your Excellency,—

“We, His Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of our most gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks for the Speech with which His Excellency the Governor was pleased to open the present session.

“The various matters to which His Excellency referred, and all others that may be brought before us, will receive our most careful consideration, and it will be our earnest endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the State.”

And that His Excellency had been pleased to make thereto the following answer:—

“Government House,
Brisbane, 5th August, 1914.

“Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,—

“I receive with great pleasure the assurance of your continued loyalty and devotion towards the Throne and Person of His Most Gracious Majesty the King.

“I feel assured that you will give the most careful consideration to all matters that may be brought before you, and am satisfied that it will always be your earnest endeavour to promote the advancement and prosperity of this State.

“ARTHUR MORGAN,
Lieutenant-Governor.”

THE EUROPEAN WAR.

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Osley*): Mr. Speaker.—I crave the indulgence of the House while I read copies of telegraphic despatches which have passed between the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth and myself. Shortly after 1 o'clock to-day I received the following wire from Mr. Cook:—

“Melbourne 12.45 p.m. 5th August 1914. Honourable the Premier Brisbane. Official information has been received that war has broken out with Germany.

“JOSEPH COOK Prime Minister.”

I may here intimate that His Excellency the

Lieutenant-Governor has received a similar communication from the Prime Minister, which he has communicated to me. I at once sent the following reply to the message of the Prime Minister:—

“The Right Honourable the Prime Minister Melbourne—Though we regarded war with Germany as inevitable your telegram informing us that war has broken out with Germany is received with profound sorrow. In this crisis Queensland unreservedly places all her resources at service of Commonwealth and mother country.—D. Denham Premier.”

(General cheers.)

QUESTIONS.

SOUTHERN PRINTING BOARD'S DETERMINATION.

Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“1. Did the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops receive a letter from the secretary of the Typographical Association, dated 12th December, 1913, calling attention to a reported infringement in Toowoomba of the Southern Printing Board's determination?

“2. If so, for what reason was no acknowledgment of the receipt of the letter forwarded to the sender?

“3. Will he institute inquiries as to whether there is any breach of the said determination at the present time in the office of the ‘Darling Downs Gazette’?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*) replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. Mr. Colborne called at the Factories Office and made a verbal complaint, and, at the suggestion of the Chief Inspector, the statement was put in writing. The Chief Inspector did not therefore consider it necessary to acknowledge receipt.

“3. Inquiries were made at the time, and further inquiries are now being made as to the strict observance of the award.”

ART UNION PERMITS.

Mr. ALLAN (*Kurilpa*) asked the Acting Attorney-General—

“1. Will he place on the table of the House a return showing the art union permits granted for the year ended 30th June, 1914; to whom granted, and the objects?

“2. Has his attention been directed to certain advertisements appearing in the local Press in respect of such matters?

“3. Has permission been granted for such advertisements, and for the exhibition of prizes, and the sale of art union tickets in the public streets?

“4. If not, what action does he propose to take?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION and ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. W. Blair, Ipswich) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes.

"3. The department sanctions only the disposal by art union or raffle. This sanction does not extend to advertisements, exhibition of prizes, or sale of tickets.

"4. The department has already taken the action open to it."

INSURANCE ON WORKERS' DWELLINGS.

The SPEAKER: Hon. members will notice that portion of question No. 4, standing in the name of the hon. member for Maree, Mr. Bertram, has been omitted. The mistake is entirely due to the Government Printing Office. I hold in my hand an official corrected proof of the business-paper as sent to the Government Printer this morning. In order to make the question intelligible to the House, I shall read it—

"Mr. BERTRAM to ask the Secretary for Public Works—

1. Is he aware that the whole of the insurances effected in connection with workers' dwellings in Brisbane are effected through one firm of insurance brokers?

2. For what reason has a monopoly of such business been given to one firm?"

Mr. BERTRAM thereupon formally asked the question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. For the business convenience of the board."

FALSIFICATION OF HERD BOOKS.

Mr. KIRWAN (Brisbane) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Is it true that as the result of certain statements made by an ex-prisoner regarding the alleged falsification of the herd books in connection with the St. Helena stud stock, an inquiry was ordered and held recently by Mr. Macfarlane?

"2. Was any stock sold to buyers that might have been affected by the false entries, and what action, if any, has been taken in connection therewith?

"3. Following upon the inquiry, is it true that the preparation of stock for the National Show has been discontinued?

"4. As the result of the inquiry, have any officials at St. Helena been dealt with, or any retired official?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. G. Appel, Albert) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. No; there were no false entries.

"3. No.

"4. No."

ROCKHAMPTON HARBOUR BOARD AMENDING BILL.

Mr. FOLEY (Mundingburra) asked the Treasurer—

"Is it the intention of the Government to bring in an amending Bill for the Rockhampton Harbour Board this session?"

The TREASURER replied—

"The intentions of the Government will be disclosed in due course."

TOWNSVILLE HARBOUR BOARD AMENDING BILL.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Treasurer—

"Will an amending Bill be brought in for the Townsville Harbour Board on similar lines to the Act in force at Cairns?"

The TREASURER replied—

"The intentions of the Government will be disclosed in due course."

Mr. THEODORE (Chillagoe) asked the Chief Secretary, without notice—

"1. Is he aware that the price of the necessities of life are being raised in Brisbane far beyond what the present circumstances warrant?

"2. Will he take steps to prevent any undue exploitation of the Queensland people in this matter?"

The PREMIER replied: I am not aware that that is so generally. I saw in the afternoon paper to-day that the price of flour had advanced £2 10s., and not being familiar with the wheat and flour market, I am investigating the cause. There is an abundance of food supplies in Australasia. (Hear, hear!) As we are an exporting community, one would naturally think that, so far from wheat and flour advancing, the difficulties of sending it out of the country would be such that prices certainly would not advance.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The only information I can gather which would appear to justify the increase—because a gamble in food supplies is, I hold, distinctly wicked—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I consider that any gambling in food supplies should be strongly deprecated. (Hear, hear!) I learn that wheat has advanced to 4s. 5d. per bushel in Sydney to-day. What is the cause of the advance I do not know. Whether it is because of the poor harvest prospect in the western districts of Victoria I do not know. It is also common knowledge that South Australia is experiencing a very dry time in their wheat districts, and that harvest outlook is poor. Such considerations may account for the rise, but when the advance in wheat and flour comes at this psychological moment it looks very suspicious. Still, there may be a bonâ fide explanation for the advance. One can understand that in the case of imported goods which cannot be renewed, and the supplies of which will run out, and even if renewed can only be imported at an increased price, owing to the increased rates of freight charged on them and increased rates of insurance, we can understand that the price of such goods will go up. I see that in France steps have been taken to protect the community from an increase in the cost of

necessaries of life, and so the Government here will give the matter the closest consideration and see what can be done.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: It is a wicked thing in time of national calamity to seek to make gain out of a crisis that, to all of us, is a source of bitter sorrow.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

RAILWAYS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

* Mr. THEODORE (*Chillagoe*): One must, of course, admit the importance of the measure which we now have under consideration. It is certainly a very important measure and makes many provisions which tend to the development of the State. At the same time it must be admitted that many of the provisions of the measure are not controversial. They have been established for many years in Queensland, and are not now the subject of controversy, at least no party controversy. It brings about the consolidation of many Acts that will make for the more simple administration of railway affairs. There are some few provisions of the Bill which I would like to touch upon. At the outset I must congratulate the Secretary for Railways on the vast amount of information which he gave to this House, not only when introducing this Bill yesterday, but when he introduced a similar Bill last session. He must have gone to no end of pains to become possessed of such an amount of information with regard to the consolidation of Railway Acts, and for the necessity for making certain amendments in our present railway law. He must have gone to considerable trouble, and the House is indebted to him. This measure necessarily confers a great amount of plenary power on the Commissioner for Railways. That is possibly quite necessary under the circumstances, because everyone must admit that a Railway Commissioner, or any other man vested by the Government or any other authority with the control of a vast business like the State railways in Queensland, must be invested with rather plenary powers, and there should not be any possibility or probability of any interference by the Minister or the Government of the day, so long as he is properly carrying out his duties as the man in charge of that business. On the other hand, we have a perfect right as the Legislature, to lay down certain principles to guide whoever may be for the time being Railway Commissioner. It is not right that Parliament should tie its hands and allow the railway business to be managed by one man, regardless of any guidance in the matter. The Legislature has a right to lay down a policy which the Railway Commissioner for the time being should observe, although he should be given a free hand within the limits of that power conferred on him by Parliament. The Legislature has a perfect right to lay down what conditions should apply to the employees in the railway service, and also the restrictions regarding the employment of these men, and the restriction of privileges, and the payment of remuneration for overtime, and also the regulation of hours. It is a fair and reasonable thing that the Legislature in considering such a measure as this, whilst conferring vast powers upon the Commissioner, should restrict his powers within

certain limits, so far as the employment of railway servants is concerned. Last year it was shown logically enough, while we had the Bill under discussion, that it was necessary to have better regulation, so far as the remuneration of railway employees, including the minimum and regarding the overtime paid, was concerned. There is more urgency now why we should support such an argument, because there have been frequent conflicts between the employees and the Commissioner upon the question of wages, wages conditions, and the conditions of employment. In most of these cases it is shown that the differences have arisen in reference to the interpretation of a fair minimum wage to be paid in the different districts in which the Commissioner is operating. If we can lay down in a Bill like this a principle to be observed by the Commissioner, such, for instance, as was contained in the amendment moved when the Bill was being considered in Committee last year, that the Commissioner should be called upon to pay the current rate in any district through which a railway is being constructed—if that principle were established in the Bill I feel sure the cause of the differences arising between the men and the Commissioner would disappear. That has happened very frequently in the last three or four years in connection with railway construction policy—that the differences which exist between the men and the Commissioner, or the men and the Minister, through the lack of any definite instruction in the Act controlling the action of those officials, has led to industrial crises in different districts of the State. That can be entirely avoided if this House affirms the principle I mention. I think no one in this House can deny the wisdom of establishing a minimum wage in regard to the different classes of work, not necessarily a rigid and fixed amount that cannot be moved either upwards or downwards, but the recognition of a standard wage arrived at after consideration of the cost of living, and other matter bearing on the existence of the employees who enjoy such a wage. In this measure the Legislature is asked to go into the smallest details in regard to some matters; the smallest details are set forth even in regard to matters affecting the employment of men and privileges in the railway service. But this question of the necessity for the Commissioner to pay the recognised minimum wage to the employees of the department in the districts in which railways are being operated is not considered, apparently, by the Minister of sufficient importance to require a definite principle to be laid down in the measure. I consider it is of sufficient importance, as it will avoid the possibility of future conflicts if that principle is adopted, as then it casts upon this House the responsibility, in the event of any conflict between the men and the Railway Commissioner, as it makes the men employed by the State, in the construction of railways, and the men in the railway service the employees of the State under the protection of the Legislature—it makes the House their employers, and not the Commissioner. It is a wide principle and one we should not shirk. In a previous measure which was passed by the Queensland Legislature a year or two ago, the Government has taken upon themselves to place the employees of the Railway Department, and the other Crown employees of the State, upon a different footing to employees in other callings—employees employed in other industries and businesses. In regard to the

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railway and other Crown employees, they have no relief by arbitration. If they have any dispute with their employer, who, in most cases in connection with the railway employees is the Commissioner, they have absolutely no right of referring their case to arbitration. Their sole recourse, when a dispute has arrived at a certain stage, is the liberty to refuse to continue their employment; they have no other redress. That should not be. Unless we can set up some machinery, by which they can get a proper consideration of their grievances affecting the conditions of their employment and remuneration, then they should be put on the same footing, or on the same status, as private employees; that is to say, they should have the right of appeal to the Industrial Arbitration Court. That is not provided in connection with the railway service, and consequently the Commissioner, regarded as an employer, is in a singular position in regard to his employees. The consequences are that when there is any conflict between the men they have to have recourse to strike—a method which no party should countenance, and which we should endeavour to avoid the necessity of, and in this case there is no argument at all to be urged why they should not have recourse to industrial arbitration in the same way as other industrial employees. It may be said that it is not a wise principle to allow an industrial judge, or any outside authority, to regulate the wages or regulate any matter which would mean a charge on the revenues of the State, without the consideration of those who have the management of the revenues of the State. I do not think that argument can hold water, because the men in the public service should have the same right to appeal to an impartial umpire as other employees, and the Legislature should lay down the right for railway employees to have the same recourse to those tribunals as other employees have. Unless that is provided the Legislature should certainly state in explicit terms that the Commissioner shall observe the minimum rates of wages that are paid in the districts in which the railways are operating—he should observe the same conditions as to hours and not less favourable conditions as to other matters affecting employment. The Commissioner should not be placed in a privileged position regarding the employment of men, and the men employed in the Railway Department should not be under any disabilities which other men employed in other occupations do not suffer. Regarding another principle contained in the Bill, which I think is controversial—and many of the important provisions of the Bill are not now controversial—I think the question of guaranteed railways is a principle of the most controversial nature that we have to consider in relation to the present measure. The Government, apparently, have found some difficulty in arriving at a final decision in regard to the difficulties that present themselves in connection with the question of guaranteed railways, because in the measure that was submitted last year, a different proposal was outlined to that contained in the present measure. As a matter of fact, no provision was made to interfere in any drastic manner with the guaranteed principle as contained in the 1906 Act, when the Bill was introduced last year.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was a provision to add one year's deficit to the capital cost.

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Mr. THEODORE: The House, when in Committee considering that measure, agreed to an amendment which made a very important departure on the principle established in the 1906 Railways Guarantee Act, and in the measure this year it goes still further. It includes the principle contained in the amendment passed last year, and also makes the principle retrospective for two years—it makes the capitalisation of any deficiency apply as from 30th June, 1912. I have definite opinions on the question of guaranteed railways—not that they in any way represent the opinions of the party on this side—they are my own individual opinions. It is generally understood in this House that practically all questions of railway construction, and the railway policy generally, is a non-party matter, and I think it would be bad policy on the part of anybody to attempt to make it a party matter. The question of railway construction, or the policy of the country for the time being regarding railway construction and management of our railways, should be entirely a non-party one. I think that is granted, and that no member of the House desires to make it a party matter. Certainly, I have no desire to do so, but my own opinion regarding the guarantee system is that the guarantee system is wrong. I do not say that it is wrong in principle. I think the idea is very laudable—the idea that those who benefit by the construction of railways should pay for any loss that may be involved in running them by taking some of the enhanced value of the properties in the districts through which railways are built is a right principle. But my own opinion is that the present system applies very unscientifically. It so operates that in certain cases the liability does not attach to the property of many persons very much benefited by the construction of the railway, and, on the other hand, the liability often includes property that is not in any way benefited. The railway districts are so arbitrary as to boundaries, that they cannot take in all persons who are benefited, and leave out all persons who are not benefited, and the rate itself, which is imposed in the case of a deficiency, applies without differentiation, and must apply more harshly than is deserved in some cases, and less heavily than is required in other cases. The principle must of necessity apply unscientifically. I suppose no such principle as this can apply in such a way as to gauge the exact proportion of expenses and the burden upon all persons affected. It does seem to be as crude an idea as one can imagine, if one has regard to the experience of the working of the 1906 Act. I think it has been allowed, and with a good deal of truth, that when a new railway is built in an agricultural district, or in a pastoral district, or in any other kind of district in Queensland, that the building of the railway does not only benefit the district through which the railway is being built, but in many cases it benefits to a greater extent than the people in the district, the towns to which the produce of that district goes. That seems to be almost an irrefutable fact. It is not possible for anyone, no matter how much knowledge they may possess on the subject, to so arrange a district as to properly apportion the liability of the town that should be included in the benefited area. As showing how crudely the Act works out, it prohibits the bringing in to any benefited area any town or property already included in another benefited area, even if the town is benefited on succeeding occasions by the

building of half a dozen railways. A town might be benefited by the building of one railway, and a few years later, when another railway is built somewhere in the same division of the State, the town may receive considerable benefit by such subsequent building, and benefited by the building of other railways, and it can be included only in the first railway district proclaimed, and property in that town is only called upon to pay the rate in regard to the deficiency on the first railway. That illustrates how crudely the present system we have in Queensland operates. I am one of those who think that, no matter how much attention is given to the subject, the system cannot be made to work scientifically as to secure an equitable distribution of the liability. The intention of those who framed the 1906 Act, and of those who administer it, may be laudable enough, but it cannot secure a proper and equitable distribution of the liability, and is bound to include those who ought to be excluded, and in some cases exclude those who ought to be included, from the railway district. On that account I intend to support a repeal of those provisions with regard to guarantee railways if such an amendment is moved. I anticipate that there will be some move made to deal with the provisions establishing the system of guaranteed railways, and it will have my support. I think this measure to capitalise the deficiency over three years is merely staving off the evil.

I do not think it properly deals [4 p.m.] with the question. If a district is called upon to guarantee a railway, and it is found that the revenue earned by that particular railway is not sufficient to meet the expenditure incurred in the running of the railway, and there is a deficiency accumulated, the capitalisation of that deficiency, in my estimation, is not likely to relieve the particular settlers, or whoever may be served by the railway. If the loss on the railway continues for a number of years, they are called upon to bear a heavier proportion of the burden in the fourth year, and in succeeding years, until the railway is made a payable proposition. I think that does not give the relief which has been asked for, and which is being clamoured for, in certain districts of the State. There are certain districts where branch lines to agricultural districts are running at a loss, and the capitalisation of the losses for three years will not relieve them. It may present an opportunity to some individuals who are now called upon to shoulder the liability, to shirk their liability by simply selling out, or otherwise getting rid of their obligations which they took on a year or two ago, when the railway was first passed.

Mr. MORGAN: Will your party, as a party, support the repeal of the Act of 1906?

Mr. THEODORE: I have already said that this party regard the railways as a non-party question. That has been reiterated again and again on the question of railway construction and policy of the State in regard to railway management, and I think it would be an unfortunate thing for any member of this House to attempt to drag it in as a party issue. (Hear, hear!) I have already said that, as a matter of opinion, I am against the guarantee system, not that I think it is wrong in principle, if it can be worked equitably, but I think that, with the means at our disposal, we can distribute the liability upon those who can bear it. Therefore, if there is an intention to move the repeal of those sections of the Act which

establishes that principle, I shall vote for the motion, and if the hon. member moves it, I will support it. I am inclined to think that the proposal to add to the cost any deficiency that may accrue in the first three years is not facing the problem as it should be faced; it is simply staving off the problem to the evil day. It may, in a few cases, result in putting off the liability until such time as the railway can earn sufficient to pay interest on the capital cost, and the added capital cost by the capitalisation of the deficiency, and in that case it will give relief to those particular settlers, or whoever they may be, in the district in which such a railway is built; but, speaking generally, it will not afford any relief at all if we have regard to the information given to the House by the Secretary for Railways in answer to a question asked by the hon. member for Murilla.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I gave you information last night.

Mr. THEODORE: I think, if we have regard to the principal lines which have been built under the 1906 Act, on which, at present, there are accumulated deficiencies, we must come to the conclusion that even if the deficiency were capitalised for three years, and three years were allowed to elapse before the settlers were called upon to carry their obligations, it would be found that even in the fourth year they would have heavier obligations to meet than they would have to meet the first year.

Mr. GRAYSON: They would be better able to bear them then.

Mr. THEODORE: I cannot see that they would be. It would only mean putting it off for three years, and calling upon them to pay a larger amount than the first year.

Mr. HAMILTON: The districts in the State which are best able to bear it are singing out about it.

Mr. THEODORE: They may be, but I must confess that many of those who are complaining have a just grievance. I think many of those that are complaining may be persons who voted against a particular railway. On the other hand, we must admit that many of us advocated the building of railways to precede settlement; in fact, it has been said before this that it has been the railway policy of the Government to build railways as early as possible in a new district so that settlement can be induced—let the railways precede settlement. If railways are to precede settlement and be built in the sparsely populated districts, it is not fair to ask that the settlers who may be there for the first few years after the railway is built should carry the whole burden of the loss in the first years of the railway. Such a railway after a few years may be earning large profits, but there is no refuting the fact that the early settlers would carry the first burden. I think the system of guarantee is quite unscientific, and, if possible, we should arrive at any other means of financing our railways and distributing the liability and safeguarding the railway policy of the State, because, after all, it is an important phase of the question of guarantee railways, and interdependent from that point of view, and that it is necessary to safeguard the interests of the whole State by those who demand railways undertaking to guarantee any loss. That is one of the chief arguments used, and no doubt it is a valid argument; but

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surely there are other means by which the same safeguard can be secured as the establishment of the guarantee principle! We can have safeguards without requiring those settlers living in a district through which a railway is passing to guarantee any loss on the railway. I think we can have safeguards without requiring such a thing as that—the safeguard of thorough, competent, and sufficient investigation of the proposal before the House is called upon to approve of a railway. I must admit that under our present system we do not get as much information about the country which a railway traverses on the proposals which are submitted as we should get. We have plans, sections, and books of reference referring to such a railway, and also a report of the Commissioner, but the report is generally in the most concise and technical terms possible. It is contained on two or three sheets of foolscap, and is the whole of the information we have before us when we are considering the railways, and members have hitherto been inclined to simply shirk their responsibility in investigating the question properly by saying that the people have guaranteed the railway and there can be no danger to the State, so they will pass it. It is well known that very few railways have been turned down or rejected by the House when proposals have been introduced under the 1906 Guarantee Act. I am inclined to think that we want at this stage of our development to have some other machinery for collecting information for the use of the House when considering railway proposals. Last year I moved for the setting up of a parliamentary committee during the discussion of the Committee stages of the Bill which should have full power to take evidence, call for documents, and investigate all railway proposals, and report to the House in regard to those proposals; but unfortunately it was ruled by the Chairman of Committees that the amendment was outside the scope of the Bill and could not be entertained by the Committee. I desire on this occasion to move an amendment at this stage practically for the same object of getting embodied in the Bill provisions for the formation of such a committee as that which I had in mind last year. I move that all the words after "Bill" be omitted with a view to the insertion in their place of the words—

"be withdrawn by the Government with a view to the insertion therein of provisions for the formation of a parliamentary railways committee, to whom shall be referred plans, sections, and books of reference of all proposed new railways before the House is asked to approve of the same. The committee thus constituted to take such measures and procure such information as will enable them to inform or satisfy Parliament as to the necessity or advisableness of constructing any proposed railway."

The object of the amendment can be conceived clearly enough. There is no desire to block the consolidation of the Railway Acts in this House, and no desire in any way to prevent the other amendments which make for the better management of the railways which are embodied in the present Bill; but I think the Bill should be enlarged in order to enable such a committee as that which I have indicated to be authorised under the Railway Acts, and the sole intention I have in moving the amendment is to have

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the Bill temporarily withdrawn with a view to these provisions being embodied in it. It will not mean any unnecessary delay. The necessary provision could be drafted and included in the Bill, and the Bill could be reintroduced under the provision of the Standing Orders, which deal with such a proceeding, next week, or the following week, or at some other early date to suit the convenience of the Government or the Minister. My idea of what the committee should consist and the powers of the committee are briefly these. I think such a parliamentary committee as I have referred to should consist of members of the Legislative Assembly, say, half a dozen members and a chairman.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It should be non-party.

Mr. THEODORE: It should be strictly a non-party committee—an equal number from each side and the chairman. They should hold office during the term of Parliament during which they are appointed. They should be appointed early in the first session, and it should be stipulated that no member of such a committee should take part in any proceedings which might come before the committee in which he himself might be personally interested; and no member of the committee in whose electoral district a proposed railway is likely to pass should take part in any proceedings when the committee are considering those proposals. I think that any person who has any bias at all with regard to proposals submitted to the committee should not act during the consideration of those proposals. I think the committee should have power to sit during any recess of Parliament, and to sit where they like—not necessarily merely to sit here in Brisbane, but to travel to the localities in which it is proposed to build railways. They should have the right of entry on any property, and their duties should be the investigation of all proposals submitted to them by a resolution of the Assembly. They should have power, of course, to summon any witness, whether he be an employee in the railway service or an independent witness, and to call for any documents, plans, or maps, or anything that would assist them in arriving at a fair idea of the advisableness of building such a railway. They should have power to estimate the value of private land in the vicinity of the proposed railway and the enhanced value which may be given to private land by the building of the line, the estimated cost of the railway, and the estimated revenue, and any other advantages likely to accrue either to private landowners or the State by the building of the proposed new railway. I think it should be left to the House, on receiving the report, to declare whether it is expedient or not that the railway should be built, or that the report should be adopted, or whether it should be referred back again to the committee for further investigation and subsequent report. I think also that the committee should be remunerated, as is done in regard to the members of the Public Works Committee in New South Wales. I think that the constitution of the New South Wales Public Works Committee can be approximately followed in this case. There are certain features of the New South Wales committee which would not suit in regard to Queensland, but I think that, generally speaking, if we followed the suggestions I have made, the committee could be consti-

tuted in such a way as to provide a very useful body to investigate proposals submitted in regard to the building of new railways. The New South Wales Public Works Committee has done a lot of useful work in regard to railways, even if it has not given universal satisfaction. No committee can be expected to give satisfaction to everyone concerned in its work, but the fact that neither party in New South Wales desires to have that committee disestablished shows that it is accepted as the best means of arriving at the information necessary with regard to the building of new railways and of coming to a decision that is calculated to give general satisfaction. Such a committee could collect information which we have no shadow of a hope of getting under our present system. Members are now very often asked to go in the dark when railway proposals are introduced. Frequently, the report of the Commissioner is strictly non-committal, and does not contain information which satisfies the minds of hon. members as to the wisdom of building proposed railways, with the result that we have simply to go upon information given in speeches delivered in the House when the proposal is under discussion; and, as hon. members know, it often happens that members have a biased mind with regard to certain proposals, and make speeches which are highly coloured as to the probability of such-and-such a railway being a paying concern. The committee which I propose would be a non-party committee, and it would go fully into the matter, and place before the House all the information which would be required. At this stage it would be an excellent thing for Queensland to establish such a committee, and my opinion is that, if such a committee were established, there would not be the same necessity for asking a guarantee from the people in whose districts a railway is being built. This committee would provide an excellent alternative for the guarantee principle, and would prevent the building of wild-cat railways. Therefore, I have much pleasure in moving the amendment. I repeat that it is not moved with any desire to obstruct or delay the passage of the Railways Bill. We may presume that the debate on the amendment will not be of a very protracted character, and, if the amendment is carried, the Minister can use the powers given him under the Standing Orders, withdraw the Bill, recast it, and reintroduce it at an early date.

* Mr. GILLIES (*Buchanan*): I have very great pleasure in seconding the amendment so ably moved by the deputy leader of the Opposition. The proposal is a good alternative to what is known as the guarantee system. The guarantee system has been on trial for over seven years, and has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. I believe that the deficits under the guarantee system at the present time amount to £60,000 odd. The guarantee principle of the 1906 Act operates in such a way as to impose a land tax without any exemption, and a land tax which falls heavily upon the class of people least able to bear it. If, when the 1906 Act was passed, the Government had adopted the suggestion of the hon. member for Leichhardt, and made the Act retrospective, so that it would impose a tax on freeholders who had had lines built, or who had engineered the building of lines, in districts in which their properties were situated, there might have been some justification for

the Act. But to impose a tax on pioneers who are taking up Crown lands shows that the powers that be have not grasped the primary object of railway construction. According to my view, the primary object of railway construction—the pushing of railways out into mining and agricultural districts—is, first of all, to promote settlement, and if pioneers are going to be called upon to make good any loss on those railways during the first five years, that will mean a heavy tax upon them, and a great obstacle in the way of permanent settlement. The object of the guarantee principle was, no doubt, a very good one, and that was to prevent log-rolling in connection with railway construction, and to prevent railways being built in places where they would not pay. The Commissioner for Railways can make a railway pay 3 per cent. if he so desires; indeed, if it is revenue that he is after, he can make them pay 4 per cent. by so regulating freights and fares. But the local authorities who guarantee have no say in the policy carried out with regard to the management of railways, and that is one reason why I am against the guarantee system. The people along a railway line have no say in fixing fares and freights on that line or in determining what train services shall be provided, and yet they are called upon to pay any loss which may accrue from the working of the railways. If the local authorities had any say in the matter they would see that the rates and fares were such that the lines would pay. I believe that the alternative proposed by the deputy leader of the Opposition for establishing a parliamentary committee on public works on similar lines to that in New South Wales would be found to be satisfactory. I would remind the House that the Public Works Act in New South Wales was passed over a quarter of a century ago, so that the matter has had a fair trial in that State, and I know, of my own knowledge, that the system has worked very satisfactorily in New South Wales. The Public Works Committee in New South Wales consists of seven members, four appointed by the Legislative Assembly and three by the Legislative Council. A ballot is taken at the beginning of every Parliament for the election of the members of the committee. The last Act dealing with public works in New South Wales was the Public Works Act of 1912, which reduced the number of members of the Public Works Committee from thirteen to seven. That committee has power to summon witnesses, to demand the production of books, documents, etc., and to call in engineering or technical skill if necessary to assist them in coming to a right decision. Every public work in New South Wales costing over £20,000, whether it is a railway or otherwise, is submitted to the Public Works Standing Committee. The committee travel through the country during recess and take evidence, and have power to compel witnesses to attend and give evidence on oath; and the report which they make on any work is submitted to Parliament. We have had numerous instances of railways being passed in this House which some members voted for very reluctantly, because they did not like to vote against a railway, seeing that every new railway is believed to be an asset to the State. We know very well that there are railways being constructed to-day of which the Minister and the Commissioner do not know the objective. If a standing committee were appointed, the members of that committee would go through the country and ascertain where a proposed

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railway was going. I have in my mind's eye two railways in my own district—which, I am sorry to say, are hung up at the present time—that I do not think the Minister can tell me where it is proposed to make the terminus of them. One may go to the coast at Mourilyan, or it may go to Charters Towers, and connect with the railway there. The objective of every line should be known to Parliament before its construction is sanctioned, and Parliament should have all the information obtainable as to the prospect of a proposed railway proving a paying concern. I venture to say that the proposal before the House this afternoon is a common-sense one, and that, if it is given effect to by the House, it will justify the abolition of the guarantee system. I am opposed to the guarantee system, inasmuch as it imposes a sectional land tax—it is a very cowardly way of imposing a land tax, because it imposes a tax on a section of the people only. One of the strongest objections to the guarantee principle is, as I have said, that the local people have no say either in its construction or management. When the Tolga-Johnstone line was being built—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was when you were in New South Wales, was it not?

Mr. GILLIES: Unfortunately, it was during the time the hon. gentleman was Minister for Railways. Therefore, I am going to put the responsibility on his shoulders. When that line was being built, the local people, represented by the progress association, objected to the banks of the Barron River being cut down for the purpose of making a low-level bridge. I believe the engineer who was in charge of that work has gone over to the Northern Territory or Western Australia to take Mr. Chinn's job, but that is by the way. The people objected to the banks of the river being cut away, because they said that if a low-level bridge was constructed, a full trainload could not cross the river. However, they were told to mind their own business. I say it was very much their business, because they are to-day being called upon to pay the loss on the working of that line. The banks having been cut down and a low-level bridge constructed, the railway result is that it takes two trains to carry a full trainload across the river, whereas, if a high-level bridge had been built, a full trainload could have been taken by one train. Owing to the very heavy timber traffic which goes along that line, it is necessary to-day to run special trains, because of the bungling of that official, who, I dare say, the Minister will say has his "entire confidence." There should be no dual control as far as railways are concerned; they should be controlled by the department, and the department should shoulder all responsibility in connection with losses accruing from their working.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have just been arguing that the local authorities should have control in connection with rates and fares.

Mr. GILLIES: No; I say that it is not fair that they should be called upon to pay any loss in connection with working expenses if the local authorities have no say in the fixing of fares and freights. If the local authority was running the railway in my district, does anyone imagine that they would run a train service at a loss of £21 a day for a whole year? No; they would

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have said, "We will reduce the service and increase the freights," or so adjust matters as to make ends meet.

Mr. HAMILTON: If the Government did that, there would be a howl from them.

Mr. GILLIES: I think the railways should be made to pay. The Commissioner has it in his own hands to make railways pay 3 per cent. or 4 per cent., if he so chooses, by so adjusting the freights and fares. The local people who are called upon to make good any losses which accrue have no say whatever in fixing the rates and fares, or in determining how many trains a week shall be run. It is unfair to say to the local people, "You have to make good any loss occurring on this line, but we shall manage it exactly as we please." I wish now to make a brief reference to the system of bookkeeping adopted by the department. I objected before

to the system of bookkeeping [4.30 p.m.] adopted by the Railway Commissioner in connection with this guarantee system, and I have suggested that if the system of bookkeeping were altered so as to give the lines which act as feeders to the main lines—or national lines, as we might call them—full credit, then I am certain that there would be no loss shown on those lines which are really feeders. That is the sort of bookkeeping system we want to prevent—the loss which is shown on several guaranteed lines to-day. My suggestion is that, as the main line was a condition precedent to the local people taking on a guarantee to make a feeder pay, only the net cost of conveying goods and passengers over the said main line should be charged against the feeder; that all moneys collected at stations on the guarantee line be credited to it; that all moneys collected at any other station for goods and passengers consigned to any point on the guarantee line be credited to the guarantee line, but debiting in both cases the guarantee section with the net cost of conveying such over the main line, which was working before the said guarantee line was opened.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is exactly what is done.

Mr. GILLIES: That is not what is done. The main line was a condition precedent to the building of the guaranteed section. I am speaking more particularly of my own district now, although I know there are similar lines in the Darling Downs. At the present time, the loss which occurs on the main line is extended also to the branch line. That is not a fair thing at all, because trains were running on the main line before the branch line was built. If the system I suggest were adopted, then there would be no loss on these guaranteed lines at all. I hope that the House will in its wisdom adopt this common-sense proposal which is made. It is a proposal which is adopted in other States, particularly in New South Wales, where it has not been found necessary to adopt the guarantee system, or to charge sectional rates on the pioneers. I am satisfied that if a standing committee were appointed by this House to inquire into all public works, and railway works in particular built by the State, that committee would be able to furnish this House with evidence that would show that it was not necessary to perpetuate the present system of guaranteed railways. I hope the House will adopt the proposal made by the deputy leader of the Opposition this afternoon.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman who seconded this amendment said that he disapproved of the guarantee system, and the approved of a standing committee being appointed by the House for the purpose of making inquiries prior to the House approving of any railway plan, section, or book of reference. The hon. gentleman went a good deal further than that, and accused the Railway Department practically of falsifying their books for the purpose of trying to make the ratepayers in railway districts pay deficits which did not take place on that line of railway. I have already assured the hon. gentleman that the department can give him every information possible with respect to the system of book-keeping. I would like to again assure him that any loss that accrues to the main line, in the running of traffic, is not debited to the branch line that may be built.

Mr. GILLIES: No assurance in the world will alter the fact.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman will not take my assurance, but it is absolutely correct, and is given in good faith. It is perhaps regrettable that the hon. gentleman will not accept that assurance. The deputy leader of the Opposition, in moving his amendment, said that he had no desire to block the passage of this consolidating Bill, which he freely said was a very valuable measure, and one that was brought forward with the object of facilitating the work of the great department, such as the railways of the State. The hon. gentleman gave his ideas as to how this proposed parliamentary committee should be formed. Practically his ideas coincide with the proposal which was made in 1899, when the Government introduced a Bill for the formation of a parliamentary standing committee, and I understand that the introduction of that Bill wrecked the Government. A great deal has been said with respect to the work that is done by the parliamentary standing committee in New South Wales, and about the saving in the finances of New South Wales, because of the reports of that committee. In fact, I have heard it said that the saving amounted to tens of millions of pounds. What are the facts? I took the trouble to go into this matter last year, and got a copy of all the works that have been proposed by the New South Wales Government in connection with public works and railways. I find that between the years 1839 and 1911—covering a period of about twenty-one years—the New South Wales Government proposed an expenditure of £33,621,029 on railways in New South Wales, and the expenditure recommended by the committee was £17,267,646. The expenditure adversely reported upon by the committee was £13,633,869. The Government also recommended an expenditure during those years of £17,179,187 on works other than railways, and the parliamentary committee recommended an expenditure of £11,070,130. The committee adversely reported upon works that were to cost £5,917,327. While it might be said that these figures ran into large sums of money, still the total expenditure proposed by the Government amounted to about £50,000,000. I would point out that there were some 250 proposals reported upon by the New South Wales committee in that period. In my opinion, it is the easiest thing in the world for the Government to shift responsibilities in connection with public works on to the shoulders of a standing committee.

Mr. HAMILTON: On to the House?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, the standing committee. Suppose there are twenty members of Parliament who desire that railways shall be built in their electorates. If there is a standing committee, the Government takes no responsibility at all. The Government, through the Minister in charge of that particular department, puts the proposition before the House. The Minister makes an explanation, and he then proposes that this proposition be remitted to the standing committee. That is easier than for any Government to placate twenty members of Parliament by introducing twenty lines of railway every session? The standing committee simply, during the course of their work, report upon these suggestions. If the standing committee report in favour of introducing the railway, it remains for the Government to introduce it. Our present system, which has been in vogue for many years in connection with the railway requirements, although it may not be the best system, still it has not worked badly at all, because the greater part of the railways that have been passed by this House during the last forty years, even if all of them were not favourable proposals, have been of direct service to the State. (Hear, hear!) The question of the guarantee provisions of the Act becomes interwoven with this question, and I may be pardoned for referring to it. The hon. member for Eacham wound up his speech by saying that he desired the standing committee to have full control, but during the first portion of his speech he distinctly desired that the local authority in the railway district should have control over the rates and fares.

Mr. GILLIES: No.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman distinctly said that the local authorities should have an opportunity of saying what the rates and fares should be.

Mr. GILLIES: I said that it was only logical when they were called upon to make good any loss.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, the hon. gentleman said that that was only logical—if the local authorities in the railway district were called upon to make up any loss, they should have the opportunity of imposing such rates and fares as were necessary to obviate any deficit. I looked into this matter to see if it would be possible to make any such provision, because I am of opinion that those who are responsible would far rather be in favour of paying some higher rate during the whole year than pay a lump sum at the end of the year, because one would not feel it so much. But what is the position? During the year 1912-13 there was a deficit of £62,232 on the railways that were being worked under the 1906 Act. In order to make up that deficit, if extra rates and fares were charged, it would work out in this way. The total expenses—that is the working expenses—on these lines of railways, were £101,660 and the gross revenue was £95,717, making a loss of £5,943. Add 3 per cent. on the capital, that is the guarantee, £56,289, and you have a total deficiency in meeting working expenses and interest on these lines of £62,232. Now the gross revenue required to meet the working expenses and interest on capital would have been £157,949, and the gross revenue earned was £95,717, leaving the deficit that I have already mentioned.

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If rates and fares had been imposed which would have precluded the necessity of calling upon the ratepayers in the railway districts for any rate to be paid by them, the rates and fares would have had to be increased by 65.01 per cent.

Mr. HAMILTON: For the whole State?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, for those railways; for the whole of the railway under the 1906 Act in operation during the year 1913.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member suggested that you should increase the rates over the whole of the railways of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think the hon. member suggested anything of the sort. The hon. member said distinctly that the local authority should have the option of saying whether higher rates and fares should be charged or not. I thought, perhaps, this matter might crop up during the course of the discussion, and I took the opportunity of getting this information, which shows that during that particular year, on that particular deficit, that rates and fares of 65 per cent. over and above the ordinary rates and fares would have had to be charged to meet the deficit. I think that is a very fair answer, and a very telling answer to any such suggestion. The law is that the land shall bear any deficit that may accrue under this particular Act, and although, as I have said, possibly it might be better to increase the rates and fares, still, that may operate harshly on certain people and allow other people within the railway district to entirely escape, and that is not what the Act is for. Coming back to the question: this is a matter of very great moment, and the question that arises in my mind is, as to whether the investigations that may be made by a committee such as is proposed, would be of the service that is alleged. At the present moment the railway officials gather all the information that is necessary from their point of view, and that information is given to the House. The people in the particular district under the Guarantee Act ask for the railway to be built, and they do not ask for any further investigation. They say, "We desire that you shall build a railway, and if there is any deficit on the working of that railway, we are prepared to bear it."

Mr. HUNTER: Now they are asking for something else.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is another question that we will deal with at the proper time, and I hope we will deal with it effectively, too. The expert evidence that is given to this House can only be repeated by those experts, and any evidence that may be given by a party of gentlemen consisting of members of this House visiting the district can only be given by the party who are interested, and the parties who are interested in the particular district cannot give expert evidence with respect to the building of the railway. It always has to come back to the experts of the Railway Department, and the information that is given is certainly information that is reliable. As this is a motion to practically do away with the guarantee system, I would like to point out that quite a large number of railways now have been placed before the House for their approval under the 1906 Act, and in almost every instance, although a certain number of ratepayers in the railway district can call for a poll—demand a poll, and it must be given to them—

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to say whether they will have that railway or not, in very few instances indeed has that poll been demanded.

Mr. HAMILTON: As soon as they get the railway they want the whole burden taken off them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As I said before, that is another question, which, I hope, will be dealt with effectively when the time comes. That is one of the strongest arguments that we have. This guarantee system is in vogue in this State, and it is not proposed in the present Bill to abolish it. I say the facts I have mentioned, that so few of those who are directly interested—they know that their pockets are affected if the railway does not meet interest and working expenses—when they have a full opportunity, and full opportunity is given for three months to consider whether they will have the railway or not—that so few of these people say they do not want the railway. I think only in one instance has a railway under the 1906 Act been thrown out on a poll of the ratepayers.

Mr. HAMILTON: And it was thrust upon them in spite of that poll. That is the Blackall line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was the Blackall line, and that is the only one that was thrown out on a poll. As the Guarantee Act is in operation, and there are safeguards to those who have to pay any liability that may arise under that Act, I do not think it is advisable that this amendment should be accepted.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): Whilst I agree with the amendment, I agree with it on quite different lines to the deputy leader of the Opposition. I agree with it on its own merits. It would be a very useful committee to establish, apart from any suggestion at all of the abolition of any other system. We know that in discussing railways in this House in times past we have always complained of insufficient information. We have had plans and specifications put on the table of the House with a report from the Commissioner—a very meagre report very often—giving us very little information indeed, and members very often have not known anything substantial at all as to the merits of the railway or the prospects of it paying, or whether it is a district to which a railway should be built. It has been a constant source of complaint that insufficient information has been given to members to enable them to come to a right conclusion as to whether the particular railway should be passed or not, and for that reason I support the amendment. Members also are not in the position to know of their own knowledge whether it is a wise thing or not to vote for the construction of some railways in far distant portions of the State, or a long way from the particular district they represent; they do not know the locality, and they have no idea at all of the requirements of the district or whether it would be a proper thing to do for that district, and very often the vote is cast on vague general knowledge and sometimes it is merely a sympathetic vote. That is not a good thing for railway construction in this State, and it is not a good thing as far as the finances of this State are concerned. We know that in New South Wales there is a Public Works Committee, and, as

far as we can gather, it has served a very useful purpose. I do not know, of course, how much it has saved the country, but from the figures read out by the Minister for Railways this afternoon, it is quite evident that the reports were favourable in the case of some £3,000,000 worth of public works. So far from taking away the responsibility of the Government, it seems to me what it does is to merely impose a further check upon the Government in the construction of our railways. It does not take away the responsibility of introducing those railways. We know that the Government has to undertake the responsibility of finding the money for the railways; they have a railway policy, and they have, first of all, to initiate it in the House, as in the case of New South Wales, and then only when it is passed is it sent to the Commissioner for a further report to be returned back to Parliament, and then finally, if the report is favourable or unfavourable, the final decision rests in the hands of the Government. It is a very useful check in cases of what may be unjustifiable railways and very often political railways. We know we have had political railways. Take the case of the Marburg Railway. I remember quite well that the Premier went up there.

Mr. KIRWAN: Not the present Premier.

Mr. HARDACRE: At any rate, it was some member of the Government who went up there just prior to election time and gave the people a promise of that railway. He may not have said so in specific terms, but it was a hint sufficient to say, "Vote for the Government and you will get the railway, and if you do not vote for the Government the railway will not be introduced." Then we know there have been wild-cat schemes and political railways promised to placate certain districts.

The PREMIER: They get the option to turn it down if they wish to turn it down.

Mr. HARDACRE: Even supposing my assertion cannot be substantiated—I say it can—we know there is a great possibility of political railways being put forward by some other Government, it may be, and a railway works committee of the kind suggested would be a very useful check to prevent anything of that kind being done. For these reasons I am in favour of the amendment. I think the Secretary for Railways said something about the possibilities of the Government introducing twenty railway lines for the purpose of getting votes is a far-fetched idea. At any rate, such has never been the case in New South Wales, and I do not think it is likely to happen. I do not know whether I will be in order in referring to guaranteed railways—probably I will not be, and I will have another opportunity of referring to that. I just wish to say that I am by no means in favour of the abolition of the guaranteed railway system, and when the time comes for a discussion on that question I shall give what, in my opinion, are very good reasons why the principle should be maintained even if it should be amended. If there is a loss on the railway in a particular locality, who is to pay the loss? Some of the districts that do not get a railway? The hon. member for Eacham complained that it would fall heavily upon his district. What he evidently advocates is that a dis-

trict should be asked to pay for the loss on a railway in some other district, because the proposal is not to ask the district which gets a railway to pay any loss thereon, but to distribute it over all Queensland.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: To nationalise the losses.

Mr. HARDACRE: To nationalise the losses, and let the particular people who get the benefit go free. That is very wrong, indeed. I shall now merely content myself with supporting the amendment, apart altogether from the character of a railway. I should like to have said something about the benefited area principle, but I am afraid that I should be ruled out of order, so I will take an opportunity at some other time of giving my views on that principle.

Mr. GUNN (*Carmarvon*): I should like to say a word with reference to the amendment. I happen to live on the border of New South Wales and Queensland, and I have seen a considerable amount of work in connection with railways which have been reported upon by the parliamentary committee in New South Wales, and I can assure hon. members that it has prevented many good railways in New South Wales from being built, and caused other railways to be built which, perhaps, were not so good. Parliamentary committees are only human. I remember once a parliamentary committee inspecting a proposed railway between Moree and Mungindi. I do not know whether the people did not treat them properly. It is said they stole Mr. O'Sullivan's pyjamas on that occasion. (Laughter.) Perhaps that was the reason, but that railway was turned down, and it was one of the most necessary railways in New South Wales. The consequence was that Queensland ran her railway along the border, and got all the trade for Queensland. On another occasion I remember a parliamentary railway committee inspecting a line from Tenterfield to the coast, where nobody would ever think of building a railway. It was a railway, I suppose, that Parliament asked the committee to report on simply to get rid of the question, knowing that it would never be passed. I have seen a good deal of these parliamentary committees in New South Wales, and I can assure the House that my experience is that they do not work well at all.

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

AYES, 31.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Gunn
" Appel	" Hodge
" Archer	" Kessell
" Barnes, G. P.	" Macrossan
" Barnes, W. H.	" Morgan
" Bobbington	" Paget
" Bell	" Petrie
" Blair	" Philp
" Bouchard	Lieut.-Col. Rankin
" Bridges	Mr. Somerset
" Caine	" Stevens
" Corser, B. H.	" Stodart
" Corser, E. B. C.	" Tolmie
" Denham	" Vowles
" Grant	" Williams
" Grayson	

Tellers: Mr. Kessell and Mr. Stevens

Mr. Gunn.]

NOES, 20.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Hunter
„ Barber	„ Huxham
„ Bertram	„ Kirwan
„ Bowman	„ Land
„ Coyne	„ Larcombe
„ Fihelly	„ May
„ Foley	„ O'Sullivan
„ Gilday	„ Payne
„ Hamilton	„ Theodore
„ Hardacre	„ Winstanley
Tellers: Mr. Adamson and Mr. Coyne.	

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Cribb, Mr. Mackay, and Mr. Mackintosh.

Noes—Mr. Gillies, Mr. Lennon, and Mr. McCormack.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I do not intend to discuss this Bill at any great length, because I think it will be generally admitted that it is a Bill which is largely of a Committee nature. The main principles are such that they already find a place in previous measures which have been in operation for a very considerable time. Doubtless, the Minister, in drafting this Bill, had in view when inserting the various principles the success or otherwise which has attended the operation of the main principles in the past. Perhaps one of the chief alterations is that dealing with the Deputy Commissioner. In the past that officer was simply appointed from time to time merely at the will of the Cabinet, but he is now practically a permanent employee for a number of years, on the same plane as the appointment of the Commissioner. I do not think that any fault can be found with that, inasmuch as if we have a man who is competent to fill this position, it is just as well to give him some guarantee as far as permanency of office is concerned. There is just one matter that will possibly come in for administration if this measure goes through, which I would like to see extended, if possible, under the Bill—I refer to the monthly conference between the heads of the department which are held at the present time. I believe this is a very excellent idea, and one which is entirely due to the present Commissioner for Railways; but I might point out to the Minister that all the wisdom of the Railway Department is not concentrated in the heads of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not suppose it is.

Mr. KIRWAN: I venture to say that there are many men in the lower ranks of the department who, by virtue of their knowledge gained day by day by being brought into contact with traffic problems, are far more experienced and competent to advise the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner as to traffic requirements. When I was at the Central Station we had an obsolete timetable issued for Exhibition and other holidays, and Christmas time. Notwithstanding that the records of the department showed that this traffic was increasing year after year, and it was necessary to send the Sydney mail in two divisions, and even the Rockhampton mail, yet the Traffic Department ignored the recommendation of the station-masters at the respective stations who were compelled to handle that traffic with anything but proper methods, and without

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any assistance being given to them by the heads of the department, and if they failed to unravel some of the complex problems, the only thanks they got next day was to be severely criticised, and to get some very absurd "blister," which is the usual term applied to these explanations in the Railway Department.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Did you get "blister"?

Mr. KIRWAN: Yes, I got a "blister" or two when I was there, and I think it is very doubtful if there is any man in the department, from the Commissioner downwards, who cannot say that he has had a "blister" applied to him.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I thought you were a model employee.

Mr. KIRWAN: I endeavoured to be as far as possible, but we are all human, and make mistakes. I am one of those who have made mistakes in my lifetime; in fact, a great many people think I have made a great mistake in leaving the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You might have risen to be the Commissioner.

Mr. KIRWAN: The fact that my record was such as to possibly place the Commissioner's job within my grasp could not get me reinstated in the department, even in the goods-shed. The question of wages has been raised by the deputy leader of the Opposition, and I think that is a very important matter. I do not wish to suggest that the Minister, much less his responsible officers or the Cabinet, have not given this matter very serious consideration, but I do think that Parliament, while not desiring to interfere in details, should lay down some particular principle that shall govern wages and salaries as far as the Railway Department is concerned. I have never yet been able to understand why there is such a difference between the wages paid to employees in the Railway Department and the wages which awards made under our Industrial Peace Act compel the private employer of labour to pay. With regard to painters, I believe the wages in the Railway Department is something like 9s. per day in some cases, and less in others; whereas, I am given to understand that outside they are 10s., and a new award which will come into operation at the end of the present month will raise them to something like 11s. per day. Of course, the reply of the Minister for Railways will be that men in the railway service are in constant employment and have certain privileges. But I think it would be much better to get rid of the privileges and give them fair treatment as far as wages are concerned. Even allowing that they have privileges, I would point out that the men who occupy responsible positions in the Railway Department have greater privileges than men who occupy similarly important positions in large commercial houses. Officers in the higher grades in the railway service who are in receipt of substantial salaries have free railway passes just as members of this House have, but a lad employed by the department, if he is living at Corinda, has to pay his fare regularly. As far as the question of guarantee railways is concerned, there is no doubt that there will be considerable dis-

discussion on that particular principle when we go into Committee, though it has been altered by this Bill in some respects, I presume because of the experience of the department in the past. The idea now is to capitalise the losses for the first three years, and add them to the capital cost of the line. Whether that will solve the difficulty or make the guarantee principle more acceptable to the people who have had railways constructed under the 1906 Act, or whether it is a move in the direction of abolishing the principle altogether, is a matter which time alone will decide. I believe that every member on this side of the House is prepared to give any assistance that is required by early settlers on our Crown lands. From what I can see of the working of the guarantee principle, if a railway is built into an area of Crown land the chances are that the cost under the guarantee will fall heavily on the selectors, and perhaps it is not an unwise thing, as a matter of public policy, to capitalise the losses for the first three years after a line is built. But in the event of such a railway going through a fair amount of freehold land, I contend that the individuals who own that land, the value of which is enhanced by the expenditure of public money, should be called upon to pay back part of that unearned increment to the Government. Undoubtedly the guarantee principle is an indirect system of land taxation, and the worst feature about it, notwithstanding all declarations to the contrary by hon. members opposite, is that it is a land tax which falls wholly and solely on the earliest selector and bona fide settler. The Government should show that they are prepared to grasp the question in a statesmanlike manner by introducing a general land tax, or by adopting the betterment principle which was proposed in a previous Parliament. I do not intend to say anything further on the Bill at the present time. We discussed it at length last session, and doubtless the Minister is anxious to get the measure on the statute-book; if it is not passed now, we shall have the spectacle of a Bill being three times before the Legislature without being placed on the statute-book. Under those circumstances I think the details of the Bill can be more properly discussed in Committee.

Mr. ADAMSON (*Rockhampton*): I am sorry I was not in the Chamber earlier, and was, therefore, not able to speak on the amendment. I regret that the amendment was defeated. I wish to give expression to my views in relation to the guarantee principle. I am totally opposed to the guarantee principle, and whenever the time comes that we can wipe it off the statute-book altogether, I shall only be too pleased to give my assistance in that direction. Our system in connection with our railways is that all railways shall be State-owned and State-controlled. It is a national system of railways, and I am of opinion that when a railway is constructed, every part of the State is benefited by that railway. I hold that Brisbane is benefited just as much as any part of the West, and, perhaps, a great deal more than some parts of the West that have to pay the guarantee tax—because, I think, that is the right name for it—by the construction of the railway out West. The same remark applies to railways along the coast. The lands nearer the coast have been longer settled, and the people there are better off

than the men who go out to the West or to the scrub lands of the North, and they are better able to pay the tax under the guarantee system than those people who are just beginning their industrial life. I understand that 292 miles of railway have been constructed since the passing of the Railway Act of 1905, and that something like a sum of £4,800,000 has been spent on those guarantee railways. One would think that if settlers out West and in the scrub countries of the North who are particularly benefited by those railways were able to pay the tax, they would gladly and willingly have done so; but, according to the Auditor-General's report, the amount outstanding last year was £64,594 1s. 5d., and in 1912 it was £29,947 10s. 10d. The amount paid during the year 1913 was £1,522 1s. 2d., and the total amount outstanding on the 30th June, 1913, was £106,757 14s. 1d. The amount owing to the Treasury is continually growing, and I do not think the capitalising of the amount and handing it on to the future is going to relieve settlers. It would be a more consistent policy if we went in for having railways constructed under the old State system, every part of the State paying the amount to be met in connection with railway liabilities. I notice that 50 per cent. of the amount outstanding is owing by districts situated in the Northern part of the State, and I do not wonder at the hon. member for Eacham and other Northern members standing up against the guarantee system of building railways.

Mr. KESSELL: What about the Port Alma Railway?

Mr. ADAMSON: There is an amount owing in connection with the Port Alma Railway. We have applied to the Government to deal fairly with the people of the district in connection with this railway, and make the rates such as will enable the harbour board to meet their obligations.

Mr. KESSELL: There was an agreement made in that case.

Mr. ADAMSON: As far as an agreement is concerned, I hope that when an agreement is made in connection with the Gladstone district, the hon. member will see that it is carried out to the letter. If the Gladstone Harbour Board got into a difficulty I would be glad to help that port to meet the difficulty, but the hon. member always seems to have a dig at Rockhampton. However, I am opposed to the guarantee system as it is not a good system, and believing that the people in the outer parts of the State need every assistance possible and should be given every chance, I am of opinion that the guarantee system should be done away with, and that Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, and all the other cities which are benefited by railway construction, should help to meet the expenses of working those railways. With regard to the railway employees and their rates of wages, I think it would have been a good thing if, when the Government had brought in the Industrial Peace Bill for settling industrial disputes, they had included provision in that measure, or in some other legislation, under which the mode of determining the wages of railway employees should be brought into harmony with the method adopted in connection with other workmen, so that they should be paid the wages current in the different districts of the State. Everybody knows what is going on in the Northern part of the State at the

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present time, and my opinion is that, if railway employees had been treated as other unionists are being treated, and had been able to get to an industrial court, the difficulty we are now experiencing, and which will be more serious as time goes on, would have been brought to an end without much trouble. I do not know that there is anything more I wish to say on this occasion. The Bill is primarily a Committee Bill, and I believe it can be amended in some respects. Last year we were able to do away with regulation 18, and railway employees can now participate in political matters in a freer way than they were able to do previously. I should like to see the Bill go through this session as it has been before the House three sessions now, and I hope the Minister will see it placed on the statute-book before the session closes.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: So do I.

Mr. HUNTER (*Marano*): I wish to say a word or two before this Bill passes its second reading. Although this Bill has been before the House on three different occasions and comes to us now in an amended form, yet it still carries with it a number of its early faults. It still contains provisions continuing the Guarantee Act, and has a clause for funding the arrears or losses on guarantee railways for the first three years. This provision will probably help to get over in a small way the difficulty which early settlers suffer from railways already constructed, but it does not get over the great difficulty connected with railways that are, or may be, constructed in the future, for the purpose of settlement. I prefer to see the guarantee principle done away with altogether. But there is just this matter to consider in connection with that: Certain districts have entered into obligations and undertaken certain responsibilities with the State, and repudiation is a very serious matter to suggest. It is serious to suggest repudiation even in the sense that is provided for in this Bill, because there is repudiation here to the extent of three years' arrears. That is a liability that is now being shifted. That liability was undertaken and agreed upon by ratepayers in the division. While it may relieve the selectors to some extent, it will not get over the difficulty altogether. One reason why I have approved of the guarantee system up to the present is that it protected the taxpayers of Queensland from being involved in large expenditure in connection with railways that were the outcome of political influence. However, on looking over the list of railways that were constructed before the Guarantee Act came into force, and the lists of railways that have been built since, I find from the answer given by the Minister for Railways in reply to the hon. member for Murilla, that there are quite a number of railways that were built before the guarantee system was in vogue, which are to-day not paying 3 per cent. If it is a fair thing for selectors—and non-selectors for that matter—within a certain area of a newly constructed railway, to make good a deficiency, is it not fair that something should be borne by those who enjoy railway communication in districts that are not paying, and that were built before the guarantee system was introduced? I see that the lines which were built before the guarantee system was introduced were as follows:—

“Ipswich to Dugandan; Ipswich to Tivoli; Pengarry Junction to Crow’s
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Nest; Wyreema to Pittsworth; Hendon to Allora; Warwick to Killarney; South Brisbane to Southport; Bethania Junction to Beaudesert; Ernest Junction to Tweed Heads; South Brisbane to Manly; Manly to Cleveland; Mayne to Enoggera; Eagle Junction to Pinkenba; Mungar Junction to Wetheron; Colton to Pialba; Isis Junction to Cordalba; Bundaberg to Mount Perry; Bundaberg to 235 miles 14 chains.”

The railways that were built since the guarantee principle was introduced were—

“Kingaroy to Nanango; Kambour to Blackbutt (Benarkin); Benarkin to Yarraman; Rosewood to Marburg; Kingshope to Goombungee (Haden); Pittsworth to Millmerran; Allora to Goomburra; Warwick to Maryvale; Goondiwindi to Talwood; Talwood to Thallon; Thallon to Dirranbandi; Oakey to Cooyar; Dalby to Bell; Dalby to Tara; Westgate to Yarronvale (Cooladdi) Section ‘A’ Great Western Railway; Cordalba to Dallarnil.”

Now, there is just one thing that I specially wish to draw attention to, and it is this: that a large number of these railways which were constructed before the guarantee principle was instituted, were constructed in and near the city, and are really what we would call metropolitan railways. It seems to me that it is not a fair thing that the people in the outside districts should be called upon to make good the losses on their railways while large sections of the community enjoying the privileges of railways—and railways that are not paying as that—are not called upon to pay anything whatever. That is one argument against the system of guaranteed railways. It is one reason why nationalisation of railways is important, particularly in a young country which is developing its territory. It is not a fair thing to ask a community in a small area to bear the expense of the development work which is taking place. If it is a good thing to fund the loss for three years, it is a good thing to fund it for an even longer period. When the Bill gets into Committee I do not know that it would not be wise to alter the system altogether. The guarantee system has not done what I thought it would do—and this had something to do with the House passing it in 1905—that is the preventing of the building of railways that do not pay, and railways that are merely political railways. The proof of that is that there were quite as many railways built since the Act was passed as there were before the guarantee principle came into operation. During the last six years there have been something over 2,000 miles of railway built in Queensland, while in the preceding forty-three years, during which Queensland has been building railways, only something like 3,400 miles of railway were built. We know that since the Government have built railways under the guarantee principle the people who got the Government to build railways into their districts have since repudiated their liabilities. That is dishonest. The House in passing these railways relied on the pledge given by these people as it was thought that the State was fully protected by the guarantee provisions. Such is not the case. Take the Tara Railway, for example. It was built through a sandy desert. It is not a paying railway, and there is no prospect of it paying.

Mr. MORGAN: There are a lot more worse than that.

Mr. HUNTER: There are a good many better. We had the Government coming down last session with a railway which they submitted against the recommendation of their expert officer. If that railway had been passed, it would have involved the State in an expenditure of £500,000. If that railway had been built, we would have some attempt being made on the part of the people in that district to repudiate the liability self-imposed and the State asked to accept the obligation. It is really time that some better system of constructing and managing railways should be adopted than is found in this Bill. That is what I wish to lead up to. The principle laid down here is not a sound one. It is not one that gives this House sufficient information to decide upon railway proposals in the way that they should be decided upon. The same evils as were associated with the Great Western Railway can be perpetrated again, with the same spectacle as I referred to just now of a railway being proposed in this House involving a large sum of money, and duplicating the service which already exists. That may be submitted again. A guarantee will be given, but when the proper time comes repudiation will follow. On account of so much money being spent in railways, and on account of the need for more railways—and it is a crying need, because railways are necessary to meet the requirements of settlers and settlement—we should face this great question in a way that this Bill does not propose to do. We should know more about what railways are to be built, and what they are going to cost. We should know what their revenue is likely to be, and we should know the purpose for which they are going to be constructed, whether they are to open up more territory, or to supply the needs of the people that are already settled, and also how the loss, if there is any loss, is going to be made up. I know it is quite possible for the State to construct a railway which loses money and yet the railway will be the means of making a profit to the State. I am sorry that the House refused to accept the amendment submitted by the deputy leader of the Opposition to-day, because in it were contained the elements of clearing away the dishonest practice that is creeping into our Legislature of allowing railways to be submitted and passed which have no prospect of paying and on which there is no liability to make good the deficit. Whether the Government is going to stand solidly on their proposal to fund the loss for three years I do not know. It seems to me that it would almost be as well for the Government to allow the matter to go by the board, and to say at once that no more railways will be built on the guarantee principle. That would mean that all railways would be national railways, and then the State would know what they were going to lose, and what they were building the railways for. At the present time we are going to write off a certain amount, there is no doubt about that. A certain amount of liability will have to be shouldered by the State that the State did not expect when those railways were built in the past. I have no desire to delay the passage of the Bill. The Assembly has accepted a principle which they think is preferable to the amendment that was proposed, and in Committee it may be possible to alter it. However, I am anxious myself that our railway system should be put on a

better footing with regard to management as well as construction. I do not think our railways are managed in the most economical and profitable way. I am at a loss to understand why it is necessary for such high rates and fares to be charged in Queensland, as compared with the South. Our railways cost something less than one-half to construct than the New South Wales railways cost, and yet in order to make them pay—and they are not paying—we have to charge nearly double the freights that they are in New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What is the population of both States? That will answer it.

Mr. HUNTER: I do not think that does answer it. I have tried in every possible way to find any justification for it, but I cannot. I admit that our lines go out into long distances in the West, but so do the lines in New South Wales. Some of the lines in New South Wales were very expensively constructed, much more so than the lines in Queensland. The New South Wales lines go over rough country and cross many rivers, and, of course, the greater width of gauge makes the cost more expensive, and there is also expensive rolling-stock.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is admitted that the lines in New South Wales cost about twice as much as ours.

Mr. HUNTER: Yes, it cost £13,600 to construct and equip a mile of railway in New South Wales and about £6,500 in Queensland, yet the freights in Queensland are double those in New South Wales. It may be that the suggestion of the hon. member for Drayton might meet the case, and an altered system of bookkeeping may make the railways a passing concern instead of a losing one. But that does not seem to me to meet the problem. Something should be done, and I should have liked if, in the interim, the Minister had made the inquiry that we asked him to make last session. It will be remembered that the leader of the Opposition moved that a Royal Commission be appointed to inquire into railway matters generally and to report, so that this House might be in a position, when the Bill came before it, to say exactly what alterations were desirable so that the Bill when it became law would contain provisions for the guidance, management, and construction of railways in the future. It would have been money well spent, but though the House, in its wisdom, did not adopt that amendment, the Minister probably could have gone to the trouble of ascertaining for himself some information on that point. Probably it would have been a good thing for Queensland. One of the most important things we have to deal with is railway construction. The settlement of our lands hinges largely on a wise decision as to railway construction in this State, and nothing can be more important than for this House to be possessed of all information, when a proposal comes before them, as to whether it is going to meet requirements in that direction or not. There are quite a number of other matters in connection with the internal management of our railways which might be dealt with, but I think they can be better dealt with when the Bill gets into Committee. However, while I regret that the House has not

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accepted the amendment. I still hope we may be able to amend the Bill when we get into Committee.

Mr. SOMERSET (*Sturtey*): It seemed to me, when this Railways Guarantee Bill was first brought before the House, that it was theoretically sound. I thought, with many other members, that the guarantee principle would do away with political railways, and that, probably, no railway would be built unless it had a chance of paying its way; that the people in the district would either decide that it would pay them to pay the guarantee or that they would oppose the construction of the railway; but in practice that has not been found to be the case. I have had some experience in the matter, because I have had to deal with two railways in my district, one from Kannangur to Benarkin and the other from Woodford to Kilcoy, and I find there are a good many reasons why the people are irritated. First of all, by the way in which the trains are run, and also in regard to the benefited area proclaimed, and the Treasurer's valuations. There are also various other reasons why the guarantee principle is strongly objected to. I remember, when the Railways Guarantee Bill was before the Chamber originally, that I strongly agitated for 2 per cent. against 3 per cent., but we had to accept the 3 per cent. or go without the guarantee principle altogether, and I believe the people would prefer to continue to pay the 3 per cent. rather than go without a railway, provided that they had some say in the matter of running the trains to suit the producer instead of to suit the Railway Department. It seems to me a one-sided affair: the Railway Department runs the trains to suit the Railway Department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Does it appear to you that the department runs the trains to suit the traffic?

Mr. SOMERSET: No doubt the department has considerable experience in that direction, but it takes quite a number of deputations to the Minister and to the Commissioner to get the Railway Department to alter the timetable to suit the producer, and when the timetable is altered, it is found that things run a little better, and that the line has a better chance of paying. That shows that had the wishes of the people of the district, as expressed through their shire councils, been attended to in the first place, the railway would have had a better chance of paying from the jump. What I expressly object to is the Treasurer's valuation. It is unfair that the shire councils should have to do work that they are not paid to do for the Railway Department in making the valuations of the alienated land.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh, yes; they are paid 5 per cent. This Bill proposes to extend the payments.

Mr. SOMERSET: I was not aware of that. If the shire councils have to undertake that work, and are capable of undertaking it, why not let the shire councils make the valuations for the Treasurer as well? Why have two different valutors, one for the Crown lands and one for the alienated lands? I also object to only one month being allowed in which the councils can appeal against the Treasurer's valuations. I consider the councils ought to make the valuations, and if they do not do so, then at least two months should be allowed in which they can appeal. It is quite possible there may not be a meeting of the council for a month after the time

the clerk receives notice of the valuations. Most councils meet once a month, and it is quite possible a meeting may have just taken place, and before the council again meets the month will have expired, and the council would not have the opportunity of lodging an appeal. Two months should be allowed, which is a very short time, for the council to gain information. Another reason why some of these guarantee railways do not pay from the jump is that the Construction Branch does not fully equip the lines. The local authority, if it has to have anything to do with the railway at all, should be asked to define what equipment is considered necessary at the various stations, and to say where the stations should be situated. All sorts of things are wanted—cattle trucking yards, pig trucking yards, gantries, and all sorts of things—when the line is handed over to the Traffic Branch, and then, naturally, the Traffic Branch objects to spending all this money. If this money had been spent originally, and the various yards had been provided by the Construction Branch and added to the cost of the line, it would give the line a better chance of paying.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is always added to the cost of the line.

Mr. SOMERSET: It may be eventually, but it takes a long time to get these things out of the Traffic Branch, and I think that the people in the district should be allowed to say what is wanted when the line is being constructed, so that the line could start fully equipped for the work. The line from Kannangur to Benarkin climbs up a steep range rising some 2,000 to 3,000 feet in a very short distance, and it is naturally a very costly piece of construction. There are several expensive bridges on the line, and the benefited area originally proclaimed by the Commissioner would have been a fair area to bear the cost, but, subsequently, before the people were told that the line did not pay, that benefited area was altered, and the Commissioner issued a new proclamation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is to cover the extension.

Mr. SOMERSET: When the people had a chance of saying whether the railway should be built or not, they imagined that a very much larger area was to be included in order to bear the cost.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The traffic over the extension materially helps the first section.

Mr. SOMERSET: The people living beyond the benefited area altogether are benefited by that extension, and it seems to me that the benefited area does not extend far enough. I should be very glad to see the Bill altered in Committee, and I hope to see the 3 per cent. reduced to 2 per cent. I hope also that some of the other matters I have referred to will be particularly taken notice of by the Minister.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I have no desire to delay the Bill at the present time, but there are one or two things I wish to say in connection with it. In the first place, it is an old friend, this being the third time it has been introduced. Some of the provisions included in the first Bill, I am glad to see, are omitted from this Bill; at the same time, there are some provisions in the Bill that I should like to see omitted,

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and which I shall deal with later on. Some improvements have been made in the provisions relating to appeal boards, which, I am sure, will be appreciated by those employees who may find it necessary to appeal; but I would point out that, when appeal boards are held only in large centres of population, the men are placed at a serious disadvantage, as they may have to travel perhaps 500 miles and bring their witnesses, and, if the appeal fails, they have to pay the expenses of those witnesses.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is provided for in the Bill.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Some of those men will find themselves at a serious disadvantage who are working away in the Western parts of the State and have to come to large centres like Rockhampton [7 p.m.] and Townsville, or elsewhere if the board thinks fit. In Brisbane there will be an appeal board, and I hope the Minister will make the same apply to the Central and Northern parts of the State, and that, if the board think it wise, they will hold the board in other centres, and not compel men to come 500 or 600 miles to the appeal board, which would entail considerable expense on them, which might be obviated. I endorse what was said by the deputy leader of the Opposition, when he spoke of the power entrusted to the Commissioner. I think it would be a good thing if the Commissioner had the power to pay a better rate of wages than is now paid in the Railway Department. We hear it stated repeatedly that the department are always prepared to pay the rate of wages ruling in the district where construction work is going on, yet it is often not done, and for that reason a change for the better might have been made. There are some who are not engaged on construction work, but in other branches, who are certainly entitled to the consideration of the department, and I hope they will get it in the near future. I have pointed out on a previous occasion that night officers, who have responsible duties to perform, find it impossible to keep a wife and family on the wages paid to them, particularly when there is no housing accommodation provided and they have to pay rent, and some have asked to be relieved of their duties and have had to go back as porters at 8s. 6d. a day, which is a reduction not only as far as salary, but as far as position is concerned. It has been said that one of the main principles of the Bill is the guarantee system, and I am inclined to think that the measure of relief included in the Bill for those who live in districts which have not guarantee railways is going to be anything but helpful. I think we are putting off the evil day, and with very little chance of any advantage to those who get it put off. It simply means that greater burdens will have to be borne when two or three years have gone by. I think the better way would have been to reduce the rate of interest to 2 per cent, which would have been of some advantage to those who find it difficult to meet their obligations in this respect. It seems to me to be rather a dangerous precedent to establish to abolish the guarantee system altogether. It may be argued that those who have got guarantee railways want to get rid of their obligations, but it does not seem to be a good principle to try to get rid of obligations which they

entered into with their eyes open. I do not remember a railway being introduced, and the plans and specifications being laid on the table for the perusal of members, where it was not stated that these railways were going to be the best paying lines in the State; but some of them are anything but good paying lines. It was also pointed out that some of the lines built previous to the 1906 Act are not paying, which is perfectly true; but it is also a fact that many of them did pay for many years after they were built. Latterly they have fallen on evil days, through circumstances over which the people who live in those districts had no control. But there is also this aspect of the question: that in a large number of districts where they got lines previous to the introduction of the guarantee system, they have been paying handsomely ever since their inception, and so it does not seem to be fair or equitable that these people with railways which are paying 8 or 10 per cent. should also be saddled with the burdens of other districts where there are non-paying lines. It is well known that the people who are near where these railways are made always reap considerable advantage from them. I am afraid it would be a rather doubtful expedient to raise freights and fares to meet this deficiency. I think there would be as much noise made about increasing freights or fares as there is about the guarantee. Whatever may be said about a railway being political or non-political, it is admitted, on all hands that a great many of these railways would have been voted against by many hon. members when they were before the House, had it not been understood that if there was any deficiency the people who were getting the railway would shoulder the burden. Then, some of the railways have been practically forced on the people without the option of saying whether they would have them or not, and that was very unjust and unfair. If the railway is not a paying concern when it is made, they have to shoulder the obligation. Most of what has been said in opposition to the guarantee system is in connection with the benefited area. It may be that in some instances benefited areas are too large and in other cases too small, and in other instances some people who benefit will have to pay, while others who benefit very considerably do not pay at all. But it does not seem to me that that alters the principle one iota. It simply shows that the benefited areas have been badly arranged; but that is a thing which could be remedied in a much better way than by abolishing the guarantee system altogether. I think some improvements ought to be made in the way of providing the House with information. When the railways are tabled it is a common thing for plans, specifications, and books of reference to be submitted, while there is no information to guide members of the House to arrive at a correct decision. I think that a parliamentary committee or some other means should be adopted to place in the hands of members much more information concerning the country through which the railways are to go than is the case at the present time. There is quite a number of other things I should like to touch on in connection with the Bill, but most of them belong to the details rather than to the principles of the Bill, and I shall perhaps be able to deal with them better in the

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Committee stage. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to make some alterations in the direction I have suggested, and if he does that I am sure the Bill will be more appreciated.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Before the second reading goes through, I should like to say a few words in connection with the more contentious clause of the Bill; that is the one connected with guarantee railways. As far as the system is concerned, I wish to say from the outset that I am absolutely opposed to it, as I look upon it purely and simply as a class tax, and one that affects the people who act as pioneers for the purpose of developing Queensland. Those people deserve every consideration, seeing that, not only do they develop localities where they undertake to make their homes, but also considerably develop the towns that depend upon them for their produce. It has been stated by members who were in the House when the 1906 Railways Guarantee Act was brought forward that, although they voted in favour of the guarantee system, they acknowledge that it has not proved the success that was anticipated. Instead of preventing what might be called "wild-cat" schemes, the figures given by the Minister for Railways the other day demonstrate that as many and more "wild-cat" schemes—if they can be called "wild-cat" schemes—simply because they do not pay 3 per cent.—have been constructed under the 1906 Act than were constructed before that Act was introduced. I think I may say that only three railways constructed under the 1906 Act have actually paid. I do not think they have actually paid, but they have been wiped off for some particular reason which has not been explained.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: £511,000 has been wiped off in connection with those railways.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, and we have not got the exact explanation why these railways have been relieved of the payment.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The explanation is that they paid their way.

Mr. MORGAN: In some respects; but there is room for explanation as to why those railways have been relieved of their liability under their guarantee. I do not believe in the guarantee principle. I think that railways should be nationalised, and each place dealt with on its merits. When we discover that railways have been constructed under the 1906 Act in districts where they do not actually pay axle-grease, it goes to show that the Act has not realised what was expected of it, and something should be done to remodel it altogether. Certainly, some consideration has been given. There is no doubt that there is a concession, if it can be called a concession—I look upon it as a right—proposed to be given by this Bill to the people who have railways constructed under the 1906 Act by capitalising the loss for three years; but that is simply putting off the evil day. In three years' time, when the payment falls due and these railways are not paying, there will be just as much a clamour on the part of the people as there is to-day to be relieved of that burden. In regard to the railway which has been constructed in the Rosewood district, which is a settled district, I am informed that there is not likely to be any more settlement there in another three years than there is to-day, and they are producing as much to-day as

they are likely to produce in another three or four years, and this will only be increasing the burden. It will be something like a man who gives a promissory note for a debt, and then says, "Thank goodness that is paid." That is exactly the position that these people will be in in that locality. The evil day will be put off for three years, and, so far as I understand from those who know the locality, there is no possible hope of that railway paying better in three years than it does now.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is one of the most fertile districts.

Mr. MORGAN: Exactly. We have a railway in one of the most fertile districts of Queensland—the Killarney line—which may pay in three years. I understand the people were entitled to a railway, and the railway was built, and has done a lot of good, not only to that locality but to the whole of the Southern portion of Queensland, and yet these people are saddled with that 3 per cent. while the railway is only paying something like $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Mr. HAMILTON: Which railway is that?

Mr. MORGAN: The Killarney Railway.

Mr. HAMILTON: That is not under the Railways Guarantee Act.

Mr. MORGAN: Well, there is one line in the electorate of the hon. member for Cunningham which is paying only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I am not quite sure of the name of the line, but on looking up the figures I found that for the year 1913 it paid something like $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. But the point is that these railways are constructed and are acting as feeders to the main line, helping it to pay 5 or 6 per cent., and yet the people who are responsible for the guarantee get no benefit from the traffic which is brought to the main line.

Mr. GILLES: Is the system of bookkeeping right?

Mr. MORGAN: I do not know much about the system of bookkeeping, but I say that the construction of the guarantee lines has made the main lines pay much better than they did before, and that is a matter which should be considered. The hon. member for Maranoa mentioned one line in my district—namely, the Dalby to Tara Railway. Why it was mentioned more than any other I do not know, as that was an experimental line which was constructed before settlement. It was taken from Dalby to Tara into a belt of country which was not settled in any shape or form, and at the present moment there are between 500 and 600 people being served by that particular line. That railway has been the means of settling between 500 and 600 people on the land. Can it then be said that the line is a failure, although it is not paying 3 per cent.? Can it be claimed that the line should not have been constructed? Those 500 or 600 people have helped to build up Brisbane and Toowoomba, as all the goods they require come from those cities. Yet, simply because the line is not paying 3 per cent. those people are being penalised. What are they penalised for? Simply because they have left the city and gone into the country and made homes for themselves on the land. I contend that these lines should be nationalised in order to get people to take up land and make their homes in the country. No doubt it is perfectly true that the people of certain

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localities have said that they were prepared to pay 3, 4, or 5 per cent. if necessary. In fact, they would promise anything. They are something like the man who is hard up and goes to money-lenders and pays them an exorbitant interest on money advanced to him. We call that usury, but in the case of these guarantee lines some members say the people have made a contract and should be compelled to abide by that contract. The people now living in the Tara district were not there when the line was constructed; the land was all Government land. There is included in the benefited area land which is nearer to the Western line than to the Dalby-Tara line, and the people occupying that land go to the Western line and do not use the Dalby-Tara line; yet they have to pay their share of the deficiency on that railway. That goes to show that the system is rotten and should be reconstructed.

Mr. GUNN: The people came there before the railway was built.

Mr. MORGAN: A lot of people went there after the railway was passed, and in a great many instances the department did not shew in the proclamation that the land was within the benefited area. It may be said that the selectors should have made inquiries for themselves, but men who are going on the land do not know what the law is and do not look up Acts of Parliament, and they were unaware of the fact that the land was within the benefited area. But they wanted the land, and I believe that if they had known it was within the benefited area they would still have taken it up. I say that those people should be put on the same footing as the people round about Brisbane and other places. When the House was passing the 1906 Act, to be consistent, it should have provided that all lines which were not paying should come within the operation of the Act. There are now some twenty-nine lines which were constructed prior to the passing of the 1906 Act that are not paying. Every taxpayer at the present moment helps to make up the deficiency on those twenty-nine lines, and the men who were responsible for the guarantee of the Dalby-Tara district are taxed for that purpose. If we dealt fairly with them we should relieve them from paying taxation to make up the deficiency on those twenty-nine lines. It appears to me that when a man who has taken up land lives within a benefited area and wants some relief he is charged with repudiation. How many unionists and others have repudiated an agreement they had entered into with their masters? We have heard of cases in which men have entered into an agreement for three years and have afterwards broken that agreement because they found it was not suitable, and they wanted better conditions after they had been working under it for twelve or eighteen months. That is exactly the position the settler is in to-day. He is helping to develop all portions of Queensland by taking up land and settling on it—by going into the country and doing without picture shows and numerous other luxuries, not forgetting the education of his children. People here can send their children right from the State schools to the University, but the child of the farmer can get nothing more than a primary education, if he gets that.

Mr. HAMILTON: He has a chance to go to the University.

Mr. MORGAN: The department is, no doubt, doing its best for the education of children in the country; but how is it possible for the son or daughter of a farmer to get any more education than he can acquire in a primary school? It is not possible. Lots of us are bringing our families into Brisbane because we think that our children are entitled to the benefit of a good education to fit them for the battle of life, but the farmer or settler cannot bring his family to Brisbane. If we are going to err at all in this matter, we should err on the liberal side as far as farmers and men on the land are concerned. We should offer every inducement and every possible advantage to men who are prepared to go out and carve their way in the bush and do the pioneering; but we find, not only in Queensland, but throughout Australia, that all the crumbs are given to the city people. In what other part of the world do you find such a large proportion of the people concentrated in the capital towns as is the case in Australia? One way of inducing the people to go into the country is to relieve them from unnecessary burdens such as that in connection with guarantee railways, and I am satisfied that the people of the big towns are prepared to shoulder their responsibilities as far as the losses on those lines are concerned. We find men in this House to-day who held a certain opinion in 1906, but who are men enough to come forward now and say that they have discovered, and it has been proved, that the guarantee system is not a correct one, and that another system should be adopted.

Mr. HAMILTON: They have got their rents raised since.

Mr. MORGAN: I am not talking about men who have their rents raised; I am talking about the small men whose land will eventually become freehold. The value placed upon a grazing area is small compared with the value that is placed upon land which is likely to become freehold. At the present moment there may be fifteen, twenty, or more men in this House advocating the abolition of the 1906 Act. Why? Because their constituents have suffered, and they know exactly how the people are suffering under that Act. Possibly, the next district may be the district represented by the hon. member for Leichhardt, and he will then have his constituents coming along and making it so warm for him that he will find some reason for changing his views and advocating the repeal of the 1906 Act. While I admit that the proposals contained in this Bill will give some relief and are better than nothing, yet I contend that the whole system should be reconstructed. We should go into the matter thoroughly. I was pleased to hear the deputy leader of the Opposition say that this is not going to be a party question. I hope the House will not deal with it as a party question, but that members will endeavour to do the best they can for the whole of Queensland. The hon. member for Chillagoe also stated that it would be impossible to put any tax on the people in a way in which it would be evenly distributed. It has been said that there is no tax known which touches everybody exactly alike. If there is a man who proposes a tax which will fall evenly on everybody he is a marvel, and I should like to see him in this House. There is no tax that taxes everyone exactly alike. But we can make it much better than it is. It has been in existence

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since 1906—eight years—and we can make it much better. My idea is it [7.30 p.m.] should be remodelled, so that it should be fairer to the settler. There is another thing in connection with the guarantee system. The estimate is given by the railway officials. The railway officials go into a district, and they prepare plans and specifications, and give estimates as to the cost of the line. A vote is taken on that particular estimate, and it has been known that railways estimated to cost £120,000 will cost £150,000 or £160,000. That is, the people, when they are asked to vote, "Are you in favour of a line being constructed in a certain district of the estimated cost of £120,000?" they vote "Yes," because there are figures to show that the line is likely to pay. But that line costs perhaps £150,000—£30,000 more than the estimate—and this goes to show that those people are saddled with a burden of £30,000 more, and they have no say as to how the line should be constructed. In the first instance, plans are drawn by the department officers, and the railways are constructed by the department officers. I do not know if members who have had railways constructed in their districts have noticed the work done by the Railway Department. My opinion is, and it is also the opinion of people in my district, that the amount of expenditure on the railways is much greater than is necessary. If the railways were built on a different system, they could be built for much less money. In many places it appears to the ordinary man that a great waste is taking place, and a great deal of time lost. It takes three years to build 40 miles of railways by the department officers. What do you think of a railway that takes that time to build, when the work has been practically going on all the time? I consider that that 40 miles of railway should be built in twelve months, especially as there are no engineering difficulties, no high mountains to climb, and no tunnelling or costly bridges to provide. We find in some localities where there are no engineering difficulties that railways cost £3,400 or £3,500 a mile, and it takes three years to build 40 miles. We want some different system to that. The present system is not a satisfactory system. We find, in connection with the Renard road train and the McKeen motor-cars, that a certain amount of money was wasted by the Railway Department. Someone has blundered there.

Mr. GUNN: We have to make experiments.

Mr. MORGAN: The Victorian Government were making experiments with McKeen motor-cars, and why did not the Queensland Government wait and see how they turned out in Victoria?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We purchased ours first.

Mr. MORGAN: The contract may have been let by Queensland first, or the purchase entered into, but the McKeen motor-cars were running in Victoria long before they were brought to Queensland, and they proved a failure in Victoria. Then we go on and run them for a few months, and we find they are a failure here. There are a lot of improvements necessary in connection with the working of our railways. Although I sit on the Government side I consider it is my duty to point out where improvements are necessary. We run our railways under the authority of the Commissioner. There are

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many ways where money could be saved, and we could get just as big a surplus from our railways as we get at the present time. Better rates could be devised for carrying the necessities of life to the people in the country districts. There are a lot of changes necessary in the Railway Department to make the railways better for the use of the people than they are at the present time. The most important matter, so far as this Bill is concerned, and perhaps the most contentious matter, is that of the construction of the railways, and when we are dealing with that we should deal with it from a national standpoint, and not from the standpoint of a person who is going to be benefited by a railway. In many railways that have been constructed in the last few years, the towns have benefited much greater from them than the farmer, and yet the town is not included in the benefited area. I have given this matter a lot of consideration. A number of people have had railways built in their districts, and while they do not wish to repudiate the agreements they entered into, they want to be placed on a better footing if it is possible, and I think it is possible. I do not give any credence to the cry that the money-lender in London lends us money to build railways because of the guarantee to pay 3 per cent. As long as the Commissioner has that 3 per cent. hanging over his head, and as long as he knows the people will have to pay 3 per cent. to make up the loss, he will not be as careful as he would be if he had to make up that 3 per cent. himself. We find that the Commissioner builds a railway and runs three or four trains a week, because he knows that there is a 3 per cent. guarantee. If it were not for that 3 per cent. guarantee, we would find that two trains a week would suffice. If he could not make it pay by that means, he would find some other means of doing it. In Victoria, they put extra dues on a particular section that does not pay. That system would be much better than the system we have at the present time. The present system is an obnoxious one. It is obsolete and out of date, and I hope that, before the Bill goes through Committee and reaches its final stage, some better arrangement will be made than the alteration provided in this particular Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): I welcome this measure. This Bill has been before the House on previous occasions, and I know that the railway men are looking for it. I hope that we shall be able to pass it this session. The Bill consists of a number of clauses of various character, and dealing with different subjects. There is no great principle involved in the Bill. There is one principle that has been discussed a good deal at length, and will be discussed at greater length later on. That is the question of the guarantee. I am one of those who, when this Bill was first introduced in 1905, to some extent opposed the guarantee system. I believe in the essence of a guarantee system, but at that time I pointed out what I considered to be a number of imperfections in the Bill. First of all, it makes the railway rate fall not in proportion to the benefit received. It makes it fall on the landowner, on the total value, rather than on the specially enhanced value that comes from the construction of the railway. Secondly, it has the imperfection of tying the hands of the Government in the construction of a railway through a poor district where there are poor selectors who

cannot undertake to pay the guarantee. It may also prevent the Government from constructing what is really a national railway, because of the veto of the poll in a district which does not want a railway. Then there is another imperfection in that if the railway pays for three years, then for ever after that district is free from any guarantee, although the railway may be a losing proposition continuously year after year. These are some of the imperfections that I see in the Bill of 1906. At the same time, this Bill has one important principle in it—that is, the well-known betterment principle, although it is only a crude form of it. The betterment principle is one that ought to justify itself to every member of the House. I believe that this Bill should be amended so that some more scientific form of that principle can be introduced. I suggest by way of amendment that we ought to adopt the same lines as the betterment principle in our Local Authorities Act. Those members who are going to oppose the guarantee principle in this Bill must also wipe out the same principle in our Local Authorities Act. We know that in our Local Authorities Act if the local authority derives a loan from the Government the people who get the benefit of the loan are responsible for its repayment. We do not nationalise the payment of that loan. We do not ask the farmers in the district of the hon. member for Murilla to pay for a loan advanced, say, to the farmers in my district. We do not make the farmers in the hon. member's district pay for the benefit which only the farmers in my district receive. It would be unfair to do so. There is another system in the Local Authorities Act regarding the tramway benefited area. The local authority can place an assessment on the enhancement in value of the land which benefits by the construction of a railway or tramway by a local authority. There is also another system under which money may be borrowed in connection with some public utility by some local authority, and the property-owners who get the benefit have to pay a special rate for it. I suggest that this Bill might be amended to provide that the guarantee should only be paid on the enhanced value, and not on the total value of the land and the benefited area. Let the Commissioner be the person who makes the benefited area, as at present, and let the Commissioner himself fix the rate; but there should be power to appeal both from the prescribed area and the rates proposed by the Commissioner. There first should be an appeal to the local authority responsible for the property in that district, and also an appeal to the Land Court, who shall have power in some way to modify either the boundary or the rate fixed by the Commissioner. In that way the Government would receive from the people in the district a certain benefit from the construction of the railway. In the construction of a railway there are three persons benefited. First of all, there are the passengers, who are rightly called upon to pay the Government for the benefit or service received by their being carried on that railway. Then there is another class who benefit—the merchants who consign or receive goods carried on the railways. It is recognised that they should also pay for services rendered to them. There is yet another class of persons who also benefit by

the construction, running, and maintenance of railways—that is, the landowner in the district, who receives an enhanced value for his property. Why should not he pay for services rendered just as passengers and merchants have to pay?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They do under the 1906 Act.

Mr. HARDACRE: Of course they do, and it is an absolutely just principle. The London County Council has adopted the principle, Germany has adopted it, and it is adopted almost universally to-day throughout the world so far as municipalities are concerned. I do not think the reason why this principle was brought in was merely to stop political railways. The probable explanation is that, just prior to that time, Mr. William Kidston, the then Premier, introduced a Betterment Bill. That Betterment Bill was defeated, and then this guarantee system followed on later as a sort of partial adoption of the same principle. It is said that there are some difficulties in the way. It is quite admitted that there are. I quite agree that the benefit cannot altogether be circumscribed. It overflows, so to speak, the boundaries of a particular district, and extends to the cities on the coast where the terminus of the railway is. I would be very glad indeed if we could give the Commissioner power to impose a rate in those cities. I admit that it is rather difficult, but because we cannot follow it everywhere, that is no reason why, where we can follow it, we should not make them pay for services rendered so far as we can allocate it. I was somewhat surprised at some members of country districts, who advocated the abolition of this system because they think that their particular district is going to suffer if it is continued. Take, for instance, the hon. member for Murilla and some others, who have failed to realise that if we do abolish the system we are going to throw upon their particular district an extra cost, either through taxation or some other way—an extra burden—and they are going to get no benefit from it at all. We are going to distribute inequitably the burden that now falls upon the particular district where the railway is constructed, and so must unfairly handicap some districts to the unfair benefit of the districts which have already got railways. Let me point out an analogy. There was a time when the landowners in Great Britain were responsible to the Government to find a certain number of soldiers for the King. About the year 1600 they managed to exempt themselves from that special liability and throw the burden upon the common people of Great Britain. Here we are proposing to do exactly the same thing; we are going to try and take the burden off the landowners in a district where they get a special benefit, and reimpose that burden on the rest of the community—on the worker, the carpenter, the blacksmith, and on various members of cities who do not own a single inch of land, and who get no benefit at all. It would be an unjust thing to relieve the people who get the benefit of a burden, if that benefit can be properly allocated. There is one other subject referred to—that is, the proposed capitalisation of the loss for the first three years. Personally, I do not like it for two reasons: First of all, I think it is a step towards relieving them ultimately altogether, and, secondly, I believe it involves an absolutely

wrong financial principle—the wrong principle of paying out of loan what should really come out of current revenue. It means actually funding losses on current revenue, and making it up out of loan money. When there is a loss in any particular year, that year should make it up in some way, and it should come out of the revenues of the State; and if the State revenues cannot pay it, then the benefited district should pay. If the loss is paid out of loan it will never come back to the revenue again. For those reasons I would like to see the guarantee principle amended in the direction of making it more scientifically conform with the betterment principle, and making the people pay according to the benefit received. Still, on the whole, I would be very sorry to see the guarantee principle altogether abolished instead of being amended in the way I suggest.

* Mr. B. H. CORSER (*Burnett*): I am particularly pleased to see this measure introduced, and I am also further pleased that provision is made therein for the capitalisation of any loss on guarantee railways for the first three years, and all credit is due to the Government for this very liberal provision. As a country member, I say it will afford the people living in benefited areas a great lot of help; it will give them an opportunity of putting off the evil day, and it will give this House an opportunity of doing away with the guarantee system altogether. We have been told that the capitalisation of the loss for the first three years is only the thin end of the wedge, and I trust it is. Previous to 1906 railways were constructed, paid for, and guaranteed by the State. The money was then borrowed from the British money-lender on the credit of the State, and if we are going to use it as an argument that the people in the country have guaranteed the money on these railways since 1906, then the country cannot be in the same financial position it was previously. Personally, I have every confidence that the State can secure all the money needed on the guarantee of the State without calling upon a few people in the newly settled districts to guarantee these railways. I oppose the guarantee principle altogether, and I hope that it will be abolished when the Bill is going through Committee. I trust also that it will be made retrospective, and that those people who have paid their dues—who have paid the money when it became their duty to do so—will have the amount refunded to them, as no doubt it would be in other occupations under similar conditions. The Railway Department should be called upon to say whether a line is going to be a payable one or not, and if it is considered to be a good State enterprise, then it should rest with the country to support what those officials say; and if it is found that these railways do not pay, a few people, who were probably misled by the reports, should not be called upon to make good that loss. There would not be so many lines in Queensland not paying if the Lands Department were taken into consideration when railways were being constructed. The settlement of the lands plays a considerable part in the question as to whether a particular railway is payable or not, and when a railway is being constructed in a particular district the Lands Department should be asked to say where that line should go. The line from Gayndah to Mundubbera is part of a grand trunk

[*Mr. Hardacre.*

railway which is going out north and west to open up those vast rich lands. Those lands are all being improved by the construction of that line, and if the Lands Department made those lands available for settlement, the Treasurer would probably benefit only to the extent of 2s. 6d. an acre, and the settlers could not make a living on it. But when people take up the land in between these points and guarantee a railway line, then the State is going to benefit, inasmuch as the Government will get from £2 to £3 an acre for those lands because the railway offers facilities for settlement. Then again, when we have a guarantee line completed—I am not going to say that the Railway Department is not right in this, in looking after the interests of the department—if the farmers of a district want a derrick erected or a grain-shed erected, or if they want facilities for loading maize or storing their maize, the department calls upon them in most cases to guarantee a certain amount of expenditure on these improvements, and in the case of derricks they go so far as to ask the settler, not only to find the material, but to go to the expense of erecting a derrick. In all cases on guaranteed lines the farmers have to do these things when the expenditure could be capitalised, just as well as the cost of construction. If there is a good road wanted at a railway station to make a better approach to a goods-shed, they can do it. It is extraordinary that the Railway Department ask settlers to pay for the erection of a gate to allow drays to come into a siding. If the State had to guarantee the loss, I do not know whether these things would cost so much. I do not know whether the railways have been constructed at a similar comparative cost. I have my opinion. I am not altogether condemning the Government because they have taken up the building of the lines by day labour. Whether that is right or wrong we could easily check the work. The Minister says that lines are being built to-day as cheaply or cheaper than they were years ago. They may be cheaper, but certainly they do not get the roadway that they did before. When the Minister made that statement he mentioned the expensive railway over the Range, and compared that with the railways like the one from Gayndah to Wetheron.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, he did not make that comparison.

Mr. B. H. CORSER: If those two railways were not compared, it shows that the estimate was not correct. Any railway passed since 1906 has had to be constructed under the 1906 Act, and as half a loaf is better than no bread, it is only natural that the people would take the line under any conditions, knowing that country members might some day be able to convince the Government that it is an unjust tax and the Government would abolish the guarantee altogether. When we consider the extra demand on the Railway Department, the increased cost of labour, and the increased cost of locomotives—everything is going up, and will have to be guaranteed at the other end. I trust that under this Bill the Railways Guarantee Act of 1906 will be abolished, and that the abolition will be made retrospective. The hon. member for Leichhardt referred to advanced districts, and in those districts it is probable that the railways will pay. I am looking to the interest of new districts where they are not sufficiently advanced to

make them pay. But where a railway has paid it means that the settlers in that district would be more in a position to guarantee a line than the people in a district where the railway has not paid, and they have to pay the guarantee. It shows that progress has gone on, and they have grown crops to be carried over the line, and can pay the guarantee; but the unfortunate settler in adverse circumstances, and who has grown nothing by which to make a living and to assist to make the railway pay, is the man who is called upon to pay for the line, and he is the one who can least afford to pay. I trust that the burden of our railways will continue to be borne by the community at large.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Keppel*): I regret that there is no provision contained in this Bill to enable the railway workers to appeal to an industrial tribunal similar to that which private employees can appeal to. I fail to see any justification for the discrimination, as the principle is a sound one, and one that has worked successfully in other States. I feel sure that, had the provision obtained here, the strike would not have occurred in North Queensland. I am justified in saying that by the fact that the men indicate in a communication which they sent to members of this House that they were prepared to accept Judge Macnaughton, or any other judicial man, to decide their case. The principle is also recognised by the Federal Legislature. We find that under the Federal Arbitration Act the public servants have the right to appeal to an industrial tribunal, and an award has recently been arrived at which seems to have given satisfaction not only to the employees but to the employers also; at least, it has caused no dissatisfaction amongst them. I think, therefore, that the Ministry were ill-advised in not introducing this principle in the Bill which we are discussing. I have very few observations to offer on this measure, and I would not have risen except for the remarks of the hon. member for Leichhardt on the guarantee principle. That hon. member states that he is a supporter of the guarantee principle. I am opposed to it, and think it is fundamentally unsound. The hon. member for Leichhardt confuses this question of the guarantee principle with land taxation, which, to my mind, is an essentially different thing. We all know how strong the hon. member is on the question of land taxation. If we have this principle, which cannot be called a principle, of land taxation, to my mind, then so long will the people be blinded to the real reform which should pass this Legislature and become the law of the land. If the hon. member wants to obtain the unearned increment, there is a proper method of obtaining it; but that is a matter to be discussed in another measure. To my mind, this measure will not give us the unearned increment, because it is restricted to a three-year period. If the railway pays for a three-year period, then the provisions of the guarantee cease. How, then, are we going to get the unearned increment? I contend that you do not get at the big landowner by this proposition. The tax falls on the poor settler, on the man who is least able to bear it, and it falls upon him at the most trying period of his existence—at the time when he is making a start on the land. We should knock out this principle altogether, as it cannot be justified from any standpoint. The hon. member for Leichhardt also stated that the people

who receive the benefits should pay for them, and I do not think any member of the Assembly will deny that; but the question is: who obtains the benefits? Is it the people in a particular electorate or a particular part of the State? I say, "No." They receive a benefit, but no more than others in the State. The people of the whole State receive a benefit.

Mr. HARDACRE: Oh, no; the landowners.

Mr. LARCOMBE: They obtain a benefit, and they can be got at in another way. But the people of the State generally benefit through the construction of the line, the increased area under cultivation, the production of foodstuffs, and the increased carriage on the railways, and it is just as much to the interest of the State that a line should be constructed, as it is to the people in the locality. It is a well-known axiom that the city cannot exist without the country. I am opposed to the guarantee principle for the reason that it places an undue burden on those who have to guarantee the line, and allows the workers in the city, who benefit largely as a result of the construction of the line, to escape free. It has been argued that this guarantee principle prevents jobbery and corruption. It may have that tendency, but it is not necessary for that purpose because we find in other States where there is no guarantee principle in operation that corruption and jobbery have practically vanished as a result of the constitution of public works committees. Those committees in addition to reducing jobbery to a minimum, have done good work in other directions for the State. I was reading one of the public works committee's reports in New South Wales, and I find that the committee go out and ascertain the area and quality of country, and other features pertinent to the locality in which it is proposed to construct the line. The information is of a very full and exacting nature, and after the House has the information before it there is very little opportunity of risk of corruption. It has been argued that if this principle is repealed we will not be able to bring about a reduction of freights and fares in Queensland; but that is refuted by the experience of other States. In Victoria and other States there have been reductions in freights and fares where they have no guarantee principle in operation, and if it can be done there it can be done in Queensland. It is very unfair and scientifically unsound to always expect the railways to make a big profit.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Unfortunately, they do not.

Mr. LARCOMBE: They are paying a fair profit, but we should not expect them to pay a big margin of profit. If the freights and fares are high, the result is that the area under cultivation and the tonnage of freight for the railways is restricted, and the people of the State generally suffer. The position of the Government employer is not the same as that of a private employer. If a private employer cannot obtain a direct return on his capital he must get out of the business, but that is not so with the State. There are the indirect benefits to which I have previously referred. If we cover working expenses and interest on the cost of construction, then I think we have done all that can be reasonably required of us.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Unfortunately, we are not quite doing that.

Mr. Larcombe.]

Mr. LARCOMBE: I differ from the Minister in this regard; he argues that a reduction of freights and fares will bring about a reduction of revenue, but that is not the experience of other States. What was the result in Victoria after they had reduced freights and fares? What was the result in South Australia, which has about the same population as we have in Queensland? They reduced freights there, and there has been an increase in revenue. You find the same conditions in Canada.

Mr. KESSELL: Go to New South Wales.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member can go to New South Wales also. The proposed increase in New South Wales is only an adjustment. You will find that fares in New South Wales are much cheaper than in Queensland, particularly for 100 miles distance.

Mr. KESSELL: Do you approve of the Canadian system?

Mr. LARCOMBE: We have plenty of examples here in Australia. That is simply an illustration in connection with the matter we are discussing. I am not arguing that there should be private construction and ownership of railways. It is simply a matter of how reduced fares work out. They work out similarly under private enterprise as they do for the State—a reduction of freights and fares brings about an increase of revenue. It is easy to understand, on the ground I have pointed out, that there is more land taken up and increased carriage on the railways. That is a self-evident proposition.

Mr. KESSELL: What about New South Wales?

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member seems to have New South Wales on the brain. If he wants to get a dig at the Labour party he cannot get one by getting in that interjection. Look at New South Wales! We find that they spent three times as much in the last three years as their predecessors spent during the corresponding period. Take the railway construction and duplication that have taken place.

Mr. KESSELL: They have increased fares all round.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member is making an assertion that cannot be backed up by figures; he may tell the electors of Port Curtis a taradiddle like that, but he certainly will not get members of this House to believe it. There is another reason why the guarantee principle should be deleted. We frequently find that a line requires to be constructed in a particular portion of the State, which would be of enormous benefit not only to the people of the district concerned, but also to the whole State, and if the people of the district are not prepared to guarantee that railway, it will not be constructed. The result of that would be that the whole State would suffer. I have shown that the principle is not necessary in order to meet the working expenses of a railway or to prevent political jobbery. With regard to the provision for the capitalisation of three years' losses, I will support that as a step in the direction of the abolition of the guarantee system. I trust that if we cannot delete the guarantee principle, the capitalisation provision will stand in the Bill, as it will be some relief in the direction in which relief is most required.

[Mr. Larcombe.

With respect to the principle of the guarantee, there is a difficulty in defining the benefited area. Take the Port Alma line in Central Queensland. Assuming that that line is a benefit, it benefits the whole Central district, and why, I ask, should not the whole of the Central district be responsible for any deficiency? Other lines in the Central district pay a high percentage; and if there is a deficiency on the Port Alma line, and we show a profit on the general system of railways in Central Queensland, the people in the Port Alma district should not be asked to pay the deficiency on the Port Alma Railway. I do not propose to offer any further observations, but shall content myself with saying that I will support any amendment for the abolition of the guarantee principle when the measure is discussed in Committee.

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): Like one or two other members who have spoken, I am very pleased to know that the Government have found out from experience that the guarantee principle is proving a mistake. I certainly think it is amply proved that it is a mistake. I can understand that when the principle was introduced it appealed to hon. members as a reasonable one, on the ground that it might prevent the construction of railways which would not pay. It has been amply proved, however, that the hoped-for result has not occurred. I regard the principle as unsound for many reasons. There is an objection to the principle of voting, under which one-third of the people of a district can saddle the balance of the people with a railway whether they approve of it or not. That is thoroughly unsound. Then, again, the Commissioner comes down with a proposition which is laid before Parliament; he estimates the cost of the construction of the line and the deficiency which would be likely to accrue on its working, and on that proposition and estimate a vote is taken. If the Commissioner was willing to abide by his estimate, I do not think there would be any complaint by any section of the people; I believe they would make up the deficiency they agreed to make up. But that is not the case. The cost of construction may be increased by 25 or 30 per cent. over the estimate, and the cost of maintaining the line may far exceed the Commissioner's estimate. Again, it is very difficult to define the benefited area. In the case in which I am particularly interested, after the vote was taken the benefited area was very materially reduced, and the cost of constructing the railway was materially increased, and the few people left in the benefited area are now called upon to make up the great deficiency which naturally accrues under those conditions. That is very unfair and quite unsound, and I very much doubt whether, under the circumstances, the Commissioner can enforce payment of the deficiency that has accrued on that line. But in any case I consider the guarantee principle is unsound, because it imposes a great burden on people who are less able to bear it than the community as a whole, who can make up a loss on one line of railway with the profits from other lines. In the country districts we have to pay about three times the rate of fare that people residing around the city have to pay, and in many other ways also the city people have benefits which the country people do not enjoy. The Government

would be well advised were they to reconsider the whole position and thoroughly nationalise all our railways, doing away with the guarantee principle, and I shall certainly live in hope that the Government will see the advisability of taking that course. With regard to the capitalisation of the losses for the first three years, that does not appear to me to be a sound principle. In some districts it may afford a certain measure of relief, but in other districts it will only put off the evil day, and when the time for the capitalisation of losses is expired the burden will be all the heavier. I certainly hope that the Bill will be so amended that the guarantee principle will be abolished entirely.

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

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

BRANDS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. White, *Musgrave*), this Bill, received from the Council, was read a first time, and its second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

MOURILYAN AND GERALDTON TRAMWAYS BILL.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Gunn, Carnarvon, in the chair.*)

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

On clause 4—"Tramways to vest in Commissioner"—

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): This clause provided that the tramways mentioned in the last two preceding sections "shall be worked and managed by the [8.30 p.m.] Commissioner for Railways as a State railway as hereinafter provided." He thought they should insert the word "except," so as to make it read "except as hereinafter provided," as clause 6 authorised the Commissioner to charge lower rates on the tramways than were charged on Government railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said if the hon. member read clause 6 he would see that while it allowed the Commissioner to work the tramway system as a State railway, he was permitted to charge differential rates.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 5—"Tramways to be connected"—

Mr. LENNON: Without desiring in any way to harry the Minister, he would suggest that he might see fit to introduce a provision for the construction of the Proserpine Bridge. The clause said—

"The Commissioner for Railways is hereby authorised and empowered to construct a line of tramway, connecting the said Mourilyan Tramway with the said Geraldton Tramway, with the necessary bridges and other constructional works,

according to the route delineated and marked red on the map in the third schedule to this Act."

The bridge was over the south branch of the Johnstone River, and it would set all doubts at rest if the Minister would be good enough to say that it would be a composite bridge—that was, a bridge to provide for vehicular traffic as well as to carry the railway, and not as some persons might think, a bridge of a kind of concrete. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He did not think it was advisable to differentiate in the Bill in connection with this particular bridge. The hon. member was rightly anxious that a bridge for ordinary traffic should be constructed over the south branch of the river, but under the Railways Bill now before the House, power was given to the Commissioner to build traffic bridges in conjunction with railway lines, and this bridge would be one in connection with a railway line, although it was a connection of only 1½ miles in length. He thought he might give the hon. member an assurance, as he had done the other night, that he would discuss it with the Commissioner and give it every consideration.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7 and the three schedules put and passed.

The Bill was reported without amendment, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

BOWEN HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—"Interpretation"—

Mr. CAINE (*Bowen*) moved an amendment on page 2, line 13, to add the following words:—"or division 1 of the Shire of Ayr." The particular part of the clause defined "ratepayer" as any person who, under the Local Authorities Act, was a ratepayer of the town of Bowen or the Shire of Proserpine or the Shire of Wangaratta, and he wished to add "or division 1 of the Shire of Ayr." That part of the Shire of Ayr was south of the Burdekin River, on the right bank of the river. As he mentioned on the second reading of the Bill, there was no question that the progress of the Inkerman district was materially helping Bowen. The main part of that trade was going to Bowen, and he ventured to say that, in all probability, the trade of Ayr, at an early date, would also go to Bowen. He did not suggest, however, that the amendment should be so comprehensive as to include the Shire of Ayr, but simply that division of it which was south of the Burdekin, and he moved accordingly.

Question put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 3—"Constitution of harbour and harbour board"—

Mr. CAINE moved a consequential amendment on page 2, line 33, to add the words "and division 1 of the Shire of Ayr" after the word "Wangaratta."

Question put and passed.

Mr. Caine.]

On the motion of Mr. CAINE, a similar amendment was inserted in line 36, and verbal consequential amendments in lines 37, 38, 39, 41, and 43.

Mr. ADAMSON moved the deletion of the words—

“Two of such members shall be appointed by the Governor in Council”

in lines 49 and 50. Members on the Opposition side held that the democratic principle of elective members should be consistently carried out in connection with all local bodies, and it should be the same in the case of the Bowen Harbour Board, the whole of the members of which should be elected by the ratepayers of Bowen.

The TREASURER: So far as the Government were concerned, they did not propose to accept the amendment, and there were very good reasons why they should not do so. The hon. member for Herbert and the hon. member for Rockhampton failed to realise that there were certain Government interests, and it was quite a fair thing for the Government to nominate two members.

Mr. LENNON: That is too vague; what does it mean?

The TREASURER: The hon. member would have an opportunity of explaining it himself by and by. The Government held that it was essential that there should be some representation on the part of the Government. There was a certain sum of money concerned—over £20,000—and it was only fair with regard to that sum and other sums which of necessity must be loaned to that splendid district, with such a splendid harbour, that the Government should have some representation on the harbour board there. They must remember that the Government did not propose to have a majority of members on the board. It was desirable that the Government should have representatives there who might see the wisdom of going slow in the expenditure of money. He had no intention of accepting the amendment.

Mr. LENNON said he was disappointed, after the very lucid explanation of the Treasurer, that the Government did not see their way clear to accept the amendment. The Treasurer gave as a reason for the appointment of two members to the board by the Governor in Council that the Bowen people were indebted to the Government to the extent of something like £20,000, and that therefore police constables should be appointed to look after Government interests. The same principle might be applied to local authorities.

The TREASURER: Occasionally the Government have stepped in and taken full charge in the case of local authorities.

Mr. LENNON: Occasionally local authorities owed the Government as much as £60,000, and yet the Government did not appoint nominees to the shire councils. He was with the hon. member for Rockhampton entirely in the amendment, as it was a thoroughly undemocratic idea to have appointees of any Government on a board, except, perhaps, in the case of hospitals. The Labour party believed in the nationalisation of hospitals, and thought Government nominees in such cases was a step in that direction, but the Labour party thought that harbour boards and local governing bodies generally should be left

[*Mr. Caine.*

entirely in the hands of the people to manage. He could speak on the matter, perhaps, with as much authority as most people, having been a Government nominee himself on the Townsville Harbour Board when it was first constituted, and he was sometimes treated by some of the democratic people of Townsville, and especially of Charters Towers, with scant courtesy. One would really expect that the co-called democratic Government would try and aim at doing something of a democratic character. The Labour party would not only like to see the members of harbour boards elected by ratepayers, but by the whole people of the district, and they felt justified in every sense in trying to prevent the appointment of Government nominees to the Bowen Harbour or any other harbour board.

* Mr. THEODORE said that he had listened very carefully to the explanation of the Hon. the Treasurer regarding the necessity, in this particular instance, for having Government nominees on the board. He had looked up the constitution of other boards in Queensland and found that the members of the Rockhampton Harbour Board were elected partly by the payers of dues and partly by the ratepayers, while other boards were partly elected and partly nominated, and he could not see any particular reason why there should be Government nominees on the Bowen Harbour Board. Certainly the Government had interests there, but they also had interests in Cairns, and they were financially interested in regard to other harbour authorities to whom they had lent money, and the same obligation applied to local authorities. The Treasurer remarked that on an occasion in regard to a local authority the Government stepped in and assumed complete control of the business, but in that case the local authority were defaulters. If the Bowen Harbour Board did not meet its obligations from year to year, then the Government would be perfectly right in taking some drastic action to keep them up to the scratch, but where the Government were merely transferring a debt to the board and handing over certain property, there was no special reason why the Government should claim the right to interfere with the management. The trouble was that some nominees of the Government were apt to assume the very critical attitude assumed by Government officials in dictating the policy of the board. It could not be gainsaid that the democratic members of such a board would resent the interference of the nominees of the Government, and the member for Bowen should make it plain that the board should be untrammelled. Seeing that they were called upon to take over a duty, they should be allowed to manage their own business in the same way as the Cairns Harbour Board had the right to manage their business. If they failed to manage it properly or economically, then the Government should take any action they thought necessary. The amendment was warranted under the circumstances and in the light of the information given by the Treasurer.

Mr. HUNTER said he intended to support the amendment, as there was no difference between a harbour board borrowing money to do certain things and a local government body borrowing money. He had yet to hear sufficient reason for making the

difference that the Treasurer was making in regard to the two bodies. It was understood that the Government had large interests in the Bowen Harbour, but they had similarly large interests in shire councils; they were simply lending a certain sum of money, and nobody ever heard of a mortgagee asking the mortgagor to allow him to come in and manage the business because he had loaned a certain sum of money. The Government itself did not do so under certain conditions. The Government had no business to meddle with the affairs of local governing bodies or harbour boards until the necessity arose. It was quite a different matter with hospitals, which received Government subsidy. In the case of harbour boards it was not good business. What legal right would the Government have to come in and make a claim on the ratepayers for a deficiency resulting from their own officers' mismanagement? Although the hon. member for Herbert modestly suggested that his influence on the Townsville Harbour Board was not of much account, it was quite possible that an appointee of the Government might, in some cases, be a very strong man who might control the whole of the board and lead to no end of trouble. He really failed to see what object the Minister had in insisting on the provision. When the harbour board applied for a loan to make improvements, the Government would make full inquiries through their expert, and if he said it was good business the Government would be safe in making the advance under the usual conditions that they should have the right to step in when the board failed to perform its obligations: but, beyond that, the Government had no right to interfere, and there would be no occasion for them to interfere. He hoped the Treasurer would give some sufficient reason for insisting on this provision.

Mr. FOLEY was going to support the amendment because he could not see why the Government should demand to have two appointees on the board, which was only composed of seven members altogether. The board would have to assume full control of the harbour works of Bowen, and would be responsible to the Government for any money expended on the harbour. He could quite understand the Government having appointees on hospital committees or fire brigade boards, because they contributed a portion of the money to carry on those institutions. If the Government were contributing a portion of the money to carry on the harbour works in Bowen they would be justified in their action, but they were only lending the money. The £20,000 the Treasurer spoke of, he supposed, had been invested in constructing the jetty and other harbour works there before the board was formed; but the Government had been collecting revenue in Bowen for many years, and had, no doubt, collected the amount of money previously spent in harbour works. The Bowen Harbour Board should have the right to nominate their own men to carry on the work, and be responsible in the same way as a local authority for money borrowed. If the Government must be represented, he thought that one representative would be sufficient to look after their interests, but he did not see the necessity for even one. He did not see why the Treasurer could not accept the amendment and do away with the system of nominees altogether.

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

AYES, 30.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Grant
" Archer	" Grayson
" Barnes, G. P.	" Hodge
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kessel
" Bebbington	" Mackintosh
" Bell	" Morgan
" Blair	" Paget
" Bouchard	" Philp
" Bridges	" Somerset
" Caine	" Stevens
" Corser, B. H.	" Tolmie
" Corser, E. B. C.	" Trout
" Crawford	" Vowles
" Denham	" White
" Forsyth	" Williams

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

NOES, 22.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Huxham
" Barber	" Land
" Bertram	" Larcombe
" Bowman	" Lennon
" Coyne	" May
" Fihelly	" McCormack
" Foley	" Murphy
" Gillies	" O'Sullivan
" Hamilton	" Payne
" Hardeare	" Theodore
" Hunter	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Coyne and Mr. Foley.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Petrie. No—Mr. Gilday.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of Mr. CAINE, consequential amendments were made in lines 1 to 4, line 5, and line 21 on page 3.

Mr. THEODORE moved the insertion of the following paragraph to follow line 34:—

"No ratepayer shall be denied the right to vote merely for the reason that all sums due to the local authority in respect of rates have not been paid."

The intention of the amendment was to enable ratepayers who might be in arrears of rates to exercise the franchise, if they were not otherwise disfranchised. Under the Local Authorities Act, ratepayers were disfranchised from voting at a local authority's election, and, surely, that was a sufficient penalty for their being in arrears without imposing the further penalty of disfranchising them from voting in a harbour board election. He was of opinion that no such penalty as disfranchisement should be imposed in connection with either of such elections, because the Local Authorities Act provided other means for collecting arrears of rates. There was a specific penalty in the way of interest on arrears, and he was inclined to think that the Minister had overlooked that provision when dealing with this part of the Bill. It was unfair to disfranchise a person merely because he was in arrears with rates due to the local authority, and he thought the amendment should be accepted as a distinct improvement to the clause.

The TREASURER said he did not propose to make the departure which the hon. member suggested in his amendment. It was a very fair thing to follow along the lines of the Local Authorities Act. If people were not sufficiently interested in the affairs of a board such as this not to allow their rates to get into arrears, then it was not right to expect that they should be given a vote.

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

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

AYES, 22.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Huxham
" Barber	" Land
" Bertram	" Lacombe
" Bowman	" Lennon
" Coyne	" May
" Fihelly	" McCormack
" Foley	" Murphy
" Gillies	" O'Sullivan
" Hamilton	" Payne
" Hardacre	" Theodore
" Hunter	" Winstanley
<i>Tellers:</i> Mr. Bertram and Mr. O'Sullivan.	

NOES, 29.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Grayson
" Archer	" Hodge
" Barnes, G. P.	" Kessell
" Barnes, W. H.	" Mackintosh
" Bebbington	" Morgan
" Bell	" Paget
" Blair	" Philp
" Bouchard	" Somerset
" Bridges	" Stevens
" Caine	" Tolmie
" Corser, B. H.	" Trout
" Corser, E. B. C.	" Vowles
" Crawford	" White
" Denham	" Williams
" Forsyth	
<i>Tellers:</i> Mr. Stevens and Mr. Vowles.	

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Gilday. No—Mr. Petrie.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. GILLIES moved that the words "three votes," on line 35, be omitted with the view of inserting the words, "one vote." It was hardly necessary in this democratic age to offer any reason for moving the amendment. In fact, it was incomprehensible that any Government should come along in the twentieth century and propose such a condition of things as would allow three votes to a man who possessed property to the value of £1,000. It was true that a similar provision was embodied in the Local Authorities Act, but it must be remembered that every man, woman, and child in the district would be called upon to pay harbour dues. It was, therefore, a monstrous proposal to give any man three votes. It was bad enough to deny an elector who was not a ratepayer the right to vote, but it was a worse thing to give three votes to a property-holder.

Mr. LENNON wanted to say at this particular juncture that if the Government, which claimed to be democratic, and were now launching forth on the sea [9.30 p.m.] of co-operation, and were going to stake their all on their co-operative mills, should refuse an amendment of the character moved by the hon. member for Eacham, he could not understand their attitude. He quite admitted that under the constitution of the Bowen Harbour Board as proposed in the Bill, the position would not be so bad as it was some years ago in Townsville, where the payers of dues had very considerable influence in electing members of the board. The payers of dues used to farm out their business over a very considerable number of friends, and so they got three votes, perhaps, fifteen times over. He thought that in Bowen they would be able to manipulate the election to some extent in the same way. Like Townsville, Bowen laboured under the disadvantage of having a large number of absentee ratepayers, who were generally represented by the smart man

[*Mr. Gillies.*

of the town, who was their local agent, and who moved heaven and earth to keep valuations and rates down. As one good turn deserved another, the absentee ratepayer would probably allow the smart man of the town to register his own name as voter for his property, and he would be able to farm out his votes over his brothers and sisters, and cousins and aunts, and, perhaps, get twenty votes. He would get, perhaps, such an influence that he would be practically able to appoint those two Bowen representatives on his own. For those and other reasons he heartily was in accord with the amendment.

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

AYES, 29.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Grayson
" Archer	" Hodge
" Barnes, G. P.	" Kessell
" Barnes, W. H.	" Mackintosh
" Bebbington	" Morgan
" Bell	" Paget
" Blair	" Philp
" Bouchard	" Somerset
" Bridges	" Stevens
" Caine	" Tolmie
" Corser, B. H.	" Trout
" Corser, E. B. C.	" Vowles
" Crawford	" White
" Denham	" Williams
" Forsyth	
<i>Tellers:</i> Mr. Crawford and Mr. Morgan.	

NOES, 22.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Huxham
" Barber	" Land
" Bertram	" Lacombe
" Bowman	" Lennon
" Coyne	" May
" Fihelly	" McCormack
" Foley	" Murphy
" Gillies	" O'Sullivan
" Hamilton	" Payne
" Hardacre	" Theodore
" Hunter	" Winstanley
<i>Tellers:</i> Mr. Gillies and Mr. Lacombe.	

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Petrie. No—Mr. Gilday.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of Mr. CAINE, a consequential amendment was made on line 36 of page 3.

Clause 3, as further amended, put and passed.

Clause 4 and 5 put and passed.

On the motion of Mr. CAINE, a consequential amendment was made in clause 6, which was then put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 19 put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments. The Bill was taken into consideration, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was order to be printed:—

Report under the Closer Settlement Act of 1906.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twelve minutes to 10 o'clock.