

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 5 AUGUST 1886**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 5 August, 1886.

Petition.—Questions.—Justices Bill—third reading.—Elections Act of 1885 Amendment Bill—third reading.—Mineral Oils Bill—third reading.—Order for Copies of Executive Minutes.—Adjournment.—Mineral Lands (Coal Mining) Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

### PETITION.

Mr. MURPHY presented a petition from certain commercial and working men in the township of Tambo, setting forth that they had been compelled to cease improving their holdings, because the confidence which had hitherto led monetary institutions to advance loans to them had been destroyed by the Land Act of 1884; and asking that clause 30 of Part III. of the said Act be amended by giving squatters thirty years' leases for the unresumed portions of their runs, and a maximum fixed beyond which the rents could not be assessed. He moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On the motion of Mr. MURPHY, the petition was received.

### QUESTIONS.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Whether the seed-corn for distribution has yet been received from California?

2. Upon what basis the Government propose to distribute the corn?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) replied—

I may inform the hon. member that the seed-corn is expected to arrive to-morrow. As to the basis upon which it is to be distributed, I have not arranged that at present. I may say that there are about 650 applicants for about 200 bushels. The great bulk of the applicants are in the Moreton, Darling Downs, and Wide Bay districts. On Tuesday next I shall be able to give very information upon that point.

Mr. NORTON asked the Chief Secretary—

1. What communications have been received by the Government respecting the expenditure of £1,000 contributed by this colony towards the exploration of New Guinea under the auspices of the Geographical Society of Australasia?

2. Will the Chief Secretary lay upon the table of the House all reports and other papers connected with the expedition?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

The Government have not, although they have asked for it, received any reports from the Geographical Society of Australasia respecting the expenditure of the money referred to.

Mr. DONALDSON asked the Minister for Works—

When will the survey of the railway line from Charleville towards Mount Margaret be completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) replied—

Owing to the severe drought and the consequent absence of grass and water on the route, the survey beyond Charleville had to be suspended in October last. Arrangements will shortly be made for the survey to be again proceeded with, and it is expected that thirty or forty miles can be completed in about six months.

Mr. DONALDSON asked the Premier—

When will tenders be called for the construction of the telegraph line from Charleville to Adavale?

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

The calling for tenders is still delayed in consequence of the route for the extension of the Southern and Western Railway from Charleville being not yet fixed.

### JUSTICES BILL—THIRD READING.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

### ELECTIONS ACT OF 1885 AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

### MINERAL OILS BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

### ORDER FOR COPIES OF EXECUTIVE MINUTES.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL, in moving—

That an address be presented to the Administrator of the Government, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be laid upon the table of this House copies of all Executive minutes from 1st November, 1883, to the date of the resignation of the late Ministry—

said: Mr. Speaker.—This is, I believe, a somewhat unusual motion to make, and it is therefore perhaps necessary that I should give some few words of explanation of my reason for moving it. I believe that, though unusual, we have a perfect right to call for these minutes. I believe it is a good thing that the Assembly should have that right. I believe it is a good thing, even so far as the present Ministry is concerned, that there should be a possibility in the future of challenging and investigating their transactions and the business they do on behalf of the country. My reason for moving for these minutes in particular is that I have been led to believe that on 5th November, 1883, a day or two before the late Ministry went out of office, a very extraordinary meeting of the Executive was held, and that certain transactions that took place then have since come to light, partly through the aid of the Supreme Court. I want to know more about the transactions which took place at that time, and especially at that meeting of a Ministry which was effectually dead.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You are very inquisitive.

Question put and passed.

### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—As there is no business on the paper for to-morrow, I beg to move that this House on its rising adjourn till Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

MINERAL LANDS (COAL MINING)  
BILL—COMMITTEE.

On motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles), the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole to consider this Bill.

On clause 1—"Short title"—

Mr. MELLOR said the clause made reference to the Mineral Lands Act of 1882. Now, there were regulations under that Act which would not be suitable under this Bill if it passed. He supposed new regulations would be framed.

The PREMIER : Yes.

Mr. MELLOR said he hoped the Government would be prepared to receive amendments in the Bill. He believed hon. members would be inclined to give encouragement to prospectors by reducing the royalty and also the rental.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 2—"License may be granted to search for coal"—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would point out to the hon. member for Wide Bay that the object of the Bill was to give encouragement to prospecting for coal. He did not think the hon. member could expect a more liberal Bill. Surely a rental of 6d. an acre, and if there was coal a royalty of 3d. per ton, were not more than enough. He would be glad to have the views of the Committee, and if it was thought a smaller rate should be charged, he had no objection.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3 passed as printed.

On clause 4, as follows:—

"The license may be renewed by the commissioner for another year upon payment of a further sum equal to one shilling per acre of the land comprised therein, and upon proof to the satisfaction of the Minister that the licensee has during the period of the license used reasonable endeavours to search for coal upon the land, and has not used the land for any purpose not hereby authorised."

Mr. SCOTT asked if the "further sum" of 1s. was to be an addition to the original tax, or whether 1s. was to be the whole rent for the second year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the rental was to be increased to 1s.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought it was very unfair that the rent should be doubled. If the prospector had been so unsuccessful as to discover nothing during the first year, and had to devote another year towards prospecting, that was no reason why he should be compelled to pay double the rental. It was the prospector's misfortune, and some encouragement should be given him. If any alteration were made, the rent should be decreased during the second year on account of the expenditure he had made during the first year without any good results.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the object of the Bill was to prevent mineral lands being locked up, and make provision for their being used for mining purposes. It was very undesirable that any facilities should be given for locking up mineral lands, and that was the reason the rent was raised from 6d. to 1s. per acre for the second year.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not think that raising the rent would be at all likely to accelerate the progress of prospecting or make licensees work any harder. He could not appreciate that reason at all. The land he was interested in would be very dear to anybody at 6d. an acre, except for the chance of finding coal. He really did not see the force of

making the amount 1s. for the second year, and he intended to propose an amendment reducing it to 6d. The commissioner was not obliged to grant a license; if he saw that no efforts had been made to find coal, he could refuse a renewal of the license, so that he had a discretionary power by which he could prevent the land being locked up. He was of opinion that 6d. an acre was ample, and therefore moved that the words "one shilling" be omitted, with the view of inserting "sixpence."

Mr. SCOTT said before that amendment was put he would suggest that the word "further" be struck out.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to know whether it was the intention to renew a license more than once, as the clause was not very clear on the subject?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : For another year after the first year.

Mr. NORTON said if a man held a license for one year, and the Act provided that the license might be renewed for another year, it might be renewed a second time.

Mr. FOXTON said he would point out the difference between the wording of that clause and that of the last subsection of clause 7. In clause 4 it was provided that a license might be renewed for "another year," whereas in clause 7, which dealt with a different kind of license, it was stated that the renewal of the license there referred to might be granted "from time to time for a further period of six months," which meant more than once. There was a vast difference between the two phrases.

Mr. NORTON said he quite understood the difference between the two. He did not think there was any difficulty about that.

Mr. FOXTON : I thought there was.

Mr. NORTON said he did not know where the difficulty came in. The holder of a license could, under clause 4, apply for that license to be renewed for another year. It did not matter whether it was a first or second license, he was entitled to a license for "another year." At any rate, the clause could be read in that way.

Mr. BROWN said he would point out that it was not very material whether the license fee for the second year was 6d. or 1s. per acre, because a subsequent clause allowed the licensee at the end of the first year to apply for a lease for ten years of 320 acres of the land at a rental of 6d. per acre.

Mr. HAMILTON said it was true that the licensee could apply for a lease of any part of the land selected to the extent of 320 acres, but he would not wish to do that until he had prospected it properly so that he might know where to select his ground. With regard to the wording of the clause, it was provided that the license might be renewed by the commissioner for "another year." He understood the hon. member for Carnarvon to say that "another year" did not mean another year. He thought there was no question but that prospectors should be allowed to have a license renewed year after year, if they were not successful in their search, provided that the Minister was satisfied that the licensee was prospecting the ground properly. But, as the clause read now, it was distinctly specified that the license should only be renewed for another year, and, that being so, if an individual had prospected land for two years he would not be allowed to continue his search further, in consequence of his time having expired. He could not agree with the contention of the hon. the Minister for Works, that it was desirable that the rent should be doubled the

second year, in order to prevent the land being locked up. How could it be locked up? Mineral lands were not used for grazing purposes. He would further point out that power was reserved to the Minister to grant a prospector's license for another year "upon proof to the Minister that the licensee has, during the period of the license, used reasonable endeavours to search for coal upon the land." With that power, he did not see how the land could be locked up, and he thought it was only fair that the rent for the second year should be exactly the same as for the first.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said they knew very well that it was a habit of some people to purchase land and let it lie idle until its value was increased by somebody else. If prospectors were allowed to take up land, they could leave it until somebody else discovered coal, and then go and work the land. He thought it was very desirable that there should be an increase of rent for the second year, so that licensees should be compelled to use the land they took up.

Mr. ALAND said it would simplify matters if the Minister for Works would inform the Committee, before proceeding further, whether the license was to be renewed for one year only, or from year to year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the intention of the Bill was that the license should be for two years only. That would give every facility for prospecting for coal, and it would not lock up the land.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not agree with the reasons advanced by the Minister for Works. It was left entirely within the power of the commissioner to renew the lease, according as he might consider that every reasonable effort had been made to discover coal. A man might want his lease renewed for more than one year, or even for more than two years. The hon. gentleman had trotted out the bogey of "unearned increment." But surely a man who acquired a stake in the country, although he did make a little "unearned increment" out of his property, was a much better citizen and member of the community than the man who spent his money in drink, and had to be provided for ultimately at the expense of the State at Dunwich or Woogaroo. Men who invested in land were very good colonists—much better than those who did not. Before dealing with the question of the payment for the second year's lease, he would move as an amendment that the words "for another year" be omitted, with the view of inserting the words "from year to year."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the result of the adoption of such an amendment would be to lock up the land and prevent anybody else from sinking for coal upon it. If the hon. member thought he was going to carry an amendment of that kind he was greatly mistaken. He knew that that was what the hon. member's constituents desired—they wanted to take up large tracts of country and to prohibit anybody else from prospecting there for coal. He should certainly oppose the amendment.

Mr. KELLETT said that in his opinion the clause as it stood was a very fair one. The object of doubling the rent for the second year he took to be to induce prospectors to try the land well during the first year; and that seemed a very fair thing. The terms were very liberal and easy, and would not be objected to by men who really intended to search for coal. Unless some limit was put, a man might continue his lease for an indefinite period; he might have discovered coal during the first year, and go on

paying the 6d. an acre until he went about the country or to England and formed a syndicate or floated a big company. That was not the object of the Bill. A few men who meant business could prospect the 640 acres within two years, or even within a year; and to enable them to do that, the Bill offered very fair terms.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the remarks of the hon. member for Stanley illustrated one of the evils arising from their having to legislate for such an enormous country. That hon. member gave the Ipswich view of the question, and no doubt it was a very good view as far as Ipswich was concerned. But in the district he represented, the land, for any other purpose whatever as far as he could see—and he had been over it—would be uncommonly dear at 6d. an acre, let alone 1s. It should not be forgotten that the renewal of a lease was entirely in the hands of the commissioner and of the Minister, and if the men who took up the land were not doing their best to fulfil the conditions the lease would not be renewed. As long as the Government could get 6d. an acre for that land, they would be very foolish not to take it. He was not afraid of those cormorants, those capitalists, who were going to buy the whole place up. He only wished there were some more of them in the colony, and then they might possibly stand a chance of getting a little bit for themselves. Instead of locking up the land, the only way to unlock it was to make the terms as liberal as possible, and to offer every inducement to develop an industry which would be of the greatest importance not only to the North but to the whole colony.

Mr. BULCOCK said he was not surprised at the hon. member for Cook objecting to pay 6d. an acre for land. That hon. member had held land at a farthing an acre, and 6d. an acre must appear to him something enormous. But supposing that within six months the prospectors found a seam of coal seven feet thick, it would be most unfair to the colony to let them have the land year after year at 6d. or even at 1s. an acre. The State had a claim to a much larger share of what was beneath the surface than that. It was probable that any company that started prospecting for coal would do so by boring, not by sinking, and they would very soon discover whether coal was there or not. If they were not satisfied with the results they would give up the land and search elsewhere. The provision in the clause was a wise one, for it would prevent the land being locked up for an indefinite period.

Mr. HAMILTON said they were not just then discussing the question of rent, but whether the lease should be for two years only, or from year to year, if circumstances should show that it was desirable. He was in favour of supporting the amendment of his hon. colleague, because many cases would undoubtedly occur where men might have spent a couple of years prospecting for coal without any results having accrued; especially if they progressed at the rate of the prospecting association at Bowen, where the Government sent a diamond drill, and they spent six months going down 300 or 400 feet. The coal measures of the Cook district were, he believed, very deep in some cases, and it might take considerable time to discover them. See how unfair it would be if a man, after spending one or two years in prospecting, getting expensive machinery, and putting down holes from 500 to 1,200 feet, and just at the end of that time, when he had not prospected sufficiently far to enable him to know the best portion or to justify him in taking out a lease—if they were to take the land away from him and any new comer could come in and apply for the same

amount of land, and hold it for two years just as the first prospector did, and take advantage of all his labour. The hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Bulcock) objected to the amendment on the ground that during the two years the prospector might find coal, and during the second he might hold the prospecting area without paying the royalty, and defraud the State in that way. But he would be unable to do that, because there was a saving clause which stated that the commissioner should not give a prospecting area unless he saw that the circumstances justified it. The hon. the Minister for Mines had stated that his objection to giving the land for a longer term than two years, and to the prospector having it for less than 1s. per acre during the second year, was that any prospector might take up land, allow it to lie idle for two or three years, and then benefit by the labours of other persons. Now, if there was no provision in the Bill to prevent that being done—if a prospector could take up land and hold it against everyone else year after year upon payment of 6d. per acre, there would be something in that argument; but, as he had already pointed out, the commissioner had it in his power, if he thought a prospector was doing anything of the kind, to prevent him from continuing in possession of the prospecting area, so that the argument fell to the ground; and that was the only argument that had been brought forward in favour of confining the time to two years and of increasing the rental to 1s. an acre.

Mr. KATES said he saw no objection, and thought no hon. member could have any objection, to the clause as it stood. In the first place, it allowed twelve months to search for coal; that was a considerable time, and if the prospector did not find it in that time he had better give it up. On the other hand, if he did find it, surely 1s. an acre for the next year was not too much. He should support the clause.

Mr. GRIMES said he was not in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Cook, because he thought it would give rise to a good deal of speculation in leases. Speculative individuals would take up portions of land under prospecting license, and if the time was extended beyond two years they would allow one of their party to go and test the ground; they would delay entering upon their ground until it was thoroughly tested, and then they would come in and secure a lease of the other portions. If they could not ascertain whether there was a seam of coal in the area in two years, he thought it would be a very poor look-out. Besides, it was not likely that anyone searching for coal would do anything beyond boring or sinking small trial shafts until they secured the land by lease, and the idea of letting people have land from year to year would be of no service at all. No one would invest their money in such a way. Twelve months or two years was quite sufficient time to thoroughly test the land, and anything beyond that would only give rise to speculation in leases.

Mr. HAMILTON said men had prospected for gold ever since Queensland had been a colony, and it had not given rise to unhealthy speculation; and so far from the statement of the hon. member being correct that any person could discover coal in a year's time, and if they did not it was time to give it up—why, just outside Townsville people had been prospecting for coal for three years, and had spent large sums of money in the enterprise without having discovered it yet. One of those persons was Mr. Jack, the geologist, and he (Mr. Hamilton) thought that was one of the strongest arguments in proof of the necessity of not confining the time to two years, but extending it from year to year.

Mr. Jack, the highest geological authority in Queensland, was one of those prospectors, and would it not be unfair in a case like that to take the land from them at the end of the time specified in the clause?

Mr. ALAND: Over what area are they prospecting?

Mr. HAMILTON: It did not matter whether it was 200 yards or 200 miles; there was the fact that coal had not been discovered, although those people had been trying for it for three years. That was clear proof of the absurdity of the argument that the time should be limited to two years; and the contention that the land might be held and allowed to lie idle if granted from year to year was also absurd, because there was the distinct statement in the clause that if the commissioner was not satisfied that the parties were searching for coal or working the land properly, it would not be granted for another year.

Mr. BULCOCK said if they adopted the argument of the hon. member who had just sat down, and granted the land from year to year, it might go on for ever.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes; if the commissioner is satisfied.

Mr. BULCOCK: The result would be that the land would be locked up. The commissioner could not inspect it himself, but would probably send someone else to do so; and they had had plenty of proof that men could be bought for purposes of that character.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the phrase about the land being locked up had been repeated several times by the hon. junior member for Enoggera. The fact was that it had been locked up ever since the creation, and he wanted to unlock it; and the most liberal terms they could give would be the speediest way of unlocking it.

Mr. BULCOCK: Give it away.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Yes; even give it away. He believed that if they even gave the title-deeds away the land would much sooner be made reproductive to the country. The hon. member had said that he (Mr. Hill) had held land at a farthing an acre and therefore he thought 6d. an acre very good rent. As to that, he could say to his sorrow and cost that the land he held at a farthing an acre had been a very bad bargain for him for the last four years—during the drought—an exceedingly bad bargain; dear at any price. But surely it was better to get a farthing than nothing; it was of course better to get 6d. than a farthing—twenty-four times as good; and if land which was now bringing in nothing could be made to bring in 6d. an acre, for goodness sake let them do it. He was sure the Treasurer was not over-burdened with superfluity of cash; they did not want to turn money away from the doors, although a good deal had been turned away through certain crazes that had lately set in among the community. It was the duty of hon. members to facilitate in every way the introduction of capital for the purpose of working those lands, and they should give people as liberal terms as possible. If they did not, it would only show the people of the North the way in which they were treated in consequence of the narrow-minded views held by the southern portion of the community, whose members looked at such questions through green spectacles. He should press the amendment to a division.

The PREMIER said the Bill was brought in to encourage prospecting for coal. It proposed to give persons a temporary monopoly over a large area of land, but some hon. members insisted on

having a permanent monopoly or nothing at all. That seemed unreasonable. The Government were willing to grant a temporary monopoly on reasonable terms, but he did not see why they should be expected to allow one that was indefinite in duration.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the commissioner need not renew the license if prospecting was not proceeded with; but some of them, at any rate, could be tipped. He did not wish to cast aspersions on the Civil Service, but he would remind the Government that it was their business to look after their officials, and see that their duties were carried out with a fair amount of honesty and a reasonable amount of ability.

Mr. JORDAN said he agreed with the hon. member for Cook (Mr. Hill) in so far that it might be advisable to give land to the people under some circumstances, but he could not agree with the amendment, as he was afraid it would have the effect of locking up land under false pretences. The clause under consideration said that the commissioner might grant the license for another year—one year only—upon payment "which shall be equal in the whole to one shilling per acre"; but he thought it might be a little more clearly worded. It might read thus:—"The license may be renewed by the commissioner for a further period of one year only upon payment of a further sum, equal in the whole to one shilling per acre." He thought that the rent for the second year—1s. per acre—was very reasonable.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he was surprised that the hon. member for Enoggera should bring such a sweeping charge against the Public Service. He spoke like a gentleman of great experience when he said they were guilty of receiving what were commonly called "tips." Those engaged in the Public Service of Queensland were just as respectable as those engaged in any other service, and as free from stain, and not at all likely to take tips, as implied by the hon. member for Enoggera. He wished to ask the Minister for Mines what was the meaning of the 4th clause? It said that the license might be renewed by the commissioner for another year "upon payment of a further sum equal to one shilling." Did that mean 18d. for the second year?

Mr. ALAND: Another sum equal to 1s.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he did not ask the hon. gentleman's opinion. Though he respected his opinions, he respected the opinions of the Minister for Mines infinitely more.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the clause was as clear as noonday. He did not know how it looked in the dark, but by daylight it said, "The license may be renewed by the commissioner for another year upon payment of a further sum equal to one shilling per acre." Surely there could be no mistake about that.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he must confess he was not one bit more enlightened on the subject than before. He might be very dull of comprehension and not know exactly the value of 18d. or 1s., but he wanted to know whether the clause meant 18d. for the second year or 1s. in all.

Mr. SCOTT said 6d. per acre was the amount of the first year's rent, and during the second year the rent was to be a further sum of 1s. per acre. Surely 6d. and 1s. amounted to 18d. As the clause stood at present it was certainly not intelligible.

The PREMIER said there was an amendment before the Committee, but the discussion was upon another matter altogether. He hoped the Committee would deal with one thing at a time.

Mr. BAILEY said they ought to look at the matter as business men. There was an immense area of land in the colony where possibly—some people might think probably—there was coal. The Government having machinery at their disposal, refused to develop it—refused to discover whether there was coal or not. Private individuals made the Government an offer. They said, "If you give us any kind of concession we will try to discover whether your lands—public lands belonging to the people of the colony—are of any value or not." But the Government said, "Though we refuse to try to find coal—refuse to attempt to settle a population on those lands—refuse to derive a revenue from them in the only way in which a revenue can be derived,—if you private individuals wish to carry out the functions of the Government, we will let you do so on condition that you pay 6d. per acre rent for the first year for all the land upon which you wish to prospect, and then, after having spent many thousands the first year, if you are not successful, because you are not successful in the first year, we will double the rent." And if they discovered what they sought for, they would afterwards only have the right to acquire a small portion, though they made the surrounding land of immense value to the country. He remembered an award being proposed once for the man who found gold at a certain depth. He thought it was the hon. member for Townsville who said it was like greasing a fat pig. If the man got gold at a great depth he did not require a reward, and if coal prospectors were not successful why should a heavier penalty be imposed?

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that the question before the Committee is the amendment of the hon. member, Mr. Hill.

Mr. BAILEY said he wished that the amendment should be put with as little delay as possible.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Premier had urged another argument against the amendment, and that was that those who were in favour of continuing the right to hold the ground desired a permanent monopoly. But no such thing was wanted; it was simply desired that if a party of miners felt inclined to spend their time and money on land they should be protected. By their occupying the land for one or two years they imagined that they would be successful by continuing in occupation. They should be allowed to do so, provided they satisfied the commissioner that they were not monopolists. He had shown that it was desirable that the time should be extended by the fact that only a little south of Cooktown persons who had been prospecting there for three years were still prospecting.

Mr. FOOTE said he thought the amendment would defeat the object of the Bill to a considerable extent. He maintained that one year was sufficient to enable prospectors to ascertain whether there was coal on the land. That information could be easily obtained in a very much less time than the time allowed by the Bill, and on a very much larger acreage than 640 acres. As to what had fallen from the hon. member for Wide Bay, he thought the hon. member's liver must be in a chronic state of disorder, as he always looked at the melancholy side of every question. He believed in giving facilities to persons to open up mineral lands, but at the same time he wished to do that in such a way that the Government should hold power over the land, so that persons should not be able for the purposes of speculation to monopolise the ground. He thought ample time was afforded to prospectors under the Bill to carry out their researches, and he did not wish to see the Bill amended in such a way as would enable persons to defeat its object.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that under ordinary circumstances two years was quite long enough for a party to find a payable seam of coal, but although that might be the case under ordinary circumstances, there were circumstances under which it was more difficult, such as when the coal-seam was very deep, as seams were in many portions of Queensland. It was not a question of much importance whether prospectors were allowed to carry on prospecting operations from year to year, so long as the Government was satisfied that the work was being carried on in a *bona fide* manner. That was all the Government wanted, and wanting that only he could see no objection to the amendment, because if a party really wished to monopolise the ground, all they had to do was simply to change the name of the party and send in a fresh application for the same piece of ground. That was done over and over again, but the Government should make stringent regulations, and see that the commissioners enforced those regulations and compelled the people to prospect for the coal which they were pretending to look for. Then there would be no speculation or monopoly. He thought the Government might consent to the amendment for that reason. What might suit the district of Wide Bay might not so well suit the districts of the Burdekin Delta, or Townsville, or Cooktown, where the seams of coal might be deeper.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said the hon. member stated that under some circumstances two years would not be a sufficiently long time to enable prospectors to find coal, but if at the end of the two years there was sufficient to induce them to go on with their work they might apply for a lease of the land; but the condition that right to occupy should be extended from year to year he did not think at all desirable. He did not know much about gold-digging, but he knew there had been a great deal of abuse of the power of applying for exemption from work, and in his opinion those exemptions were continued very much longer than they ought to be. He did not think it desirable that the commissioner should be enabled to grant the right to hold the land on representations being made that work was going on. The proposal of the hon. member for Cook to reduce the rent to 6d. he did not think would answer, because the hon. member merely dealt with the surface value of the land. Now, it was known that the surface value of coal land was very small indeed, but no one knew what was underneath. The hon. member for Cook did not pretend to know that, and, to secure the State against those lands being held by persons who were only doing enough work to be able to say they were working, a slight increase of the rent was proposed. Now, that increase could not press very heavily upon anyone, and it might be just sufficient to induce prospecting parties to carry on their work and find out whether it was worth while applying for a lease or not. He thought that under such circumstances there was nothing much to complain of. Sixpence an acre was not a heavy charge, and even the second year the whole sum would be small; but if the right to occupy were continued from year to year it would mean that a rental would be derived from the land which would not be at all commensurate with its value. The hon. member must remember that the Cook was not the only district in the colony, and he could not agree with him that it was at all desirable to hand over the deeds of certain lands to persons who were willing to see what they could find. They had an instance of almost a similar evil in the case of lands near Maryborough. Ten or twelve thousand acres of land were held at the Burrum

by persons who refused to do anything with it, and there was only one man—an outsider—who had secured quite a small area, who had attempted in any way to develop it. Men from Victoria attempted to get hold of the other land, but the demands of the owners were so exorbitant that they could not touch it. The member for Wide Bay said that they did not know for certain that coal existed on these lands, but there were plenty of men who did know for a certainty that it existed in the Wide Bay district. They knew pretty well the depth to which they would have to go, and where to put the shaft down. The quality of the coal would have, of course, to be tested by boring, but that the coal was there they would not have the slightest doubt. The representatives of that syndicate intended to start the Urangan railway, and made a selection of 1,000 acres of coal land without any difficulty whatever. No bore was put down until it was known that the coal was there, which could be seen from the appearance of the land; but its quality had to be determined afterwards. The clause gave ample facilities to those who wished to test the coal at the expense of only a few pounds.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that, under the clause they were discussing, the evils pointed out by the Minister for Works as existing in regard to coal-mines could not arise. The Government always had the power in its own hands. If the commissioner was satisfied that the grounds for a renewal were not sufficient, the Government could say "No," and there would be an end of it. That was as it should be.

Mr. ADAMS said he thought they were there to legislate for the colony as a whole. He thought two years was ample, but a great deal depended upon circumstances. He must candidly confess that the commissioner would have it in his own hands whether he liked to renew the lease or not. If Ministers did not intend to renew the lease, he was satisfied that they would not do so. If the amendment passed, he did not think it would be any benefit to the colony. Two years would be ample. In the interior a lot of mineral land had been prospected for coal and other minerals, and they found that it was not the capitalist who found those minerals; he only came in afterwards to develop them. Therefore it would be very hard indeed if sufficient time were not given to those people who had devoted one year or two years, and in one case he knew of three years, to sinking. They would have expended their time, which was their capital, and would know that the coal was there. An extra 6d. per acre seemed a very paltry sum; but it might mean a great deal. The industrial part of the community ought to be considered in the matter, and time enough should be given them to develop the land.

Mr. ANNEAR said he was sure that the hon. gentleman would admit that they were sent there to look after the interests of their constituents. The members for Ipswich, as well as those for Maryborough, studied the interests of their districts. They had got on very well with the business of the country so far, and he was somewhat surprised to see that the Bill was going through committee so hastily, when it was well known that there were a great many who wished to have something to say about the Bill and to bring their opinions to bear upon it. It was a very important measure, and there was no doubt that it would be passed through committee in a very little while. If he thought that a rent of 1s. per acre would be the means of compelling people to comply with the labour conditions, he would vote for it; but he did not think it would have that effect at

all. He thought, with the hon. member for Cook, that if they gave the land for nothing, to induce coal-miners to settle upon it, it would be beneficial. Having to pay the rent and royalty amounted to a very heavy tax indeed.

The CHAIRMAN said he must remind the hon. gentleman that the question of time was under consideration, and not the question of rent.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put, and the Committee divided :—

AYES, 30.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Miles, Dickson, Rutledge, Dutton, Moreton, Sheridan, Foote, Scott, Brown, Grimes, Kates, Annear, Wakefield, McMaster, Foxton, White, Campbell, Jordan, Bulcock, Mellor, Smyth, Aland, W. Brookes, Buckland, Lalor, Govett, Horwitz, S. W. Brookes, and Norton.

NOES, 11.

Messrs. Macrossan, Chubb, Hamilton, Black, Adams, Lissner, Philp, Hill, Pattison, Murphy, and Bailey.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That clause 4, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put.

Mr. MELLOR said he believed the hon. member for Cook had another amendment to move, and he did not know whether he intended to press it or not. He would like to see the provision for a further sum of 1s. per acre for the second year taken out. He thought himself that a like sum for the second year would be quite sufficient, and would improve the clause.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he certainly intended, even if he had to go to a division again, to press an amendment substituting the words "a like sum of sixpence" for the words "a further sum equal to one shilling."

The PREMIER: Say "sixpence" instead of "one shilling."

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: No; I want to leave out that objectionable word "further."

The PREMIER: It will be a further sum whether you leave it out or not.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said there seemed to be great objection to the word "further" in the minds of some of the elderly gentlemen near him. He moved the omission of the words "further sum equal to one shilling" with the view of inserting the words "like sum of sixpence." He trusted the Minister for Mines would accept his amendment this time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had a great objection to the hon. member bamboozling him and making the clause unintelligible.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I want to make it intelligible.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the clause seemed to him clear enough. The rent for the first twelve months would be 6d. an acre, and if the land was held for another year the rent would be 1s. an acre. He hoped the hon. member would not press his amendment and make the clause unintelligible.

Mr. ANNEAR said he could not understand the clause yet, and there were a good many other members who could not understand it. He agreed with the hon. member for Leichhardt, and as he read the clause he took it that a man would have to pay 6d. an acre for the first year and 1s. an acre for the second, or 18d. in two years. He would support the hon. member for Cook. Who could go down 1,000 feet in two years? There was not sufficient time given, and he hoped the hon. member would press his amendment and that he would be better supported than he was on the last amendment he moved.

Mr. HAMILTON said no reason had been given for increasing the rent to 1s. for the second year. A miner might be unsuccessful in his search for coal in the first year, and yet the rent was to be doubled on him in the second year. The provision was certainly not inserted to prevent monopoly, as had been asserted some time ago, because under the Bill the commissioner had it in his power to prevent a person having the land for a second year unless he was satisfied that the ground had been worked properly. If they gave the land for nothing, as had been said, to induce persons to spend time and money in developing that which now lay dormant, it would be a politic thing for the Government to do. A more petty clause he never saw. The Government had not attempted to give any reason for doubling the rental the second year.

Mr. CAMPBELL said that twelve months was rather a short time to allow anyone to hold land for prospecting purposes; and he thought a compromise might be effected by making it eighteen months.

Mr. ALAND said he thought the Government might reduce the amount to 6d. It was only a small matter—£16 on 640 acres; and the Government might give way, seeing that they had fixed the time at two years.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the prospectors were poor men—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, no!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that those in his district were not men of capital, or bloated speculators, or aristocrats in any shape or form. They were struggling men, to whom it made a great difference whether they paid £16 or £32 a year. The time was excessively short in a country like that, and if the prospectors did not find payable coal enough in one year to justify them in applying for a lease, he did not see why the rent should be doubled for the second year. He really thought the Minister might let them go on another year at the same rate. It put the country to no additional expense—the cost to the country was no more the second year than the first.

Mr. JORDAN said he intended to support the amendment. He regretted that the Minister for Works had not made it perfectly clear when the question was first raised whether the claim implied a payment of 1s. 6d. or 1s. Several hon. members had expressed a doubt on the question, and it was not until the Premier distinctly said it would be 1s. 6d. that it was understood by the Committee. He (Mr. Jordan) certainly understood it to mean that the payment would be 1s. 6d. the second year. It was very desirable that the Minister in charge of a Bill should give explicit replies to gentlemen who started such difficulties.

The PREMIER said the Bill provided for the issue of a license for one year on payment of 6d. an acre. It then provided that the license might be renewed on payment of a further sum. What did that mean? A sum in addition to the sum already paid. What was that sum in addition to the sum already paid? A shilling an acre. Then 6d. and 1s. made 18d. He confessed he could not see where the difficulty lay.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Is it 18d. for one year or two years?

The PREMIER: Sixpence in the first year and 1s. in the second—what did that come to? He really could not see the difficulty. Hon. members had referred to the matter as one of not much importance; but see the advantage which was given to persons who got their licenses for the second year! They held the land all that time, and took all the coal they got out of



it. If they found coal at the end of the first year, and instead of taking out a lease at increased rent and with heavier conditions—labour conditions and everything else—held it under their license for a second year, they kept all the coal they could take out, paying no royalty and only 6d. an acre rent. He thought that was very liberal. Not only did they keep the land on which they were getting the coal, but they kept everyone else off the whole 640 acres. As for the £16 preventing anyone from going on, that was absurd.

Mr. HAMILTON said it was impossible for the miner to get out any quantity of coal during the second year. In the first place, the Minister would not grant the prospecting area unless he saw that the person was entitled to it by the work he had done. The first thing to do in prospecting for coal was to put down bores 400, 500, 1,200, or 1,400 feet deep. After the prospector had done that and fixed upon the position of the 320 acres he wanted to take up, it would probably take a couple of years to get one shaft down 200 feet. It was perfectly absurd to say he could get any coal out before then.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put, and the Committee divided :—

AYES, 19.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Miles, Rutledge, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, W. Brookes, Bulcock, White, Foxton, Buckland, McMaster, Wakefield, Kates, Grimes, Foote, Brown, S. W. Brookes, and Horwitz.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Macrossan, Chubb, Norton, Sheridan, Aland, Hamilton, Black, Adams, Jordan, Lalor, Campbell, Lumley Hill, Scott, Govett, Lissner, Philp, Amear, Pattison, Mellor, Murphy, Bailey, and Smyth.

Question resolved in the negative. Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put passed.

On clause 5, as follows :—

“If during the period of the license or the renewed license, the licensee desires so to do he may apply under the provisions of the principal Act for a lease of any part of the land comprised in the license not exceeding three hundred and twenty acres in extent, and his application shall have precedence over the application of any other person for the same land.”—

Mr. HAMILTON said he would like to know whether it was the intention of the Government that only those persons who had prospecting areas should be allowed a lease of 320 acres under that Bill? He asked the question because the clause provided that a licensee might apply “for a lease of any part of the land comprised in the license not exceeding 320 acres.” If it was intended that any person should be allowed to take up 320 acres, then some alteration would have to be made in the wording, or a new clause would have to be introduced. A person prospecting might discover payable coal, but could only take up on lease 320 acres out of his prospecting area of 640 acres; and other persons might wish to reap the benefits of his discovery and work the adjoining claims, but they could not do so under that clause unless they had been prospecting the land under a license.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the clause provided that a man could not take up more than one-half of his prospecting area of 640 acres. If he understood the hon. member correctly, he wanted to know whether a man could take up the whole 640, and the answer to that was that he was limited to 320 acres.

Mr. HAMILTON said he understood that. What he wished to know was whether a man could lease that area without having previously held the land under a prospecting license?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the clause appeared to him to be clear and distinct enough. A man would have to apply for a license to prospect 640 acres, and when he had prospecting the land he could apply for a lease of 320 acres out of the 640 acres.

The PREMIER said the principal Act made 160 acres the maximum area of land for which a lease could be obtained for any purpose, coal included. Except under the provisions of that Bill nobody could take up more than 160 acres of coal land, but that area could be taken up without the provisions of the Bill. That Bill gave special privileges to persons who prospecting for coal, and he supposed that persons would nearly always avail themselves of those privileges, because by paying down £16 a man would get a prior right to a lease of 320 acres of the 640 acres which he had prospecting. He thought everybody would take advantage of the provision unless the labour conditions were considered too severe if the area was so large, but he was of opinion that 160 acres was not too small an area if payable coal was obtained.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Are we to understand that the 320 acres is to be a first claim on the prospecting area, and that anybody else can come in afterwards under the provisions of the principal Act?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. HAMILTON: That is what I want to know.

Mr. FOOTE: Will the prospectors be enabled to take up the 320 acres wherever they like upon the 640-acre block?

The PREMIER: It must be taken in one portion.

Mr. FOOTE said that coal might lie in many different parts of a 640-acre block, and if the prospectors were allowed to take up the 320 acres where they pleased upon it, they would naturally secure all the coal-seams.

Mr. SHERIDAN: Suppose a man or company takes up 640 acres as a prospecting area, and eventually decides to lease 320 acres of it, will a stranger be allowed to take up the remaining 320 acres in that block?

The PREMIER: A stranger cannot take up more than 160 acres.

Mr. SHERIDAN: In that prospecting area?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 6, as follows :—

“The yearly rent of land leased for the purpose of mining for coal shall be at the rate of sixpence per acre, and there shall also be reserved in the lease a royalty at the rate of threepence for every ton of coal raised from the land during the first ten years of the term of the lease, and at the rate of sixpence for every ton raised during the remainder of the term.

“The times and mode of ascertaining the amount of any royalty so payable and the time for payment thereof shall be prescribed by the lease.

“If land leased for the purpose of mining for coal is used for the purpose of mining for any other mineral, rent shall become payable in respect thereof at the rate of ten shillings per acre in addition to the royalty, if any, payable in respect of coal raised therefrom.”

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he should move as an amendment that the word “threepence” be omitted, with the view of inserting the words “one penny.”

The PREMIER: Why not give it away for nothing?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said it would be better to give the coal away for nothing than to leave it under the ground. He was aware that his amendment would meet with a good deal of opposition, especially from the Ipswich men, who had no royalty to pay.

Mr. FOOTE: But they have bought their land.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Yes; and they made other people pay the royalty, especially the companies who did the work for them. But the Bill applied to unalienated land, and more especially to unalienated land in the North. It was of the utmost importance that the Government should offer every inducement to the Northern people to develop their coal lands as speedily and under as favourable conditions as possible; the greatest encouragement should be given them to go into the work at once, even if they only paid 1d. a ton royalty. In the present case the royalty would go directly into the coffers of the State, and not, as in the Ipswich and Oxley districts, into the pockets of the cormorant monopolist, who had succeeded in acquiring the land.

Mr. MELLOR said that before the amendment was put he wished to move the insertion of a new clause to follow clause 5.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL withdrew his motion for the present; and the MINISTER FOR WORKS, to enable the hon. member for Wide Bay to move his new clause, also withdrew his motion with regard to clause 6.

Mr. MELLOR said that he moved his new clause with a view to encourage prospectors to prospect for coal at greater depths than had hitherto been reached. The greatest depth yet reached, according to the reply given yesterday by the Minister for Works to a question from the hon. member for Gympie, was 350 feet. It was generally supposed that at a greater depth coal of a better class would be found than had been raised up to the present time. The colony was not yet producing what was called a really good shipping coal, which could only be found at greater depths than were now being worked. If the clause he intended to propose did not quite meet the case it could be amended. There were large tracts of unoccupied Crown lands where nobody lived, and where not an acre had been selected, which were believed to be coal lands, and if once coal was found upon them the surrounding lands would be greatly increased in value. With the view of encouraging the prospecting of such lands, he proposed the insertion of the following new clause, to follow clause 5 of the Bill:—

If any person or company prospect at their own expense on reserved Crown lands the area of which is not less than eighty square miles, and shall discover coal, such person or company of persons shall be entitled to, as a reward, a lease of twice the area as provided by this Act, with the condition that such lease shall be continuously worked in searching for coal except as under such exemptions as may be allowed by the Minister. And if such persons or company discover coal at a depth exceeding five hundred feet, the area granted under lease may be increased in the proportion of one acre for every extra foot of deep sinking.

The insertion of a clause of that sort would have the effect of encouraging prospectors to look for deeper seams of coal; and it would be better to see the land occupied by men searching for coal than to see it lying utterly useless, as had been the case up to the present time. It would never be used for any other purpose than the development of the minerals underneath. He moved the new clause.

The PREMIER said the proposed new clause involved a great many questions. He thought the hon. member would see that the scheme he had suggested was not practicable. It began by saying, "If any person or company prospect at their own expense on reserved Crown lands, the area of which is not less than eighty square miles, and shall discover coal." He did not see that the area of the re-

serve had anything to do with the matter, or what connection there was between the area and the land being reserved. That clearly was a condition that was not applicable to the matter. Then, as he understood it, there was to be a double area given as a reward for the discovery of coal upon Crown lands which formed a reserve of not less than eighty square miles, although the coal discovered might be in only one small corner of the area. There was no connection between the area being eighty square miles and the value to be derived from the discovery of coal; so that the hon. member would see that he proposed to make the additional reward dependent upon a thing which had nothing whatever to do with it. The other part of the clause said, "And if such persons or company discover coal at a depth exceeding five hundred feet, the area granted under lease may be increased in the proportion of one acre for every extra foot of deep sinking." That part might stand on its own merits. It meant that if a man prospecting for coal discovered it below 500 feet he should get an extra area of land; but it would be necessary to define what the discovery of coal was. A man might get good coal at 100 feet and bad coal at 500 feet, or find a seam only two or three inches thick at 500 feet, so that the subject was much larger than the hon. member thought. The only principle they could go upon was to determine what was a fair area of land to give a man who desired to work coal to settle what was a fair area and let the man work it. If he discovered good coal—good enough to pay—he would work it, and if not he would not go on. He (the Premier) did not see how they could lay down beforehand any principle of giving rewards to be called "rewards for deep sinking for coal" unless they described what "coal" was. Of course, the Government could not accept the amendment in its present form, and he thought the hon. member on further consideration would see that the proposal required to be very much more elaborated, and that the first part of the clause was founded on an erroneous idea.

Mr. W. BROOKES said the proposed clause was open to objection in his mind, in consequence of the expression "eighty square miles." He had always been given to understand that it was not so much a matter of the quality of coal as its discovery in accessible places. The best coal in the world might be found in an area of eighty square miles, but yet it might not be worth getting out.

Mr. MELLOR said, in reference to the objection of eighty square miles, perhaps something else might be substituted in place of that. He had no objection, if the hon. Secretary for Public Works would accept the clause, that it should be made to apply to Crown lands and not to reserves. His reason for inserting "reserves" was because he knew there were large reserves for coal purposes all along the coast, and his idea was that where a person discovered coal upon lands which had not been alienated it made the Government land adjoining of so much more value, and opened up quite a new industry—discovered a new field, in fact, in the same way as the discovery of a new goldfield would entitle the discoverer to claim a reward.

Mr. BROWN said he thought the idea of giving encouragement to persons to spend money in deep sinking was a very good one, but he did not see how the proposition of the hon. member for Gympie could be carried out. How was the area to be increased? Was it to be in proportion to the depth of the shaft? Was the land all round the shaft to be reserved until it was ascertained to what depth the shaft would be worked? All these were matters that would require to be defined. He thought that if the

principle was introduced it should be in a different shape altogether to the clause—that it should be in the form of a new lease or grant of land as a reward for the first deep shaft.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed the object of the hon. member for Wide Bay was to encourage deep sinking so as to endeavour to obtain a discovery of coal suitable for shipping purposes. That object was a very good one if it could be carried out. At present the belief was that they did not go deep enough to get coal of a hard description suitable for shipping, and the hon. member was endeavouring to offer a reward to persons who would sink sufficiently deep to get coal of that description; but as the clause was drawn it would not meet that object; it was too vague. An extended lease of the land would have to depend on the quality of the coal. After all, however, it did not amount to very much. They would not be giving very much away, and if the clause were properly brought in he should have no objection to it.

Mr. SMYTH said he thought that the words "discovery" and "sinking" should be clearly defined. Sinking should mean sinking a proper shaft sufficient to get the coal up, and not merely putting down a borehole. Persons might put down a borehole—say they discovered a five or six feet seam—and then claim the reward for having found coal at a great depth. He was sorry that none of the members interested had taken any notice of the question of giving rewards for the discovery of coal at long distances from present workings—for instance, Bowen or Cooktown. It would improve the proposed new clause if the hon. member would take out the words "eighty square miles" and substitute "Crown lands," and alter it further in such a way that the reward would only be given to people finding a payable seam of coal.

Mr. MELLOR, in reference to sinking, said it was generally understood that the ground was prospected with a diamond drill or other appliances. If the parties discovered coal and were satisfied with the prospects, they sank a shaft; but it was only when the conditions of sinking the shaft were complied with and the coal was discovered and worked, that the reward would be granted.

Mr. GRIMES said the Committee could hardly do justice to such a long clause unless they had it in print, and he suggested that it should be withdrawn for the present and printed, so that hon. members might have it before them on a future occasion. The Bill might be recommitted, if necessary, for the purpose of inserting the clause.

Mr. MELLOR said that as he understood it was not the intention of the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill to finish it to-night, he would, with the consent of the Committee, withdraw the clause for the present.

Mr. ALAND said there appeared to be too much hurry in regard to such an important Bill—one that interested many people living at a considerable distance. It was only read a second time the night before last, and he thought an opportunity ought to be given to persons interested to correspond with the members representing them, so that their views on the subject might be known.

New clause, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that if they were to wait till everybody interested corresponded with hon. members on the subject they would never get the Bill through. However, he had no wish to rush the measure through, and he would move that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: I move that this House do now adjourn. The business-paper for Tuesday will stand thus:—Employers Liability Bill, second reading; Opium Bill, second reading; Local Authorities (Joint Action) Bill, committee; and Elections Tribunal Bill, committee.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at four minutes to 6 o'clock.