

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 16 DECEMBER 1915**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

PROTEST AGAINST GOVERNMENT'S LEGISLATION.

Mr. MCPHAIL (*Windsor*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Has his attention been called to a meeting of merchants and others, held on Tuesday last in the Courier Buildings, to protest against the advanced democratic legislation which has been passed this session, at which Mr. Campbell, a member of the firm of James Campbell and Sons, is stated to have said that he had told his men who had been thrown out of work that they only had the Labour Government to blame for it?"

"2. If so, will he take steps to prevent this gentleman from intimidating his workers and practising victimisation?"

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), on behalf of the Chief Secretary, replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. The matter will be carefully considered."

INCREASES IN RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*), on behalf of Mr. Kirwan, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What increases, if any, are being paid to temporary labourers in the various branches of the department?"

"2. From what date are these increases payable?"

"3. What arrangements have been made so that the railway employees may receive their increases, when the Estimates are passed, in time for Christmas?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Adamson, *Rockhampton*) replied—

"1. Temporary labourers will receive the same rate of pay as permanent labourers. The rate in the new classification is 8s. 9d. per day.

"2. From 1st July, 1915, if they have been on since then; if not, from the date they were appointed.

"3. Instructions have been issued to all heads of branches, and every effort will be made by the Accounts Branch to pay the men before Christmas, provided the Estimates are passed in time."

CONDITIONS OF RAILWAY SERVICE.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY, on behalf of Mr. Kirwan, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Provided a man who has worked for a number of years on railway construction works, having passed the necessary examination, is appointed a lengthman, does the time he worked on construction work count as continuous service?"

"2. What conditions govern his annual holidays, and under what regulations are they dealt with?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. No.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 16 DECEMBER, 1915.

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

QUESTIONS.

SUPPLY OF BRISKET BEEF.

Mr. BEEBINGTON (*Drayton*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"Can he inform country agents, who are not butchers, where a supply of brisket beef can be obtained?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hunter, *Maranoa*) replied—

"Townsville. I presume fresh brisket beef can be obtained from any butcher."

STATE SAWMILL AND WAGES BOARD RATES.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Is it the intention of the Government to debit all charges directly or indirectly connected with the working of the State sawmill and its branches to the venture?"

"2. Do the Government now pay wages board rates at their recently acquired sawmill and timber-yard?"

"3. If not, is it proposed to pay wages board rates; and if not, why not?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"This question should have been addressed to the Secretary for Public Lands. Answers are—

"1 and 2. Yes.

"3. See answer to 1 and 2."

"2. The conditions are that an employee must work twelve months before he is entitled to annual leave, which is eight working days, including public holidays. After serving six years he is entitled to an additional day's leave for each year of service over six years—clause 22, subsection 3, staff regulations."

#### PAPER.

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

Return to an Order relative to wheat imported from beyond Australia, made by the House, on motion of Mr. Morgan, on the 3rd November last.

#### RAILWAY FREIGHTS ON GOODS.

On the motion of Mr. McPHAIL (*Wind. sor*), it was formally resolved—

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

1. The ordinary freight on goods prior to June, 1915, and the localities.
2. The special freight on same goods, and same localities.
3. Description of goods.
4. The names of the principals or agents of the firms concerned directly or indirectly to such special rates."

#### NEW STANDING ORDERS.

##### CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Coyne, Warrego, in the chair.*)

On Standing Order 6 (a)—"Election of Speaker"—

The TREASURER moved that Standing Order 6 (a) be amended by the addition of the words "Any member may decline to accept nomination" after subsection (1).

Question put and passed.

New Standing Order—

The TREASURER moved that the following Standing Order be added after Standing Order No. 280:—

"(1) When a Bill has been initiated in the Legislative Assembly, and has passed any or all of its stages in that House, but has not been transmitted to the Legislative Council, and its further course has been interrupted by prorogation of Parliament, the consideration of such Bill, with such amendments (if any) as may have been made therein, may on motion after notice be resumed in a subsequent session of the same Parliament at the point it had reached in the previous session, and thereafter be proceeded with as if no prorogation had taken place.

"(2) When a Bill has been passed by the Legislative Assembly, and transmitted to the Legislative Council, and not returned to the Legislative Assembly owing to prorogation of Parliament, the same Bill may be introduced into the Legislative Assembly, on motion after notice, in a subsequent session of the same Parliament and passed through all its stages, without amendment or debate, and sent to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in these Standing Orders contained.

"(3) This Standing Order shall not apply to any Bill which has been dealt

[*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*]

with by both Houses but has not been finally passed owing to disagreement on any amendment or amendments suggested by either House."

"Note.—If any Bill is of such a nature as to require a recommendation from the Crown, it cannot be proceeded with under this Standing Order unless a fresh recommendation from the Crown has been received."

Mr. MACARTNEY: What is the reason for it?

The TREASURER: The intention was to follow the practice followed in other Parliaments of allowing Bills to be taken up again in a succeeding session at the point where they had been dropped in the preceding session. It might happen that Bills might not be returned from the Council at the prorogation of Parliament, and they could be taken up in the following session and passed without amendment or debate. It was intended to apply to measures of no great consequence. In the present session it was likely to apply to such a Bill as the Townsville Harbour Board Acts Amendment Bill. It would save time in a subsequent session if the Bill could be taken up at the point where it was dropped.

Hon. J. TOLME: Are there any other Bills on the paper that it might apply to?

The TREASURER: It was possible that it would apply to others on the list. It was very hard to say, as that was only his opinion. They did not know what might happen to the Patriotic Funds Administration Bill. It was only a small measure. The idea was to take up Bills at the point where they had been dropped in the previous session. Of course, if there was any measure containing any vital principles, no Government would attempt to take advantage of the Standing Order without going through the usual course of initiating the measures in Committee. In the case of Bills requiring appropriation, it would still be necessary to get an appropriation from the Governor.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*) presumed this Standing Order was being adopted at this particular stage of the session when the Government was anxious to clear up business by reason of the fact that a number of measures were on the paper having proceeded to a certain stage. He took it that that was the only reason for the introduction of the amendment at the present moment. There should be some convenience generally speaking, in the passing of a Standing Order dealing with Bills, perhaps, lengthy measures, dealing with big questions which might be left unfinished at the end of the session. At the present moment it did not appear to him that there were on the paper any such measures. In any event the session they had just gone through had been an absolutely abnormal one from the point of view of the legislation introduced, the manner of its introduction, and the manner in which it had been put through. He did not know in the history of the Queensland Parliament that so much legislation had ever been introduced by a Government, at any rate enjoying its privileges for the first time. He thought that hon. members would generally admit that the legislation which had been introduced had not received that mature consideration from the Assembly which the importance of it demanded, in many instances, at any rate. He thought it was unwise to introduce an amendment of this character at the present time, seeing

that it could only affect three measures—the Patriotic Funds Administration Bill, the Townsville Harbour Board Acts Amendment Bill, and the Gas Bill—the latter of which, important as it might be, and however difficult it might be, was, he understood, only a short one. He really failed to see the necessity for the introduction of this amendment of the Standing Orders. As things had been this session, he thought it would be a distinct advantage to have the opportunity of rediscussing measures which might be left over to a subsequent session. He thought that the legislation this session had received more consideration in another place than it had received here. At any rate, stated shortly, those were his opinions to the amendment of the Standing Orders, and, personally, if a division was called for, he proposed to vote against it.

Question put and passed.

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

#### LONGREACH TO WINTON RAILWAY EXTENSION.

##### APPROVAL OF PLAN, ETC.—PROPOSAL TO GO INTO COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Adamson, *Rockhampton*): Mr. Speaker,—I move you do now leave the chair and that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

“1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway extension from Longreach to Winton, in length 109 miles 42 chains.

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

HON. J. TOLMIE: Before the House goes into Committee for the consideration in detail of this railway, I would like to say that there is very strong objection by members on this side to the railways being brought down at such a late hour in the session. We have noticed in the public Press for several days that it is the desire of the Premier that the session should come to an end to-morrow, but in addition to the business already on the paper we are now saddled with railway proposals which may provoke a considerable amount of discussion. Railways are always treated by this side on their merits, and, if it is thought desirable that they should be built, they are built irrespective of where they run. We have no objection to railways being built, but I certainly think that the Minister has treated us with scant courtesy on this occasion. I must in all fairness to the hon. gentleman say that that is not his usual practice, but to come down and put four railway proposals on the table as was done yesterday, and say that we should go into their consideration to-day, after a long sitting last night, and when we have had no opportunity of going into and fully investigating the reports submitted, is certainly asking a very great deal from hon. members. If the Minister had postponed them till next week we would not have been able to raise the objection that is being raised now, and rightly raised. I think it is only right that we should take this objection while the Speaker is in the chair to point out the

difficulty under which this side is labouring. I am afraid that members opposite, and on the front Treasury bench, have got into the habit of looking at things from one point of view only, and that is their own point of view. We know from experience that all propositions of this kind have been thoroughly discussed, and members on the other side are thoroughly conversant with the whole of the contents of these books and plans, but hon. members on this side know nothing of them. As a matter of fact, the only thing that we do know in connection with them is that not one of these railways are likely to touch an electorate represented by a Liberal—by a member on this side of the Chamber. I ask if the Liberal party ever dealt with things in that way. I say not at all. When we brought down railway proposals we did not confine them to Liberal constituencies.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is out of order in discussing whether various railways should be introduced. The question is that I leave the chair.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The question is that you do now leave the chair for the purpose of considering the railway proposals which have been brought down. I maintain that I am in order in discussing the way in which the railway proposals have been brought before the House.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is in order in discussing that, but he is not in order in discussing the question as to whether Liberal or Labour electorates should have railways.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I regret that I cannot agree with you in the position that you take up in regard to that matter, because I must point out that we are being badly treated in regard to these proposals.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will have an opportunity of putting forward that view of the matter in Committee.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I maintain that it is my business to put it forward when the Speaker is in the chair, because when we get into Committee, as you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, we can only discuss the particular railway which is before us. We have now before us the whole railway policy of the Government, and you want to restrict discussion simply to the one railway which has been moved, but if that ruling were maintained, how could there be a free discussion in connection with the railway policy of the Government?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must surely know that he is not in order in discussing the Government policy of railway construction on this motion.

HON. J. TOLMIE: This is the only time we can discuss the Government policy in relation to railways. What other opportunity has there been given to us?

The TREASURER: The Address in Reply.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Not at all. The Address in Reply is not the time to discuss them. The time to discuss them is when railways are brought before the Chamber, and the Speaker is desiring to narrow us down to the discussion of a single railway that is brought before this Chamber. If that be so, then there is no business in that at all. We burke free speech in regard to a matter of this kind.

*Hon. J. Tolmie.*]

THE SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member knows quite well that he is not in order in discussing the general railway policy of the Government at this stage.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I move the omission of all the words after the word "That," with the view of inserting "the railway policy of the Government is unsatisfactory to the House." I am loath to move an amendment of that sort, but still, at the same time, I recognise that it is desirable that there should be a discussion in regard to these railways. We on this side of the House recognise that there has not been a just distribution of the railways so far as all portions of the State are concerned. If you look at these railways, you will find that they are all railways running into electorates represented by only one particular section of this House.

THE TREASURER: That is where to put them. Labour members represent all the country districts.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We wish to express our objection to the way in which these railway proposals have been brought down by the Minister for Railways. There are quite a number of other districts which are just as much entitled to consideration. I do not want to decry the merits of any of these railways, because I realise that some of them are railways which have always received the approval of members on this side, and ought to be constructed in the interests of the people of Queensland.

MR. FOLEY: Why waste the time of the House, then?

HON. J. TOLMIE: Never mind. We are discussing matters which are before the House, and if the hon. member is not disposed to listen in silence, as he ought to do, then he ought, in fairness to other members of the Chamber, to retire. There has not been a fair distribution in the allocation of the railways brought before this Chamber, and that being so, I feel it necessary to express disapproval of the policy of the Government in regard to railways. If the

[4 p.m.] Government had dealt fairly with the House in regard to this matter, their railway policy would have been enunciated weeks ago, and we would have had the plans on the table of the House in order that we might have an opportunity of investigating the different proposals with the view of ascertaining whether, in our opinion at any rate, it was desirable that those railways should be set aside. As a matter of fact, we may come to the conclusion, after investigation, that it is desirable that all these railways should be passed, but we have not had an opportunity of studying the different propositions, and until that opportunity is given to us we are justified in taking up the attitude we are taking in the matter.

MR. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I wish to second the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition, and, in doing so, I wish to enter my protest against bringing down railway proposals at the very last moments of the session. On turning up "Hansard," I find that a very vigorous protest has been made year after year by men at present occupying the Treasury benches against the bringing down of railways within the last week or two of the close of the session. Yet we find that almost on the last day of the session the Government have placed four most important railway proposals upon the table for members to consider and give an

[*Hon. J. Tolmie.*

intelligent vote upon. It is not a fair thing to bring down railway proposals two days before the close of the session, simply because a number of men wish to terminate the session earlier than is warranted, as there is some most important business yet to be transacted. I also protest against bringing down four railway proposals, no matter how important they may be, while there are some dozen railways already passed by the House, and passed unanimously, which are not yet constructed; railways which were recognised by every member at the time to be necessary. I would also like to know from the Minister this afternoon whether it is his intention to commence the construction of any one of these four railways before railways already passed had been completed. I have two important railways in my electorate which have been passed, railways which are necessary to save the land from becoming infested with pear, and railways which would open up a large area to closer settlement; railways which the Government claimed should be constructed for the purpose of settling people on the land, and in only one instance is there an amount placed on the Estimates in connection with those lines, that is the Dalby to Tara Railway, while the Miles to Taroom Railway has been ignored. It is recognised that that line would open up vast areas on the Dawson, and it should be constructed in order that people should be placed on the land before the pear takes charge. Three of the present proposals are purely political railways and are being introduced in consequence of promises made during the last election campaign.

MR. H. J. RYAN: Is the first one a political railway?

MR. MORGAN: The first proposal is a railway that I recognise is necessary, but it is not as urgent as many of the country lines; not as urgent as the Dalby to Surat Railway or the Juandah to Taroom Railway. The railways now being introduced could be done without, but at the present moment there are hundreds of settlers who cannot remain on the land if the other railways remain unconstructed. At the very moment the Government came into power, they commenced the construction of suburban railways instead of building lines in the country for closer settlement purposes. In order to keep men employed in Brisbane they started the Enoggera to Terror's Creek Railway, and they also put men on the Rockhampton to Alton Downs Railway even before a vote was taken of the people, a thing that has never been done before by any Government. After the people recorded their votes, the Minister went up in great haste, took the people to task, and promised all sorts of trouble to those who voted against that railway. The people themselves said they did not want the railway, and yet we find that the railway is being constructed, while in my electorate and in other electorates people are absolutely dying for railways.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know you are not speaking the truth.

MR. MORGAN: Is it not a fact that the Alton Downs Railway was turned down by one vote? Can the Minister deny that? Is it not a fact that men were working on that railway before the result of the poll was known?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know it needs a two-thirds majority before a railway is turned down.

Mr. MORGAN: Why was it necessary for the Minister to go practically post-haste to Rockhampton in order to find out what could be done, and why did the Minister take the men off the railway immediately the vote was recorded? First of all, the men were put on the railway, a vote was taken, it was turned down by one vote, and the men were then taken off the railway. The Minister cannot deny that. Now they are going on with the railway, notwithstanding the fact that a majority was against the construction of that line. So far as political railways are concerned, and political jobbery, the introduction of these four railways absolutely proves my contention in that direction. There are enough railways passed already to keep the present Government going with all the loan money they are able to obtain for the next two years without passing any more railways, and it must be admitted that every one of the twelve railways that have already been passed and remain unconstructed are railways that are necessary for the development of Queensland. The Minister is introducing those proposals in order to placate present members, and in order to show when the Liberal Government get into power that they were started by a Labour Ministry. I wish to enter my protest in connection with these proposals. I do not intend to vote against them. (Laughter.) It is not because I am afraid, but I have never voted against a railway in this House. I recognise the fact that all railways will some day be justified, if they are not justified at the present moment. Railways are what we want. All the same, I wish to protest, first of all, against the introduction of these railways at this late stage of the session, and secondly, against the introduction of these railways when there are so many urgent and necessary railways already passed and not yet constructed. I also wish to protest against the party feeling displayed by the Government in bringing down railways wholly and solely in constituencies represented by Labour members.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): On every occasion when railways were brought forward by past Governments the greatest protest was entered by the Opposition owing to the fact that the railways were introduced without being accompanied by a report from a works committee. On this occasion we have the Labour Government bringing forward railway proposals under the same obnoxious conditions as they said existed under a Liberal Government. We find the Labour Government bringing forward practically in the dying hours of the session railway proposals without any report from a works committee. We know that the Minister for Railways and his colleagues have supported and advocated in the country that no line should be introduced into Parliament without an independent report from a works committee.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know that is not true.

Mr. CORSER: We know very well that it is true.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: You turned down the works committee.

Mr. CORSER: We did not turn down the works committee. I am sure that hon. members on this side are quite agreeable to a works committee, and, as "Hansard" can show, we supported the proposal. I am sorry that the Government have not seen the

advisableness of securing a report from a works committee before introducing railways similar to those before us at the present time. I want to say, without indicating my position in regard to any of the proposals, that the Minister proposes to introduce certain lines into districts to tap country which is proposed to be fed by other railways. Whether he is right in doing so is not for me to judge, but we do know that the Minister, when member for Maryborough, advocated a line from the Gayndah line out into the Dawson Valley, and we know very well that a railway proposal has been already passed by this House into that country. We know also that there has been considerable trouble between Maryborough and Bundaberg as to which had the right to this country, and it was decided last session that Bundaberg should also have access to it, and that a line should be constructed from Kaliwa to Goondoon at a cost of £8,000 per mile. Not only was that railway passed, but the Minister has provided money on the Estimates to commence the construction of that railway, but there has been no money provided for the extension from Mundubbera north and west, which is the country which both ports want, and which is the country that the Bundaberg extension will serve.

Mr. CARTER: It will be tapped by a shorter line.

Mr. CORSER: Now, we hear the other side. When the hon. member can convince me that 100 miles is shorter than 22 miles I will agree with him.

Mr. CARTER: Eighty miles is shorter than 180 miles.

Mr. CORSER: He will be perfectly right when he can show me that to Many Peaks is shorter than from Mundubbera to Eidsvold. The present proposition already passed should go to Eidsvold, but the Minister won't vote for it, because he is going into the district from the other end.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The Upper Burnett is behind Gladstone.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member knows perfectly well that the Minister would not say that in his electorate. The hon. member claims that it is passing through very rich country, but Maryborough and Bundaberg claim that Gladstone should not have access to it. Those are my reasons for supporting the amendment, and I sincerely trust that whatever is done, the fair thing will be done in the interests of the State and without consideration as to whether the Labour districts should have all the good things and the Liberal districts all the bad things. In the interests of the State, railways should be constructed which had the most advantages from the agricultural point of view.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): It seems to me unseemly to come here in the last days of the session and introduce railway proposals to cost nearly a million and a half. We have had no time to go into the merits of those railways. For instance, I see one on a map on the wall, and it comes right back to the country behind Bundaberg and Maryborough. What chance have we to inquire whether it is advisable to take the trade from those parts and allow it to go to Gladstone? There is a very large sum of money involved in these proposals, and it will make a big hole in the sum we have available for the purpose of carrying on railway construction during the current year. A large number of railways have already been approved by

*Mr. Swayne.]*

Parliament and are under construction, and I should like the hon. gentleman to inform the House whether the construction of railways like the North Coast line will be in any way interfered with by the passing of these proposals.

Mr. MURPHY (*Burke*): I think the House is entitled to get from the Minister information regarding the railway construction policy of the Government. When the Denham Government were in power, we were continually criticising them for passing a long list of railways, and we accused them of being unable to obtain the money to construct those railways. We also said that many of the lines were passed for the express purpose of endeavouring to bribe the electors. I took up the same stand with regard to the method followed by the Denham Administration in regard to railway construction as I am taking up to-day. We know that, under the agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the Queensland Government, Queensland will obtain £3,000,000 next year. We have already awaiting construction railways which will involve an expenditure of £10,000,000 or £12,000,000. Are these railways merely to be added to the list, or is the work of constructing them going to be commenced shortly after they are passed by this Chamber? Are any districts which have been granted railways under the guarantee system going to be cut out of railway construction altogether? These are matters upon which we should have some information. Parliament should deal with railway proposals from a broad standpoint. It is unfair to the country, and it is unfair to the districts which have been promised railways that we should add to the list of lines already sanctioned. Queensland should have some policy of railway construction. We do not want to repeat what was done with regard to the Gulf. That portion of the State was promised a railway thirty years ago, and it has never been built. One of the railway proposals that is now to be submitted to this Chamber was assented to by Parliament thirty-two years ago, but it was never constructed in consequence of a certain report. I refer to the railway to the Bowen coal fields. Do we want this sort of thing to continue? Are we to go on passing railways every session of Parliament without any prospect of building them? What is the good of Parliament and the Government simply gulling the people by passing railway proposals when they know they are not in a position to construct those railways? We have already, I suppose, fifteen or sixteen railways waiting to be carried out, and nothing has been done with regard to them.

Mr. A. J. JONES: And will wait.

Mr. MURPHY: If the railways which have already been sanctioned by Parliament must continue to wait, what in the name of common sense is to be gained by adding another four railways to the already long list? It seems to me that these railways are being put through, as the hon. gentleman used to say in the last Parliament, and as, no doubt, many members opposite did say during the election campaign, for the purpose of placating certain electorates and enabling certain members to be returned to Parliament. That is not the function of Parliament.

Mr. CARTER: It was the function of the late Government.

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

Mr. MURPHY: If things were badly done by the late Government, and they were loudly condemned by hon. members opposite, then the same kind of thing should be condemned on the present occasion. If it was a bad thing for the Denham Government to pass railways which they knew they had no hope of constructing, it is an equally bad thing for the Ryan Government to act similarly. We have it on the authority of the Minister for Lands, into whose electorate, I understand, one of these railways is going, that they are going to be built. If the Government are going to commence the construction of these four railways immediately, then they are going to rob some other electorates of railways which they have been promised. The member for Murilla has pointed out that two railways have been promised in his electorate, and there are other electorates in a similar position. We are to get £3,000,000 from the Commonwealth, but that is not a large amount for railway construction purposes when you take into consideration the cost of such work.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you ask us to go on with the *via recta*?

Mr. MURPHY: No; but I say the present Secretary for Railways was one of those who strongly supported the *via recta*—

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And voted for it.

Mr. MURPHY: And honestly believed it was a good railway, and one which it was in the interests of the country to construct. That was his opinion at the time the line was before this House when he was a private member; and I believe that now he has become Minister for Railways he still believes that that line ought to be constructed.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is certainly not urgent.

Mr. MURPHY: The Winton Railway may be regarded as particularly urgent, and no doubt the Government will proceed to build that line because the Commissioner for Railways has said that it will not impose an extra burden on the people, as another section of railway already sanctioned by Parliament will be cut out. But is there anything urgent about any of the other lines?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Bowen line is urgent.

Mr. MURPHY: I ask the hon. gentleman to look at the long list of railways which have been passed, and for which we have given the Government the necessary power to raise the money to construct them, and tell me if they are urgent.

Mr. COOPER: A lot of them are built.

Mr. MURPHY: A lot of them are built, and a lot remain to be built. I know that it is considered a crime by Australian politicians for a Premier to refuse £2,000,000 as a loan. Members go into the country and talk about the curse of rent and curse of interest, but if any Premier is honest enough in the interest of the taxpayer to refuse to pay interest on money which will have to lie idle, he is condemned as one who has done something against the interests of the country. No doubt he could have utilised that £2,000,000 in the construction of railways, but at the end of twelve months, when

the Commonwealth Government wanted the money repaid, he would have to pay a pretty high figure in order to raise the required sum.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: You want sixteen railways.

MR. MURPHY: I do not want anything of the sort. I have simply pointed out that Parliament has sanctioned sixteen railways, and that next year the Treasurer is to get £3,000,000 from the Commonwealth, which will not go a long way in the construction of railways, so that these new railways will simply be dangled before the electors to lead them to believe that some time in the dim and distant future the lines will be constructed. As far as the policy of the Government is concerned, I do not think it is one of which anybody can approve. No one was louder in his condemnation of railways being brought down at the last moment of the session than several members opposite. I think I could turn up a speech of the Secretary for Railways—

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am sure you could not.

MR. MURPHY: In which the hon. gentleman declaimed against that practice.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; you are drawing on your imagination.

MR. MURPHY: I should not like to misquote the hon. gentleman, but so many members on that side of the House adopted that course that I may be excused if I include the hon. gentleman in the list. However, I accept his assurance that he never did that, because he has represented in Parliament Maryborough and Rockhampton—two electorates which are continually clamouring for railway construction; and the hon. gentleman, being a believer in railway construction in the district he represents would not be condemnatory of any railway proposals brought forward. It was in order to obtain information on these points that I called "Not formal" to this motion this afternoon.

MR. A. J. JONES: You are assuming that these railways are turned down.

MR. MURPHY: I am assuming that some of the railways already passed will either be turned down or that the passage of these railways will be so much high falutin'; and I do not think, in view of the fact that we are approaching so near Christmas, that Parliament should be engaged in discussing railways which are not going to be constructed, but are only to be dangled before the electors.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We will see about that.

MR. MURPHY: I hope that when the hon. gentleman gets up to speak, he will be able to show where the Government are going to get the money from. We know that Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, has pointed out that the borrowing powers of the States are fixed for a certain period, and that the taxpayers know the extra burden they will have to bear. The sum of £3,000,000 is certainly not going to enable the Secretary for Railways to construct the long list of lines which have already been passed and the four railways which he now asks the House to sanction. I would remind the hon. gentleman

of the condemnation which was hurled against the Railway Department for its slow construction of both the Western and North Coast Railways. The excuse which used to be given by the late Minister for Railways was that money was not available, and that the Government could not push on with the work as rapidly as they would like to do.

The hon. gentleman is in no [4.30 p.m.] better position. He does not possess a magician's wand whereby with a wave of it he can fill the Treasury with golden sovereigns, nor does he possess a magician's wand whereby he can fill up the Treasury with Commonwealth notes. He is in no better position, so far as finances are concerned, than the previous Government. That being so, I must say that the railway policy of the Government, so far as these railways are concerned, is one which ought not to meet with the approval of the Chamber.

MR. VOWLES (*Dalby*): It seems strange to me that four railways should be tabled at such a late stage of the business of this House, when one realises that the districts which are to be affected are those represented by members sitting on the opposite side of the House. Does it not make one begin to think that there is something significant in that, and that it is a case of spoils to the victors? When the Secretary for Railways was asked why the railways were tabled, if he had said that it was part of the Labour platform and that he was honouring the promises made at the last election, he would have been nearer the point.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are quite wrong.

MR. VOWLES: When one remembers that legislation has been passed during this session, and that the Government have adopted the policy of a public works committee, we would think that there was no necessity for tabling any railways at all. If we table these railways in this way are we not taking away some of the functions of the public works committee? We are going to accept the recommendation of the Commissioner and his officers so far as these railways are concerned, although the Government passed a public works committee, because they refused to acknowledge that principle. We are stultifying ourselves if we agree with the Government's proposal in introducing these railways. This House has already passed the public works committee, and all railway proposals should be left to that committee. When the present Premier was speaking on the Mount Edwards to Maryvale Railway last session, he made use of the following, which will be found on page 2152 of "Hansard" for last year:—

"MR. RYAN: I cannot help thinking certain things when I see a big batch of railway proposals laid on the table. I do not like saying hard things about them, but I think a good deal about them, and I believe there are a lot of other people who are thinking a good deal about them, particularly when you hear the hon. member say that there are a lot of electorates concerned in this matter. Surely we are not going to make our railway policy a matter of electioneering! It will be a bad day for Queensland if we make the question of

*Mr. Vowles.]*

railway construction and the spending of hundreds of thousands of pounds a matter of electioneering. I would sooner be out of Parliament than be guilty of doing such a thing. (Hear, hear!) There is only one way of getting over the difficulty, and that is, when you get some system by which you can get a decision on the matter; and the only way to do that is to leave it in the hands of a non-party committee."

The hon. member talks about a non-party committee.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I tried to do that, too.

Mr. VOWLES: Would you call it a non-party committee when it is composed of members on proportional representation in this House? Then the present Premier also said—

"Such a committee cannot be influenced by considerations that might influence the Government, who want their railways submitted for this constituency or that. I am sure that that is an attitude that will be supported not only by the electors along this route but by the electors of Queensland."

If this Government intend to act in accordance with the opinions and feelings of the Premier, as expressed when he was leader of the Opposition, why do we have these lines tabled this session, when we have a public works committee? Why should we take away the functions of that committee?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are not taking away their functions from them.

Mr. VOWLES: If there was any urgent necessity for these railways there would be some justification; but, as it stands at present, to my mind, these railways are merely fireworks. It is one of the things that has to be done by Governments every session. They have to bring forward a railway policy. Hon. gentlemen opposite are just honouring their electioneering promises by bringing forward these railway proposals, which will cost the people of Queensland £1,500,000. What are the Government going to do? What about the railways that have already been consented to by this House? They were consented to by hon. members opposite, because they went through without any comment. We accepted the reports of the responsible officers with regard to those railways and passed them. Are those railways to be placed lower down on the list? What about the railway referred to by the hon. member for Murilla to extend into the Tara country and towards Surat. The people there have been waiting for this railway for the past six years. They took up the land there on the understanding that this line would be built. Yet at the eleventh hour of this session, here we have a list of railways brought in.

Mr. COOPER: Who deceived those people for six years?

Mr. VOWLES: The first section was completed, and last year the second section was passed by this House, but nothing has been done yet. The Government did not find the money for that railway but it has been found to be spent in other directions. We induce these people to go into these remote places and make their homes in the scrubs there on the understanding that they will get a railway in a reasonable time. Members now

[*M. J. Vowles.*]

sitting opposite also supported those railway proposals. If we have not got the money to build the railways we have already passed there is no necessity to place these new railways on the table, especially at the close of the session, unless it is done for party purposes or as an electioneering dodge. I do not think the Government can justify their action. I hope the Government will show us how they can carry on the work that has already been passed by this House. If they do that they will be doing business, but what they are doing now is simply hoodwinking the people. They are just doing it so that they will be able to say to the electors that they carried out their electioneering promises. They would say to the electors, "We told you we would give you these lines and we have tabled them." The Minister should tell us what is the railway policy of the Government, and what he intends to do with regard to the lines already agreed upon by this House. After going to all the expense of providing the plans and books of reference and passing the lines, are we going to build them?

Mr. COLLINS: Who passed them?

Mr. VOWLES: They were passed by your colleague sitting in opposition at the time, and they were passed without comment. There were some divisions taken on the via recta in particular, and that was carried through by the vote of the Labour party, or some of them. What on earth is the good of the Government going to the trouble and expense of preparing plans and passing railways in this House if they are not going to build them? We should not agree to any more railways being passed until those that have already been agreed to have been built. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I am rather surprised to see these railways brought down just at the end of the session, more especially as the Minister objected to the same course being followed last session.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I never did, and you know it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I know that the Minister has always been a great advocate of land settlement and settling people on the land, but no one can say that these lines are intended to settle people on the land.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, they are.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How many people will be settled on the land between Longreach and Winton? There is not 1 acre of land cultivated in the whole of the distance between Longreach and Winton, yet we have any amount of country, good agricultural country, where we could have numbers of settlers living, but who are without railway communication at present. This railway will not settle any people on the land at all. We know that the line is being built from Longreach to Winton because it will rob Townsville for the benefit of the city which the Minister for Railways represents. I do not blame the Minister for doing all he can for the city he represents, we must give him all the credit due to him for that, but what about the hon. member for Townsville who sits quietly in his seat, and allows Townsville to be robbed of the trade which it has had for years?

Mr. D. RYAN: You cannot rob Townsville.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I know that country better than hon. members opposite, and I say that the Minister for Railways is deliberately robbing Townsville of that trade, and that is the reason why this railway is being brought in. It is not for the purpose of settling people on the land at all, because it will not settle a single person there. Look at that other railway which cuts the country at the back of Maryborough. Is that railway being built in the right direction? We know the railway policy which has been adopted in New South Wales. Everything is being taken to Sydney. The big cities there get all the railway trade and traffic. We seem to be following the same policy in Queensland, and we are taking the railways to suit the big cities. Bundaberg and Maryborough must be robbed of their legitimate trade in order to satisfy the claims of the big ports and the big places. The railway is being taken to Gladstone instead of to Maryborough, and the farmers will be compelled to pay freights on hundreds of miles of railway that there is no need for them to pay. It is just the same policy as is being adopted in New South Wales, where everything is done to accommodate the big cities. Is that fair to the settlers? I say it is an unreasonable thing. I am not going to oppose these railways.

Mr. SMITH: You just feel indignant.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I feel indignant because a lot of good agricultural country is being neglected. If the hon. gentleman had gone down the Dawson Valley, to Taroom as I have done four or five times, he would see some fine country there which should be opened up by a railway. A lot of good country is being lost to the prickly-pear, but if we had a railway there we could reclaim a lot of that country.

Mr. D. RYAN: Is there any water there?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In the places where there is no permanent water supply they have put down twenty different supplies of water. Instead of building these railways in country where people will not be settled on the land like that from Longreach to Winton, we should build it in places where people would settle. The Longreach Railway is merely built to take away the trade from Townsville and give it to Rockhampton, and we should not encourage things like that.

Mr. D. RYAN: You are a little Queenslander.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Was he a little Queenslander when he advocated opening up the Dawson country? It would be far better to have a railway there than some of the other places suggested by the Minister, and I am sorry that the Minister has not adopted that idea.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I should just like to say a few words in reply. Let me say that, so far as the leader of the Opposition is concerned, I regret exceedingly that there may seem to be any discourtesy in connection with the tabling of these proposals. I placed them on the table as soon as the plans and the reports were available. If it had been possible to have had them ready before now, I would have been very pleased, and we should have had a chance to consider them more fully. Not having them ready earlier, we had either to bring them in now, or not at all. I think we have a right

to a railway policy as well as hon. members opposite, and I think we are carrying out the railway policy of members opposite in a very fair way. I have here a list of railways now under construction, and I want the House to listen where these railways are. We might have stopped them altogether if we had wanted to. In the

Southern Division—

Munbilla-Mount Edwards, Kingaroy-Tarong, Roma-Orallo, Enoggera-Terror's Creek, Murgon-Proston, Branch to Windaera.

Great Western Railway (section A) Cheepie-Bulloo River.

Central Division—

Mount Morgan-Dawson Valley (third section), Rockhampton-Alton Downs.

Great Western Railway (section B), Emmett to near Welford.

North Coast Railway (section A), Kunwarara to Marlborough.

In the Northern division we have the following:—

Malanda-Millaa Millaa (first section), Malanda-Millaa Millaa (second section), Koolamarra-Mount Cuthbert, Tumoulin-Cedar Creek.

Great Western Railway—Section C, Winton-Elderslie; Section D, Duchess-Wills River; Section D, Wills River-Carbine Creek.

North Coast Railway—Section B, Koumala-Carmilla Creek; Section B, Mackay-St. Helens; Section D, Rollingsstone-Ingham; Section E, Mooliba-Innisfail.

Those were all railways commenced by hon. gentlemen opposite.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: And all in Labour constituencies.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is the fortune of war. They were in Liberal constituencies when they were commenced. With regard to railways approved but not commenced most of those in the Southern division are in Liberal electorates. The following lines are going to be commenced, namely:—Inglewood to Texas and Silverspur, Goondoon to Kalliwaa Creek—that was in a Liberal electorate when it was passed—and the extension beyond Tara. And yet, we hear the hon. member for Murilla saying we are not doing anything for his electorate. If we had gone on towards the Dawson he would have been pleased, no doubt; and I would have been pleased to do so if I thought it was a fair thing. Our policy is to build railways in the districts that have been neglected, the Cinderella districts of Queensland, and for the hon. member for Burnett to tell me this country belongs to Maryborough is ridiculous.

Mr. CORSER: I said Bundaberg and Maryborough.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think the line for Maryborough is right out towards Taroom. Taroom would be tapped by Maryborough and Brisbane.

Mr. CORSER: Where is Taroom being tapped from now?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: From Miles. And in relation to Bowen, every one who is acquainted with the North

*Hon. J. Adamson.]*

knows that Bowen is one of the towns that has been neglected in the past, and it is because we desire to do a fair thing by the neglected districts that we have brought in that line.

Mr. CORSER: No one has objected to the Bowen Railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are objecting to the Gladstone line.

Mr. CORSER: We object to the non-construction of a railway that has been passed and the substitution of another.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As far as that is concerned, I think that line has gone just as far north as it ought to go—(hear, hear!)—and if we are going to get further north the country should be tapped from Bundaberg and Gladstone, and then we would get the railways into their proper hinterland. The hon. member knows the controversy that has been going on for years between Maryborough and Bundaberg. I want to do everything fair by Maryborough and that district, because I know it is a fine district, but I think there are other towns with a right to equal consideration.

Mr. CORSER: You should not consider towns at all, but districts.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman claims all the country right out back towards Banana for Maryborough.

Mr. CORSER: That is incorrect.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am very glad there are some in the Wide Bay district who realise that Gladstone has a right to a railway as well as Maryborough, and a right to the hinterland that belongs to it. In relation to the Orallo to Injune Creek line, it has been said that it will not open up any new lands for settlement. That is the principal reason we are building that railway—to induce settlement—to get into better land than the line of which it is an extension has got into. The same thing applies with relation to the Tara extension.

Mr. MORGAN: You are not going on with that yet?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: But we will be. If anyone will look through the labour proposals in relation to railways, they will find that a fair, and even large, proportion of the railways passed by hon. gentlemen opposite is being gone on with. In relation to the Longreach-Winton line, it has been said it will not settle any country. This line has been asked for by members on the other side of the House for years. It has been said it ought to be built because it will link up the two systems. It has also been said that it would pay 10 per cent. from the beginning, and that in times of drought it would be the means of saving a great deal of stock to the country. It is because the line has been talked about for so long—I have heard it talked about for fifteen or twenty years—and knowing the need of the line, we have decided to do something that hon. members opposite said in the past should be done.

Mr. MURPHY: The information we asked for is when you are going to do it, and how.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have surveys from both ends, and as

[*Hon. J. Adamson.*

soon as working plans are ready, we will commence, and the other railways will be commenced as soon as possible.

Mr. MURPHY: That is what other Governments have told us—"As soon as possible."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would like to remind the leader of the Opposition that the railway proposals in the last session were not brought on too early. They were introduced on the 2nd of December, and the House rose on the 17th. This Government had to get au fait with things, and they have been delayed by surveys. As soon as it was possible, the plans were laid on the table, because it was a question either of bringing them in now or not at all, and people who were expecting these railways would have been disappointed. I think it is an ungracious thing for the Opposition to say that, because these railways happen to run through Labour electorates, they are political railways. I am surprised at the leader of the Opposition. Of course, I am not surprised at the hon. member for Drayton. He says anything that comes into his head. (Laughter.) He calls us murderers and all the rest of it, and says we are not fit to associate with him. Our railway policy is to build railways into Crown lands to induce settlement, and, at any rate, three of these lines will do that. Then we have another principle in our policy—the linking up of these lines out West as quickly as possible, and to build the North Coast Railway; and, in doing that, we are carrying out a good part of the policy enunciated by hon. members opposite, and it is worthy of the State, and will do good for the State.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Original question put and passed.

#### APPROVAL OF PLAN, ETC.—COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, in moving—

(1.) That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway extension from Longreach to Winton, in length 109 miles 42 chains.

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

said: It is not necessary for me to make any preliminary remarks in reference to this railway. There is no need for me to go into a lengthy description, because the reports are on the table, and have been placed in members' boxes, and they can read them for themselves. The Longreach-Winton Railway connects the Central and Northern Railway systems, thus making a connection of the three railway systems of the State—the Southern, Central, and Northern. The length of the line is 110 miles, and the estimated cost is £531,702—that is, £4,834 per mile. The estimated cost is based on war prices for rails, because the prices for rails are a great deal higher than they have ever been before, which makes the construction of railways more expensive at the present time than previously. We might have waited for the construction of this line if there had been any hope that the railway material would be any cheaper, but it is considered

that for a long time after the war railway material will still be dear, and that nothing would be gained by waiting so far as that is concerned.

MR. MORGAN: Have you fixed a minimum wage for the workmen?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So far as that is concerned, the hon. member knows we are paying very decent wages, equal to New South Wales. At the present time, rolling-stock, stores, material, or staff sent to the North have to be conveyed by boat or else by motor-car across to Winton. With this connection made the department will be able to make transfers over its own lines. Frequently the traffic in one division

may be very brisk, while traffic in another division may be slack.

[5 p.m.] Surplus rolling-stock could be rapidly transferred from one division to another, which would mean facilitating business and a saving in money. The line, in addition, traverses very fine country. The line will go through some of the finest sheep country in the State, and it will enable us to get the wool grown there more rapidly to market, and in drought times it will enable stock to be transferred to areas where there is grass and water, and that will be a considerable saving to the State. The general feeling is that if this line had been built at the present time a very great number of sheep and cattle would have been saved to the State. It would have been of the greatest convenience to the meatworks, and would, perhaps, have kept some of the meatworks going if the cattle from the north-west could have been brought to the South. Then there is another consideration. In having this connection, there will be no need to go on building the line from Windorah to Springvale, that is the other section of the Great Western Railway. This will form a connection, and the Railway Commissioner, at any rate, is of the opinion that it will meet the wants of the West for a considerable time to come. The country benefited by this railway is mostly Crown lands. The total area benefited is 22,014 square miles, of which only 425 square miles are freehold or agricultural selections, 58 square miles of vacant Crown lands, and 475 square miles open for grazing selection. So we find that there will be closer settlement in that district if the railway is built—closer settlement so far as grazing is concerned. Some of the big stations will be broken up and settled by grazing farmers, and, as everyone knows, the grazing farmer does more for the State than the big squatter. It is proposed to have level bridges over the Thomson and Darr rivers, as a great extent of the country is covered by flood waters, and to build a high level bridge out of flood influence would be at a prohibitive price. I do not think I need say anything more in relation to this railway. It is a national railway, and not a Central District railway, as has been said. It is a railway that really belongs to the North and South, and not to the Centre, and, being a national railway, instead of hon. members opposite opposing it, they should allow the resolutions to be carried. I am sorry that these railways have not been brought in earlier. I would have brought them in earlier if I could have done so, but, having brought them in, I hope hon. members will pass them quickly and let us get to business and bring this session to a close.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I would like the Minister to give us some information as to when he is likely to proceed with the construction of this railway, and also in regard to all the railways brought before this Chamber. He has told us that he has a large number of railways on the list now; railways going into agricultural centres, that will supply the need of people who have waited for a very long time, and who deserve every consideration, and I think, in fairness to the House, the Government should proceed with the construction of those lines. They have already been passed by this House as necessary for the development of Queensland. Then, the question arises as to the ability of the Government to go on with the construction of railways, owing to the cost. The Minister might give us some indication as to whether money is available for the purpose of building these lines, as well as the lines that have already been passed. We would be delighted to know that such is the case. We have always argued that this railway should be built. I myself have been across from Longreach to Winton and I know the character of the country. I know the excellence of the country there. I am not going to say that the Government are going to settle a large number of new settlers in the district, as that district, for a considerable number of years, must be devoted to sheep-raising, and sheep-raising on fairly large areas. The member for the district knows very well that a man cannot make a very good living on a small selection of 10,000 acres. Of course, he can make a living on it, but men engaged in that industry have to make something over in the good years in order to make up for the lean years that may come upon them. In ordinary seasons a person on 5,000 acres would have difficulty in making both ends meet, but in a time like this, when wool was up, he might do very well. We have, however, seen wool at a very much lower price than it is now. We have seen the very best wool for two or three years in succession only bringing 6½d. per lb., and when these times come the grazing farmer on a small area will find that things are not right.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They have had a number of good years now.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Yes; but prior to that they had a number of bad years, and, unfortunately, some of them were wiped out altogether, but the men who took their places made a good thing out of it. I do not want to see any man wiped out. In districts such as that, what is a living area is in very much doubt. However, the real necessity for the railway is to make a connecting link between the Northern and Central system, which means also the Southern system, and in times of drought the railway would be of very great use. Personally, I would like to see the line built, but what is astonishing to me is the cost of it. The country is comparatively level, and does not present any engineering difficulties.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is an increase in the cost of railway material owing to the war of over £600 a mile.

HON. J. TOLMIE: If the hon. gentleman is going to build the railway straight away, I can quite realise that the price will be considerably higher than it would have been

*Hon. J. Tolmie.*

three years ago. However, I have no intention of opposing the railway. I have always done my best to assist every district to get railway communication. I believe the iron road is the only road to open up Queensland as it ought to be opened up, and I am pleased to see that this railway has been brought down, as it will be of great benefit to Queensland.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I must say that the building of this railway line from Longreach to Winton affords me a great deal of pleasure, not because the line is going into the Gregory electorate, but because it is a line which has a great many national advantages. One of the greatest of its national advantages is the fact of it linking up the Northern and Central districts. I do not want to enlarge on what the leader of the Opposition and the Secretary for Railways have said in this respect, but I would like to point out, as the Commissioner has said, that the Railway Department pays over £20,000 per year now for the carriage by sea of various materials for the Northern Railway, and things coming from the North down to the Southern railways. As the Northern railways are extended—and they are being rapidly extended—that cost will be greatly increased, and this railway will mean an even greater saving in the years to come, and the sooner it is built the better for all concerned. Apart from that, there is one fact which I do not think many hon. members are aware of at the present time, that is that the country north of Winton right up towards Cloncurry and up in the Gulf is country which has never known a drought to the same extent as the country in the Southern and Central parts of Queensland. Around the Camooweal district they had 18 or 19 inches of rain in January and February. I know I was hung up there with wet weather, and that there was a tremendous amount of rain. I know also that right throughout the Gulf country and right up to the borders of the Northern Territory at the present time there is a tremendous number of fat cattle, despite the arguments of hon. members from time to time that there are no fat cattle in Queensland. These cattle could be sent down to the meatworks if there was a railway from Winton to Longreach. That railway is needed badly, because the country from Winton north has always been in a fairly good condition, and now is in such a really fair condition, compared with other parts of Queensland, that stock could have been travelled down from the Gulf almost to Winton. So if the line had been constructed long ago from Winton to Longreach we would have been enabled to get fat stock down here instead of having to eat steak which seems to have come from the hoof. Further than that, I would like to refer to the statement of the hon. member for Drayton as to the building of this railway. In a particularly narrow speech he pointed out that the railway was only being built for the purpose of taking away the trade from Townsville and giving it to Rockhampton. I think this Government is going to rise a little above these petty personal considerations. If a Government cannot do more than attempt to build railways for the sake of bringing trade from one particular town to another, then it is about time that Government was put out of office. At any rate, this Government in building the Winton to Longreach Railway, which has so many

natural and national advantages, are doing something to get away from the old parish pump idea. I do not know of any members on this side of the House who are desirous of having railways run into their own electorates for the purpose of leaving other and better situated districts out of the running. The argument of the hon. member for Drayton in that connection was ill-timed and venomous, and not in accordance with the facts. The hon. member for Drayton also used the argument that no land will be made available for settlement by the construction of this railway.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is all occupied, carrying sheep to its full amount.

Mr. POLLOCK: What nonsense! That country has never been occupied, and it has never carried its full amount of sheep, because it has never been cut up in order to allow the smaller man a chance to stock it more fully. Many of the big companies who have stocked that country have their headquarters in Sydney, and their managers are boundary riders. Some of the stations do not carry stock to their full capacity, but the owners are satisfied. I know of one case in which a manager allowed 10,000 sheep to die in a paddock because a wire had not come from Sydney, from which place the station was being controlled, telling him to shift the sheep.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have never seen a manager who would allow 10,000 sheep to die in a paddock.

Mr. POLLOCK: Many of these managers are simply boundary riders who have to take their instructions from Sydney. The hon. member said that this line will not open up more country for settlement. That is a statement which is not in accordance with fact. The country which will be opened up by this railway comprises some of the best grazing land in Queensland, and, as the Secretary for Railways pointed out, out of the 22,000 square miles which the railway will tap, only 500 square miles are alienated from the Crown. The country is held by big owners, and when it is opened up by this railway a far larger number of people will be settled upon the land, and the land will be used to better purpose than would be the case under other conditions. The construction of this railway will be a benefit to the district and to the whole of the people of Queensland.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have no doubt that the hon. gentleman knows more about this country than I do, although I have been through it a few times. Still, the hon. member must admit that the country has been stocked pretty well up to its carrying capacity. I do not say that it will not be more fully stocked if it is cut up and leased in smaller areas. As for the statement of the hon. member that a certain station manager allowed 10,000 sheep to perish in a paddock because he did not receive a wire from Sydney, I think the hon. member scarcely knows what kind of men station managers in the West are. I have found some of the station managers in the West among the finest people to be met with in Queensland. I know that the managers are restricted in their action to a great extent, but I consider that the statement of the hon. member is a libel on those gentlemen.

Mr. POLLOCK: I can prove it to you.

[*Hon. J. Tolmie.*]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I understand the Western people better than to accept a statement of that kind. I admit that there will be many advantages gained from the construction of this railway, but there is one matter on which I should like some information from the Minister. The Mount Russell Railway runs through a freehold of something like 100,000 acres at the end of the line, and the owners of that freehold lodged a deposit of £20,000 with the late Government to cover the expense of building the railway through their land. I believe that the present Government have refused to build that line. In the country to be traversed by this proposed railway there are 320,000 acres, or 500 square miles of freehold, and I should like to know whether the owners of that land are going to pay anything towards the construction of this railway.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): I do not intend to oppose this railway, because I think it will be a good thing to build the line. But the arguments used by the Minister and the hon. member for Gregory are so utterly absurd that I think it is desirable to make some reply to them. To say that this line will open up a lot of country which is not now available is nonsense.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said the country would be cut up, not opened up.

Mr. FORSYTH: The country will be cut up whether this railway is built or not, and the building of the line will not mean the selection of one single acre more between Winton and Longreach than would be taken up if the railway were not built.

Mr. POLLOCK: Where is the greater demand for grazing selections—on land near a railway, or on land where there is no railway?

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. member knew a great deal about this country twenty-five years ago, but I defy him or the Minister to point to any station between Winton and Longreach where there will be one single acre more selected because of the building of this railway. The country there is first-class country, as rich country as you will find anywhere in Queensland, and when the land is resumed, every inch of it will be selected. The reason I support this proposal is that the railway will link up two lines, and thus enable plant to be shifted from one part of the State to another, and save the expenditure of a considerable amount of money by the department. That is the principal reason why the line should be built. At the present time none of the land between Winton and Longreach is more than 50 miles from a railway. Like the leader of the Opposition, I do not understand why this line is going to cost so much money, as there are no engineering difficulties to contend with, as far as I know. The Minister said that the material will cost more on account of the war. No doubt, that is so.

Mr. POLLOCK: They will need a bridge over 3 miles long across the Thomson.

Mr. FORSYTH: If there is going to be a bridge 3 miles long across the Thomson, that will mean the expenditure of a considerable sum of money.

Mr. POLLOCK: It will be between 2 and 3 miles long, at any rate.

Mr. FORSYTH: There will not be many cuttings on the line, so that it should not be

an expensive railway to build. However, the engineer should know better than I do what the cost will be. But I cannot understand how the hon. gentleman can make out that rails are not likely to be any cheaper for some years after the war is over.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is the opinion of the expert.

Mr. FORSYTH: Will there not be more vessels available for carrying cargo after the war? I know that at the present time the rates for freight are abnormally high, but those rates should be reduced when the war is over and more steamers are available for carrying cargo, and we should be able to get our rails carried at a much cheaper rate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I simply told you that the price of material on account of war conditions is reckoned at £600 per mile; but you know better than the experts.

Mr. FORSYTH: No. I do not say that just now the material will not cost £600 per mile. I am discussing the question of rates after the war. The hon. gentleman said he knew they would not be very much cheaper.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is the opinion of the experts.

Mr. FORSYTH. I know as much about that matter as the hon. gentleman or his experts, and I say that after the war you will have available hundreds and thousands of vessels which are now being used for war purposes, and that that will mean a reduction in the rates. Nothing in the wide world can prevent the rates being cheaper.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We will have them cheaper then.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes. I think that you will be able to buy your rails much cheaper. I hope so; because the cheaper we get the rails the less expense it will be for the people of Queensland. So far as this railway is concerned, I think it will do a great deal of good, as it will link up the various systems in Queensland, and we will be able to remove live stock from one line [5.30 p.m.] to another, while it will also be convenient for shifting rolling-stock from the southern portion to the northern portion of the State. The line will also be of great benefit to the people of Queensland, and from that point of view alone it will be a good thing to build it.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, which was agreed to by the House.

#### MANY PEAKS TO NEW CANNINDAH EXTENSION.

##### MOTION TO GO INTO COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

“1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension from Many Peaks to New Cannindah, in length 27 miles 53 chains.

*Hon. J. Adamson.*]

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

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the whole history of railway extension into the Upper Burnett will show that I have always taken, from my point of view, as representing the Burnett, that cities were not to come into consideration at all. The Minister for Railways, by his remarks, indicates that I have advocated Maryborough, but I want to say that, right along the line, ever since I have been in this House, I have advocated that the line to the Upper Burnett should be built wherever it was thought best in the interests of the people who have to pay for it. I think the Minister will bear me out in that. In 1912, in speaking in this House, I made the following remarks, which will be found on page 260 of "Hansard":—

"As member for the Burnett, I would be very pleased if the Government allowed us to know their policy of railway construction in the Burnett. For instance, there are several rival routes of the proposed railway to Dalgangal; and while I am not going to support any particular route, I say that a line to Dalgangal should be built, and the experts of the department can say which route should be adopted."

Following on that, in 1913, on page 261 of "Hansard," it will be seen that I said—

"We see a competition between Maryborough and Bundaberg as to which should have the railway connection; and on the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Port Curtis (Mr. Kessell) showed that people in his district are wondering how they can get access to this rich asset of Southern Queensland. I think, as I have said, that it would be a very good thing if the Minister would state clearly when he is going to start this line, which will open up lands which the Lands Department now are cutting up."

I spoke again on the same subject in 1914. On page 301 it will be seen that I continued to urge that expert advice should be given on the various railway proposals in the Upper Burnett, so that the best country should be served. I am making these remarks because the Minister for Railways, probably unintentionally, left an inference that I was advocating the interests of Maryborough. Then on page 304, in the same year, it will be found that I said—

"Since so much has been said about the Burnett district, I want to say that the hon. member for Port Curtis, the hon. member for Maryborough, the hon. member for Wide Bay, and many other hon. members, not forgetting the Minister for Agriculture, are all claiming a piece of this Burnett district. (Laughter.) If these people's differences were not so great, we might have had the line already, but they continue to try and court the Burnett. I can assure you that the line which the Minister for Railways, through his responsible officers, says is the best for the country, is the

line which is going to receive my support and the support of this Chamber."

What happened since then? Since that time the Minister for Railways brought forward his railway proposals based on expert advice, and I supported them in this Chamber. The proposal was a railway extension from Mundubbera to Dalgangal. It was agreed that that line should be built, and that was the advice given by the experts of the department. As I knew that the Minister was bringing in a railway extension into the Upper Burnett from another place, I asked him when the line from Mundubbera to Dalgangal would be built, and he told me that he did not know that it would be built at all. He also told me that the line from the Upper Burnett was going to be connected with Gladstone, as Gladstone was the port. When that railway was passed from Mundubbera to the Upper Burnett it was not only to tap that country, but it enabled both Bundaberg and Maryborough to receive access to this country. The line from Goondoon to Kalliwa was passed at a cost of £8,000 per mile. The present Minister for Railways has made available thousands of pounds in connection with that Kalliwa line to start its construction, and it should have the effect of giving to Bundaberg some of the spoils as well as Maryborough, and it will make it possible for two ports to be fed from the Upper Burnett. Although the Minister is constructing the Kalliwa line, he is taking away from that railway the benefit it would receive if the railway policy of the late Minister was carried out. If the line from Mundubbera to the Upper Burnett was constructed, it would act as a feeder to the Kalliwa line, but the Government are not going to construct that line, and that is what I protest against. I have never protested against Gladstone coming in and taking some of the Upper Burnett country. I say distinctly that I would like to see a line to connect Many Peaks with Mundubbera. That would bring the line right through. But I do protest against the action of the Minister in coming along and proposing the construction of the line from Many Peaks to New Cannindah at £15,000 per mile after the assurance that was given last session when the line was passed from Mundubbera to the Upper Burnett. If the Minister was not going to build the line from Mundubbera to the Upper Burnett, which was to cost £4,472 per mile, what was the use of advocating and fighting for the Kalliwa line? There is plenty of room, as I have always said, for several railways into the Upper Burnett, but the Minister is going to allow this country to feed the Central district and take away a railway 60 miles south. The last Government passed the Mundubbera Railway, and this Government come along and cast it on one side. If we constructed the railways passed last year, it would prove of great advantage to hundreds of settlers. That is what I am protesting against. Mr. Phillips, an eminent railway engineer, and Mr. Charlton, an eminent land surveyor and expert, made an exhaustive report on the whole of the Upper Burnett country, and that report showed that the cheapest railway would be one built from Mundubbera to the Upper Burnett. It was on the strength of that report that the line was built to Mundubbera. That report showed that it was almost an impossibility to construct a railway across the Dawes Range to Many

[Hon. J. Adamson.]

Peaks, and that the best way of giving access to the Upper Burnett country was from Mundubbera across to Kalliwa Creek. The surveys were carried out at great expense by the Railway Department and the Lands Department, and many settlers have gone there. The railway was passed for the benefit of the settlers there, and now we have a proposal to tap the Upper Burnett country from another direction altogether. I welcome the line from Many Peaks into the Upper Burnett, but we must not allow North or Central Queensland to strip any country districts of what is their due, and I will not allow myself to be associated, whether in the interests of the department or not, with any particular port in the development of that Upper Burnett country. That railway should not be constructed, and it should not be passed here without the Minister for Railways saying that he will stand by the railway that was passed last session from Mundubbera to the Northern Burnett, in the hope that the two railways would be joined.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am rather surprised at the remarks made by the hon. member who spoke last. They simply bear out the suggestion made by the hon. member for Burke that these railways are to take the place of some of those which have been passed. The Minister for Railways says he has always stood by the settlers, and I hope he will stand by the people who have settled in the country with the expectation and on the promise of railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am doing it now, too.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If he is earnest in that, why has he stated that he will not build a certain railway in the Burnett district which the hon. member who spoke last says he is not going on with. I am sorry that the Minister did not see fit to give the information I asked for about the amount that the owners of the freehold are paying in connection with the last railway.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, I shall ask for that information by questions in the House to-morrow.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would just like to say with regard to what the hon. member for Burnett said when he spoke about the Burnett and Wide Bay districts being the Cinderella in regard to railways, that his speech is not in harmony with facts.

Mr. CORSER: I said the Burnett; not Wide Bay.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I say, if there are any Cinderellas, that the Gladstone district has been one of the number. In the Wide Bay district during the last six years nearly £900,000 has been spent in railways.

Mr. CORSER: Was it warranted?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There are other districts that have not had money spent in them on railways, and they should get a chance as well as the district the hon. member represents. The distance between Dalgangal and Mundubbera is 59 miles, and the men on the land will have to pay a permanent charge for all time to have their produce taken to Maryborough, whereas they will have it taken in 80 to 90 miles from

Dalgangal to Gladstone. If the hon. gentleman can prove that the Mundubbera to the North Burnett line is a better line than the one from Gladstone, it will be considered. But I am not going to do anything that is unfair, and I contend that Gladstone should have something like fair play. I think it is time it had a chance.

Mr. CORSER: Are you going to construct the line from Mundubbera through Eidsvold?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will be considered still further. I am not going to construct it without further consideration.

Mr. CORSER: A most unsatisfactory reply. Question put and passed.

#### APPROVAL OF PLAN, ETC.—COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, in moving—

"1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension from Many Peaks to New Cannindah, in length 27 miles 53 chains.

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

said: I have a few facts with regard to this line on which there has already been considerable discussion. I need only be brief. The object of this line is to bring the rich land of the Upper Burnett into touch with its natural port, Gladstone. It is in length 23 miles. It is practically only a section, and it is proposed later on to extend the line into the Upper Burnett. The estimated cost is £404,245. The rise in the cost of rails due to the war has increased the cost by £16,000. Whatever the hon. member for Murrumba may say, we cannot help the increase in the cost of materials, and as to whether the charges for freight and insurance will remain high for only a short period after the war is a matter for others to determine as well as that hon. member. There are other experts as well as he. Because of the difficulty of getting freight and rails from either America or England, the cost is considerably increased. The country is very difficult, which accounts for the high estimated cost, and yet we have a fairly good grade—something between 1 in 33 and 1 in 40 is the highest—and, taking it altogether, there are other lines that have quite as steep gradients. The area benefited by the line is 525,440 acres, of which only 15 square miles is freehold. On the Dawes Range are splendid forests of pine and hardwood, and a line from Gladstone tapping the Upper Burnett is practically nearer than forcing this traffic to go to Maryborough. It may be said that this country legitimately belongs to the port of Bundaberg, but there are serious difficulties in reaching it from that port.

Mr. CORSER: What about the Goondoon line?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Goondoon-Kalliwa line was proposed principally to benefit the Gin Gin Mill and open up Crown lands in the Goodnight Scrub.

Mr. CORSER: It is to connect with the Gayndah line.

*Hon. J. Adamson.]*

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As far as this country is concerned, it is just possible that some other lines may benefit some parts of it. Some people said there was room for two railway systems in the Burnett. Time will prove this. It is time now, in my opinion, that the Gladstone district should have some money spent in it for railway construction, as well as the Wide Bay and Burnett.

Mr. MURPHY: Gladstone is the best port in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am quite prepared to admit that, and I think that port should have fair play. I do not think I need say anything further, as the reports are before the House.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, which was agreed to by the House.

#### MERINDA TO BOWEN COALFIELDS RAILWAY.

##### APPROVAL OF PLAN, ETC.—COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—

“1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed branch railway from Merinda to Bowen Coalfields, in length 44 miles 50 chains.

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

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, which was agreed to by the House.

#### ORALLO TO INJUNE CREEK RAILWAY EXTENSION.

##### APPROVAL OF PLAN, ETC.—COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—

“1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway extension from Orallo to Injune Creek, in length 31 miles.

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

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am very glad that the Minister has introduced this line from Orallo to Injune Creek, as it is one of those lines that ought to be pushed on in the interest of the settlers. Personally, I have

thought that the line from Roma [7 p.m.] to Orallo was too long delayed, and after the line leaves Orallo it runs into first-class country, very suitable for settlement under the best conditions. I had an opportunity of visiting the district and interviewing a number of the settlers and learning from them what they were doing. They are settled on practically small areas, and although they certainly work very hard, they were contented and happy, and were making a living, and what they can do, others can do in the same

[Hon. J. Adamson.

district, more particularly when they have railway facilities. I am glad to see that a railway is to be constructed to that district, because there is good country there for settlement, and if it was not soon opened up by railway communication, it would become infested with prickly-pear. I heard it said this afternoon that this railway was going through pear country. That is not the case at all. It is going through first-class country, and will help very materially to people that portion of Queensland, and I have great pleasure in supporting the proposition. What I want to point out is the marked difference in the cost of construction of this line as compared with the other lines already passed. The previous line is estimated to cost nearly four times as much, but one advantage that that railway had was that it would tap country represented by the Secretary for Railways.

Mr. MURPHY: A good deal has been said about creating settlement by the construction of a railway such as this, but when we find that the Commissioner points out that this railway is only likely to pay .69 per cent. on the cost of construction, I think the people of Queensland are asked to pay too high a cost for settlement. It shows the advantages of the abolition of the guarantee system. The general taxpayer will have to provide the interest on the cost of this railway, and it seems to me that we could get settlement along railways which have already been built at an enormous cost to the State to much greater advantage than by spending thousands of pounds in building this railway. It seems to me that we have any amount of Crown lands into which railways have been constructed at enormous cost which might very well be settled before spending money on the construction of more railways ostensibly for settlement purposes. It seems to me that there is any amount of Crown land along railway lines available for settlement at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Whereabouts?

Mr. MURPHY: The reports which come from the Lands Office show that there is plenty of land available for settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Alongside railways?

Mr. MURPHY: In the neighbourhood of railways.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Name them.

Mr. MURPHY: Is the Secretary for Railways going to ask this House to believe that after the expenditure of £36,000,000 to £40,000,000 on railway construction in Queensland, and with a population of a little over 500,000, that the immense area comprised within the boundaries of Queensland is all occupied, and there is no agricultural land available for settlement? It is no good arguing that at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will argue about that after you sit down.

Mr. MURPHY: If the hon. gentleman can tell me that there is no land available for settlement after spending all this money on railway construction, all I have got to say is that the greater part of the lands of Queensland cannot be fit for settlement. The Secretary for Public Lands might argue, as the leader of the Opposition has pointed out, that the building of the railway will

enable the Government to some extent to cope with the spread of pear, but it seems to me that, so far as settlement is concerned, Queensland is paying a pretty high price when it is putting thousands of pounds into a railway like this, which will only return .69 per cent. for the sake of making available land for a comparatively small number of settlers.

Mr. CORSER: The most pleasing feature of this proposal is that it is only to cost £4,356 per mile. It is a pleasing comparison when we remember that the railway into the Upper Burnett is estimated to cost £15,000 per mile. That is more than the via recta cost. And we must remember that that £15,000 a mile railway is a substitute for a line in the Upper Burnett that was only estimated to cost £4,472 per mile.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What would the settlers have to pay for ever on that line?

Mr. CORSER: The less expensive line is the shorter distance.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Three times the distance.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: And it does not propose to go within 66 miles of the terminus of the one closed down.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member not to discuss that proposition any further.

Mr. CORSER: I sincerely trust that this line will open up land suitable for settlement, and land which is well watered. That is the kind of land that we trust the Minister for Lands is giving his attention to, and we hope, even if it is to be found in his electorate, that this railway will make such lands available. In many parts of Queensland we have very fine lands that are not receiving attention, but we sincerely trust that the craving for good land will be in some manner eased by the construction of this line. We sincerely hope that it is a good proposal, although we have not very much information in regard to it.

Mr. GRAYSON: The Commissioner. in his report, states that—

“For the first 9½ miles, sandy soil country, heavily timbered with box, wattle, sandalwood, cypress pine, and broad-leaved ironbark, is traversed. From 38 miles to the Great Dividing Range dense brigalow, belah, and scrub undergrowth with patches of box obtain. From the range to the terminus, better country is traversed. Most of the country to 48 miles varies from light sandy loam to red or brown soil, and should be suitable for cereal crops, whilst on the Injune Creek fall, provided there is an average rainfall, appears to be good grazing country.”

I do not know that I have ever opposed a single railway since I have been in Parliament, and I do not intend to oppose this proposal, but it appears to me that this line should have received further investigation. The line from Roma to Orallo runs through pear country, and my experience is that the construction of railways through pear country will be the means of eradicating pear is a false idea. I know in the Talwood and Thallon districts there is an immense area of prickly-pear land, and

since a railway has been constructed in those districts an immense area of prickly-pear land has been thrown open for selection, but I do not believe that 100 acres of pear have been eradicated. I know for a fact that in the Roma district we have an excellent wheat belt, and with a fair rainfall it would be one of the best wheat-growing districts we have in Queensland. With a fair rainfall it will probably be one of the best wheat-growing districts we have in Queensland, and if the construction of this railway is likely to increase the area of land put under wheat cultivation I should hesitate to oppose the line. The Commissioner states that most of the country to 48 miles should be suitable for cereal crops, but whether the land is suitable for that purpose or not is a matter of opinion. The profit which is likely to be derived from the land is very small indeed, and I think it is a pity that the Commissioner did not send out two practical men to thoroughly investigate the country and report on its suitability for agricultural pursuits. During the last three sessions railway proposals which were tabled by the Denham Government met with strenuous opposition from some members sitting on the Ministerial bench, but not from the Minister for Railways. No member of the House opposed those lines more strenuously than the present Minister for Lands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The via recta.

Mr. GRAYSON: I would not be in order in discussing the via recta, but I may say that the via recta is a better proposition than this railway. There is no comparison between the value of this line and the value of the via recta, which is a national railway.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GRAYSON: The via recta is a line which ought to be constructed. However, I am not vindictive. If I were, I would offer every objection in my power to the passing of this particular line, but I have no intention of doing that. The Minister for Railways is anxious that this line should pass, and has informed us that its construction will encourage settlement, and any line which will do that will have my support. There is no State in our Commonwealth that requires railway construction more than Queensland does. We have no navigable rivers, and the only means of transport we can depend upon for the conveyance of produce from the country districts to the markets are railways. I am given to understand that on this particular line there is almost no settlement. The Government state that it will tap a certain area of country at the terminus of the section. I know of land there which has been taken up by squatters, who have failed in their endeavours to make it a paying proposition, but I do not intend to oppose the line. I hope the construction of the railway will be the means of inducing many small settlers to settle on the land and go in for cereal production.

Mr. GUNN: I notice that the Commissioner states in his report that he expects this line to pay only .69 per cent. I cannot help contrasting that with what might have been expected from the building of a line from Milmerran to Kooroongarra, which I am convinced would pay ever so much more than that. In fact, a deputation which I introduced to the Minister were prepared to

*Mr. Gunn.]*

guarantee that line up to 3 per cent. There are a number of people settled on the land in that district, and it has a better rainfall, is nearer the coast, and has better agricultural land than is to be found in the district which this proposed line will traverse.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member not to discuss the merits of the Kooroongarra district. Just now we are discussing the Orallo district.

Mr. GUNN: Yes, I understand that. This line is not supposed to be a paying line, yet the railway is to be constructed when lines might be built in better districts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am rather surprised at the hon. member for Cunningham suggesting that the district through which this railway is going is one which does not warrant the expenditure, since that same gentleman voted for the first section of the line which passes through prickly-pear country, and which, if it stayed there, would be run at a loss for all time; whereas this section will make a large area of good land available for selection. I can assure the House—I do not think it is necessary to assure members who have been in the House any length of time, but I assure younger members—that this railway will open up—as the leader of the Opposition and late Minister for Lands has told us—some excellent country well suited for wheat-growing, dairying, and fruit-growing. It is an area of land the equal of which can hardly be found in Southern Queensland. The Upper Burnett country is, I believe, equal, if not superior, to it; but I know of no other place where an equal area of good land—something over 500,000 acres—can be made almost immediately available for settlement, and that land is absolutely free from pear. It has been said that the railway will not pay more than .69 per cent. Why? Because there is no settlement in that part of the country. The railway will open up virgin land upon which not a soul is living, and by settling that land we shall prevent the pear from spreading into clean land, so that we shall add to instead of depreciate the value of the land. That would not be the case if the railway was not built; but if the railway is built the land will be worth considerably more than it is at the present time. The Government have no need to apologise for submitting to the Committee a railway such as this, as its construction will be a good thing for Queensland. It is a great pity that railways have not been built to precede settlement in the past. With the construction of this railway, the people who settle in that part of the country can go on the land with the assurance that, if they engage in agricultural pursuits, they will have some means of carrying their produce to market. At the present time the few people who live in the district have small cultivated plots around their residences, showing what can be done in the way of cultivation, but at the same time showing, in the most emphatic way, that it is no use growing stuff that far out, because it does not pay to cart it into the railway. We have no land free from pear in Southern Queensland at the present time that is fit for settlement. Why? Because we have built our railways in a number of cases through freehold properties, through large

[Mr. Gunn.

estates, and in other cases through lands which people have got possession of afterwards. In my own electorate I could count over 500,000 acres of land abutting on the railway which is held to-day as freeholds. That is why we have miles and miles of railway running through land which is not properly settled.

Mr. MURPHY: That is why you are repealing the guarantee.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is why I voted for the land tax—because that tax will burst up big estates and make the land available for close settlement.

Mr. MURPHY: You said the other day that you would make the owners of city properties pay.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Minister for Railways informs me that the construction of this railway will render available 1,460 square miles of Crown land, and I am sure that the building of the line will be a great benefit to that district and to Queensland as a whole.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, which was agreed to.

#### LAND TAX BILL.

##### CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The TREASURER: Mr. Speaker—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair.

The SPEAKER: Before leaving the chair, I would like to point out that the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 10, adding the words "for two years from such first day of July and no longer" is [7.30 p.m.] an infringement of the undoubted rights and privileges of this House. Our own Standing Orders set out exactly when this House shall not insist on its privileges, and members will see that by referring to Standing Order No. 300, dealing with "financial business of the House." In regard to the question of taxation proposals, I will read to the House what "May" says on the matter. Dealing with taxation proposals amended by the House of Lords, "May" says, on page 575—

"It follows, accordingly, that the Lords may not amend the provisions in Bills which they receive from the Commons dealing with the above-mentioned subjects"—

that is taxation Bills—

"so as to alter, whether by increase or reduction, the amount of a rate or charge—its duration, mode of assessment, levy, collection, appropriation, or management."

This amendment of the Legislative Council certainly interferes with the duration of this land tax, and consequently I have to inform the House that, in my opinion, it is interfering with the undoubted rights and privileges of this House, whose privileges should be safeguarded.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

## COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Coyne, Warrego, in the chair.*)

On clause 10—"Levy of land tax"—

The TREASURER: The Speaker had taken exception to the amendment inserted by the Legislative Council. He thought there was nothing else for the Committee to do but to uphold the privileges of the Assembly by disagreeing to the Council's amendment. The Council had no warrant in interfering in this matter with the taxation proposals which emanated from the Assembly. He moved that the amendment be disagreed to. He wanted particularly to call the attention of members to the constitutional aspect of the question, because it seemed likely to arise again. They saw what had taken place in the Council in connection with the Income Tax Bill, so that they should shortly have the same principle under consideration. The Council disregarded entirely the limitations imposed on them by the Standing Orders and the Constitution with regard to interference with taxation Bills. It was his opinion, and he thought this must be concurred in by all members, that it was entirely outside the competence of the Legislative Council to insert an amendment of that kind in any taxation Bill proposed in the Assembly. It was an infringement of the powers of the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Council was specifically excluded from interfering with those powers by the terms of the Queensland Constitution, and also by the rules governing both Houses. The Council was exclusively prohibited from initiating or amending Bills that created a charge upon the people. The Legislative Council could not amend any Bill authorising the imposition of a tax or levy, and they could not alter the incidence of taxation, the method of collection of taxes, or appropriation of a tax, nor could the Council interfere with the duration of a tax. That was specifically and clearly set down in the decisions which had been given at one time and another both in the Assembly and in the Council. In order to set forth clearly what the position was and to save any controversy between the two Chambers, he called the attention of members to the reference, particularly to the procedure, governing the two Chambers in connection with taxation Bills. The Speaker had referred to page 575 of "May," giving the limitations of the Lords as regarded money Bills, and that was applicable to the Legislative Council. "May," on a previous page, dealt with the "Origin of the Lords' Position," in which he sets out—

"The Commons, having during nearly three centuries claimed the right to include the members of the House of Lords in the taxation levied upon the subjects of the Crown, advanced this claim still further by resolving, 1671, 'That in all aids given to the King by the Commons, the rate or tax ought not to be altered by the Lords'; and, by a second resolution, 3rd July, 1678, 'That all aids and supplies, and aids to His Majesty in Parliament, are the sole gift of the Commons; and all Bills for the granting of any such aids and supplies ought to begin with the Commons; and that it is the undoubted and sole right of the Commons to direct, limit, and appoint in such Bills the ends, purposes,

considerations, conditions, limitations, and qualifications of such grants which ought not to be changed or altered by the House of Lords.'"

Then Sir Erskine May mentions—

"The Lords may not amend the provisions in Bills which they receive from the Commons dealing with the above-mentioned subjects so as to alter, whether by increase or reduction, the amount of a rate or charge—its duration, mode of assessment, levy, collection, appropriation, or management."

Sir Erskine May goes on, on page 576—

"If otherwise unobjectionable, the Commons usually accept amendments by the Lords, which, though not strictly regular, do not materially infringe the privileges of the Commons; and they justify their conduct by an entry inserted in the journal under direction from the Speaker, stating, for instance, that the amendments are verbal—further the intention of the House—carry out the intention of the Commons—make the provisions of the Bill uniform and consistent—supply and omission in the Bill—are rendered necessary by several Acts recently passed—or that the amendment does not alter or otherwise affect any valuation or assessment of taxation."

Sir Erskine May, in his "Parliamentary Practice," laid it down that the power of the Lords was strictly limited in the matter of interference with taxation Bills. As he pointed out, sometimes the Commons accepted minor amendments, but the Speaker directed that the reason for the acceptance should be set forth in the journals and records of the House. In looking up the precedence that had occurred in the Parliaments of the Dominion, he found that a notable case occurred in Queensland many years ago, when the matter finally went for decision to the Privy Council. It afforded a very good analogy of the present situation, and it was one which should guide them in determining their attitude towards the Legislative Council. It was one which should determine the attitude of the Council in not insisting on its interference with the privileges of the Assembly. He would quote from "Keith's Responsible Government in the Dominions" to show the history of the dispute between the two Houses in connection with money Bills. "Keith" laid it down—

"THE NOMINEE HOUSES AND MONEY BILLS.

"The question of the powers of the Lower and Upper Houses in Legislatures with nominee Upper Houses has been finally settled by a decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, to which the matter was referred in 1886 by the request of both Houses of the Parliament of Queensland."

He was omitting many of the details of the case, but "Keith" went on as follows:—

"The same principles were reasserted in the Queensland case, but with the added dignity of the authority of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The following extracts show the question put and the reply:—

Most Gracious Sovereign—

We, Your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative

*Hon. E. G. Theodore.]*

Council and Legislative Assembly of Queensland in Parliament assembled, humbly approach Your Majesty with a renewed assurance of our affection and loyalty towards Your Majesty's person and Government.

Questions have arisen between the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly with respect to the relative rights and powers of the two Houses, which questions we are desirous of submitting for the opinion of Your Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council."

"1. The Constitution Act of Queensland, 31 Vict. No. 38, contains the following provisions:—

"Section 1. 'There shall be within the said Colony of Queensland a Legislative Council and a Legislative Assembly.'

"Section 2. 'Within the said Colony of Queensland, Her Majesty shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the said Council and Assembly, to make laws for the peace, welfare, and good government of the Colony in all cases whatsoever. Provided that all Bills for appropriating any part of the public revenue, for imposing any new rate, tax, or impost, subject always to the limitations hereinafter provided, shall originate in the Legislative Assembly of the said Colony.'

He would omit several of the paragraphs of the address which were not apropos, and go on to paragraph 8, which reads—

"8. On the 12th of November the Legislative Assembly returned the Bill to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

"'The Legislative Assembly having had under their consideration the amendments of the Legislative Council in the Appropriation Bill No. 2—

"Disagree to the said amendments for the following reasons, to which they invite the most careful consideration of the Legislative Council:—

"It has been generally admitted that in British Colonies in which there are two branches of the Legislature, the legislative functions of the Upper House correspond with those of the House of Lords, while the Lower House exercises the rights and powers of the House of Commons. This analogy is recognised in the Standing Orders of both Houses of the Parliament of Queensland, and in the form of preamble adopted in Bills of Supply, and has hitherto been invariably acted upon.'

"The Legislative Assembly maintain, and have always maintained, that (in the words of the resolution of the House of Commons of 3rd July, 1678) all aids and supplies to Her Majesty in Parliament are the sole gift of this House, and that it is their undoubted and sole right to direct, limit, and appoint, in Bills of aid and supply, the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations, and qualifications of such grants, which ought not to be changed or altered by the Legislative Council.

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

"9. On the same day the Legislative Council again returned the Bill to the Legislative Assembly with the following message:—

"'The Legislative Council having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly of this day's date, relative to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Appropriation Bill of 1885-6 No. 2, beg now to intimate that they insist on their amendments in the said Bill:—

"'Because the Council neither arrogate to themselves the position of being a reflex of the House of Lords, nor recognise the Legislative Assembly as holding the same relative position to the House of Commons.

"'The Joint Standing Orders only apply to matters of form connected with the internal management of the two Houses, and do not affect constitutional questions.

"'Because it does not appear that occasion has arisen to require that the House of Lords should exercise its powers of amending a Bill for appropriating the public revenue, and, therefore, the present case is not analogous; the right is admitted though it may not have been exercised.'

"10. On the 13th of November the Legislative Assembly, by message, proposed the appointment of a Joint Select Committee of both Houses 'to consider the present condition of public business, in consequence of no supplies having been granted to Her Majesty for the service of the current financial year.' Such committee was appointed on the same day, and on the 17th of November brought up their report, recommending, amongst other things—

"'That for the purpose of obtaining an opinion as to the relative rights and powers of both Houses with respect to money Bills, a case be prepared, and that a joint address of both Houses be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to be graciously pleased to refer such case for the opinion of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council.'

This address was signed by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of that year and by the President of the Legislative Council.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council reported on the 27th March, 1886, as follows:—

"'Your Majesty having been pleased, by Your Order in Council of the 8th March instant, to refer unto this committee a humble petition from the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of the Colony of Queensland, concerning questions which have arisen between those two bodies with regard to their relative rights and powers, together with certain documents on the subject, and to direct that this committee should consider the same and report their opinion thereupon to Your Majesty at the Board: The Lords of the committee, in obedience to Your Majesty's said Order of Reference, have taken the said petition into consideration, and, in

answer to the two questions submitted to their Lordships by the said petitioners, namely:—

“1. Whether the Constitution Act of 1867 confers on the Legislative Council powers co-ordinate with those of the Legislative Assembly in the amendment of all Bills, including money Bills?”

“2. Whether the claims of the Legislative Assembly, as set forth in their message of 12th November, 1885, are well founded?”

“Their Lordships agree humbly to report to Your Majesty as their opinion that the first of these questions should be answered in the negative, and the second in the affirmative.”

They negatived the question whether the Constitution Act of 1867 conferred on the Council powers co-ordinate with those of the Assembly, in the amendment of all Bills, including money Bills; and they affirmed the claim which the Assembly set forth in the message of 12th November, 1885. He, therefore, thought there could not be any possible doubt as to the standing of the Assembly in the matter of initiating or proposing taxation, or that the Council had no right to interfere with the imposition, levy, collection, assessment, or duration of any tax or charge upon the people. And wherever they infringed that rule or law they were exceeding their powers and encroaching on the privileges of the Assembly, and the Assembly should maintain its undoubted powers and privileges in the matter and resist any encroachment upon those powers. If at any time it became convenient to accept an amendment which did not in any way interfere with the powers of the Assembly, but which might correct an anomaly in the Bill, or insert a provision which had been overlooked when the matter was under consideration before the Assembly, it might be wise to accept the amendment, at the same time stating on record that it was simply carrying out the intentions of the Assembly. In the present case the amendment was not carrying out the intentions of the Assembly nor correcting an anomaly, but it was abrogating and limiting the powers always upheld by the Assembly. The Land Tax Bill was carried by a majority of the Legislative Assembly after full consideration and due thought, and the Council was acting very impertinently by attempting to limit the duration of the taxation authorised by the Assembly. He moved that the Council's amendment in clause 10 be disagreed to.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He remembered when he was at school and was advanced to the dignity of writing copybook headlines dealing with the saying, “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” He thought that applied to some of the communications which passed between the two Houses. He had listened to the Treasurer when he spoke about the undoubted rights possessed by the Assembly, and said they should resist any infringement on those rights. But he was afraid the trouble had been brought about by themselves by the impertinent manner in which the rights of the Legislative Council had been interfered with. They could not expect that there would not be reprisals. He had fought for the protection of the rights of the Legislative Council, that there should be no infringement of those rights by

the Assembly; and, while he was prepared to do that, he was equally prepared to fight for the rights of the Legislative Assembly. He quite agreed with the remarks that had fallen from the Treasurer in regard to this matter. (Hear, hear!) He thought, whether rightly or wrongly, that this was an infringement of the undoubted rights and privileges of the Assembly; and, believing that, he naturally would support the Treasurer in the position he had taken up, just the same as he had told the Treasurer when he did what he (Mr. Tolmie) believed was an undoubted infringement of the rights of the Legislative Council. He believed that both Houses of the Legislature should be allowed the full rights due to them, and that while the Assembly protested against any infringement of the rights of the Legislative Council, they must certainly take up the position of safeguarding their own rights. He found himself quite in accord with the Hon. the Treasurer.

Question put and passed.

On clause 30—“Rules of court”—

The TREASURER said the Council had inserted an amendment which would have the effect of requiring rules of court drawn up by judges of the Supreme Court to be laid before “both” Houses of Parliament, and not merely before the Legislative Assembly, and making provision also that if “either” House passed a resolution, of which notice had been given at any time within fifteen sitting days after the rules had been laid before such House, those rules should be disallowed. There was no great principle involved in that, and if it would have the effect of satisfying persons in another place, he saw no reason why they should not accept the amendment. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 31—

The TREASURER said the Council had seen fit to insert an amendment which gave an appeal from the Supreme Court in cases where the Crown exercised its rights to acquire land which had been undervalued by the owner for the purpose of taxation. The other House thought there was not sufficient protection when the matter was finally decided by a Supreme Court judge. He thought it might be wise to accept the amendment, and he moved accordingly.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had disagreed to the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 10, and agreed to the other amendments in the Bill.

Report adopted.

Ordered that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

“Mr. President,

“The Legislative Assembly, having had under consideration the amendments of the Legislative Council in the Land Tax Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

—Disagree to the amendment in clause 10—

“Because it is an axiom of constitutional law that the representative Chamber has the sole right of control over taxation and revenue.

*Hon. E. G. Theodore.]*

"The Legislative Assembly submit that it is not competent for the Legislative Council, when dealing with rates or charges, to alter their duration, mode of assessment, levy, collection, appropriation, or management.

"The Legislative Assembly trust that a statement of these well-recognised principles, which have always governed the relations between the two Houses, will be sufficient to induce the Legislative Council not to persist in their amendment;

"And agree to the other amendments in the Bill.

"Legislative Assembly Chamber,

"Brisbane, 16th December, 1915."

#### INCOME TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill with amendments.

The TREASURER: I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and that the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider the Legislative Council's amendments.

The SPEAKER: I might say the remarks I made in regard to the Land Tax Bill apply also to this Bill. The Council have evidently fixed the duration of the tax and interfered with the rights and privileges of this House.

Question put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

On clause 2—"Expiration of Act"—

The TREASURER: The new clause inserted by the Council after clause 1 had the effect of limiting the increased taxation imposed by the Bill to two years, [8 p.m.] although it certainly made provision for the continuance of certain clauses introduced into the Bill in regard to reciprocal arrangements to supply information to the Commissioners of other States. The Speaker was quite right in calling attention to the new clause being undoubtedly an infringement of their powers, as there was an infringement of their powers in regard to the Land Tax Bill. He moved that the Legislative Council's new clause 2 be disagreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 3—"Amendment of section 3"—

The TREASURER: The Council had omitted clause 3 entirely from the Bill. That clause contained a new definition of "absentee" and also amended the definition of "income derived from personal exertion." The former portion of the clause dealing with absentees, whilst not an interference in any way with the incidence of the tax, still, was most unacceptable because it was an attempt to adopt a uniform definition of "absentee," and on those grounds alone there would be good reasons for disagreeing to the Council's amendment. In omitting clause 3 they had omitted the definition of "income derived from personal exertion," and that had practically the effect of interfering with the taxation proposed by the Bill, because the amending of that definition would have the effect of allowing the Commissioner of Income Tax to assess as income profits made by the speculation in real or personal estate. At present

such incomes were not subject to taxation. If a person carrying on any other business than that of a land agent made a deal in land and made a profit, no matter how much in the year, that portion of his income was not subject to the tax because it was not portion of the ordinary business of the taxpayer. By the clause in the Bill it was sought to bring those profits within the operations of the Bill and make them subject to income tax, but the Council had seen fit to smite that out of the Bill. He moved that the Committee disagree to the Council's amendment.

Mr. MACARTNEY asked whether the clause that the Council had eliminated provided that if the land was purchased many years ago and sold during the current year at a profit such profit would be subject to income tax? It appeared to him that the clause could be construed in that way.

The TREASURER: The hon. member knows that considerable power was given to the Commissioner in regard to the interpretation of income. It was not his intention to levy on profits which might have been earned before the commencement of the year 1915, but if property had a certain value at the commencement of the year 1915 and was sold at the end of the year and realised a higher price than the value at the commencement of the year, then the difference between the value at the commencement of the year and the amount realised would be profit and would be subject to the tax. That would be a perfectly real interpretation.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That might be the Commissioner's intention, but certainly the clause did not say so. The clause was wide enough to cover any profit that might be made by a man who held land.

The TREASURER: The profit has to be stated in the return as having been made in that year.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the sale took place in the year the clause would entitle, and, in fact, would compel the Commissioner to demand tax on the profit.

The TREASURER: It won't be made retrospective.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman said it won't, but the clause made no provision to protect the taxpayer. He must say that the clause fixed the profit as at the time the sale was made, and clearly the profit must be the difference between the original cost and the amount received for the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That would not be profit for that year.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It might not be profit for that year, but the sale was made that year, and the profit, whatever it was, was made in that year. There was no getting away from that fact.

The TREASURER: Under the principal Act this is a matter for the interpretation of the Income Tax Commissioner.

Mr. MACARTNEY did not think so, as the Income Tax Commissioner had to take the law as it was. It appeared to him that that was a very lax method of legislating. The thing was beyond all reason if it meant what it appeared to mean on the face of it, and there certainly seemed some reason for the Council deleting that particular clause.

Question put and passed.

On clause 4—"Amendment of section 5"—

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

The TREASURER: The Council had inserted an amendment in clause 4 which restricted the operation of the reciprocal authority until such time as the Commissioner in Queensland had duly conferred with the Commonwealth Commissioner of Income Tax or his deputy or such other commissioner of income tax as sought information from the Commissioner. The clause itself dealt with the reciprocal arrangement between Queensland and any other State of the Commonwealth in regard to giving information which would assist the respective commissioners who were parties to the reciprocal arrangement, and, of course, it would not be brought into force except when an arrangement was arrived at to the extent that the other States were parties to that arrangement. Already the State of New South Wales had agreed to reciprocate in the matter of giving information. One of the other States—Western Australia—found that they could not do it without amending their Income Tax Act, but they proposed to do that at the first opportunity. The Commonwealth said, although that matter had been one for discussion at the Taxation Commissioners' Conference held in Melbourne not long ago, as there was no finality arrived at by the conference, they thought it would be better to defer any arrangement between the State and the Commonwealth until such time as they had thrashed it out. However, there was no reason why they should not make the provision in the Bill. It was stated in the first subsection that it should not come into operation unless or until it had been brought into operation by the Governor in Council by Order in Council published in the "Gazette." The amendment was quite unnecessary, and was overloading the provision, and under the circumstances it would be far better to delete it. He did not know whether that explanation was made to members of another place or whether they thought the mere passing of the Bill brought the matter into operation, and that the income tax commissioner of any other State could demand from the Commissioner here information in regard to taxpayers in Queensland. When they knew the facts, they should not insist on their amendment, because it would not be brought into force until a reciprocal arrangement was entered into. He moved that the Committee insist on their amendment.

HON. J. TOLMIE could not see why the Treasurer could not accept the amendment, as it was only making assurance doubly sure. The Treasurer said that so long as the present Government occupied the Treasury benches, they would not advise the Governor in Council to allow any information to be given by the Queensland Commissioner to the commissioner of another State, but they did not know how long the present Treasurer and his colleagues might occupy the front Treasury benches. Another party might occupy those benches, and not having the same spirit which actuated the present Government, and not having the same feeling in regard to the matter, might do those very things which the Treasurer said he would not do or would not recommend the Governor in Council to do. The clause gave absolute protection to the Treasurer or to any Government that no powers could be given to the Commissioner to communicate information to similar offices in any State unless there was reciprocity. He did not think that, under any circumstances, the information should be given. When the

citizens of Queensland made a declaration as to what their private affairs were to the Income Tax Commissioner of Queensland, it ought not to go beyond that. The income tax commissioners of the other States should not be put into possession of a knowledge of the private affairs of people in this State who might have business relations with the other States. It was disclosing the secrecy which was the underlying principle of the Income Tax Act, and which ought to be the underlying principle. He rose for the purpose of saying that he was in accord with the amendment inserted by the Council. There was no interference with the rights of the Assembly, but there was a safeguarding of public interests in the amendment. Rather than waste the time of the Committee in what might seem from the Government point of view a useless discussion, but from his point of view an endeavour to maintain the interests of citizens, the Treasurer ought to accept the amendment, especially as he said there was nothing in it except that it would burden the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The leader of the Opposition, even after the Treasurer's explanation, sought to encourage the other Chamber to thwart the purpose of the Assembly in obtaining revenue from a proper channel. The practice was for commissioners to assist one another in obtaining information with regard to income.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Do you say they give information now?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He said the practice was about to be put into operation. He believed it was in operation now between New South Wales and Queensland. Whether it had been the general practice or not, he knew that that had been done several times in the past. What the amendment proposed was that they should be prevented from entering into an arrangement until a parliamentary measure had been passed giving other income tax commissioners similar power. What was that but obstructing and thwarting the purpose of the Bill? If by an arrangement the various commissioners could do this thing without a Legislative measure being passed, there was no necessity for the amendment. The commissioners were sworn to secrecy, and was it likely that they were going to disclose to the general public information which they obtained confidentially? The thing was simply imaginary and preposterous, and to accept the amendment would be to delay that mutual assistance which the commissioners might give to one another.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It would come as a shock to the community to hear that there had hitherto been in existence a practice which permitted the disclosure by the Income Tax Commissioner of information which was given to him confidentially, even if that disclosure was limited to the Commissioner of Income Tax for the Commonwealth, or for any of the other States. He did not believe for a moment that it had been done, although from what the Minister for Public Instruction said they must believe that he at any rate was under the impression that it was done.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I know it is.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the hon. gentleman knew the provisions of the Income Tax

*Mr. Macartney.]*

Act, he must know that the Commissioner was sworn not to disclose that information, not to the general public alone, but to anybody; and it was impossible to conceive that being sworn to perform the duties of his office he would do anything of the kind. The hon. gentleman must be under a misapprehension.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No; I know that mutual help has been given by commissioners.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If mutual help had been given, that amounted to a disclosure of information imparted to the Commissioner of Income Tax, and was a breach of his oath, and they would have to be more than careful what provisions they inserted in their legislation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I say from New South Wales to Queensland.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Did he understand the hon. gentleman to say that information had been supplied by the Income Tax Commissioner of New South Wales, but that similar information had not been given by the Queensland Commissioner to New South Wales?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I do not know about Queensland, but I know it has been done by New South Wales.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That was, of course, a matter for New South Wales, but he should be very sorry to think that a statute of that sort had been broken. The amendment of the Upper Chamber seemed to him to be absolutely reasonable. It was nothing more than this: that if the Commissioner of the Commonwealth, or his deputy, or the Commissioner of any State, was authorised in the same way as we authorised our Commissioner, the practice could be brought into operation. The amendment was liberal to a degree. The moment this information was authorised to be given by our Commissioner to other States, we could not control the secrecy of it. In view of the statement of the Treasurer that practical effect would be given to the amendment, even if it was not included in the Bill, he could not understand what reason there was for objecting to it. If power was given to the Governor in Council to authorise the Commissioner to give this information, surely it was not unreasonable to say that the Governor in Council was not to enter into such an arrangement until a similar favour was extended to this State by the Commonwealth or other States. Apparently the Treasurer did not want the control of Parliament at all, but wanted to be able to make any arrangement he liked, and to be at liberty to recommend the Governor in Council to extend this favour to the Commonwealth or other States without the conditions specified in the amendment. The Treasurer said he did not want to do that. Why, then, should he object to the amendment? He would suggest to the hon. gentleman that he should accept the amendment.

The TREASURER: Whatever might be the impression of the Minister for Public Instruction, he was quite sure that there had been no breach of the oath of secrecy which it was the duty of the Commissioner of Income Tax to observe. He had no information in his possession that there had been any interchange of information on the matter of incomes of taxpayers in Queensland with the New South Wales Commissioner or any other Commissioner. As a

[Mr. Macartney.

matter of fact, it was because the commissioners had found that there had been some difficulty on account of the lack of power to give such information that the several income tax commissioners agreed at a conference held in Melbourne a few months ago to ask their several Governments to grant them the power to make this reciprocal arrangement. One State had conferred that power upon their income tax commissioner, namely the State of New South Wales. This Parliament was now considering the question. The proposal was introduced in Western Australia, but the Bill was rejected by the Upper House. The Commonwealth Commissioner of Income Tax had communicated with him a few days ago, stating that he thought it would be better to hold the matter over until the next meeting of the taxation commissioners. But, in his opinion, there was no necessity to wait till then. They could get considerable help by allowing the Queensland Commissioner to co-operate with the taxation commissioner of New South Wales. Under subsection (3) the Commissioner would have no power to enter into such an arrangement, unless specially authorised by an Order in Council, but that subsection referred only to the right of the Commissioner to give information relating to the incomes of taxpayers. The next subsection related to the authority of the Commissioner to give information in his possession with respect to business done in Queensland by any person carrying on business in any of the other States. There was an essential difference between the two things.

Mr. MACARTNEY: In both cases it ought to be reciprocal.

The TREASURER: In both cases it would be reciprocal.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is all the amendment provides.

The TREASURER: Yes, but as he had informed the Committee, it was surplusage, as there would be no information given unless there was a reciprocal arrangement.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is, as you will it or not.

The TREASURER: Why not leave it to the Governor in Council? The members of another place went further in their amendment, and attempted to prevent the Commissioner from giving any information regarding a business carried on in Queensland by persons who were carrying on business elsewhere, without the special authority of a reciprocal arrangement.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It ought to be reciprocal.

The TREASURER: He did not know that there was any necessity for that, because, if that were insisted upon, unless reciprocal authority was given to the commissioner of another State he could get no information from the Queensland Commissioner. The Commissioner was satisfied that it was to the interests of the commissioners that information should be given with regard to businesses carried on in Queensland, and he did not know that they should prevent him giving such information. But the giving of information relating to the incomes of taxpayers in Queensland was an entirely different thing, and that would not be given unless there was a reciprocal arrangement between the commissioners. The Commissioner of Income Tax informed him that he was considerably hampered because

he could not get information regarding businesses carried on elsewhere by people in Queensland who made returns. It would be to his advantage to have that arrangement. The hon. member could understand that it would be of mutual advantage to the commissioners throughout Australia, because they could become posted in information relating to the business of firms and companies that traded in different States in Australia. For instance, take the case of an interstate steamship company. At present the Commissioner could only ask for details of the company's operations in Queensland, but under the Bill they could get the information with regard to other States. It would be of mutual advantage to all States.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION pointed out that in the case he had in mind where the advice was given to Queensland by New South Wales it was done with the consent of the payer of income tax in Queensland, but who had property in both Queensland and New South Wales. He could not understand the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Toowoong agreeing with the Council's amendment. They said that it should not be put into operation, but they said, if the Council's amendment was accepted, it should be put into operation. There was no breach of confidence on the part of the New South Wales Commissioner when he gave the information to the Queensland Commissioner.

Question—That the Committee disagree with the Council's amendment in clause 4—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 36.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Jones, A. J.
„ Armfield	„ Jones, T. L.
„ Barber	„ Kirwan
„ Bertram	„ Land
„ Bowman	„ Larcombe
„ Carter	„ Lloyd
„ Collins	„ May
„ Cooper	„ McLachlan
„ Dunstan	„ McMin
„ Fihelly	„ McPhail
„ Foley	„ O'Sullivan
„ Gilday	„ Peterson
„ Gillies	„ Pollock
„ Gledson	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Hardacre	„ Smith
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, W.	„ Theodore
„ Huxham	„ Winstanley
Tellers: Mr. T. L. Jones and Mr. McPhail.	

NOES, 18.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Gunth
„ Barnes	„ Hodge
„ Rayley	„ Macartney
„ Bebbington	„ Moore
„ Bell	„ Somerset
„ Bridges	„ Stevens
„ Corser	„ Stodart
„ Forsyth	„ Tolmie
„ Grayson	„ Vowles
Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Vowles.	

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Free, Mr. Wellington, Mr. Payne, Mr. T. J. Ryan, and Mr. Lennon.  
Noes—Lieut.-Col. Rankin, Mr. Booker, Mr. Petrie, Mr. Appel, and Mr. Walker.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 5—“Rates of income tax”—

The TREASURER: the Council amended the definition of “public utility.” When the Bill was passed by the Legislative Assembly, the definition of “public utility” was as follows:—

“‘Public utility’ includes street tramway services, the manufacture or supply of coal gas for any purpose, the produc-

tion or supply of electricity for light or power, and any other undertaking declared by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly.”

The Council altered that by including “resolutions of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly respectively to be a public utility.” He did not think they should give way to the Council on this matter. The Council were infringing their powers to make such an amendment. Hon. gentlemen opposite smiled when he said that

Mr. FORSYTH: Read the Standing Orders.

The TREASURER: There was considerable doubt on the question according to “May,” who said—

“It follows, accordingly, that the Lords may not amend the provisions in Bills which they receive from the Commons dealing with the above-mentioned subjects, so as to alter, whether by increase or reduction, the amount of a rate or charge, its duration, mode of assessment, levy, collection, appropriation, or management, or the persons who pay, receive, manage, or control it; or the limits within which it is leviable.”

The Council had no right to insert the amendment, and it would be wise for the Assembly to insist on the definition as it appeared in the Bill. The definition of “public utility” would have to be agreed to by resolution in the Assembly, so that it was perfectly safeguarded.

HON. J. TOLMIE agreed with the Legislative Council. There was no doubt that the Assembly were insisting on their undoubted rights in regard to taxation proposals, but this was not taxation at all. This was merely a definition, and the Council had co-ordinate powers with the Assembly so far as the definition was concerned. The Legislative Council had as much right to make definitions as the Assembly. The Treasurer was evidently taking a stand because he wished to strike out the words “Legislative Council” whenever it was possible to do so. If the hon. member wanted to get rid of the Council, the proper way to do it was to carry out the abolition legislation of the Government.

The TREASURER: Are we not going to do that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: No, the hon. gentleman was not going to do it. The outside public were not going to give away their rights. The Legislative Council were maintaining their undoubted rights in this matter. It was arrogance and impertinence on the part of the Assembly to attempt to take away from the Legislative Council its powers which the Constitution gave it. The Treasurer proposed to infringe the rights of the Legislative Council, and he had no right to do so. He (Mr. Tolmie) supported the amendment of the Legislative Council.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The amendment was not only within the rights of the Legislative Council, but it was also a reasonable one. The Bill defined what a “public utility” was, and it could only be passed into law with the concurrence of both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. The amendment of the Legislative Council only sought to continue that. That was a perfectly reasonable attitude to take up.

The TREASURER: Next session we may want to include another public utility, but vested interests represented in another Chamber will prevent it from getting through.

Mr. Macartney.]

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman had his views in the matter, and they deserved consideration. It was an exceedingly dangerous thing to leave the definition of "a public utility" under this Bill to the Legislative Assembly. They did not know in these days what the Assembly was. They did not know where resolutions originated, whether it was the Cabinet that directed the course upon the other side or whether it was the caucus, which—as he understood it—directed not only the movements but the conscience of the majority. The Liberal caucus did not deprive members of the right of exercising their own conscience. A minority in the Assembly, even as it was now constituted, might impose upon the Assembly the necessity of passing a resolution that something was a public utility that was not a public utility for the purpose of obtaining some political end. A majority of the Labour caucus, say twenty-three, might compel the whole Government party of forty-five to declare a public utility, and though twenty-two Labour members and twenty-seven Liberals were conscientiously opposed to it, it would be so declared. They understood there was more than one Parliament in Queensland. Besides the ordinary Parliament there was a secret Parliament, that they did not know anything about.

Mr. KIRWAN: What about the secret Parliament in the "Courier" buildings?

Mr. MACARTNEY: He did not know anything about any Parliament in the "Courier" buildings. The amendment of the Upper House was an absolute safeguard to the community for the reasons he had given, and they should accept it.

Question—That the Committee disagree to the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 5—put; and the Committee divided:—

## AYES, 35.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Jones, T. L.
" Armfield	" Kirwan
" Barber	" Land
" Bertram	" Larcombe
" Bowman	" Lloyd
" Carter	" May
" Collins	" McLachlan
" Cooper	" McMinn
" Dunstan	" McPhail
" Foley	" O'Sullivan
" Gilday	" Peterson
" Gillies	" Pollock
" Gledson	" Ryan, D.
" Hardacre	" Smith
" Hartley, H. L.	" Stopford
" Hartley, W.	" Theodore
" Huxham	" Winstanley
" Jones, A. J.	

Tellers: Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Lloyd.

## NOES, 17.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Hodge
" Barnes	" Macartney
" Bebbington	" Moore
" Bell	" Stevens
" Bridges	" Stodart
" Corser	" Swayne
" Forsyth	" Tolmie
" Grayson	" Vowles
" Gunn	

Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Bridges.

## PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Free, Mr. Wellington, Mr. Payne, Mr. T. J. Ryan, and Mr. Lennon.

Noes—Lieut.-Col. Rankin, Mr. Booker, Mr. Petrie, Mr. Appel, and Mr. Walker.

Resolved in the affirmative.

[Mr. Macartney.

The TREASURER said the next amendment was a similar one, except that it dealt with a "monopoly company," and there was a greater necessity of resisting the Council's amendment than in the last case, because a monopoly company was not defined in any other sense except that it rested with a resolution of the Legislative Assembly to declare what company was a monopoly company. Hon. members knew what a difficulty there was in defining a monopoly in Federal politics, and the same difficulty would occur in defining monopoly company. If there was a rigid definition of a monopoly company, that they must have a complete monopoly of any service, then there would be no company come within the definition. It therefore seemed to him necessary to have a definition put in the Bill in that form, and under those circumstances it would be most unwise to allow the Legislative Council to have any say in declaring what were monopoly companies. He moved that the amendment be disagreed to.

Question put and passed.

The TREASURER: On the same page, further down, the Council had made an amendment by deleting paragraph (viii.), in which it was stipulated that any public utility company or monopoly company liable to pay the higher rate of tax was prohibited from increasing the prices of its commodities or the charges for its services without getting authority to do so by Order in Council from the Government.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Does that affect the principle of the tax?

The TREASURER: He did not think so, but it certainly affected the effectiveness of the Bill, because if it was right to bring under the higher scale certain companies that had special monopolies, it was also necessary to see that such companies, who were protected as monopoly companies, did not pass on the extra rate to the consumers. Otherwise the increasing of the income tax would be only an imposition upon the consumers who used the services or the commodities of the companies. Under those circumstances they must disagree with the amendment. Some hon. members from the other House had told him that there might be some inconvenience to such companies because of the necessity of getting an Order in Council—say, in the case of a gas company—to increase the price of articles such as coke and other by-products. As he had pointed out to those members who saw him about it, there would be no difficulty about that, because if the company could show the necessity of increasing the prices of those goods because of the higher cost of fuel, or materials, or labour, then it would only be a matter of getting an Order in Council. Such Orders in Council would not be limited to one a year, so there would be no great difficulty about that. He moved that the amendment be disagreed to.

HON. J. TOLMIE regretted very much that he could not find himself in accord with the Treasurer in this matter. He thought the Legislative Council had shown greater wisdom in regard to the matter than the Legislative Assembly. This was an amendment that had absolutely nothing at all to do with the Bill under discussion. It was a principle that rightly belonged to the Control of Prices Board, and not to an income tax amending Bill. It was just as

well to take it out of the Bill and hand it over to Mr. Sumner for the purpose of regulation. The Hon. the Treasurer said the desire was that the company should not pass the increase on to the consumers. There were a thousand and one things regulating the business of a company and the price of a commodity, and a company would be absolutely under the control of the Governor in Council in the management of its business if this were allowed to stand. The whole matter should be handed over to the Control of Prices Board. It was a very serious interference with the business of companies in Queensland, and if they wanted to interest people in launching out in enterprises, they should give them some chance to work their own business. He heard most deplorable stories in the Chamber last night about the way in which enterprise had [9 p.m.] fallen to pieces. They heard of large concerns being tied up all for the want of capital; that the capitalist was not coming forward and putting his money into enterprises such as he had hitherto done, and the consequence was that industries were languishing and men were thrown out of employment. The class of legislation they were passing was going to have the effect of limiting the avenues of employment. If all companies doing business were to have their actions circumscribed by legislation they would cease to carry on their operations, and make their first loss the least loss. He intended to support the Council's amendment.

Mr. MACARTNEY quite agreed with the leader of the Opposition that that clause should not find a place in an Income Tax Bill. It had absolutely no reference to income tax, and the hon. gentleman admitted that, but he used the argument that a monopoly company should not be allowed to pass the income tax on. If that was the object of the clause, it might be a good argument for its insertion; but it was not. It was an absolute prohibition against any company increasing the charges for its commodities or services beyond those existing on the 1st October last. It was a general prohibition, and the hon. gentleman seemed to forget that there was other legislation affecting companies which were public utilities. The amount of tram fares was limited by statute, and he was not sure that the same rule did not apply to gas companies.

The TREASURER: There is no regulation in regard to the price of gas.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There might not be, but there was a Bill before the Assembly which sought to do it very effectively, and that was the proper place to do it. There was a good deal to be said in favour of what the leader of the Opposition stated—that the clause was likely to dislocate enterprise. They could not afford to dislocate enterprise at the present time; rather they wanted to open their arms to enterprise in order to meet the bad times that were coming, and coming at no distant date. They were in for a very anxious time—a time when they would want everybody who had got enterprise and ability and the means of putting it into effect to do their best for the State and the people of the State, including the working class. This

was not the time to interfere with enterprise, and he was rather astonished to find that the legislation before them was aiming at the destruction of that enterprise and ability which had done so much for the State in the past, and which would be wanted so much before any great length of time had elapsed. As the leader of the Opposition had stated, there were many causes which necessitated increased charges. They had got wages boards which were increasing from day to day the amount paid in wages, and the cost of material, on account of the increased wages and on account of war conditions, was going up by leaps and bounds. They had got additional taxation imposed by reason of the war, not only State taxation but Commonwealth taxation as well, all of which was a heavy burden on the enterprise of the State; and any Bill which sought by hard-and-fast methods to place a limit on the business carried on by those people was unjust. It was inconvenient and unreasonable to place those companies practically at the mercy of the Treasurer for the time being.

At 9.5 p.m.,

Mr. BERTRAM relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. FORSYTH: They understood the definition of "public utility" because it was specified in the Act, but when it came to a "monopoly" it was a different thing altogether. The trouble was: How were they to define a monopoly? There were some companies in Queensland which had practically a monopoly of certain things, and yet those things were increasing in value from day to day. In many cases the cost had increased by 50 per cent., and yet they were told that they could not increase the price beyond what it was on the 1st October, 1915. As a matter of fact, in almost everything they got there was a general rise at the present time, owing to the war probably, and also owing to the increase in freights. The Commonwealth were trying to export the large surplus in wheat, and they knew the difficulty the Commonwealth Government had in getting away that surplus in wheat. They were faced with this position, that, instead of paying £1 a ton to get it away they had to pay £4 or £5 a ton. The tonnage was so scarce that it was impossible to get goods out at anything like the price to-day that they could a few months ago. If they were going to restrict companies, as proposed by the clause, how on earth could they carry on? Surely the Government did not want people to sell goods under cost price? He did not think the Government realised the very serious position they were putting the business people in. The difficulty was to arrive at what a monopoly was. They might have twenty people who were partial monopolies, and how were they going to say to those people that they could not increase the price of their commodities? Take the case of explosives. He supposed there were only three or four people dealing in explosives in Queensland, and they had practically a monopoly of the business. The rates were high and prices were going up on account of the huge demand for war purposes and on account of the increased rates, but because those people charged a certain

Mr. Forsyth.]

amount on the 1st October, 1915, the Government say they could not charge any more now unless they got an Order in Council. Instead of putting restrictions on business, the Government wanted to assist business people. The business people had enough worries at the present time, and, instead of harassing them and putting all sorts of restrictions on them, the Government should rather try and help them to increase their business.

Question—That the Committee disagree to the Council's amendment in subclause (viii.)—put; and the Committee divided:—

## AYES, 34.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Jones, T. L.
„ Armfield	„ Kirwan
„ Barber	„ Land
„ Bowman	„ Larcombe
„ Carter	„ Lloyd
„ Collins	„ May
„ Cooper	„ McLachlan
„ Dunstan	„ McMin
„ Foley	„ McPhail
„ Gilday	„ O'Sullivan
„ Gillies	„ Peterson
„ Gledson	„ Pollock
„ Hardacre	„ Ryan, D.
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Smith
„ Hartley, W.	„ Stopford
„ Huxham	„ Theodore
„ Jones, A. J.	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Larcombe and Mr. McPhail.

## NOES, 18.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Hodge
„ Barnes	„ Macartney
„ Belbington	„ Moore
„ Bell	„ Somerset
„ Bridges	„ Stevens
„ Corser	„ Stodart
„ Forsyth	„ Swayne
„ Grayson	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Bridges and Mr. Vowles.

## PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Free, Mr. Wellington, Mr. Payne, Mr. T. J. Ryan, and Mr. Lennon.

Noes—Lieut.-Col. Rankin, Mr. Booker, Mr. Petrie, Mr. Appel, and Mr. Walker.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The TREASURER: On line 7, page 7, the Council had struck out the word "any" and inserted the word "such," so that the clause should read "where any of the profits of such company remain undistributed amongst the members," etc. This was really an improvement in the clause. It was one of those rather unusual instances in which the members of another place had fortuitously improved a measure sent up by the Assembly. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The TREASURER: The Council had made a further amendment in paragraph (x.), line 41, where they had omitted the words "always has been" and inserted in lieu thereof the words "shall be deemed to be," making the clause read "it is hereby declared that the same shall be deemed to be a declaration of dividends," etc. This destroyed the retrospective character of the clause. It would be unwise to do that, because some companies had been assessed and had paid taxes on dividends upon the assumption that what was here stated to be enacted had been actually in force ever

[Mr. Forsyth.

since the principal Act came into operation. There were some taxpayers who had not been assessed and who had not paid any tax on such dividends. It was not intended to collect any tax by going back earlier than the 1st of January, 1915. Still, this provision was necessary to validate the action of the Commissioner in the event of any dispute arising under the clause. Under those circumstances, it would be wise to adhere to the original terms of the clause, and he moved that the Council's amendment be disagreed with.

HON. J. TOLMIE thought the members of the Council were wise in making this amendment. The Treasurer said the clause was simply a validating clause as far as this particular matter was concerned, and that he was not going to collect any tax which ought to have been collected beyond the 1st of January, 1915. But the hon. gentleman could only answer for himself, and some other person who occupied that office might collect the tax further back than the 1st of January of this year. If the Commissioner had done any action in the past which was illegal, then the only way to validate that action was to make reparation for any wrong that might have been done to any person.

The TREASURER: This is only a declaration of what is assumed to be the law at the present moment.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And, if he understood the hon. member rightly, it was going to have a validating effect. If the clause was not going to be made retrospective, then the phraseology of the Council was the soundest, and their amendment should be agreed to.

Question—That the Council's amendment be disagreed to—put; and the Committee divided.

This division was the same as the last, except that Mr. Somerset did not vote with the "Noes."

Resolved in the affirmative.

The TREASURER: On page 7, line 8 (now 44), the Council had inserted an amendment which he could not understand. They added after "subsections" the words "for the years in which the transfer [9.30 p.m.] to capital, or application in reduction of assets, or revaluation and issue of shares or debentures, have respectively been made or taken place." He did not know what the Council were driving at. The amendment they had inserted was already provided for. It would be ridiculous to insert the words when they had already provided for them in another clause. When the undistributed profits were distributed, or when the assets were increased in value, that would be counted as a declaration of dividends and a distribution of profits for that particular year and for no other year. That was the intention of the clause and there was no doubt about it. If they included the Council's amendment it would only confuse it because it was already provided for.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It was perfectly obvious that the way the clause stood when it went to the Council showed that it had retrospective action, and the Council apparently realised that. They saw that it

amounted to a serious injustice because it was giving to the State something which the State was never entitled to by any law prior to the passing of this Act.

The TREASURER: Say a reassessment was made last year and a declaration of dividends took place last year, it would be liable for the year.

Mr. MACARTNEY: When the clause left the Assembly it read—

“shall be and it is hereby declared that the same always has been a declaration of dividends,” etc.

The Council amended that by making it read—

“that the same shall be deemed to be a declaration of dividends,” etc.

That showed that the Council wished the clause to have future operation and not retrospective operation. The amendment was inserted in order that no injustice should be done, because it made it perfectly clear that the clause should only have future operation. There could be no objection to the amendment.

Question—That the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 5 be disagreed to—put; and the Committee divided:—

#### AYES, 34.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Jones, T. L.
„ Armfield	„ Kirwan
„ Barber	„ Land
„ Bowman	„ Lacombe
„ Carter	„ Lloyd
„ Collins	„ May
„ Cooper	„ McLachlan
„ Dunstan	„ McMinn
„ Foley	„ McPhail
„ Gilday	„ O'Sullivan
„ Gillies	„ Peterson
„ Gledson	„ Pollock
„ Hardacre	„ Ryan, D.
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Smith
„ Hartley, W.	„ Stopford
„ Huxham	„ Theodore
„ Jones, A. J.	„ Winstanley
Tellers: Mr. Gledson and Mr. A. J. Jones.	

#### NOES, 18.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Hodge
„ Barnes	„ Macartney
„ Bebbington	„ Moore
„ Bell	„ Roberts
„ Bridges	„ Stevens
„ Corser	„ Stodart
„ Forsyth	„ Swayne
„ Grayson	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ Vowles
Tellers: Mr. Corser and Mr. Gunn.	

#### PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Free, Mr. Wellington, Mr. Payne, Mr. T. J. Ryan, and Mr. Lennon.  
Noes—Lieut.-Col. Rankin, Mr. Booker, Mr. Petrie, Mr. Appel, and Mr. Walker.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to one of the Council's amendments, and disagreed to all the other amendments.

The adoption of the report was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

## SUPPLY.

### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Coyne, Warrego, in the chair.)

### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

#### CHIEF OFFICE.

The following items were passed without discussion:—Inspection Staff, £10,590; Medical and Dental Inspection, £10,562; Queensland University, £7,841; Training College, £8,059; The Women's College, £600; Schools of Arts, £7,500.

Question—That £21,900 be granted for “Chief Office”—put and passed.

#### SECONDARY EDUCATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £26,250 be granted for “Secondary Education.”

HON. J. TOLMIE said he would like an explanation from the Minister with regard to the amount of £6,221 for scholarships to be granted in 1916 for six months. Were they going to stop the scholarships at the end of six months?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He would give an explanation of the whole increase in connection with the vote. The increase was due to the new system of qualifying scholarships as against the old competitive system. The new system came into force in 1914, and to show how it had increased, he would give the comparative figures from the year 1913. In 1913, 112 scholarships were granted. In 1914 there were 368 scholarships granted. That was the year the new system came into force. In 1915 the number increased to 447, and for the year 1916 the department was asking for 550. Hon. members would see from those figures the very large increase in the number of scholarships, which was entirely due to the new system. The reason why the amount was provided for six months of 1916 was because they were providing in the next six months for the scholarships that would be obtained at the examinations held this year. He believed they were being held now. They would obtain the scholarships at the present examination, and therefore they only required the amount for six months of the present financial year.

Question put and passed.

#### STATE SCHOOLS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £512,805 be granted for “State Schools.”

Mr. LLOYD (*Enoggera*): He remembered reading in an educational paper some years ago that the annual report of the Education Department reminded the writer of those lines of poetry—

“Time writes no wrinkles on thine  
azure brow  
Such as creation's dawn beheld thou  
rollest now.”

He was not reflecting on the report of the department, but he thought the lines would apply to the debate on the educational estimates—or that part of the educational estimates which applied to State schools. Year after year they heard very much the same thing said. They heard it asserted that our State schools were the best in Australia, if not the best in the world. They heard it said that the management of those schools was very efficient, that the teachers were a very deserving body of men and women, and it was generally added that

*Mr. Lloyd.]*

it was to be hoped that at some time in the future some different treatment would be accorded to those who were carrying on the work. He appreciated the Minister's remarks on the relations between the Treasury and the teaching staff at the present time. The Minister regretted that the department at the present time was not in a position to deal a little more liberally with the teachers in the State schools, and it would be recognised that that position was indisputable. At the same time, one of the defects the department had to contend with was the fact that it had a very underpaid staff. (Hear, hear!) Some people were under the impression that the teachers were going to get rises. Actually, the teachers were going to get reductions. If an employer had a certain number of apprentices coming out of their time, and he said to them that he wanted them to go on journeymen's work, but not to get journeymen's full pay, he took it that that would be a reduction. At the present time the Government managed to give the teachers a partial rise. Except in exceptional cases, teachers did not get an annual increase. Some of them had to wait three years for a rise of £20; and a man who had waited three years and then only got a £10 increase would not be as satisfied as another who got a £10 rise last year and a £10 rise again this year. He hoped this would be remembered later on. There were one or two cases of hardship he would like to call the Minister's attention to. The amounts involved were only small. One was the case of young pupil-teachers who became classified teachers. Under ordinary conditions, a pupil teacher of the fourth class earning a salary of £80 was eligible, when he passed the classifying examination, to go on to a salary of £110, but under the present conditions he could only get a rise of £10, and consequently he would have to stay on £90, although he would have the full responsibility of a classified teacher. He hoped that some adjustment would be made in regard to that. It would not mean a very big sum, and by means of a transfer of money from one department to another something might be done. Another case was that of teachers who entered the service by means of the competitive pupil-teachers' examination. Once every year competitive examinations were held at which pupil-teachers of the age of sixteen or seventeen competed for positions in the service. If a girl passed her examination in June, she went on for six months at £20, and under ordinary circumstances, if her services were satisfactory, at the end of the year she would go on to £50. Under present conditions she could only get a £10 increase, and went on to £30 instead of £50. That was almost a breach of faith—a breach of contract—because the young people went in for the examination on the understanding that after six months' probationary service they were going to get £50 a year. The girl who put in a year in a business college and went out as a typist got £1 a week to start with. He mentioned this matter because he was sure, if it [10 p.m.] was possible, something would be done. He was just as certain as every other member that, considering the tools and material given to the teaching staff and the administration staff, the work was done in the best possible way, but whether the tools and material were such as would ensure the best results he was not at all sure. He did not want to disparage the

[Mr. Lloyd.

Queensland educational system, but he was not so sure that it was in the lead. There were certain indications from young people who came from the old country that gave him the idea that they had something to learn after all in Queensland. He was satisfied they were getting the best they could at the price, and if they were to get anything better they would have to pay for it. The Minister referred to a matter which concerned the State school teachers particularly—that was, the question of granting a zone allowance. He did not suppose that that would come into force straight away, but it was just as well that they should give some little attention to it. He supposed that nearly every member of Parliament had once or twice in his life been approached by a teacher to get a transfer to Brisbane or some place like that. He supposed if every member who had had that experience went out of the Chamber the place would be empty. The teacher who had served in the North and West and wanted to get South generally based his claims on the high cost of living in those places. He understood that some time ago the department went very fully into the cost of living, and, speaking as one who had lived in the North, he must say that the cost of living in some of the Northern towns was not so very much higher than in Brisbane. It was proposed by the zone system to grant a special allowance to those teachers who were serving in parts of the country where people did not care to serve. In fact, the idea was to balance things so that there would be no difficulty in getting men to go to any part of the State; the more desirable the part of the State, the lower the salary would be, and the more undesirable the part of the State, the higher the salary would be, and consequently, when it was a matter of taking a deserving man who had done good service in the Gulf and putting him in Brisbane or on the Downs or in some other desirable place, the difficulty of replacing him would be got over by the fact that somebody would be found in Brisbane to whom the pecuniary considerations were very important, and who would be willing to take the place of that man. He thought the scheme would be a very successful one, and it should be given a trial. As far as he remembered, the Minister did not commit himself by saying he would abolish home lessons, but still he (Mr. Lloyd) got the impression all the same that the Minister had something in his head to that effect, but he very wisely referred the question to the professional officers. He hoped, if the Minister had in his mind the abolition of one particular kind of home work, that he would not lose sight of it, and that later on he would follow the thing up a little further. He referred to the written home work. The term "home lessons" was used rather loosely. Generally speaking, home lessons meant memory work; exercises were written work. It was certainly of benefit to pupils in the upper classes to prepare certain work at home, but he thought written work was burdensome, and, speaking as an ex-teacher, he thought very little benefit was derived from it. It was certainly desirable that a boy (or girl) should be put on his own and made to do something without any aid at all, but it should be done in the school under proper supervision. At the present time the salaries of head teachers varied according to the attendance at the school. The most popular schools had the

largest attendance, and there was certain competition going on between the schools. He understood something was to be done to modify the evils of that competitive system, but at the present time it was there, and in a great many cases the home exercises were a means of advertising the school, and the head teacher who had a big staff could exploit the labour of the assistant teachers, and through those exercises score over the smaller schools where the head teacher had to do nearly all the work himself. If the exercises were really of benefit he should not object to them, as it was the duty of the teachers to do the work they had undertaken, no matter how burdensome it was, but he believed the written exercises did no good, that they were burdensome, and, in some cases, mischievous. He congratulated the Minister on his grasp of educational matters and he congratulated the Under Secretary on the highly efficient manner in which he conducted the Department of Public Instruction. During the seven or eight years the present Under Secretary had been in charge of the department, he had made a very great difference in the attitude of teachers towards the heads of the department. He was very sorry he had missed the opportunity of speaking on the vote for inspectors, because if he had not missed that opportunity he should have said that the inspectors should get larger salaries. He should also have said that the Chief Inspector—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LLOYD congratulated the teachers on the good work they were doing, and he hoped that this time next year he should have the pleasure of congratulating them on having received substantial recognition in the form of better pay.

Mr. STOPFORD said it was gratifying to hear a practical man like the hon. member for Enoggera pointing out the sweated conditions under which the teachers of Queensland were performing their work. He had a list of the salaries paid to school teachers, and he found that in the fifth year a teacher was entitled to £110 a year, out of which he had to pay £5 to the superannuation fund. The Educational Estimates showed that the messenger received a higher salary than that which was paid to highly qualified teachers for the grand work they were performing. In the seventh year the teachers were entitled to £130, and they could reach a maximum of £150 in eight years. But even that depended on the reports of the inspectors. After receiving a salary of £150 for a period of two years, they could sit for an examination, and he was told that that examination consisted of thirteen subjects, and it was unusual for a teacher to take all those subjects at one sitting. The usual course was to extend the passing in those thirteen subjects over a period of four years; then perhaps the teacher would be successful, and he would get the magnificent increase of £20 in his salary, making £170 per annum after twelve years' hard study and excellent work. The remuneration of school teachers compared unfavourably with the wages paid to fitters, carpenters, and men following other occupations. Shortly after he entered the House he accompanied a deputation of school teachers from the Central and Northern districts to the Minister, to place before him their claims for similar recognition to

that accorded to Federal officers, with regard to extra living rate allowances in districts remote from the metropolitan area. The Minister appeared very sympathetic, and arranged to put a sum of £41,000 on the Estimates for that purpose; but, owing to the financial position which confronted the Government, they were unable to carry out the project of the Minister. He held that it would have been a fair thing to impose extra taxation in order to raise that £41,000, and that the money could have been obtained by a tax on picture shows and other entertainments. The only result of the deputation was a paragraph in the report which stated that the extra living allowances were determined by the Public Service Board, and that in some districts men were over-paid, while in other districts they were under-paid. It was not much consolation to the man who was under-paid in this respect to be told that men in other districts were over-paid, or that one housewife made a sovereign go further than another, or that one man grew his own vegetables, or that one man's children were not as healthy as another man's. The position of the teachers was largely the result of their own neglect, but some day the teachers would awake to the fact that they were only workers, and they would stand together like other workers and make their demands with a united voice. With regard to compulsory education, he had seen little boys of ten and twelve years jumping on trams and offering copies of the daily papers for sale during school hours, and he should like to know what education they were receiving. It could not be said that, if they were compelled to go to school, a widow would be deprived of a means of livelihood, because the State granted a sum of 8s. per week to a widow for each child under thirteen years of age, and he hoped the Minister would cause inquiries to be made into this matter. He had received a letter setting forth the conditions under which the department employed widow women as cleaners of schools. Hon. members opposite, when speaking on measures before this House, showed great concern for the unfortunate widow, yet they asked this woman to clean a large five-roomed school for 14s. 7d. per week, and out of that sum she had to provide one dozen towels for the children's use, four dozen dusters, two brooms, two scrubbing-brushes, two buckets, one watering-can, twenty-four dishes, one towel, one tea-cloth for teachers' kitchen, one towel and one nailbrush for the headmaster's room. She had to clean and dust five rooms every day, also six verandas, five flights of stairs, and five cloakrooms, and to scrub eighteen seats of water-closets. He was pleased to say that, immediately this matter was brought under the Minister's notice, the hon. gentleman granted an increase of pay to that unfortunate woman. But he held that the department could purchase those articles for the whole of the schools in Queensland much cheaper than any individual woman could buy them in the different towns. When he was organising, he received a report of the Education Department, in which there was a picture of a travelling-school, but during the whole of his organising work he had never bumped against one of those schools on railway construction works. Some consideration in the matter of education should be shown to the children of men employed on such works, and the tent of the Young Men's Christian

*Mr. Stopford.]*

Association could be utilised for school purposes. He sincerely trusted that the department would do something in this direction, and that they would give the teachers remuneration commensurate with the services they rendered the State.

Mr. SWAYNE: He would like to know whether £10 increases were given to classified teachers receiving under £200 a year, and, if so, from what time would the increase date? With reference to provisional schools, he desired to point out that struggling settlers in outlying districts needed assistance for the building of provisional schools. While the late Government had altered the arrangement with regard to local residents being required to find one-fifth of the cost of a State school, the obligation to find the whole cost of provisional schools still rested on the people living in country districts. He hoped that this matter would receive the attention of the department, and that assistance would be given to settlers to provide schools in outlying districts. He noticed that reference was made in the report to the provision that was being made for rural and agricultural schools, and he presumed that the sum of £1,000 set down for an instructor in agriculture related to that matter. He had often advocated that something should be done in the direction of imparting technical education to some extent in primary schools. In agricultural districts the children were likely to become farmers, [10.30 p.m.] and they should receive instruction in the rudiments of agricultural science, life of plants, the handling of manures, and all that sort of thing. In mineral districts, where the children would be likely to take up mining, they should have instruction in geology and mineralogy. There was room for extension in that direction. He took it that there were to be continuation classes for those who had reached the fifth form standard and who were over fourteen years of age. Was it intended to have whole time for these schools or two or three days a week, and would it be in the slack season so as not to interfere with harvesting work?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They are special schools.

Mr. SWAYNE: Were they not attached to the State schools?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No. An inspector in agriculture visited the State schools.

Mr. SWAYNE: He had not been up to the Northern districts yet, where they had some of the biggest farming districts. With regard to the compulsory attendance he noticed a good number of children in the towns did not comply with the Act. There was a gag about the farmers keeping their children home from school, but they were not as bad as those in the cities. The farmers were just as anxious for their children to get educational facilities as any other class. He knew one typical case of a farmer who denied himself in order to educate his son, and the son had since gained his diploma as a doctor. He knew others who made sacrifices in order to give their children the advantages of high school education. He knew it was not the time to advocate an increase in salaries, but the teachers were underpaid more than any other section of public servants, and deserved some recognition.

[Mr. Stopford.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Quenton*) drew attention to a paragraph in the "Educational Journal," reading as follows:—

"Here are a few typical cases to be found on the staffs of most schools. A highly efficient teacher, cultured and well informed, conscientious, and high minded, giving of the best to the State year after year with no hope of higher remuneration, because he or she has not gone through the ordeal of Class II. or Class I. examination. On the same staff is another teacher who despite his high classification possesses neither controlling nor driving power, a lifeless piece of inferior machinery giving but a minimum amount of useful work and yet receiving a much higher remuneration, because through sheer cramming he has secured a higher classification. This is quite bad enough, but it is not all the mischief wrought in our system by the examination incubus. Here is a young teacher, a girl, perhaps just out of her pupil-teachership, devoting every spare moment and every ounce of energy to the task of cramming for Class II. Her constitution is undermined, the bloom of youth is fast vanishing from her cheeks, she looks haggard and worn, her pupils are receiving only a part of the energy which is due to them."

Then, further down, it said—

"We have many excellent teachers in Queensland, who year after year turn out the very best work—intelligent, alert, mannerly, and honest children, the country's best asset, and yet receiving the same small pay because they have not crammed for Class II. These teachers should be encouraged, and increases on account of their continued good service granted to them."

At 10.25 p.m.,

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Koppel*) relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. WINSTANLEY pointed out that after the teachers passed their examinations, they were a long time before they received their increases. He took as a sample one of the reports of a teacher given by an inspector. It read, "organising power, excellent; teaching ability, excellent; industry, excellent; mental activity, very good; progress in teaching, highly satisfactory." There was a scale laid down for the teachers which did not work out in a satisfactory way. When a teacher passed his Class II. examination he got an increase of £10, but as he lost £10 from his sustentation allowance it made him the same as he was before. There was no encouragement given to teachers who possessed teaching ability, and it was a hardship when they got an increase that it was taken off for something else. Another hardship was in the case of a teacher of a class 6 or 7 school. If he wanted to be transferred to Brisbane he would not get the same salary, but he would often have to take the salary for the class of school to which he had been transferred.

Mr. ARMFIELD (*Musgrave*) thought the teachers did not receive adequate remuneration. It was surprising to him how they could get so many young men and women to take positions in the department in the country schools on such small salaries. He thought that when teachers left their schools

in the country to visit their homes at Christmas time they should receive the cost of their travelling from the department. A young teacher getting £110 a year had to spend £13 to visit his parents at Christmas time. That was not fair, and the cost should be borne by the department. The railway servants, who were far better paid than the teachers, were entitled, after a certain period of service, to a free railway pass to any part of the State for themselves and their wives, therefore it was only reasonable that the teachers should have the same privilege. He agreed with hon. members that the teachers did not receive sufficient pay for the work that they were doing for the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION admitted that, generally speaking, the salaries of teachers were not as high as they ought to be. There had been for some time past a request that there should be a general increase in salaries to bring them up to what was paid in the Southern States. He had endeavoured to comply with that request, and there had been placed on the Estimates this year a sum of £40,000 for that purpose, but when the Cabinet came to consider the finances of the State they had reluctantly to defer that proposed increase to some more favourable time. There was in the Estimates a provision for the continuation this year of increases to salaries in addition to the restored salaries for last year. That was to say there was, first of all, the increase provided by the Denham Government up to £110, making a total of £5,639, and, in addition to that, the Ryan Government had increased salaries up to £250, totalling £6,058. They not only restored those salaries last year, but they were continuing them this year, and the money was provided for in the vote. In addition to that continuation there had been provided this year further automatic classified increases totalling £8,027, as follows:—Promotion of classified teachers, £4,250; promotion of pupil teachers, £3,777. That was fairly good consideration, particularly when they had regard to the general finances of the State. In addition to those salaries they were trying to meet some of the long-standing grievances by providing for three new regulations. First of all they were lifting the maximum which the teachers could get. They were also providing for a regulation preventing the salaries of teachers being reduced when they were in a school the classification of which was reduced through no fault of the teacher. Besides that there was a more important regulation providing for a new increase altogether. In visiting the schools he had found that there were certain teachers who had been for twenty years in the service, and during all those years they had received no increase at all, while other teachers got the automatic increases. It had been pointed out to him that they were just as good teachers as some who had passed their examinations but had been only a little time in the service, and in some instances better teachers, because of their long experience. He felt that there should be some recognition of their long service, and therefore he was providing a new regulation to give those teachers an increase of £10 every five years, and there was provided on the vote a sum of £3,000 for that purpose. Under the circumstances he thought that the department had dealt very fairly with the teachers, although not so fairly as he would have liked if the finances had been

more favourable. With regard to the zone allowance, a deputation had waited on him requesting that some allowance should be made to teachers in certain parts of Queensland where they suffered great inconveniences and discomforts of all kinds and were put to increased expense. He had sympathised with the deputation and was hopeful at the time that he would have been able to provide a sum on the Estimates to meet their request, but owing to the decision of the Cabinet that there should be no increase in salaries above £200 he had been unable to give that allowance. However, he should certainly do what he could next year to get their request granted. With regard to the cleaning of schools: it was admitted by the department that the payment for cleaning schools was very low, but in no single instance had a reasonable request for an increase in the cleaning pay been refused. Now, as to the compulsory attendance clauses: the system at present was that the police had the administration of those clauses. The department acted on information provided by the police officer of the district, and then the police officer was instructed to warn the parents of the child playing truant. He had intended introducing legislation this year to deal with cases where children were employed after school hours, but there had not been time. However, he hoped next session an amending Bill would be introduced to enable the department to deal with those cases.

Question put and passed.

#### TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £38,760 be granted for "Technical Education."

Question put and passed.

#### RAILWAYS—GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Adamson, *Rockhampton*) moved that £36,511 be granted for "Railways—General Establishment." The reason why the Government were taking these Estimates at that late hour of the night was that [11 p.m.] the railway men were asking that they should receive their pay, particularly their back pay, before Christmas, and he was anxious that they should get their back money from the 1st July in order that they might have it to spend at Christmas. He had prepared a statement explanatory of the appropriation for the Railway Department for this year, and he should like hon. members to give him their attention while he laid it before the Committee, as it would probably give information which would save the asking of questions on some matters. The statement was as follows:—Total amount required from revenue for the services of His Majesty for the Railway Department for the year 1915-16 is £2,675,220, being an increase of £287,720 above what was voted for last year. The amount of revenue money actually spent last year was £2,421,823. This does not include the salary of the Commissioner for Railways, which is provided for in the schedule. The increase, which is a very large one, is accounted for as follows:—Classification increases to salaried officers receiving under £200 per annum, £31,393. An all round increase to the wages staff, equal to an advance of 8 1/3 per cent.,

*Hon. J. Adamson.*]

£121,500. Last year no automatic increases were voted by Parliament. When the present Government took office they decided that these automatic increases were to be paid. This meant an expenditure of £47,051. Expansion of traffic, £23,393. New system of overtime, £5,000. This was owing to the late Government's decision that each day was to stand by itself and overtime rates to operate after eight hours had been worked, instead of after ninety-six hours a fortnight. This year's compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act is provided for on the Estimates to the extent of £5,000, whereas last year no provision was made, each amount being obtained under "Unforeseen Expenditure." Extra staff on new lines that will be opened during the year, £8,000, and additional staff owing to the decentralisation scheme, £3,385. There are also two votes that did not appear on last year's Estimates—viz., Mount Garnet Railway and Innisfail Tramway—as these lines had not been taken over by the Commissioner. These require this year £10,981. The balance represents extra provision for stores and improvements, renewals, painting, etc. No special merit increases have been provided for, although there are several very deserving cases that I should have liked to have rewarded. First vote—"General Establishment, £36,511." Last year the amount voted under this heading was £78,071. The reason for this large reduction is as follows:—Chief Office—i.e., the administrative staff—shows a reduction of £10,374, due entirely to decentralisation, which meant the establishment of accounts and audit offices in the other divisions and the transfer of the Deputy Commissioner to the Northern division. The Traffic Branch, Civil Engineering Branch, Signal and Lighting, Mechanical Engineer, Audit Office, Southern division, which appeared last year under this vote, has been rearranged and provided for under their respective divisions. The only additional items under Chief Office is Traffic Superintendent and staff, £2,195. This previously was shown under traffic, but is now attached to the chief office; £5,000 for workers' compensation, which has already been explained. Members would see that the present Government were not altogether to blame for the expenditure which had been so adversely criticised by the Press and in other quarters. The late Government did not take up the burden they should have done, and did not deal with some things they should have dealt with. They promised a new classification of £150,000 to meet a classification of £501,000, and the present Government were left to face that new classification. Although they had not done what they would have liked to have done for the railway employees, yet they had done something more for them than was done by the late Government. With regard to the general establishment, the vote for last year was £78,071, while the amount required this year was only £36,511. The decrease was accounted for by the decentralisation scheme, under which certain votes had been transferred to other divisions.

HON. J. TOLMIE: With reference to the railway men getting their back money so that they might have an opportunity of enjoying their Christmas, the Opposition would facilitate action in that direction. Whatever delay there was, was due entirely to the Government in bringing on their Estimates in the way they had done. He did not know whether the delay was because

{Hon. J. Adamson.

they were afraid of criticism, but as the arrangement of the business was entirely in their hands, and they had so arranged the business that members were deprived of the opportunity of discussing the Estimates, it seemed as if they were afraid of discussion. The Standing Orders allowed eighteen days for the Estimates, but the Government had so arranged their business that the end of the year had come, and members could not occupy eighteen days in discussing the Estimates. The late Government allowed two days a week for the consideration of the Estimates, and the Estimates were brought on early in the session, but the present Government had so arranged their business that eighteen days were not allowed for dealing with the Estimates. Such action could only be designated by one term, but he was not going to apply that term. They were now dealing with Estimates on a day which was not allocated to Supply.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is thrown in.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It was not thrown in. If it were thrown in, they would cease to discuss the Estimates at half-past 10 o'clock. That evening he allowed the leader of the Government to bring forward the Income Tax Bill, though it was not on the business-paper, and he did that in order to facilitate the work of the Government. If what they were now experiencing was the reward for that kind of thing, the Opposition would know how to treat them in future. He was going to let the Estimates go through without any discussion at all. The Government ought to arrange their work so that it could be done properly. The only point he wanted information on was with regard to the control of the work of making munitions by the Railway Department. The Government had been preparing all along for the war and had been passing legislation for war purposes. There were people outside who were willing to make the shells, and others had placed their factories at the disposal of the Government, but they were told that the Railway Department were controlling the whole of the manufacture of munitions, and they would not allow anyone else to do it but themselves. He understood that 2,000 shells had to be made by the 18th December, and he would like to know if the shells were ready. He knew that in a big department like the Railway Department there must be grievances amongst the men. He knew that the Minister had gone out of his way to try to remedy those grievances and make his department run smoothly. It was only just to the Minister to say that. He thought that the Opposition had not been treated in an honourable manner right from the start to the finish of the Estimates. There were no reports ready, and the departments were gerrymandered in such a way that they did not know which department would be discussed first. It was impossible to criticise the Estimates under those conditions. Of course, it did not apply to the Railway Department, so far as the reports were concerned, as the department had the Commissioner's report ready in time. If they wanted to get the Railway Estimates through to give the railway men their Christmas allowances, then the Opposition would not prevent them.

At 11.20 p.m.,

Mr. FOLEY (*Mundingburra*) relieved Mr. Larcombe in the chair.

Mr. MORGAN pointed out that lengthsmen in his electorate after doing their eight hours' work were often called out at midnight to do two hours' patrol duty. They used to be paid time and a-quarter for this work, but at the last pay they were only paid ordinary rates. He thought they should receive the extra rate if they were called out to do that duty. No one protested against the railway men getting a good living wage, but at this time, with the country suffering from a war and drought, every class in the community should bear some share of the burden. Many people in the cities did not have any extra burden imposed on them, but those in the country districts had to pay extra railway fares and freights. He was told that in one district a farmer had to pay an increase of from 20 to 100 per cent. over the previous rates. Where he previously paid 3d. for a gallon of cream in a cream can he had to pay 10d. under the new rates.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Instructions were issued that they were only to pay for the amount of cream in the can.

Mr. MORGAN: The amount charged for individual parcels was too great. If a man was making up a 2-ton or a 4-ton lot with bags of flour and such goods, and he had a few extra parcels over, he was not allowed to include them, but they had to be paid for at parcel rates. One man who paid 2s. 6d. for a parcel of goods at Maryborough had to pay 2s. 2d. freight on those goods. He noticed that some of the men had suffered dismissal, whereas in New South Wales they did not dismiss anyone, but reduced their salaries. All classes should carry the burden, but they were not doing it in the cities. Those getting big salaries did not have any extra burden imposed on them beyond having to pay a little extra for the increased cost of living. In the country districts they had to bear the big increase in the cost of living owing to the increased fares and freights put on by the Government. The Government had also altered the system of excursion tickets. Previously anyone coming to Brisbane from Goondiwindi could stay at Warwick and Toowoomba and see a friend or a relative, and then continue the journey to Brisbane, but at present they would have to come right through to Brisbane without breaking the journey.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They do that in New South Wales.

Mr. MORGAN: He did not agree with that system at all. The Government also instituted a system of single fares. Previously, a man could buy the railway tickets for his wife and family to go to town, but now he could only buy a single ticket for the first half of the journey. If his wife and family were coming to Brisbane, they would only have tickets for the forward half of the journey. The wife had now to get a ticket when she went back, and to bustle up to the ticket office amongst the crowd, because the department had done away with the issue of return tickets. If they had increased the price of the return tickets to the price of two single fares, it would have been more convenient than the present system. It was a great nuisance to travellers, and it meant a lot of extra work for the staff. The Government had pursued the policy of charging whatever they desired for freights and fares, regardless of the conveniences and

circumstances of the country people. In the metropolitan areas the people had not had their fares and freights increased, but the whole of the burden had been placed on the shoulders of the country people. They could get a trip to Sandgate and back for about 9d.

Mr. KIRWAN: No, you cannot. The Sunday excursion is 1s. return—only on Sunday.

Mr. MORGAN: They did not get that concession in the bush. The freight in the city was practically one-half of what it was in the country.

Mr. KIRWAN: Because there is more traffic.

Mr. MORGAN: The suburban line from Brisbane to Cleveland had not paid for the axle-grease since it had been constructed.

Mr. MCMINN: That is untrue; it is a misstatement. We paid 3½ per cent. last year.

Mr. MORGAN: That was about the only time they had paid it. He was not speaking of the present year but of past years. It had not been a payable line. When they looked up the records, they would find that it had paid ½ or 1 per cent.

Mr. MCMINN: You are talking about something you know nothing about.

Mr. MORGAN: They had purely and simply a city Government, which was out to cater for the big populations, as was instanced by the polling in the recent Federal election for Wide Bay. The Labour party were strong in the cities, but they had so sickened the people in the country that a unanimous farmers' vote had been recorded against the Labour candidate. It was quite clear what the policy of the Government had been. It had practically said, "Why need we care for the farmers? We are not likely to get their support, and we are going to help those who have put us into power and give them high wages and cheap fares, and make the men in the bush pay for it." One hon. member opposite said that the storekeeper paid the extra freights, but the storekeeper was going to pass it on to the poor consumer who dealt with him.

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

Mr. SWAYNE thought it was disgraceful on the part of the Government to bring on the Estimates of this big department—one of the most important departments in the State, representing a capital expenditure of £40,000,000 of loan money—after 11 o'clock in the evening. He pointed out the good management which had characterised this department under previous Administrations. The diagram in the report of the Commissioner which set forth the earnings and the expenditure showed that, while the expenditure for the past year had been £2,401,679, the earnings had been £3,832,003. It was to be hoped the present Government would be able to show the same result. He wanted more particularly to refer to the new departure in connection with the making of ammunition. He had the pleasure of a visit to Ipswich the other day, and he gave the Government every credit for the good work that was being done in connection with the manufacture of munitions. There was nothing to complain of as to the management and the skill of the operatives. He recognised the enthusiasm of the Minister, but he doubted the wisdom of the course pursued. Without going into the figures which

*Mr. Swayne.]*

the Minister had given, he would say that a very fine plant had been put in, and a very large sum of money, that could ill be spared, had been expended in connection with the buildings and the installation of the plant. But the raw material which had come to hand was not more than sufficient to keep the plant going for more than a week, and there was now a strike on at the steelworks. The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think it would be a wiser and more patriotic thing for you to hold your tongue.

Mr. SWAYNE: Unfortunately, the newspapers were publishing accounts of strikes at the works which were providing the raw material, which showed how precarious the supply of that essential was.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know that the money expended on that is not involved in this vote at all.

Mr. SWAYNE: Were they not to be allowed to discuss the matter at all? The fact remained that there was one firm in Queensland that would have worked up all the raw material that the Government had got in five weeks, without any extra expense to the Government at all, and that was not the only firm that was willing to assist. In the face of that, where was the need for all the extra expenditure that had taken place? At the present time the Empire was largely depending on works privately owned. In Great Britain most of the munitions were from such, and in Canada, with a population not much larger than Australia, £150,000,000 worth of contracts had been executed by private firms.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your Government were nearly twelve months in office, and did not even attempt to do anything.

Mr. SWAYNE: The need for it then was not brought home. (Government laughter.) In any case, what were the Federal Government doing? They seemed to be rather backward when they could not get a second shift at the Small Arms Factory. The Government had installed a very expensive plant, and now there was no raw material for it to handle.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In five months we have done more than you ever thought of doing in twelve.

Mr. SWAYNE: The Minister in charge of the Estimates was quite able to look after himself without the assistance of the Minister for Lands, who was not yet Premier, nor likely to be, and whose present position might not even be secure. There seemed to be an absolute dearth of raw material. He happened to know how many tons had been received, and it was not sufficient to keep the elaborate plant the Government had installed at work for more than a week at the rate of output which the Minister himself gave them as being expected after 18th December. He thought it would have been better to rely on private firms.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member in order in discussing operations which were not concerned in the vote that was before the Committee?

Mr. SWAYNE: He was discussing work that was carried out by the Railway Department, and he had almost finished when his friend opposite jumped up in his excitable way. It would have been better if the Government had relied on the margin they had to spare for extra work at the Ipswich

workshops already, because he understood that so far all the shells had been made without using the new lathes in the new workshop.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have plenty of other work for all those old shops.

Mr. SWAYNE: If they had done that, and material came to hand more rapidly, they could have relied on privately owned shops, of which there were plenty ready to assist. He thought it would have been better if they had been allowed to lay the foundations of the industry as had been done in Canada. One of the weakest points in the policy of the Government was to concentrate everything in the hands of the State. He was also given to understand that private firms were told that they would have to turn out shell bodies, without the copper band and the plug that was screwed temporarily in the end, at 10s. each. The Minister had said that the price per body with the band and plug was £1 1s. He understood that the cost of the band and plug would not be more than 4s., so that apparently the private firms were expected to do for 14s. what the Government were getting £1 1s. for. He thought that when they ought to try to make the money go as far as they could, it was a matter for inquiry as to whether they could not get the shells made more cheaply outside.

Mr. KIRWAN congratulated the Minister on the splendid work he had done in connection with the Railway Department. The hon. gentleman was winning the confidence of the railway employees, and he had secured from the leader of the Opposition a very high compliment. When the decentralisation scheme came into force two men from the Brisbane traffic office, which had always been an overstaffed office, had been shifted out of the office. One was referred to as the outdoor traffic manager and the other the indoor traffic manager. One was appointed chief inspector over the heads of men who were his seniors, and the other was appointed chief clerk in the General Traffic Manager's office, Roma Street, and he (Mr. Kirwan) had been told on reliable authority that that man who was getting a very high salary could generally be found down at Brunswick street timing the trains. That was not work which a high salaried officer should perform. He had also been informed that a gentleman was brought down from Townsville and appointed assistant traffic manager in the Commissioner's office. How many more assistant indoor traffic managers were to be appointed? When he was in the department, Mr. J. G. Brown, who was now in Townsville, ran the whole Southern division with one or two men as traffic managers. While he admitted that the traffic and the staff had increased, he was not going to say that the staff had increased to the same extent as the officials, and if the Minister went into that question he would come to the conclusion that the department was official ridden, and a large number of men who got big salaries would find some difficulty in showing what work they did for their money. He also called attention to the great leakage going on in the department in connection with construction works. He had last year referred to the bridge at Normanby, and the Minister kindly secured a report from those responsible, and they endeavoured to explain the fact away, but he would ask any hon. member, when in the vicinity of the Normanby, to have a look at the bridge which was put

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

up as a temporary bridge until the new iron bridge was constructed over the four sets of rails which it was proposed to put down, and say whether any engineering ability had been displayed in the construction of that bridge. If the cutting was extended to its full width, the bridge would fall down. He was informed that at Wulkuraka a station and signal-box were erected, and after it was put up somebody discovered that it was in the wrong position. Those officials who were paid big salaries and were responsible for those mistakes, which cost the department large sums of money, should be dealt with in the same way as they dealt with subordinates, and many of them showed very little mercy. He remembered that last year the Minister had pointed out that a bathroom was constructed at Gladstone, and when the bathroom was built, they could not get the bath in it. Another thing, they built the tank down below, and they put the bath upstairs, and the poor, unfortunate driver or fireman coming in from a long journey and anxious to get a bath before he could enjoy any pleasure in the time he was off, had to go downstairs and carry the water upstairs in a bucket. What a brilliant idea! He had also been informed that on the Curra Railway Station a new platform had been put down two or three times and taken up again. He asked the Minister to make inquiries into those matters, and insist on the officials who were to blame being dealt with and the leakage stopped. He also asked the Minister whether it was a fact that it was necessary to construct a large tunnel in order to get to the new goods-shed at Roma Street. A sum of £250,000 could be saved in the Railway Department if those matters were attended to. The hon. member for Murilla had pointed out that a lengthsmen who was employed in patrol work after his ordinary hours to secure the safety of the mail train running West, had only been paid ordinary time recently. That was a fair sample of how they saved money in the Railway Department. When he was at the Central Station, they used to have a lavatory attendant on duty every Sunday, when somebody discovered that it was necessary to save money, and for some considerable time the lavatory attendant did not attend on Sundays, and the foreman porter was called upon to perform the work. When it was necessary to save money, the department should start at the top of the ladder and not at the bottom. A great song was made before Lieut.-Colonel Rankin left office, and the daily Press came out with a notification that the late Government were going to pay overtime. The strange thing in connection with those matters was that a general memorandum was printed and sent out, and immediately the men asked for payment of the increase in accordance with the memorandum they were informed that it was never intended to apply to the clerical staff, who might work overtime on a day when they might have been extra busy. If those memorandums were issued by the Minister or Commissioner, the understrappers who were instructed to carry them out should be compelled to do so. Dealing with the guards, who, to make time, had to act as shunters, he condemned the department's action in reducing them to shunter's pay. It was unfair to require this one special class of workers in the department to accept retrenchment of this kind, and he hoped that the Minister would give his attention to this matter. He congratulated

the department on the reorganisation of the Stores Branch in Brisbane, and urged the adoption of a scheme to encourage suggestions for the improvement of the railway service from men in the lower grades of the service.

Mr. COOPER congratulated the Minister upon the excellent way in which he was administering the department, and the magnificent things he had already done for the men in the railway service, including the raising of the wages of labourers from 7s. to 8s. 9d. per day. The lengthsmen were amongst the hardest-worked men in the service; many of them had received only a paltry wage for a number of years. They were now asking for a little lighter job to be found for them, and he hoped their request would receive consideration. There were leakages at the Ipswich workshops in connection with the private contracts, principally those connected with the Westinghouse Brake Company. He admitted that an efficient brake was necessary, and the one turned out by this company was the best, but the department were not justified in entering into contracts with that company in the way they did. The Westinghouse Brake Company had buildings erected for them, they were provided with accommodation, and passes were issued for their employees. After the gear was fitted to the trucks the department painted it and did everything necessary. He remembered that once the Government inspector refused to pass the handbrakes of the Westinghouse Brake Company at £1 15s., but the locomotive accountant passed them and they were installed. If the matter had been referred to an engineer instead of a clerk, the company would have got only 7s. 6d. for the brakes instead of £1 15s. That was where one leakage occurred. A lot of parts supplied by the Westinghouse Brake Company could be supplied cheaper from the Ipswich workshops. He advocated better pay for the railway clerks. Those who came under the eye of the boss got better treatment than the others who, perhaps, might be senior to them. He noticed that a man high up in the service, who had a discrepancy in his cash, was re-employed in the service, but a lengthsmen of thirty-one years' service, who took an extra pint on a hot day, was discharged because he went to sleep. There should not be differential treatment of that kind in the service.

At 12.55 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. BEBBINGTON did not think the remarks of the last speaker were a good advertisement for State enterprise. He (Mr. Bebbington) was seven years with a railway company at home, and the competition with other companies brought about better conditions. It had been rumoured lately that a good many persons who were unemployed before June last were now in Government billets—that they were receiving anything from £4 to £8 per week, and that they were not altogether necessary. A member of the House had been in Rockhampton lately and had discovered there were four or five men there in good fat billets, which, it was reported, were given to them as reward for electioneering services. He suggested that more labour-saving machinery should be used on construction works, and stated that

*Mr. Bebbington.]*

he had seen men digging a trench with pick and shovel, when, with a scoop and a plough, they could do the work much easier and much more rapidly. He also deprecated the increase in freights on agricultural produce.

Mr. PETERSON suggested that guards on the Central railways should be given permission to transport accident cases and urgent cases of illness to the nearest hospital in what was known as the U.V. brake vans. With reference to railway construction works, he claimed that there was no such thing as what was called the "Government stroke" on those works; suggested that, as on the Commonwealth railway works, a medical man or ambulance attendant should be provided for every 300 men; that school accommodation should be provided for the children of married men employed in building railways, and that proper accommodation should be afforded the navvies. He further suggested that instead of buying stores in the Central district in a retail way, the department should buy them in large or wholesale quantities, and asked why his constituents had to pay double the fares Brisbane people paid?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY referred to the meetings of the Munitions Advisory Committee, and stated that he was informed notices of meetings were sent to all members.

The CHAIRMAN ruled that the munitions question could not be discussed on the vote before the Committee.

Question put and passed.

#### SOUTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that the sum of £1,679,838 be granted for the "Southern Division." There was an increase of £257,161 in this vote as compared with the appropriation for 1914-15.

Mr. VOWLES expressed astonishment that the Minister had not made any reply to the adverse criticism of the administration of the department by his own followers, as absolute charges of corruption had been made.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will reply later on.

Mr. CORSER said he was surprised that no provision was made on the Estimates for a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole of the working of the Railway Department, as members of the Government party had frequently insisted that such a course was necessary.

Question put and passed.

#### CENTRAL DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that the sum of £437,236 be granted for the "Central Division." He had no intention of burking any discussion or of shirking any explanation, and would have dealt with the matters which had been mentioned on the last vote, but was under the impression that he could make a general reply on the last vote. All that had been brought forward that evening had been noted, and would be inquired into most carefully.

Mr. VOWLES expressed disappointment that the Minister had not taken an opportunity to refute the very serious allegations made by members on his own side against the administration of the department.

[Mr. Bebbington.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not allow the Minister or any other member of the Committee to refer to anything that took place on the previous vote.

Mr. MORGAN said that very great charges had been levelled against the department, and he was sorry that the Minister had not endeavoured to protect his officers.

Mr. CORSER deprecated the serious charges made against clerks and the auditors in the Central division, and hoped that the Minister would take steps to remove the blot which had been placed upon them by the aspersions of members on the Government side of the House.

Mr. GILDAY congratulated the Minister on the way he had handled the matters under his control and on the increases which he had given to the employees in the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So far as the officers of the Central division were concerned, he had perfect confidence in them, as they had shown themselves thoroughly capable of performing their work. In the Commissioner, the Secretary (Mr. Crowther), and some other officers of the department he had every confidence. There were, however, other officials in whom he had not the same confidence, and he could only repeat what he had previously said, that the conduct of these officers and the matters which had been brought under his notice that evening would be inquired into and receive every consideration.

Question put and passed.

#### NORTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that the sum of £521,635 be granted for the "Northern Division."

Question put and passed.

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

### RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill with an amendment in which they requested the concurrence of the Assembly.

Ordered that the Council's amendment be taken into consideration at the next sitting of the House.

### LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill with amendments in which they requested the concurrence of the Assembly.

Ordered that the Council's amendments be taken into consideration at the next sitting of the House.

The House adjourned at nineteen minutes to 2 o'clock a.m.