

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 4 JUNE 1889**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, 4 June, 1889.*

Petitions—Direct Railway from Ipswich to the Southern Border.—Grant to Schools of Art.—Questions.—Croydon Branch Railway Extension—committee.—Mines Regulation Bill—second reading.—Adjournment.

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

## PETITIONS.

DIRECT RAILWAY FROM IPSWICH TO THE SOUTHERN BORDER.

Mr. SALKELD presented a petition from certain residents of the Southern portion of the

colony having reference to the proposed line from Ipswich direct towards the Southern border, *via* Warwick; and moved that it be read.

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

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

#### GRANT TO SCHOOLS OF ART.

Mr. JESSOP presented a petition from members of schools of art, and others interested in such institutions, having reference to the endowment now granted by the Government, and praying that the House would afford such relief as it might think fit; and moved that it be read.

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

The SPEAKER said: The petition which has been read to the House, although not actually asking for a grant of money, puts, I think, in other words what is equivalent to asking for a grant of money. The petition is so worded that I think it is scarcely within my province to rule that it should not be received. I think it is for the House to decide whether it shall be received. If the hon. member chooses to move that the petition be received, the House will have to decide whether it should be received or not; but I think hardly any doubt can be entertained as to the intention of the petition, and that is to ask that the sum of money hitherto granted by way of endowment to schools of art should be increased to what it was formerly. As that is not expressly stated in words in the petition, I will leave the House to decide, when the hon. member moves that it be received, whether it should be received or not.

Mr. JESSOP: I beg to move that the petition be received.

Question put.

Mr. ARCHER said: Mr. Speaker,—We hardly ever hear a petition read, as there is so much noise in the House. I did not hear one word of this petition read, and if I am to vote upon it I would like to hear what the wording of the petition is. If it is read again distinctly and hon. members keep quiet, we shall know what we are voting upon.

Mr. GROOM said: Mr. Speaker,—I may be permitted to say that the petition read by the Clerk was drafted by myself. The decision of the House upon it will be of importance, as similar petitions, I understand, will be presented from the schools of art throughout the colony. I was asked whether I would draft a petition asking Parliament to increase the endowment to schools of art from 10s. to 20s. in the £1 as formerly. I did so in a way which I believe complies with the Standing Orders. As I say, similar petitions will be presented from all the schools of art in the colony, and if these gentlemen have been led astray in the matter I must accept the responsibility of it.

Mr. ARCHER: Could not the petition be read again by the Clerk, and if hon. members keep quiet we shall hear it?

The SPEAKER: If any hon. member likes to hear the petition read again, the Clerk will read it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Mr. Bernays, will you read the petition. I must ask hon. members to keep quiet while it is being read.

Petition read at length by the Clerk.

Question—That the petition be received—put.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think, and I am giving my own individual opinion, that if we receive this petition we shall be going out-

side the Standing Orders. I feel certain of it. I may say that, notwithstanding the able way in which this petition has been drafted. I myself received a similar petition from my constituents in St. George, and I sent it back with the intimation that I did not consider any such petition would be received by the House, as it is against the Standing Orders. The petition, I take it, ought to be sent to the Minister in charge of the Estimates. If the petition, on being received by this House, is not followed by a grant of money it will have no effect, and therefore it seems to me it is a direct breach of the Standing Orders. It is a demand for a greater contribution from the State to schools of art than is made at the present time; and no matter how skilfully it may have been drafted by the hon. member for Toowoomba, I think he has not and can not get over that. I shall vote against the reception of it on these grounds.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. W. Pattison) said: Mr. Speaker,—I disagree with the Premier on this question. It appears to me, that this petition discloses the actual fact—that schools of art in the colony are seriously crippled, and require further aid; and it simply closes with a prayer that relief may be granted them. There is no direct request for money made, and I shall vote for the reception of the petition.

The SPEAKER: In the petition, as I pointed out before, there is no direct request for money, and on that account I cannot rule that it should not be received; and therefore I have left it to the vote of the House.

Question put and passed.

#### QUESTIONS.

Mr. CASEY asked the Chief Secretary—

Is it the intention of the Government, during this session, to introduce a Bill, or take any other steps, to regulate the sale or supply of opium to the aboriginals of Queensland.

The PREMIER (Hon. B. [D. Morehead) replied—

The matter is under the consideration of the Government.

Mr. POWERS asked the Minister for Railways—

1. Whether a power is not retained in all Government contracts for the construction of railways, for the Commissioner to see that all the wages of men employed by the contractors, and by sub-contractors, are paid?

2. Whether the Commissioner for Railways does not always exercise that power upon notice that any wages are due and unpaid by the contractor, or by any sub-contractor, to any of the men employed?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. M. Nelson) replied—

1. The following clause appears in the general conditions of contracts for the construction of railways:—  
“Before the payment of any money to the contractor the Commissioner may require from him a statutory declaration that all the workmen and others then and therefor employed by him, and by his sub-contractors on the works, under this contract have been paid their wages and claims of every kind in full, in lawful money and to the latest date at which such wages or claims are due, and the Commissioner may withhold payment of any money due to the contractor until such declaration has been made and delivered to him. And the Commissioner may also from time to time, and whenever he may deem it expedient, give notice in writing to the contractor to pay such wages and claims, subject to the deduction in the last preceding clause mentioned before a date in such notice to be specified; and should the contractor fail to satisfy the Commissioner that he has complied with such notice, he shall for each and every such default pay to the Commissioner the sum of ten pounds, which sum or sums may be retained by the Commissioner out of moneys then due, or which may become due, to the contractor, and should the contractor neglect or refuse to pay such wages and claims as aforesaid, or any claims which have been adjudicated upon by any competent tribunal, the Commissioner

shall have power to pay the same and deduct the amounts so paid from any sum or sums which may be due or become due to the said contractor."

2. Yes, when considered necessary.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Minister for Railways—

1. Has the Minister's attention been directed to an article which appeared in the *Telegraph* newspaper of the 29th May, under the heading "Railways Report—Traffic Manager Thallon's Report not forthcoming," in which the following passage occurs:—"It is noticeable, however, that the Appendices include the reports of every responsible officer save only that of the Traffic Manager of the Southern and Western Railway. It is understood that repeated applications were made by the Commissioner for Railways for Mr. Thallon's report, and, as it was not forthcoming, it was decided that rather than unduly cause any further delay, the departmental report should be issued without the subordinate report?"

2. Are the facts as stated in the passage quoted?

3. If so, has the Traffic Manager offered any explanation of his conduct, and what is the nature of such explanation?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1. Yes, through the hon. member's present question.

2. The Traffic Manager's report is not included in the report, and it was decided that rather than unduly cause delay, the Commissioner's report should be issued without it.

3. The Traffic Manager's explanation is that he was not furnished with the necessary information.

#### CROYDON BRANCH RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS moved—

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

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Croydon Branch Railway, section 2, from 42 miles to 94 miles 45·96 chains (Croydon), in length 52 miles 45 chains 96 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 28th day of May ultimo.

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.

#### COMMITTEE.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Croydon Branch Railway, section 2, from 42 miles to 94 miles 45·96 chains (Croydon), in length 52 miles 45 chains 96 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 28th day of May ultimo.

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 he did not think it necessary to go at any length into the merits of the proposed extension, for the simple reason that it was fully discussed last session, and, he believed, almost unanimously approved. The proposal was simply to carry out the second section of the railway that was then so cordially approved of; and the only reason why no vote for the purpose was then brought forward was because the plans and sections were not then ready. Since then, however, not only had a trial survey been made, but also the permanent survey; and the work could be commenced as soon as Parliament had approved of the plan, section, and book of reference. The railway, as everybody knew, was an exceptional one with regard to the mode of its construction, being made with certain patent steel sleepers. He mentioned last session that it was his intention to experiment to some extent with wooden sleepers upon the same railway, as the particular feature which distinguished that railway from others did not consist

so much in the use of metal sleepers as in the fact that it was a surface line upon which there were hardly any earthworks worth speaking of, and on which no ballast was required. Those two items were among the largest sources of expenditure in the ordinary construction of railways; but in the case of the line now under consideration, the country was admirably adapted for the experiment of making a surface railway; and it was the wish of the Government to extend the experiment as far as Croydon. He still considered it an experiment, for the reason that there had not yet been an opportunity of making a thorough test. He mentioned last session that the section then approved—42 miles from Normanton—would afford Parliament a good guarantee by the opening of the present session, as to the expediency of carrying on that particular mode of construction as compared with the old mode; he was sorry to say, however, that during the interval there had been no wet season in that part of the colony, and therefore that portion of the line already constructed had not been put to the thorough test to which he had looked forward. He had made all preparations in order to report fully to Parliament on the matter. He had even engaged a competent engineer to inspect the line and put it to whatever tests he considered necessary—a man of competence, and unbiased in his opinion as regarded the particular mode of construction adopted. But, for the reason he had stated, that came to nothing. Upon the whole he thought it appeared expedient to extend the railway upon the same principles they had already adopted, so far as the township and goldfield of Croydon. The reason why the wood sleepers were not so successful was because there was no timber fit for the purpose in that part of the colony. The only sleepers one could think of sending up there would be made of the best quality of ironbark, dressed, sawn, and squared. In the Southern part of the colony they might be obtained at a reasonable price, but the freight and other charges were so great at present, that the cost of getting the sleepers up there would really exceed the cost of steel sleepers if taken there direct. It seemed that the delay had hardly caused any loss either. It was seldom that delays did cause losses in that way, because they were gaining experience all the time. And Mr. Phillips, the engineer in that part of the colony, was also gaining experience. He had improved on the design of the sleepers very much. Those laid down lately were made of a plate of uniform thickness, but Mr. Phillips had altered the design to the extent of putting a central ridge of double thickness where the bearing power was required. The weight of the sleepers would also be increased considerably, those proposed to be used in future weighing about 100 lb. each. They were to be 6 feet in length and would be made from plates of steel 3·16ths of an inch in thickness and 18 inches wide, but, as he had mentioned, there would be a central ridge to strengthen them, 6 inches wide, of double the thickness of the rest of the plate. The exact cost of them he had not yet been able to ascertain; but from all the information he could get, it seemed highly probable that they would be able to land sleepers of that description at Normanton, at a probable cost of from 8s. to 9s. per sleeper. There was one thing that was rather against them, and that was that at the present time the price of steel had advanced considerably in the home market, and that would entail a little extra cost. At any rate it had compelled Mr. Phillips to raise his estimate of the cost of the line. Some months ago he estimated he could make the line at under £1,800 per mile, including everything; but he now estimated that it would cost £1,930 per mile.

That included everything connected with the railway—bridging, station houses, a large and commodious station at Croydon, pumping stations upon the road to supply water, and everything else except rolling stock. It included the cost of the permanent way. With those few details, he might mention further that 36 miles of the present section had been finished since last session, leaving 6 miles of it still to be completed. The reason why it was not finished a little further was simply that the engineer found that it would require a few more sleepers per mile than he had provided in the estimate, and the line was made, therefore, so far as the supply of sleepers then in hand would last. The total amount of construction now required would be 58 miles 43 chains 96 links. The land to be resumed was hardly worth mentioning. There was one gold-mining lease that would be interfered with, and one homestead, the total amount being, in all, 17 acres. There were also roads and reserves on the Croydon Gold Field of 28 acres that would have to be resumed. The rest of the way the line went through Crown lands or lands temporarily reserved. In regard to the financial part, he might state that £150,000 was voted for the Croydon Railway last session, and that was not expended. The cost of the first section had been considerably less than was originally estimated, and there was a balance of that vote in hand of £76,428. They had expended in regard to the second section of the line, in the shape of the material for and building of a bridge over the Macrossan River—which, he might mention, was already finished, although the rails were not laid down—a sum of £13,888; so that the estimate to complete the line would be about £23,000 over the original vote. In regard to the nature of the country, he thought that was pretty well known to hon. members. It was of a very sandy description, and the only water-course of any size was the one he had mentioned, the Macrossan River, the bridging of which he had authorised some time ago and was now completed. He thought that was advisable, in anticipation of Parliamentary authority, because work could be resumed as soon as the sleepers were obtained, and there would be no delay in pushing the line on. There would be no occasion to make any deviation to cross the river now that the bridge was built, and they could go straight ahead with the plate-laying. The soil was principally sandy, and appeared of firm quality up to the present. It was covered with a good deal of light timber, broad and narrow-leaved ti-tree and stunted bloodwood. The latter was principally useful for fencing, and the country was level and even. There was no uneven country in the whole distance of the railway until it got close to Croydon, which was situated at the base of ridgy country. The steepest grade in the line was 1 in 66, and there would be very few grades. The sharpest curve, which occurred just on the Normanton side of the Croydon station, was one of 20 chains radius. The earthworks were, of course, nominal; the bridging now required to be done was estimated at 900 feet, which for a distance of 58 miles was very small indeed. There would be a water station at 38 miles 46 chains, another at 56 miles 66 chains, and another at Croydon, where a well would have to be sunk in the railway yard. The water at the other places would be drawn from the Macrossan River, which was considered, according to all the information he could get, permanent water. The railway station at Croydon would afford, he believed, accommodation for a large traffic. A great deal of discussion had taken place with regard to where the terminus should be, but after getting full reports from the warden

of the field and other sources, he decided that the station should be located at the place where it was originally surveyed to be, and the engineer agreed with that determination. It would offer no difficulties to the extension of the line, should Parliament afterwards decide to carry the railway, which appeared to him extremely probable, towards the large goldfields on the Etheridge, with Georgetown as the terminus. With regard to the traffic, a considerable amount of general traffic might be expected. The circumstances of the goldfield had, however, been somewhat exceptional. Even now, although there had been some rain, he was told that three-fourths of the mills were not working for want of water. On that account, therefore, it was highly probable that there would eventually be a very considerable traffic on the line in the way of carrying ore from Croydon, which did not seem to be adapted for the conservation of water, to places along the railway where permanent water existed. That system was being adopted, as most hon. members knew, at Charters Towers and other goldfields, and it seemed to him very probable that it would also be adopted at Croydon. With respect to the permanency of the goldfield, he did not entertain any doubt at all on that point; all the reports as to the amount of rich ore to be obtained there were extremely favourable. The amount of gold taken by the last escort was over 20,000 oz., which, considering the season and the number of mills not working, did not appear to give any cause for alarm. The population of the field was probably not quite so large as it was this time last year, but that might be accounted for by the circumstances which he had already mentioned. Facilities would also be afforded for the carriage of goods and all sorts of produce towards the Etheridge by the completion of the line to Croydon, which would, no doubt, attract a very considerable amount of traffic, and consequently develop the large area of auriferous country which they knew existed in that direction. With reference to the maintenance expenses of the line now built, they amounted to £96 per mile per annum, which was much higher than it was expected they would be, but the Estimates submitted to him showed that a line of that description could be maintained in thoroughly good working order at a cost of under £66 per mile, and he had no reason to doubt the correctness of that estimate. There was nothing further occurred to him to say with regard to that line, but if any further information was required he had no doubt he would be able to supply it. He now moved the motion approving of the plans and book of reference.

Mr. HODGKINSON said it was not very often that a Minister of the Crown made a statement to that Committee which must be so satisfactory, not only to the country, but also to himself. On behalf of the very important electorate which he (Mr. Hodgkinson) represented, and the residents immediately connected with it, he congratulated the hon. gentleman, not only on the motion which he had now made as redeeming a promise he was kind enough to affirm some months ago, but also for the very explicit and careful statement of the motives by which his action had been guided. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) thought that was the very first occasion in the colony upon which a Minister for Railways had been able to get up in the House and report to that Committee that the vote which was taken on account of the construction of a railway absolutely left a surplus after it had been completed, with the exception of the six miles to which the Minister for Railways had referred. That bore out more fully than the very clear observations made by the Minister the very inexpensive nature of the country which the line traversed, and, as the hon. gentleman justly

observed, that country continued to within a very few miles of the township of Croydon itself. The wisdom of deferring the completion of the contract until the railway built of steel sleepers had had a certain amount of test could not be questioned. It was hardly to be expected—however impatient the residents of that district might be for railway communication, which was to them a question of interest, of vital importance to the field—that the hon. gentleman would undertake that expenditure in defiance of professional opinion on the subject, until he had satisfied himself, to some extent, that he had reduced the hazards to a minimum. The steel sleepers which had been laid down had had an opportunity of being inspected by gentlemen who, though not professional experts, were, he believed, in some unofficial manner, requested by the Minister to inspect the railway, and give him their opinion as to how far the assertions of the consulting engineer, Mr. Phillips, were borne out by facts. Those sleepers had been previously tried on some portions of the southern line near Brisbane; but the Minister for Railways, he understood, was in some doubt as to whether that trial was sufficient, owing to the different quality of the soil where the trial took place from the sandy formation on which they were intended to be laid in the Northern district. The hon. gentleman had now been strengthened in the course he intended to take, first, by the opinion of Mr. Phillips, who certainly occupied a somewhat peculiar position, but who, as the hon. gentleman had said, had a reputation for ability and character; also, by the success attending the employment of the sleepers on a small section bearing a very heavy traffic in the South; and also by some well known gentlemen, members of that Chamber, who had lately been touring round the North, and who examined into the success or otherwise of the 35 miles of line already laid down. They arrived then at this fact, that 35 miles of railway had been constructed at a cost of nearly £23,000 less than the vote taken on account, and that there were yet to be constructed 54 or 55 miles to complete the line to Croydon, which would only entail an extra expense of £70,000. They had also the statement of the constructing engineer that that included not only the laying down of the line, but all the expenses attached to the equipment of the line, with the exception, of course, of the locomotive adjuncts. That was to say, that many things which were usually put down as extras on other lines were included in that remarkably small estimate of considerably under £2,000 a mile. That the railway would be payable, everyone who was competent to express an opinion on the district perfectly well knew. The last report of the Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Curnow, was invaluable. It was, he believed, the first occasion on which that gentleman had ever spoken his mind out fully and straightforwardly; and the facts revealed by that report were such as would not only encourage the Minister for Railways to complete that line, but also to give to the more important district of the Etheridge the line for which they had been praying, and which had retarded the progress of that field for the last eighteen years. Of the £13,000,000 of money expended in the colony on railways no less than £8,000,000 had been expended in the Southern districts. They had heard a great many statements as to the true allocation of that money, but never before had he been able to get at the real figures regarding the expenditure on railways in the colony. It might be somewhat diverging from the subject actually under discussion, but he trusted to be allowed to make the digression in order that those figures might be promulgated throughout the colony, and the actual facts made known. They were not

figures which he had carefully extracted for the purpose of bearing out any line of argument he or any other Northern member might have made use of; they were the figures endorsed by the present Commissioner for Railways, whose report was of course compiled from the best official information on the subject. This was what that gentleman said as to the division of railway expenditure between the various districts of the colony: The total capital expended to the end of 1888, on lines open for traffic in the colony, was £12,169,237 19s. 9d., leaving for lines under construction or survey £1,318,619 6s. Out of that £12,000,000 and over, £7,957,066 3s. 9d. had been expended on that portion of the colony which was bounded on the north by the town of Bundaberg. The Central district, from Bundaberg northward and including Bowen, had had the advantage of a little more than £2,000,000 of expenditure, while the Northern district, from Bowen to Cape York, including the money which had been voted for the Normanton to Cloncurry line, amounted to £1,513,584 9s. 7d. Therefore, up to the 31st of last December, the allocation of expenditure in the three districts of the colony had been, on the basis he had adopted, which was the basis usually employed, two-thirds of the whole sum for the Southern portion of the colony, not quite one-fourth, but a little over one-fifth for the Central portion, and only one-eighth for the whole of the North. Those figures were also borne out in a remarkable manner by the total mileage of railways in the colony. On the date mentioned that total was 1,562 miles, out of which 369 miles were constructed, or in process of construction, in the North. It would be observed that that mileage and the expenditure of money bore one another out, and bore out also the argument he had been using. As a further instance of the commercial folly of that allocation he might add that while the net returns from the Southern and Central portions of the colony had only been 2·509 per cent., that on the Northern lines had been 4·238 per cent. That was to say, that from the Northern lines a net revenue had been derived which absolutely more than paid the interest on the money expended, while on the Southern and Central lines there had been a deficiency, or a loss. Those were indisputable facts. The figures had not been collected by him for the express purpose of accentuating the demands of the North; they were the figures of the responsible officer of the Government, and as such they showed that the North had just claims to a very much larger expenditure than it had hitherto enjoyed. He had quoted those figures not for the purpose of detaining the Chamber, but because he thought they should be put on record as being calculated to be of utility in any future discussion that might take place on railway expenditure. They all knew, of course, the manner in which statistics could be manipulated, and probably those very statistics might be overridden by another set of statistics. A new king might arise in the Railway Department who knew not Joseph, and when Mr. Curnow had left the colony his statistics would probably not be regarded with the same weight that now attached to them. But it must never be forgotten that they were Mr. Curnow's statistics, and that he was the man responsible to the Government for making a just statement of what might be termed their railway assets. He congratulated the Minister for Railways upon the very clear evidence of his desire to do justice—in a prompt and, so far as laid in his power, satisfactory manner—to the Northern portion of the colony; and he trusted that he would, despite any efforts from any quarter, continue in that course until he had, at any rate in his own opinion—which he was quite certain would be a just one—wiped out the gross disparity

between the advantages derived from an expenditure for which the whole of the colony was responsible, which the Southern portion of the colony enjoyed in comparison with the Central and the North.

Mr. HUNTER said he was very pleased indeed to see the Government bring forward that motion for the extension of the Croydon Railway so early in the session; and that it was likely to be carried without any opposition whatever. It was not his intention to draw any comparison between the expenditure on Southern railways and Northern lines or to create any ill-feeling between Northern and Southern members. As he had said, he was very pleased to see the second section of the line brought forward by the Government, especially as it was accompanied with almost a promise of a continuation of the line to the Etheridge. They had all heard of the inexpensive manner in which the line was being constructed, and it was now very well known that the steel sleepers were a success. Therefore he hoped that, in consideration of the small cost of construction, the Government would continue the line to the Etheridge. As soon as the line to Croydon was opened, money would have to be spent on the roads on to the Etheridge. He never liked to see money expended in that way, because, although at times it was very necessary, still he looked upon it as so much money wasted when what was really wanted was a railway. He was sure it would be very much better to apply the money that would have to be spent on roads in the Etheridge district to the construction of a railway to that goldfield, a field than which there was none better in the colony of Queensland, a field the richness and immense value of which had been proved many years ago. He therefore hoped the Government would see their way to continue the Croydon line to the Etheridge at a short date, and thus save the expenditure on roads in that district to a large extent. Supplies for the Etheridge were now taken from Townsville, but directly the railway was opened to Croydon supplies would be sent from there. The distance from Croydon to the Etheridge was about 120 miles, but if the line were built it would be only about 100. The cost of the line would, he believed, be something under £200,000, and he was satisfied that the Government would find it a very profitable line if constructed at once. He might state that, while in the South recently, he was informed that certain people there who were well acquainted with the district, were prepared to construct a railway to it, if the Government would allow them the privilege and give them the land to build it on. They had so much capital invested in the district, and had such faith in its richness and resources, that they were prepared to construct the line themselves. He (Mr. Hunter) stated that he did not think the Queensland Government would agree to such a proposition. It was a principle he did not believe in himself; but, with that fact staring them in the face, he hoped the Government would see their way to continue the construction of the line to the Etheridge at an early date. He again congratulated the Government upon having proposed the extension of the line to Croydon.

Mr. PALMER said the Minister for Railways had described the line as a branch line, and he was quite correct in doing so, inasmuch as it was only a branch of the main trunk line from the Gulf through Cloncurry southwards. Although that branch line was now proposed, he hoped the Government were not losing sight altogether of what would yet be the main line. The Minister for Railways had referred to the fact that owing to the drought the steel sleepers used

on the line had not been subjected to a proper trial. He (Mr. Palmer) was prepared to admit that the last wet season was the lightest of twenty-five wet seasons he had known in the North, but still those sleepers had been tried in places which had been subjected to very heavy thunderstorms; they had been very severely tested in that way, and much to the surprise of everyone they had proved entirely satisfactory, so much so as to carry conviction to those who had been opposed to them for many reasons. The portion of the line from 8 to 10 miles from Normanton had been subjected to very heavy thunderstorms, the whole of it being under water, and from the report it was evident that the sleepers had acted to the satisfaction of everyone. He thought after such a test as that, and the test to which the sleepers had been subjected on the Fassifern branch, with which the Minister was perfectly satisfied, it might safely be accepted that the principle of the sleepers had been thoroughly tried, and come up to all that was expected of it. He had seen a portion of a railway in New South Wales laid with steel sleepers, and although it had been in use for three years no fault had been found with it. In that case, however, ballast had been used. Those steel sleepers had proved a great success, and he thought they should not lose sight of the fact that a great deal of credit was due to the leader of the Opposition for having taken the subject of those steel sleepers in hand, because, if he had not overcome the professional prejudice that existed, and the advice that was tendered, the principle would not have had a proper trial yet. One matter he should like to refer to in connection with the Croydon line. Although it was a cheap line and would get a good deal of traffic from the surrounding goldfields, yet it could not be expected that it would pay all expenses until a further line was carried to deep waters. He did not know whether the Government had any intention of extending the railway coastwise, at present; he believed a survey was in progress, but it was absolutely necessary for the development of the goldfields and of the district generally that the line should be extended coastwise as well as towards the Etheridge. He would remind the Minister for Railways that there had been some controversy lately as to whether the line should be taken to deep water or whether the river should be dredged. On that point he might say that he had been informed on good authority that the depth of water in the Norman River, where the rocks barred the navigation at high tide, on several days, was 3 feet 4 inches, and that at low tide it went down to 1 foot 7 inches. He thought in the face of such an obstruction as that the construction of the line to deep water would be the cheapest way of benefiting the surrounding district, which needed help so much. He thought the department was to be complimented upon the cheapness of the line that had been and was about to be constructed, as it was about the cheapest line in Queensland. Taking that cheapness into consideration, it should be a paying line, and he hoped the Committee would support the motion unanimously.

Mr. GOLDRING said that he did not rise to oppose the passing of the motion, but to draw attention to the fact that it was nearly time something should be done in regard to the line from Normanton to Cloncurry. Several deputations had waited upon the Minister for Railways lately, and he had promised that the matter should have his earliest consideration. The principal causes of delay were that a fresh survey would be required and the testing of the steel sleepers. He was pleased to hear from the hon. member for Carpentaria that at certain

portions of the line there had been heavy rains, which had tested the line. In such country as the proposed line traversed the steel sleepers had proved a success; and he expressed a hope that no time would be lost in now ordering—if that had not been already done—sleepers for the construction of the first section of the Normanton-Cloncurry line. Those sleepers had been ordered, he believed, some years ago, and had been supplied, but they had been misappropriated, having been used on the Normanton-Croydon line. From what he had heard the latter line was likely to prove a payable one, but the Cloncurry line would pay equally as well. The hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hunter, had expressed his desire to see the plans and sections of the continuation of the Croydon line placed upon the table of the House at an early date. He should also like to see them, but at the same time he would much prefer seeing the line which had been so long promised, from Normanton to Cloncurry, commenced, or at any rate carried as far as the crossing of the Flinders River—a distance of some 38 miles. The non-construction of that line was a great drawback to the residents of that part of the country. When the Flinders River was in flood, and therefore impracticable, goods were carried from the terminus of the Northern line, a distance of 300 miles from the coast, and then they had to be taken a further distance of 236 miles—making the total distance 536 miles; whereas from Normanton they could be delivered on the Cloncurry, which was a large mining and pastoral centre, by going a distance of about 280 miles, or, if there were a railway, of about 250 miles. The agitation for the construction of the line had been very extensive, and he was sure the Minister for Railways had been nearly bored to death by deputations waiting upon him in regard to it. He trusted the Government would see their way clear to have the line constructed in a short time without any further agitation. He would not detain the Committee any longer, except to express the hope that, having seen how the Croydon line was being constructed, the Cloncurry line would be started as soon as possible, as it would not cost any more than the line to Croydon.

Mr. LISSNER said that he rose to congratulate the Government upon the practical motion of the Minister for Railways to build a railway, which he (Mr. Lissner) had not the slightest doubt would be a good one, as proved by the statistics quoted by the senior member for Burke, which had proved that the lines in the North paid so much better than the lines in the South. He was not speaking upon Separation, but he always congratulated the Government when they had done something that was in the right direction, which would prove profitable to the colony at large, and, as the hon. member for Carpentaria had said, to the North in particular. He had travelled that short journey of 90 miles from Normanton to Croydon, and not even a prickly pear would grow there on account of the white ants interfering with it, while the ground was such that anyone would pick it out for lawn tennis all the way. The steel sleepers had proved that they would be quite good enough for the traffic the line was likely to carry for some time to come. The line would cost only about £200,000 for 90 miles, and it would benefit about 8,000 or 9,000 people. There could not be the least doubt that there was no risk, as it would prove a good speculation, and he would again congratulate the Government for having for the first time adopted his view, and connected a large goldfield with a seaport before they went on with anything else. "Rome was not built in a day." He had been a member of the party that had gone, almost in a Ministerial capacity, to

look over the line, and they had been feasted by the people, and of course had made some promises. He was certain that in all his little speeches he had never promised anything that they would not be justified in giving to those people. The sooner the railway from Normanton to Croydon was built the better it would pay. The whole 90 miles would only cost £200,000, and they had nice railway stations—the one at Normanton was a very nice building; and the ride of 36 miles on the portion of the line already made was the best they had had in the colony. Although the late rainy season had not been a very bad one, still there were pools of water in places, showing that heavy thunderstorms had occurred, and the sleepers which were resting on the packing were as solid as a rock. The water rushing over them had done no harm—in fact, it had made them more solid. The line would be one of the cheapest and one of the best paying in the colony. He believed it could be made to pay 8 per cent. on the capital invested in it, and it would help to pay the interest on the Southern lines. Of course the people in Normanton asked for a railway to be begun immediately to Cloncurry. They based their claim upon the fact that £500,000 had been placed upon the Estimates long ago for the construction of that line. That line would be the nucleus of the transcontinental line, and he thought the line would be built as soon as the Government were in a position to do so. He praised the Government for building the line to Croydon first, in spite of all the others which had been asked for. The Cloncurry line was very necessary, and he expected the Government would build it as soon as they were able to. The line from Croydon to the Etheridge was necessary, and would prove payable. It would open up any amount of mineral country, but before they asked for that railway, they would have to ask for a survey, and speak about the railway afterwards. He congratulated the Government on bringing the line before the House for approval, because he believed it would prove as good and as payable a line as there was in the colony.

Mr. PAUL said he simply rose to inform hon. members, as one of the Ministerial party referred to by the hon. member for North Kennedy, that he had inspected the line, and made himself acquainted with the nature of the country over which it would pass, and he was perfectly satisfied that the steel sleepers would prove a great success. As he had pointed out in the few remarks he had made when at Normanton, those sleepers were constructed on the same principle as the sleepers used for crossing the desert of Egypt, which he had crossed some years ago. They were perfectly hollow, and becoming packed underneath they were as firm as possible. He endorsed everything that had been said with regard to the line, and congratulated the Government upon having done some little justice to the North. He had no personal interest in the North, but he was satisfied that the line when completed would pay.

Mr. WIMBLE said he should support the motion, because he considered that the line would be one that would connect Normanton with the central goldfield of Croydon. On account of the small cost of the line there was no doubt the line would pay; and it must be remembered that the riches of Croydon had yet to be unfolded, and from all accounts that had been received, both from the department and from local sources, the Croydon and Etheridge combined would be the greatest gold-producing fields in the Australian colonies. The hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson, had referred to the extension of the line on to Georgetown, and also to the neglect which

that field had experienced in the matter of railway communication to the port. He trusted that the line would also be pushed on, and that the line would be extended towards Herberton and Cairns, thereby giving a connecting line between the west and east coast. It was the opinion of all those who had made themselves acquainted with the resources of the North that the line from east to west was the proper course for the railway to take. At Normanton there was also a good harbour, while on the east coast there was good harbour refuge at Cairns. Although the difficulties of railway construction seemed to be more on the eastern side than on the western, yet there could be no question of that being the proper direction of the line, even though the cost at one end might be excessive; and his arguments would be borne out in the future, that a line connecting the eastern and western seaboard would be one of the most payable in the colony. He would not detain the Committee further than to say that he considered the line under consideration very necessary, and he was glad to see that the Government had promptly taken it in hand.

Mr. PALMER said he would like to ask a question, if the Minister for Railways was in a position to answer it. If not he could place it on the notice paper. He wished to know what tonnage of steel sleepers had been ordered to complete the Croydon line, and for the Normanton to Cloncurry line? Had the hon. gentleman ordered a sufficient quantity of material to go on with?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said tenders were invited now which comprised 134,000 sleepers. He reckoned that the whole of those would be required for the Croydon line. The material required for the Cloncurry line he had not ordered yet, for the simple reason that it would be some time before it was required. He had, as most hon. members who were interested knew, given instructions for a fresh survey of that line. The old survey, according to all the information he could collect, and according to the reports received from the engineer, was not the proper route to take from the Gulf to Cloncurry. Pressure had been brought to bear upon the Government in regard to commencing that line at once, and the hon. member for Flinders had said that he (Mr. Nelson) must have been bored with deputations. But he had not felt much bored, because if 100 deputations a day waited upon him, that would not compel him to commence the line until it was ready to be commenced. He would not recommend any railway to Parliament until he was convinced that the fullest information that could be collected had been collected, with regard to the route. The principal objection to the route previously adopted for the Normanton-Cloncurry line was the great expense that would have to be incurred for bridges, if the line was to be available in ordinary seasons. Mention had been made of the Flinders River, and he might say, that to bridge that river which, as had been remarked, was very often flooded, being at the bottom of the whole of the watershed of that large area of country—to put a high-level bridge over the river to be available at all seasons and all times, a low level bridge being practically useless—would take at least, at a very low calculation, £150,000. That amount of money would build 60 miles of the class of railway they were building up there; and as he had been informed by Mr. Engineer Phillips, who knew more of the country than any other engineer he had met, that it was not necessary to go by the originally proposed route, and moreover, that the route traversed 110 miles of country wherein there was not a single drop of water, and no great probability of obtaining any,

he thought he was perfectly justified in getting a fresh survey made, especially as he was assured that a very much better route was obtainable. Until that survey was made—and there might be more than one trial survey made in order to ascertain the best route—he did not think it was incumbent on him or expedient for the Government to take any action to commence the immediate construction of that line. They must have the fullest information before them before they did that. The quantity of rails and other railway material afloat now was about 2,500 tons, probably a little more than would be required to make the line to Croydon, and whatever was over would be retained for the purposes of the main line. As soon as ever that line was finally surveyed, and it was fairly known in which way it should go, there need not be any alarm on the score of proper precautions being taken to provide the necessary material to construct the line without any unnecessary delay.

Mr. PALMER said that the Minister for Railways having spoken so plainly on the question of the Cloncurry railway, he did not revert to it now with any idea of persecuting the hon. gentleman or unnecessarily troubling him, nor would he do so without good reason. He might point out to the hon. gentleman, however, that the argument used with regard to the enormous amount of money that would be required for a bridge over the Flinders, £150,000, was not a very sound one. They knew that a bridge had been constructed over the Burdekin River, which was much larger than the Flinders and carried more flood water, and was altogether a more difficult river to cross; a low-level bridge had been constructed over the Burdekin at a cost of £20,000. A low-level bridge over the Flinders would answer every purpose, because there was a natural ledge of rocks where the survey crossed the river. He knew from greater experience than Mr. Phillips had, that the flood waters on the Flinders did not remain for any length of time at a high level. He admitted that they rose to a very high level in extraordinary seasons, but they subsided as quickly as they rose, and remained at a uniform level. He was not going to try to upset the decision of the Minister to get what he thought sufficient information. The hon. gentleman had stated that he intended to have a new survey carried out, and perhaps a second one, before he ordered any railway material for the line, but it was to be hoped he would not be guided by such an argument as that it was necessary to expend £150,000 for a bridge over a river, where one costing £20,000 would answer as well.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS, the report was adopted.

## MINES REGULATION BILL.

### SECOND READING.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) said: Mr. Speaker,—In 1881 the Parliament of the day passed a Mines Regulation Bill, which was to a very great extent a tentative measure. The mining system at that time carried on in the colony was in a far more primitive condition than it is now, and in a more primitive condition than it was in in Victoria at that time, where they had a Mines Act and a Mines Act Amendment Act as well. At the time we passed that Bill in 1881 the principal part of our mines were very shallow, and for that reason and on account of it being the first time a Bill of the kind passing through this House, the clauses

of the Bill were to a very great extent not so severe on the management generally of mines as they were in other portions of the world where mining was carried on to a larger extent. The Mines Regulation Act being, as I say, a tentative measure, has failed, to a certain extent, to carry out the intentions of Parliament in passing it—namely, the prevention of accidents and injuries to miners. Previous to the passing of the Act, accidents were very numerous and the effect of passing the measure was that, immediately after it became law, the number of accidents was very greatly reduced. But since then the number of our mines has increased, the depth of our mines has also increased, and the mining population has increased to such an extent that accidents are now nearly as numerous—though not so numerous proportionately—as they were before 1879. Last year the number of accidents which occurred in all our mines—both coal and metal mines—was 107, out of which number there were actually twenty-eight fatal accidents. Now I think that, seeing the number of fatal accidents—and some of the accidents which are not fatal might almost as well be fatal—seeing the great number of fatal accidents, it behoves this House and the Ministry to try to prevent them as far as possible. I admit at once that many accidents are non-preventable, but still I think that a great many accidents are preventable, and it is the duty of this House as far as possible to try to adopt means to prevent those accidents as far as we can. If we look at the number of accidents that have taken place since the passing of the present Act, we shall find that it is very alarming. The killed and wounded amount to nearly as many as in some of the great battles fought by the British army in different parts of the world. There have been about 500 killed and wounded in mining accidents since the Mines Regulation Act was passed; and I say that is a very alarming state of things, and it is the duty of this House to prevent it as far as possible, as I said before. Of course there is a certain amount of recklessness among the miners themselves which no legislation can prevent; but, even taking that into account, probably that recklessness may be checked to a certain extent when miners begin to think of the importance which Parliament attaches to their lives, and to their happiness as well. Many men may be induced to think and ask themselves why it is that Parliament should pass a Bill like this at the present time, and that may cause them to be a little less reckless than they are at present. Of course miners, like sailors, become, to a certain extent, reckless through working constantly in dangerous places. I may say here that the Bill now brought forward is not altogether new. It will be found that the old Act is re-enacted, with additions in the shape of new clauses, and also amendments to existing clauses, which our experience of the past eight years has given us to understand ought to be adopted. The chief alterations made in the Bill itself are suggestions made by the two mining inspectors, from the experience they have gained by their inspections during that period; and a good many have come from an association on Charters Towers called the Charters Towers Miners' Union. That association has had a great deal of experience, and is composed of very experienced men; and I look upon their suggestions with great respect, as I think any Minister ought to do, seeing that they are all practical and experienced miners. The reason why I repeal the old Act and make an entirely new Bill is, that I thought it better, instead of introducing an amendment which might confuse mining managers and miners, as there would then be two measures dealing with the same subject—I thought it better to have one

measure dealing with the subject, and have it as complete as possible. And here I would like to direct the attention of hon. members to the last report of the Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr. Fryar, which will be found in the report of the Mines Department for last year. In it they will find a table giving the accidents of which I spoke as amounting to 107, and they will also find that out of that number twenty-eight were fatal. They will find also in that tabulated statement the total number of accidents that have taken place since 1879, the number being within one or two of 500. It will also be seen that the greatest number of accidents were what are generally looked upon as preventable accidents, namely, those caused by falls of rock or earth and by blasting. Such accidents as those can, in a great measure, be prevented; and if we can prevent one serious accident—one fatal accident—in a year, the labour of this House in passing this Bill will not be thrown away. I will now direct the attention of hon. members to the parts of the measure which are new, as I believe there will be no discussion over those parts that are old, and which have been found on the whole to work well. In the definition of the word "mine" in the interpretation clause hon. members will find these words—

"or any shaft, level, or plane, being sunk or driven for the same purpose."

That is an addition to the present definition of the word "mine." There is also the addition of the word "rollers" in the definition of the term "machinery." Rollers are now being used to a large extent instead of stampers, and, therefore, it is necessary to include the word "rollers." Then, again, the word "plan" is defined, and that is new—

"Plan"—Includes a map and section, and a correct copy or tracing, of any original plan as so defined."

And the word "prescribed" is defined thus:—

"Prescribed"—Means prescribed by this Act, or by any regulations made thereunder."

The 3rd paragraph of clause 5 is new, and is a very important addition. A portion of clause 7 is new also. If hon. members will turn to subsection 4 they will find that it gives an inspector power—

"To examine into and make inquiry respecting the state and condition of any boiler or other machinery."

And then there is added in this Bill —

"And if advisable to have the same tested in his presence, in any manner prescribed by this Act."

It was a great defect in the old Act not to give the inspector power to order a test. That power has been found necessary, and therefore it has been included in this Bill. The 5th and 6th subsections also are new. They give the inspector power—

"To initiate and conduct prosecutions against persons offending against the provisions of this Act;

"To appear at all inquiries held respecting mining accidents, and, if he thinks fit, to call and examine and cross-examine witnesses."

Then, again, clause 10 is a very important clause indeed, and relates to inspection by the representatives of miners. There is one part of this clause which has been unaccountably dropped from the original draft, and which I intend to have re-inserted in connection with it. The part dropped out gives power to any mining association, such as that I have mentioned as existing at Charters Towers, the Charters Towers Miners' Union, to order an inspection to be made, and to appoint two miners to inspect any mine in which the workings are supposed to be defective or dangerous. The clause as it stands simply gives the miners themselves power to appoint two representatives; but the clause as I mean to amend it will give them power, and

also power to such a body as the Charters Towers Miners' Union, or any other body, to have a mine inspected. That has been looked upon as being necessary for the protection of miners from being persecuted by the manager of a mine, who might look upon them as being inimical to his interests, or to those of the proprietors, in having the mine too closely or too sharply inspected. Miners, as a rule, although they are possessed of as much moral courage as any other class of the community, would not like to subject themselves to persecution or dismissal for some implied offence, but in reality because they offended the manager by asking for an inspection of the mine. I think that clause is necessary, and it is a suggestion that has come from the Charters Towers Miners' Union. The next clause is also new—

"Every mine shall be under the control and daily supervision of a manager, and the owner or agent of every such mine shall nominate himself or some other person to be the manager of such mine."

Then—

"The appointment, name, and address of every manager for the time being shall be notified in writing by the person or body appointing him, to the inspector or warden, and also to the Minister, within seven days after such appointment, and no person shall be so appointed who has not the management of the mining operations carried on in or at such mine."

That is, in the event of a prosecution being necessary, the warden or the inspector, or the Minister, will know whom to prosecute, so that the responsibility will not by any possibility be shaken from the shoulders of one person to another, and the prosecution avoided. That is a recommendation from the Charters Towers Miners' Union also; and also a recommendation of the mining inspector. Clause 12 is a new one—

"If any mine is worked for more than three days without there being a manager for that mine, as required by the last preceding section, the owner and agent of such mine shall each be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds, and to a further penalty not exceeding ten pounds for each day during which such mine is so worked."

The next clause, which is also new, deals with the temporary absence of a manager. The duties and responsibilities of a manager are dealt with in clause 14, which is necessarily also new. I am drawing the attention of hon. members to these new clauses, so that they will be able to direct attention to them, particularly in committee, as I have no doubt that the old clauses, as I said at first, will go without discussion, they having been found practicable and fairly workable. The 1st paragraph of clause 17—

"The occurrence of any accident in or on a mine shall be *prima facie* evidence of neglect on the part of the owner or manager"—

is a provision which I sought to have inserted into the present Act; but the House would not have it, and I mean to try again to have it included, as I think it is very necessary, and it has been recommended by the mining inspectors. It is also in existence in the Acts of Victoria and New Zealand. That also was suggested by the Charters Towers Miners' Union. Clause 18 is also new—

"This Act shall, except as hereinafter provided, apply to all mines, except shallow alluvial workings, in which any person working for wages is ordinarily employed below ground.

"No boy under the age of fourteen years and no female shall be employed below ground in any mine."

The present Act contains an exemption in favour of mines in which there are not more than six miners working below; but that has been found to be very detrimental to the interests of miners, and I think it is high time that all mines were brought under the operation of the Act. No boy under the age of fourteen years and no

female shall be employed below ground in any mine. I do not think the latter part of the clause is necessary, but still it is as well to have the prohibition.

Mr. HODGKINSON: There was a female employed in the "Day Dawn" in the early days.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I have seen only two or three women employed in mining on goldfields in my life, and never in Queensland. Clause 19 is also a new one, and comes with the strongest recommendations from the Charters Towers Miners' Union. This is really an Eight Hours Bill—

"No person in charge of machinery used in connection with any mine, or for the treatment of the products of any mine, shall be so employed for more than eight consecutive hours at any time, or for more than eight hours in any twenty-four hours; such period of eight hours to be exclusive of any time occupied in raising steam and in drawing fires and exhausting steam in connection with the machinery in charge of such person, and exclusive of meal-hours; and of any time in which such person is employed in case of breakage or other emergency."

That clause is entirely new, and I think it a very important one, and a very necessary one. Then we come to the general rules. Sub-section (a) contains two new lines after the word "inspector" in the present Act—

"Nor in any quantity exceeding five hundredweight." That is in regard to explosives; and is a suggestion which came from the Charters Towers Union. Sub-section (b) is also new, and is a suggestion by the mining inspector. Sub-section (c) contains the words—

"Containing not more than eight pounds of gunpowder, or five pounds of dynamite."

That is new. Sub-section (e) is new also, and relates to detonators. Sub-section (f) is likewise new—

"No person shall enter with a naked light a powder magazine, or any excavation in a mine where powder or other explosive or inflammable substance is stored."

Then sub-section (i) is new. It states that—

"A charge which has missed fire shall not be approached until one hour has elapsed from the time of lighting the fuse. This rule shall not apply to charges fired by an electric current."

Sub-section (j) is new, and provides that—

"No boy under the age of sixteen years shall be allowed to charge or fire explosives."

If hon. members will just follow me as I go on, and mark the portions of the Bill which are new, it will facilitate their work in Committee very much. There is an addition in sub-section 6, the words "or covered" being inserted after the words "securely fenced." Sub-section (a) of rule 9 is also new; it provides that—

"In the case of underlie shafts, no material shall be raised at the same time as any person is travelling in the shaft, unless the travelling portion of the shaft is fenced off from that used for raising material."

The whole of rule 11, which is a very long one, is new, and rule 12 is also new. The latter states that—

"A clear view shall be kept for the engine driver between his station and the shaft at the surface brace"—

so that there will be no excuse for the engine driver to say that he did not see the top of the brace. Number 18 is new—

"In raising or lowering men, the rate of speed shall not exceed two hundred feet per minute when the cage or bucket is within one hundred feet of the surface, nor five hundred feet per minute in any part of the shaft."

That, of course, refers to raising and lowering men by machinery, and is intended to prevent reckless raising and lowering. Number 19 is also new—

"No iron, timber, tools, rails, sprags, or other material, except when repairing the shaft, shall be placed in the same cage in which men are being lowered or raised from their work."

And so is number 20—

“All machinery, whether above or below ground, shall be kept in good order and condition.”

And 21—

“Every brace or pit-bank shall be properly covered to protect the workmen from the inclemency of the weather.”

Number 22 again is a new provision—

“No person under the age of eighteen years shall be employed as lander or braccman on any mine, and the brace and all elevated tramways leading therefrom shall be securely fenced.”

Some portions of number 24 are new. The words “every steam boiler” are in the present Act, but the words “or other vessel in which pressure is used” are new, as also are the words “or vessel” on line 47. The last paragraph but one has already been provided for in a previous part of the Bill and may be excised in committee. The provision, however, is new. The paragraph at the top of page 9—

“The safety valve shall be so adjusted, that when the machine is working the pressure in any boiler or vessel shall not exceed two-thirds of that shown by the last preceding test to be a safe pressure for that boiler or vessel!”—

is new, and the word “use” in rule 25 is also new. Numbers 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34 are new, and are all very necessary for the protection of miners. If hon. members will turn to clause 23, they will there find a new provision with regard to persons employed in mines. The clause states that, if any miner finds any portion of the machinery defective, or any portion of the mine dangerous, he shall report it to the manager, and then there is added the words—

“And on leaving work he shall report to the man relieving him the state of that part of the works where he has been employed, or otherwise he shall be guilty of an offence against this Act.”

Accidents have happened, and may possibly happen again, if not prevented, through the person going on to relieve the shift not knowing the state or condition of the works. The man going off the shift has not had the ordinary common sense to report the dangerous condition of the mine or the works at the time. Then, again, in clause 25, the words “for which no specific penalty is herein provided” are new. Clause 27 is new—

“Whenever any person shall be employed in any mine working for wages at per day, eight hours' labour, exclusive of meal-times, shall be deemed and held to be one day's labour, and any person who shall work over eight hours per day shall be entitled to demand and receive payment for the excess of time so worked over and above eight hours per day at such rate (if any) as may have previously been agreed upon, or otherwise at the rate then current in that district. Provided that no person who is in charge of machinery shall work or be permitted to work overtime, except in case of emergency as provided for in clause 19 of this Act.”

That is the eight hours' principle, and I think eight hours is quite long enough for any miner to work who does his work properly. Clauses 29, 30, and 31 are new. These clauses relate to the competency of engine drivers, and hon. members who are acquainted with mining will know that such provisions are absolutely necessary, and I hope they will be strictly enforced when the Act comes into operation. Clauses 32, 33, and 34 are also new. Clause 33 provides for the plan of a mine being always available when the inspector or warden requires it for the inspection of the mine, and clause 34 provides that—

“Where any mine of which a plan should be kept, under the last preceding section, is abandoned, the owner at the time of abandonment shall, within three months thereafter, forward to the Minister an accurate plan, on a scale of two chains to one inch, showing the boundaries of the workings of such mine up to the time of abandonment.

“Every person who fails to comply with this section shall be guilty of an offence against this Act.”

That is very necessary for the future working of mines.

Mr. TOZER: Catch him if you can!

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: Oh, we will catch him. The same person will probably apply for a piece of land on some other portion of the goldfield, or on some other goldfield, and, if necessary, we can impose some additional penalty in this clause, which will make it imperative, and deprive such a person of his miner's right. Clauses 35, 36 and 37 are also new. Clause 35, which of course applies to all mines—metal-mining and coal-mining as well as to gold mines—provides that the owner shall furnish a return of the material treated, which I think is very necessary, and very important in making up the statistics of the colony. Clause 36 provides how notices are to be served. Then we come to the part relating to collieries. Clause 40 is new, and comes recommended by the chief mining inspector, Mr. Fryar; and besides that it is also found in the New Zealand mining regulations. Clause 41 is the same as the corresponding provision in the Act at present in existence. Looking at the new portions of the Bill, hon. members will see that they have been introduced from the experience we have gained by the working of eight years of our present Act, and from the experience the mining inspectors have gained during that period. I have used the experience of Victoria and New Zealand to a certain extent also, as mining in all the colonies is more or less very much alike, and the means adopted in one country to protect the miner from accident are similar to those adopted by all the others. I think, therefore, there will be very little difficulty in passing this Bill through the House. It is in no sense a party measure. It could not be conceived to be a party measure, as the lives of miners and the property of mine owners are dependent on a Bill of this kind. I expect to get from the mining representatives of the House a considerable degree of support, and also probably information which will lead to the Bill leaving the Chamber much more perfect than I have introduced it. I shall be very willing to accept any suggestion which will lead to the further protection of miners without unduly pressing on mine owners. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. HODGKINSON said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman may rest perfectly assured that the Bill will not be treated in any sense as a partisan measure, more especially as he has himself shown his impartiality by indiscriminately adopting in this measure suggestions made some time ago in a measure of a somewhat analogous character. It would have facilitated the passing of the Bill if the hon. gentleman had mentioned all the sources from which he derived the suggestions that are embodied in it. He was very careful to mention that he had derived some of them from the report of the inspector of mines—the inspector who resides in Brisbane, and who gathers most of the material on which he bases his views on the occurrences on goldfields from the reports of the various wardens. In addition to the acknowledgment the hon. gentleman makes to the inspector of mines, he also refers to a committee of miners at Charters Towers. He could not possibly go to a better source on which to base the improvements he proposes to make in our mining laws. But I think he might have had the common courtesy to recognise the pains and care taken by two officers who, I believe, were not the least respected by him while in the service. I should like to know how the hon. gentleman defines the meaning of the word “new.” In his summary of the Bill he kept telling members to be very careful while he

pointed out what he termed "new" in the Bill. With all respect to him, and with all deference to his perfect acquaintance with the matter, I would suggest the use of the word "additional," rather than "new," because I recognise word for word—and I can easily prove my statement—clauses which were inserted in a Bill drafted some time ago by Warden Sellheim and myself.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS:** May I be allowed to correct the hon. member. I am not aware of a single word in this Bill which had its origin in the hon. member or in Mr. Warden Sellheim. I knew that those gentlemen were engaged in drafting a copy of goldfields regulations, but I never heard of their being employed in drafting a Bill to provide for the regulation and inspection of mines and collieries. If they did so, I know nothing at all about it.

**MR. HODGKINSON:** The hon. gentleman is never at a loss for a defence. It is almost a pity he did not belong to that profession where his casuistry would have been of so much use to him. It is perfectly certain that Warden Sellheim and myself were never employed to prepare a Bill, and never attempted to do so. In making that statement the hon. gentleman was perfectly correct; but the object sought to be obtained by this Bill could just as easily have been obtained by the power given in the existing Act to the Minister for Mines and Works to promulgate a set of regulations—that is to say, the regulations now in force could have been adapted, by a few slight alterations in the present Act, to meet the purposes which the hon. gentleman proposes to obtain by the passing of this Bill. It was my intention—of course we know perfectly well that the road to a certain place is paved with good intentions—in justice to myself I think it necessary to state, that it was my intention, when occupying the position now held by the hon. gentleman, to have endeavoured to codify the whole of the laws relating to mining in the colony in one Act; and I may also state that I had instructed a gentleman eminently qualified for the task of performing such a thing satisfactorily, and that he was, at the time of my relinquishing office, engaged in that task. I do not want to say one word that will in the slightest degree hurt the hon. gentleman's feelings, nor to contradict the assertion he has made. He is within the limits of truth in his statement.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS:** It is the whole truth.

**MR. HODGKINSON:** He is within the limits of truth in stating that Warden Sellheim and myself prepared no Bill, and I also am within the limits of truth in stating that some of the clauses of this Bill are verbatim copies of the regulations we framed, modified to bring them within the scope of the present Bill. Hon. members may laugh, but before laughing let their laughter be justified with a little common sense, so that they may understand what they are laughing at. What I say is that, although the language employed in the Bill may be different from the language employed in the regulations, yet the words contain the very same ideas that were put in writing by Warden Sellheim and myself. That I will give proof of. The hon. gentleman has quite sufficient knowledge of this subject, and he knows he will command my hearty support in such a well-meaning effort, but he might certainly have said that, although we had drafted no Bill, he had perused the regulations we made; for I presume he has seen a copy of the regulations to which I now refer.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS:** I have never seen them. There is not a single word in this Bill taken from them.

**MR. HODGKINSON:** The alterations and additions which I see, with one or two insignificant exceptions of details, were taken from the regulations to which I have alluded, or from the Victorian Act. With regard to the definition clause, that is a legal necessity, and on those legal points I certainly shall not lose myself; I do not pretend to understand them, and there are legal gentlemen in the House who not only understand the legal issues of the language, but who have also had large practical acquaintance with mining matters, and will be able to give the House a great deal of enlightenment on those points. One feature of the new Bill is this: that it recognises not only the eight hours system, but makes it almost absolutely penal to work under any other system. I congratulate the hon. gentleman upon endorsing that principle in this measure. As he says, very justly, eight hours is quite enough for any man to work in a mine, and it remains to be seen on a future occasion, when treating of a different subject, whether it is not quite sufficient labour for a man in other branches of industry besides mining. But let us accept what we have got, and congratulate ourselves upon the recognition of this principle in the Bill. The statement the hon. gentleman made with regard to loss of life in mining is quite corroborated by official documents laid before the House this session. It has been, as he stated, as great as the losses in some battles that have been fought by the British army, and for which very lavish decorations were granted; but the pitiable part of the business is this, that it mostly results from gross carelessness. If we look at the reports of the inspectors we shall find that the great majority of accidents are due to carelessness. At Gympie we find the warden reports that really the miners have nothing to learn about mining, the work being carried out with so much attention to timbering, and what may be termed the equipment of the shafts and the use of explosives, that it would be a credit to any mining district in the world. The gentleman who makes that statement is one whose opinion carries great weight with anyone who knows him—Mr. Sellheim. But as you get removed from Gympie, and go further North, it seems that greater recklessness prevails, and consequently more accidents occur. If it were necessary to prove what I say, you have only to read the reports of the inspectors in the Northern division of the colony. One would almost imagine from those reports that the men who suffered were taken with some desire for self-destruction, or with some gambling propensity to face death as nearly as possible with the chance of avoiding it. The second great cause of accidents is the careless use of explosives, and I am very glad to see that that important subject is largely treated in this measure. The next point I shall refer to is with reference to inspectors, clause 7. Now, Sir, we have inspectors at present. Every warden of a goldfield, so far as I am aware, is an inspector, and so is every mineral lands commissioner, and we have what may be termed special commissioners, Mr. Fryar, who is Chief Inspector and inspector for the Southern division, and Mr. Shakespeare, who is inspector for the Northern division.

**MR. SAYERS:** There is another.

**MR. HODGKINSON:** The hon. member for Charters Towers says there is another but that does not matter. The more there are the greater the difficulty to which I allude. That difficulty is this: That there is a certain amount of friction between the inspectors specially appointed, and whose duties are confined to the business of inspection, and the wardens, who perform the duties of inspectorship by reason of

their official position. I have noticed myself that there is jealousy between the metropolitan officer and the local wardens, and although as a rule the local wardens have sufficient tact to avert the evil consequences that would result from this cause, still they do arise sometimes. The difficulty is, without in any way trespassing upon the functions or the privileges of the metropolitan inspector, to have that immediate inquiry into an accident at a mine which is absolutely requisite, if you want to obtain any correct details with regard to it. Unless the inquiry is made at once the evidence of the cause of the accident may be lost. For instance, take the 4th sub-section of clause 7. It says one of the duties of an inspector under this Act is—

“To examine into and make inquiry respecting the state and condition of any boiler or other machinery, and if advisable to have the same tested in his presence, in any manner prescribed by this Act.”

Upon whom will that duty fall? Take the case of the warden of a goldfield like Charters Towers. His time is fully occupied; he has no time to attend to those duties. The local inspector of the district may be at a remote portion of the goldfield. I do not know how far Mr. Shakespeare's district extends now that there has been a third inspector appointed, but it must be a very large area; and the difficulty arises in having official inspections at all times and under all circumstances, and to carry them out with all necessary stringency, because it is evident that the whole value of this measure will depend upon having it made a living, working Act. If it is allowed to drop into disuse or neglect from any cause, it might as well be relegated at once to the waste-paper basket. The Act already passed was passed with the very best intentions the same as this will be, but it has been to a great extent inoperative, for the simple reason that no prosecutions have been instituted under it for the last twelve months. Although the inspector himself laments an unusual proportion of accidents during the year, still he reports that there have been no prosecutions under the Act. The fact is this: When the Act was passed people regarded it as a measure that might be sufficient to carry out the matters with which it professed to deal, and to inflict the penalties it professed to impose, but they found that it was a sham Act—that it had no force whatever—that no matter what men might do, as a rule they went unpunished. It is also strange, as showing the exercise, or rather the want of it, of the local functions of inspection, that in only two instances in the Southern districts in 1888 were there prosecutions, and they resulted in paltry fines inflicted by the local warden under the regulations of the Act passed in 1874, not under the Mines Regulations Act passed since. Therefore it will be very necessary in committee to see that the provisions which the hon. the Minister for Mines and Works wishes to enforce by this clause are armed with full powers of enforcement. With regard to clause 11, which deals with the appointment of managers, I am sure the House will credit me when I say that that clause is almost a verbatim copy of the regulations framed by us on the same subject. I do not say the hon. gentleman ever saw it. It may be that there has been an unconscious plagiarism, that the same idea occurred to two great minds alike. It is possible that the hon. gentleman may have set down here the very thoughts that were expressed by myself and Mr. Sellheim on this very subject. At any rate I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that this clause is in almost the same words, and I am certain no hon. member will deny that the idea of the one is not concentrated in the other.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Both emanating from the same source.

Mr. HODGKINSON: It is very clear that there was no unconscious incorporation here. There were no novelties introduced—only additions; I felt some fear and trembling when the discussion was interrupted by the voice of that spiritual power who sits behind the throne of the present Government—that hon. gentleman who, as I remarked the other evening, wields the two-edged sword in the Cabinet, and who is so free in giving his opinion upon the matter under discussion. The remark was made that I felt unduly sensitive as to the omission of any reference to former work done by the hon. gentleman's department in this matter. I confess I did, and hon. members must remember that I am not only speaking for myself, but for one of the most able men in the service of the department, who, in common with myself, devoted a great deal of time—and unpaid time—with the view of framing mining regulations. Questions have arisen as to whether the Minister for Mines and Works has adopted in whole or in part any of his regulations from the Victorian Act, or from those of his predecessors in office. That is the duty of every Minister; he is obliged to go to the best authority, and what better authority could we have than the colony of Victoria, which has for a long period, and to a larger extent, been occupied with mining than any other colony of the group. But to that Victorian experience is added the local experience gained by local knowledge, and, with the view to substantiate the statements I made as to the wonderful similarity of ideas which prevailed between the framers of this Bill and those regulations, I shall take, just as an instance, the 11th clause, referring to the appointment of a manager. On that head the regulation I framed was—

“Every leasehold, registered claim, or ground held under application for lease, in which six or more men are employed, or to which the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act of 1881 have been extended, shall have a responsible mining manager, whose name, date of appointment, or discharge, shall be registered at the warden's office within one week from the date of such appointment or discharge.”

I think it will be admitted that the provisions of that regulation are pretty similar to the provisions of the 11th clause. The period in which the announcement shall be made is exactly the same. Perhaps this is one of those suggestions obtained from the Charters Towers committee. Committees on all the goldfields were furnished with copies of the regulations, with the request that they would revise them and submit any improvements or amendments they thought proper; so that there is nothing improper in the similarity of the proposed clauses to the regulations, as they emanated from the sister colony, and were subjected to the same revision. Then again, in clause 15 there is a provision that notice of accident shall be given to the inspector of mines. Now, of course, this Bill will undoubtedly receive the attention of every mining member of this House, and it is simply put before us in this form with a view, I presume, of the adoption of any amendments that may commend themselves to the hon. gentleman who introduced it. Here is another anomaly in this 15th clause, that the mining manager shall give notice of accidents. That is a very necessary conclusion that any man drawing such a Bill would come to, but whether notification shall be given to the inspector is a matter for subsequent determination. It might in some cases where there is not an inspector within reasonable distance, and having in view the importance of these accidents being inquired into as soon as possible, be advisable that notice should be given to the nearest police magistrate, or even to the nearest justice of the peace; but of course those are only details, which the hon. gentleman will give due attention to. The 19th clause is

extremely valuable, although it leaves a loop-hole in the hands of the employer by attempting to confine skilled mechanical work to eight hours in twenty-four, and then goes on to say—

“Such period of eight hours to be exclusive of any time occupied in raising steam and in drawing fires and exhausting steam in connection with the machinery in charge of such person, and exclusive of meal-hours, and of any time in which such person is employed in case of breakage or other emergency.”

Now, it is questionable whether it is proper to allow anyone but a competent engineer to touch machinery, but these are duties that can be performed by a man not necessarily in that position, and I think if the advisability of limiting work to eight hours in twenty-four is recognised, it should be stringently enforced, because we know very well that wherever a loop-hole is left, advantage will be taken of it. The old question will come in. The man who pays the wages will want to get as much work as he can from them, and he will not only insist upon the eight hours' work, but will endeavour to get as much more work out of his men as he possibly can. The general rules regarding explosives are also open to modification, because they are a very fruitful cause of accident. I come now to a clause in which there is evidently a typographical error, or an instance of careless drafting. The 11th sub-section of clause 20, under the heading of “General Rules,” says:—

“All methods of signalling in mines to indicate that men or material are to be raised or lowered in shafts shall be clear and distinct, and shall be posted in a clear and legible form on framed boards—one of which shall be placed at the chamber at the bottom of the workings in the shaft, another on the brace, and a third in the engine room.”

Now, I confess that even with the assistance of the Victorian Act and local committees, I am at a loss to understand how the hon. gentleman proposes to post a method, either in a legible form or a framed board; but I have no doubt he will explain that on a fitting occasion. The 19th sub-section of clause 20 is new, and is to the following effect—

“No iron, timber, tools, rails, sprags, or other material, except when repairing the shaft, shall be placed in the same cage in which men are being lowered or raised from their work.”

Well, that may be a novelty in Queensland, but it is certainly not a novelty in Europe or other portions of Australia or America; but at the same time the clause is very necessary, because it is not so very long ago since an accident occurred through neglect of that precaution. The 24th sub-section, relating to boilers, safety valves, &c., is also an importation from previous legislation on the same subject. Now, in the 27th clause there is another and a very satisfactory recognition of the eight-hour question, but it also provides that a miner shall be entitled to demand and receive payment for excess of time worked over and above eight hours per day, at such rate (if any) as may have previously been agreed upon, or otherwise at the rate then current in that district. I am quite certain that no one knows better than the hon. gentleman in charge of this Bill that, as he justly says, eight hours' work per day is enough for any man who honestly works for the eight hours, and except in special cases where an accident has occurred, or is imminent, requiring the services of all the men in the mine to take precautions against it, similar to taking in sail at sea when a gale is coming up, I think that principle of eight hours' work only should be stringently enforced and observed in the case of miners, just as much as in the case of a man attending the engine. I say that because, although the man in charge of the engine has perhaps to a greater extent an influence over the lives of the men in the mine, yet men engaged below

have to a greater or lesser degree an influence over the lives of those engaged in the mine. A man putting in timber, or doing any other job requiring care and accuracy, may be fatigued and may be unable to do his work properly, and he may be kept in the mine partially against his will. He may have other work to do of a private nature outside which will lead him to do his work in a perfunctory or careless manner, and I suggest to the Minister for Mines and Works whether it would not be better for him, in addition to providing that men in charge of machinery shall not work or be permitted to work overtime, to extend the same provision to men employed in the mine. The 33rd clause is very nearly a transposition of one of those regulations to which I have referred, and I think if I read the original clause it will be quite as clear to the majority of members, and it will be seen it is much shorter than the substituted one. My statement on this subject in commencing my speech was questioned, and I wish to show that I made it in the belief that it was an accurate statement. The original clause reads thus—

“The lessee of, or applicant for, any gold-mining lease shall prepare and keep proper plans of all underground workings, which at any time shall be open to the inspection of the warden or any person authorised in his behalf, and which on abandonment or forfeiture of the ground shall be filed by such lessee or applicant in the office of the local warden. Such plans to be made by a competent person in a workmanlike way.”

The improvement of the hon. gentleman on that regulation is that this clause applies to claims, whereas the one to which I have referred applies only to leases; but that could doubtless have been altered in committee. If I see an omission I am not ashamed to notice it, but I say that the superstructure upon which this 33rd clause is reared is contained vitally in the regulation I have just read. The 35th clause provides that returns shall be furnished, and states—

“On or before the first day of February in each year the owner of every mine shall forward or cause to be forwarded to the inspector or warden of his district a return showing the quantity of mineral raised from his mine during the twelve months which ended on the thirty-first day of December last preceding, and the value or estimated value thereof; and every owner of any crushing or other machine or appliance for extracting gold or other mineral from the ore or matrix shall, on or before the same date, send in a similar return showing the quantity of ore treated by such machine or appliance during the twelve months ended on the thirty-first day of December last preceding, and the quantity and value of the mineral obtained. And every owner who shall neglect or refuse to furnish the returns required by this section within the time specified shall be liable to a penalty of ten pounds for each week after the first day of February until the return is sent in, and such penalty may be sued for by the inspector and shall be recoverable in a summary way before any two or more justices of the peace.”

That is the germ of an invaluable clause. There is no doubt that the reputation of this colony suffers very greatly from want of accuracy in our statistics. We had a lively instance of that to-day, and a great many men will go to bed to-night much more pleased than they would otherwise have been after reading the report of the manager of the Mount Morgan Mine, which appeared in the papers to-day. It has been understood, hitherto, that the working of that mine was shrouded in mystery, so far as I have learned from conversations, as I have not the good fortune to be a shareholder in that undertaking, I regret to say. But to-day we have a clear, well-worded, explicit report which will give confidence to those who read it, and which shows a state of affairs which is a credit to the enterprise of the proprietors and to the gentleman who has managed the mine and brought it to its present state of perfection. It will be most assuring to those

who have invested their money in it; and I think it is a pity the details given in that report were not given to the public before, and it is to be hoped that it will be supplemented by additional information hereafter. But this clause, although the object of it is good, is not by any means perfect. It is a long way from perfect. The clause framed on this subject in the regulations to which I again refer was to this effect—

*"Return of Gold.*

"The registered owner of every quartz mill or place for the reduction of auriferous ores shall forward to the warden a statutory declaration of the quantity of auriferous matter treated, and the gold produced from each parcel thereof, on or before the fourth day of the month next ensuing, under a penalty of one pound for each day's default.

"It shall be incumbent on all claimholders, leaseholders, and gold-mining companies to furnish the warden of the goldfield, if required to do so, with any returns he may require for statistical or other purposes within one month from such return having been requested, and any default shall be deemed a breach of these regulations."

Now, the omissions in the clause proposed by the Minister for Mines and Works are these: In the first place there is only an annual report required from the owner of every mine. There is a very large number of mine-owners in this colony who do not hold a mine for twelve months. There is a large number of mines, especially on new fields, where a sample crushing is taken out and the place is then left or abandoned in favour of some new rush, because the work done upon it was not profitable. If we are to have accurate returns of the produce of this colony, we must have them as full and complete as possible. Again, we are by this clause throwing obstacles in the way of officials on goldfields doing their duty. The Minister for Mines and Works requires from every warden a monthly return giving the details to which I have referred. The public generally are not fond of perusing these reports unless they are reports of successful returns. The mine-owner will say—"The law only requires us to furnish an annual report," and as a practical issue the warden will only get that annual return, and the consequence will be that the monthly returns will be gathered in the very unsatisfactory way in which they are obtained at present. For the purpose of comparison the twelve months is too long a period for these reports altogether. Then again—

"Every owner of any crushing or other machine or appliance for extracting gold or other mineral from the ore or matrix shall, on or before the same date, send in a similar return showing the quantity of ore treated by such machine or appliance during the twelve months ended on the 31st day of December last preceding, and the quantity and value of the mineral obtained. And every owner who shall neglect or refuse to furnish the returns required by this section within the time specified shall be liable to a penalty."

stated in the clause. But so long as he gives a gross return from the machine, say 2,000 tons stone from the 1st January to the 31st December, which yielded so much gold, he complies with all that is asked for in this clause. That is not what is wanted. Men investing in mines often find it necessary to rake up the history of a mine from the earliest days, and one of the best possible means of doing that, is to have a record of the actual output of stone and the yield, and unless we have a return made of each parcel of stone, and the crushing from each parcel, small as well as large, separate and distinct, our statistics of that yield will be of little value, either to the department or the public. Of course there are other members representing mining communities who desire to express their sentiments on this Bill. The only object I have in making my remarks is to show that I have studied the Bill to some extent, and also to

assure the hon. gentleman that as much assistance as is in my power to give will be most carefully rendered, because I recognise fully the benefit he has conferred on the mining community in the protection of what has been hitherto poorly looked after, that is, the protection of valuable life, and also, probably, of property. The clauses dealing with collieries I shall not touch upon, for the very sufficient reason that it is a subject of which I know very little.

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall trouble the House with very few remarks on the second reading of this Bill. As a large number of my constituents are engaged in collieries, and as I gave attention to the matter many years ago, and was specially requested by my constituents to bring several matters before the House, I trust I shall be pardoned for detaining the House for a short time. I may repeat now what I said to the Minister for Mines and Works with regard to another measure, namely, that any assistance I can give in getting the Bill passed through this session will be cheerfully rendered. I had some conversation with the hon. gentleman, and on many things connected with this Bill we fully agreed. The first matter which I consider of importance is to secure the entire independence of the mining inspector. Working miners will not communicate with an inspector in whom they have no confidence. They will not speak to him freely, and there is always considerable difficulty in the matter. I propose to submit an amendment in committee which will, I think, insure perfect confidence in the inspector on the part of the working miners, and also render it extremely difficult to remove that gentleman from office, unless the voice of the country calls for his removal. In the 9th clause I cannot say I agree with the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill as to his proposed plan for the appointment of an inspector by the miners. My own idea is that two men should be appointed by the working miners in any colliery. I hope the House will observe that I do not presume to express any opinion with regard to gold-mining, because that is a matter of which I know nothing whatever. I am merely confining my remarks to coal-mining as carried on in this colony. I think those men should be appointed by the miners, and that the fact of their going to a mine for the purpose of inspecting it should be conclusive evidence of their appointment; which will be found a better plan than their official appointment by the union. The next matter to which I shall refer is contained in the 20th clause, with respect to ventilation, which is a matter concerning not only the comfort of miners, but also their lives. I have seen in another colony where I resided, in the middle of a coal district, men thirty years of age thoroughly broken down in health and rendered old men by imperfect ventilation. It is unnecessary for me to go into a dissertation on a matter well known to the whole of the House—I mean the functions of the lungs—but I know that in some cases where men have died, and *post mortem* examinations have been made, the lungs were found to be completely carbonised, and that is a state of things we should endeavour by all means to prevent. I am not, and never shall be, a party to any legislation which would put undue burdens on the owners of mines, but this matter of ventilation is of the utmost importance, not only to the health of the miners, but also in connection with the danger arising from inflammable gases. There is serious danger even in a small quantity of inflammable gas when mixed with finely-powdered coal, because it then becomes highly inflammable; and I will just call attention to the accident at the Bulli Colliery which, for the time being, was a matter of interest to all the colonies, and appealed to their sympathies on

behalf of eighty-three families which were rendered destitute. The Bulli Colliery accident was brought about by the neglect of the inspector, who did not consider it his duty to visit the unused workings. In those workings there was a large waste or goaf, that is, a place where the worked-out coal had tumbled in. Instead of this being properly walled up, as it should have been, it was left alone, and the consequence was that a large accumulation of gas took place. This, combined with a low barometer indicating an exceedingly rarefied state of the outside atmosphere, produced a suction which must have drawn this gas into the workings. There it probably came in contact with some naked light—a miner endeavouring to light his pipe, tampering with his safety-lamp, or swinging his safety-lamp about when the immense cap on the top of the flame indicated the presence of a large amount of gas—and an explosion followed by which the Bulli Colliery for the time being was converted into an enormous cannon, out of which men were almost shot, many of them being killed by collision with things they came in contact with, and others destroyed by the product of the combustion, which is even more fatal than the combustion itself. I shall submit an amendment, having for its object the definition of the exact amount of ventilation which is necessary to guard against such dangers; and that amendment will be based on an authority which I had in my possession many years before I had the honour of a seat in this House—a treatise on coal-mining by Mr. Warrington Smyth, Chief Inspector of Mines under the British Government. In every amendment I shall move I shall submit that authority for the statements I make. The next point to which I shall refer is with regard to the regulations. By the 33rd clause the plans of the workings up to three months past are to be furnished. I have already pointed out to the Minister for Mines and Works that with respect to collieries I think the time should be reduced to fourteen days, because collieries are more subject to accidents from falls of coal than gold mines are from falls of earth or stone, and if an accident takes place it is necessary to know exactly where the workings are, so that the men may be rescued and lives saved. Then there are insidious diseases, so to speak, peculiar to coal mines, which are known among miners as creep and thrust, in which the strata appear to move one upon the other, causing at very short notice the most terrible collapse. It is, therefore, all the more necessary that plans of the workings should be frequently and regularly furnished. With regard to the 40th clause, the practice in England is not to inflict a fine—I know I am somewhat at issue with the hon. member for Bundanba on this point—the practice is not to levy a fine, because it might pay some collieries to pay £600 a year for the privilege of not making a second opening. The practice, as I am informed by practical miners, and as I have read in books, is that while the mine is being opened, that is while the dead work is being done, to restrict the men and boys employed to a certain number, and if the owner does not choose, when he commences to get coal, to make another opening, he is restricted to the number of men and boys he had when doing dead work. The mine consequently becomes unprofitable, and he is obliged to comply with the law. The next matter which I shall mention is one which I was specially requested by my constituents in that portion of my electorate which joins Bundanba to bring under the notice of the House, and that is the question of paying the miners according to the weight of the coal obtained. It will be apparent to hon. members that the coal which is paid for by the tub is no criterion of the weight of the coal got by the miner, because the

small coal would make up a much larger weight. It is quite possible that with the large pieces there may be very considerable apertures or spaces. Now, the only test of payment is payment by weight, and I think that the 48th clause is somewhat defective in regard to that, in that it does not provide that machinery for weighing should be provided. The working miners may have their check-weigher and be willing to pay his salary; but unless there is some machinery to weigh the coal, they must either provide it themselves at their own expense, or the whole thing will remain inoperative. I shall submit an amendment in reference to the subject. Of course, it is not always possible to have a check-weigher, because his wages would form such a serious deduction from the wages of the miners that they could not afford to pay him and, therefore, I have framed a clause which I think will meet with the approval of those who understand the subject—namely, that the cubic contents of all tubs, baskets, waggons, and so on, by which the mineral is measured for judging the payment, shall be marked, and the inspector shall see that this is done. I believe that this will remove a very considerable hardship indeed, and that the men will be satisfied with this form of measurement, and there will be no further difficulty. I do not think there is anything else in the Bill that I need notice on the second reading. There is undoubtedly considerable provision made for the safety of miners by the Bill; but I do not think that in some cases it goes far enough, and the House must remember that coal-mining is a most dangerous occupation. I suppose there is no form of human labour which is so dangerous as that in a coal-mine, both from the risk of explosion and the risk of a fall of roof. The provision that there shall be two openings is absolutely necessary, because if there be only one, and a fall of roof occurs, and there is any serious fall which cannot be cleared away in a few minutes or hours, as the case may be, the miners are caught in a trap, and will perish. I trust this Bill will be discussed in the spirit in which it has been introduced, and that the experience of the practical miners we have in the House will make it a perfect measure. I believe every effort will be made in that direction, but with regard to the points which I have submitted to the House, I think it is defective. I have troubled the House at this length, because I was specially requested to bring those matters forward. I, myself, have held several meetings in the coal-mining portion of my electorate, in which these matters were fully discussed. In anything which I shall propose I shall quote the highest authority, that of the chief inspector of mines in England. I believe in our present inspectors, and if good men are appointed, and the position is made impregnable, so that they will be independent of the Government and everybody else—so long as they do their duty—I believe the system will be worked to a satisfactory issue. The hon. member for Bundanba possesses far more practical knowledge than I do. The knowledge which I possess is derived mostly from conversations and reading; but the hon. member I have mentioned will bring into the matter practical knowledge which I do not possess. I shall submit various amendments in committee, and without pressing them unduly upon the Committee, I believe I shall be able to give very good reasons for their acceptance in every case.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—We must all admit that it is the duty of the House to legislate to prevent accident, if possible. The provisions of the present Act have unfortunately not prevented a large number of accidents and deaths during the past year. Within the past year a larger

proportion of deaths and accidents have occurred than in several years immediately previous, and that furnishes the reason for the Hon. Minister for Mines and Works introducing fresh legislation. For instance, the further development of the mining industry requires fresh legislation; the discovery of tin mines, for example, has initiated a new class of accidents. The hon. member, Mr. Macrossan, was the first who introduced a Mines Regulation Bill in Queensland. First in the year 1880, but it did not pass; in the following year he again introduced a Mines Regulation Bill, and the effect of that Bill has been such that the miners in Queensland owe him their fervent thanks. To prove this I shall just compare the number of accidents which occurred before the passing of that Bill with that which has taken place since. In the year 1879 there were 2,750 miners in Queensland, and the proportion killed during that year was 5·45 per thousand, the proportion injured being 13·8 per thousand. In the year 1880, the year before the passing of the Bill, there were 3,046 miners in Queensland, and the proportion killed during that year was 3·61 per thousand, the number of injured being 10·2. In the year 1886, five years after the passage of the Bill, there were 6,993 miners in Queensland, and the proportion killed was 1 per thousand, the injured being 6·80.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Do you mean that in the year 1886 there were not more miners in Queensland than in the year 1880?

Mr. HAMILTON: If the hon. member for Burke will try to understand what I am stating, he will see that I am referring to the proportion per thousand killed in the various years. To come down to the hon. member's intelligence, I will go into the matter a little more completely. In the year 1879 there were 2,750 miners in Queensland, and in that year there were 15 killed, which means that there was a proportion of 5·45 killed per thousand, and in the same year there were injured, a proportion of 13·8 per thousand. In the year 1880 there were 3,046 miners, and the number killed during the year was 11, or a proportion of 3·61 per thousand, the proportion injured being 10·2. In the year 1886 there were 6,993 miners employed in Queensland, and the number killed was 7, a proportion of 1 per thousand, the proportion per thousand injured being 6·80. In the year 1887 there were 10,640 miners employed, and there were 9 killed, which was a proportion of 8·46, or about four-fifths of a miner per thousand. The proportion injured in that year being 3·85 per thousand. In the year 1888 there were 11,049 miners employed, and 28 were killed, a proportion per thousand of 2·534, and the proportion injured during the same year was 7·15. The hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson, stated that the greater number of accidents was chiefly due to the outside places, and that accidents were not so frequent at such places as Charters Towers and Gympie. In that he was mistaken, and to prove it I can show that last year, out of the 11,049 miners working in Queensland, 3,314 were employed on those two fields. That was about one-third of the entire number in the colony, while nearly two-thirds of those killed in the mines of the colony occurred on those fields. Of the 28 deaths that took place in the colony, 6 were at Gympie and 12 on Charters Towers. Out of the 28 killed in Queensland in that year, 18 were killed on Charters Towers and Gympie. The Minister for Mines and Works alluded in his speech to an alteration made in a sub-section of clause 8, to the effect that the inspector charged with the duty of examining machinery should also have authority to have

it tested in his presence. That addition is desirable, because if it is the duty of an inspector to inspect machinery he should also have the power to have it tested in his presence. Clause 10, as the hon. gentleman stated, is a very important provision, and I quite agree with his acceptance of the suggestion of the Miners' Union, that they should be accorded the right to send someone to inspect a mine on their behalf. Such a provision is desirable, because, although miners working in the claim might consider it necessary to inspect a mine on account of the unsafe character of the workings, they might be afraid to make a suggestion to that effect from fear of dismissal. It is, therefore, important that miners should be protected in this matter. I would suggest that this clause should be amended by adding after the words "inspect the mine," the words, "and machinery," the same as in the present Act. The hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson, stated in the course of his remarks that some of the clauses in this measure were copied almost verbatim from some passed by himself. I was glad to hear that, especially when he cited clause 11 as one of his own. It runs thus:—

"Every mine shall be under the control and daily supervision of a manager, and the owner or agent of every such mine shall nominate himself or some other person to be the manager of such mine."

I could not comprehend why a practical man like the Minister for Mines and Works could have introduced such a clause, and I am gratified to find that he is not guilty of doing so, but that it is the hon. member for Burke who constructed that clause. It is one of the most absurd provisions in the Bill. For instance, if three or four mates are working in a quartz-mine and go about 10 feet deep, they must go through the absurd procedure by this regulation of appointing a manager and notifying the appointment in writing to the inspector or warden, and also to the Minister, within seven days, otherwise they will be liable to a fine of £50. It is a most absurd clause, and therefore I am really gratified to find that the Minister is not to be credited with having conceived it. As to the statement of the hon. member for Burke, that a number of these clauses have been copied from other Bills, we cannot, of course, expect anything new in legislation of this character. We have before us the experience of Victoria, New Zealand, New South Wales, and England, the experience of experts who have been devoting their energies to Bills of this kind for many years, and we must take the benefit of their experience. I feel perfectly assured that it would be impossible to frame any new clause on the subject. It is the duty of a practical man to select such clauses as will apply to our mines, and that has been done in this measure. I certainly was not aware that the hon. member for Burke was ever deputed to draw up a Mines Regulation Bill. The only thing that I was ever aware he drew up was some regulations in connection with goldfields which never yet saw the light.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Try to be accurate.

Mr. HAMILTON: Well, they did see the light, but they were relegated into darkness again. There is certainly one regulation in connection with the Mineral Lands Act which the hon. member has the credit of having passed. It is to the effect that a prospector taking up a mineral area may take up 80 acres, and that the area must be worked by half a man. It has puzzled the intelligence of the Minister how to have such a claim properly worked, and the only way to manage it is to introduce a Bill to regulate what half a man shall be. At present, according to the regulation a prospecting claim must be worked by half a man, and, therefore, if half a man is not found the claim is not worked according to the regulations.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Where did you get all these fairy tales from?

Mr. HAMILTON: I will read the regulation if the hon. member wishes. I admit that the hon. member is a practical man, and has had a lot of experience, but what I have stated is a fact. Clause 15 states that—

“The mining manager shall, within twenty-four hours after the occurrence of any accident attended with serious injury to any person, give notice thereof to the inspector.”

I think the words “within twenty-four hours” should be struck out and the words “without delay” substituted, because the inspector may be distant more than twenty-four hours’ journey, and in that case it would be impossible to comply with the provision. On the other hand he might be not more than half-an-hour’s journey off, and in that case the manager would be guilty of negligence if he allowed twenty-four hours to lapse before making the report. It would be better, therefore, to insert the words “without delay,” and leave it to the persons who tried the case to say whether the manager had been guilty of negligence or delay in making his report. In clause 19 it is provided that—

“No person in charge of machinery used in connection with any mine, or for the treatment of the products of any mine, shall be employed for more than eight consecutive hours, or for more than eight hours in any twenty-four hours.”

I can understand why a person in charge of machinery, that is winding gear, should not be allowed to work more than eight hours, because he has the charge of the mine in his hands; and every precaution should be taken that he is not unfitted by overwork or any other cause for the safe and efficient discharge of his duty. But I cannot see why such a provision should apply to persons in charge of machinery “for the treatment of the products of any mine.” Sub-section (b) of clause 20 states that gunpowder

“shall not be stored in the mine in any quantity exceeding fifty pounds of gunpowder or thirty pounds of dynamite or other nitro-glycerine compound.”

I think if 30 lb. of dynamite is allowed, four times that quantity of gunpowder should be permitted to be stored in a mine. Although it does not matter much if there is an explosion whether 30 lb. or 150 lb. of dynamite is stored in the mine. With regard to clause 27, the hon. member for Burke says it should not be legal for a man to work more than eight hours a day in connection with a machine. I fail to see why, if a man chooses to work longer and a contract is made to that effect, he should not be allowed to do so. I have worked considerably over eight hours a day at mining, and have not felt fatigued. As for the suggestion about improper timbering, the miner would take very good care to secure it, knowing that as he worked under it he would have to pay the penalty if he failed to do so. The time limit might seriously affect men who are not fitted to do very hard work. There are men who can only do easy kind of work, such as feeding a quartz-crushing machine. The men who feed machines have generally to work twelve hours instead of eight hours a day, for which they receive the same wages as the men who work hard for eight hours a day; the work being so much easier, they have to work for a longer period to earn the same wages. With regard to clause 28, which provides that persons who shall, after any shaft has been disused for mining purposes, wilfully damage or render it useless, another provision ought to be inserted, stating that it shall be penal to abandon a claim without properly covering any shafts sunk in it. Clause 35 alludes to the returns which shall be forwarded during the twelve months, I quite agree with what the hon.

member for Burke stated—namely, that the returns should be forwarded monthly, and that more particulars should be given than are mentioned here. I notice that in the Gold Fields Bill, which is down for its second reading later on, there is a provision to the effect that monthly returns shall be sent in by mine owners. It is most desirable that we should have this; not only would it be useful in the collection of statistics, but it would be the death blow to bogus companies. This Bill, on the whole, is a great improvement on the old Act. It embodies many suggestions from miners’ unions, and therefore from practical men, and from various mining inspectors of wide experience, and I am certain it will be thoroughly appreciated by the miners.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE said: Mr. Speaker,—As a representative of perhaps the largest and most important goldfield in the colony, I welcome with very great cordiality the introduction of this Bill. I recognise in the introduction of it an honest and intelligent endeavour to correct some very great evils that have for a long time existed in connection with the working of our gold mines. The Act which is at present on our statute book, and which this Bill is intended to replace, has undeniably accomplished a very considerable measure of good. But the provisions of that Act have been found, as time has gone by, to be scarcely sufficient to meet all the necessities that arise from year to year. There cannot be a doubt that the additions which it is proposed to make to the existing law, and which are incorporated in this Bill, are of very great importance, and go a long way towards remedying some of the evils to which allusion has been made. During the few years that I had the honour to occupy a position in the government of this colony it was one of my duties to read depositions taken at inquests on deaths, and I have been appalled at the frequency with which preventable deaths have occurred in connection with gold-mining in all parts of the colony; and I have also seen that the difficulties in the way of punishing those who deserve punishment for negligence that resulted so fatally were such that, in the absence of additional legislation, it was not possible to get at the offenders. I am very glad to find that in this Bill the scope is very largely extended, and that the facilities will be very much greater for punishing those who are guilty of negligence and who have hitherto escaped punishment. I am very glad indeed to find that the powers of inspectors have been defined and enlarged in the way that they have been in clause 7 of the Bill. I am sure the hon. gentleman will—as indeed he has to a certain extent done in the course of his speech introducing the measure—recognise the very great service which has been rendered to the mining interests of the colony by the present Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr. Fryar. During the time I was in office I felt myself indebted to him for the very zealous and effective way in which he discharged his duty in connection with the mining accidents that had occurred, and cases in which mining accidents were likely to occur, and which he was able to prevent by representations which he made in the right quarter from time to time. I regard Mr. Fryar as being a man of very great value indeed to the Mines Department, and regret that such a valuable officer should continue from year to year to be so miserably underpaid as he is, and I shall be very glad indeed if we can see, at the proper time, that suitable recognition is made of his merits in the shape of an increased salary. Mr. Fryar has done very great service in connection with both coal mines and gold mines. I have not so much personal knowledge of coal mines as of gold

mines, though I had to acquire some knowledge as to what was done in coal mines to understand the operations of them with regard to the deaths that took place in connection with the coal-mining industry. There cannot be a doubt that the increased facilities given to inspectors by this Bill will go a very great way towards reducing the hitherto abnormal proportion of serious accidents to the total number of miners engaged in the pursuit of mining. The hon. gentleman has done well in this Bill to abolish the restriction which hitherto existed, making the regulations applicable only to the case of mines which employed six miners working underground. I am glad that that restriction has been swept away, and that it is intended to make the provisions of the Bill applicable to mines universally. But if the hon. gentleman will accept a suggestion from me he will do well, in view of the provision contained in section 21, to amend the latter part of the introduction of section 20. As it stands, clause 20 begins by stating that—

“The following general rules shall, wherever reasonably practicable, be observed in every mine.”

But the hon. gentleman has made extra provision in clause 21, which seems to me to render the words I have emphasised superfluous. That section says :—

“If in the opinion of the inspector the observance of the foregoing general rules is not reasonably practicable in any particular mine, the Governor in Council may from time to time by notification in the *Gazette* suspend, alter, or vary such rules in such manner as he deems necessary in respect to such mine. And any general rules so altered or varied shall be deemed to be the general rules of the mine to which they relate.”

Now, Sir, it would be very easy for persons wishing to escape punishment for some breach of the regulations prescribed in clause 20 to bring forward evidence to show that in a case of that kind those rules were not “reasonably practicable.” I think the rules should be made absolutely applicable to all mines, and let the reasonableness or otherwise of the applicability of the rules be a matter to be brought under the notice of the Government by the inspector, who, having made his report, and that report having been considered by the Government, it would be for the Governor in Council to except any particular mine to which the rules were not supposed to be reasonably applicable. I think therefore it would be far better to omit the words “wherever reasonably practicable” at the commencement of clause 20. In sub-section 6 of section 20, I should like to observe that the hon. gentleman seems to have followed rather too closely the provisions of the analogous sub-section in the present law. That sub-section provides :—

“The top, and all entrances between the top and bottom, of every working or pumping shaft, shall be properly and securely fenced or covered, but this provision shall not be taken to forbid the temporary removal of a fence for the purpose of repairs or other operations, if proper precautions are used.”

And so on. I notice here an absence of provision for guarding against a great liability to accident that very frequently arises in the cases of persons working at the mouth of a shaft, particularly where the mine is one that is not so well developed as some of the older mines. Men have sometimes to stand at the edge of the shaft, and to lean over it to reach the bucket being lifted by the windlass, and pull it on to the landing; and it has come under my official knowledge that men engaged in doing that have lost their foothold and been precipitated down the shaft, the weight of the bucket being so great that they had not strength sufficient to land it, or the lowering has been done at the wrong time. I think some regulation should be made by which trap-doors, self-adjusting doors of some kind, or platforms should

be erected over the shaft, so that when the bucket comes up, the platform should be lifted and fall back again into its place.

Mr. LITTLE : How could you land it then ?

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE : By that means you could save men from falling down the shaft. I can assure the hon. gentleman that I have had, in my official capacity, to investigate matters of this kind to see if I could bring home a case of neglect to somebody through whose want of provision for the protection of the men employed a valuable life had been lost. Of course I am not a practical man in these matters, and the hon. gentleman may see difficulties where I do not; but it seems to me that there should be some protection at the top of the shaft to prevent accidents to the working miner. He is the man for the protection of whose life and limb we should devote our best attention in this House. I am very glad indeed to see that provision has been made with reference to ascertaining the competency of persons who are entrusted with the lives of their fellow-workmen to the extent that engineers in connection with claims are by the provisions contained in sections 29 to 32. It seems to me that there has been too much of a rough and ready method hitherto adopted in connection with the working of our gold mines, and the appointment of persons to take charge of winding machinery. It has been a matter of frequent occurrence that through ignorance and incompetence valuable lives have been ruthlessly sacrificed. When seeking the suffrages of the Charters Towers constituency last time this matter was brought especially under my notice, and I was asked to bring it under the special attention of the Minister for Mines. When the Estimates were passing last year I did draw the hon. gentleman's attention to the subject, and I am very glad to find that he has made the provision he has for dealing with it in this Bill. But I should like, Mr. Speaker, in order that the excellent provisions here proposed should be made as operative as possible, that some directions should be given for the appointment and the remuneration of those persons who are to ascertain the competency or otherwise of those engineers. Unless some special appointments are made and the necessary salaries are provided for, we shall probably have this state of things: Some Government official will be asked, “Oh, ascertain whether such and such a man is competent to attend to winding gear, or knows something about machinery.” It will be done in a perfunctory manner. The same thing was referred to the other day in the report respecting the examiners of patents, in which complaints were made that the work was done in a perfunctory manner, because the Government officials to whom applications were referred for examination and report were not paid for the work. Unless some provision is made here by which the Board will become a veritable entity, and will receive the recognition which is due to so important a tribunal, by being paid for its services, I am afraid that the beneficial effects of this Bill will fall into desuetude. I notice a few little inaccuracies in the measure, but they may be very easily corrected in committee. I am not prepared to say that the Bill meets all the necessities of the case, such as a practical man, which I do not profess to be, might be able to discover, but as far as I have been able to gather, it seems to embrace a very large measure of reform indeed. As far as my own intelligence enables me to form an opinion, I think a very excellent effort has been made in it to meet the claims of the great body of working miners of the colony; and since the hon. gentleman has not only said that he will not be

unwilling to accept suggestions from whatever quarter they may come, but has actually invited them, I shall, without any attempt at embarrassing the passage of the measure, contribute my share towards assisting to get it through the House with as much celerity as possible.

Mr. LITTLE said : Mr. Speaker,—I am very pleased to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Charters Towers, which I thoroughly endorse. We have also heard the remarks of the hon. members for Burke and Cook, and probably the Bill will be improved by some slight amendments in committee. However, I am highly pleased to hear the hon. member for Charters Towers speak as he did to-night. Although not a miner he is a trained lawyer, and from his experience I am sure that he will be able to assist in passing the Bill. I shall certainly give it my most hearty support.

Mr. TOZER said : Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad to give the Bill my support. I was very much pleased to hear the Minister for Mines and Works say that it is not to be treated as a party question. I am always pleased to hear that questions of social reform are not to be treated as party questions in this House ; otherwise we shall not go ahead. For that reason I have taken considerable trouble since last session to obtain information as to the result of the working of a similar measure to this in Victoria. Fourteen years ago they started this question ; we have, therefore, fourteen years of their experience to guide us, and if the Minister for Mines and Works had not gone to Victoria he would have failed in his duty ; and having gone there we should accept, with thanks, the efforts he has made to get the best information he could bring to the colony. I am speaking without a Bill in my hands, because it appears to me that so far the discussion has been more upon the details than the principles of the Bill. The true principle is what I shall confine myself to. I do not like to hear so much said in the way of the present Act proving inoperative. I can assure this House that it has been a good measure. It has been well administered and worked by the inspectors, and it has done incalculable good ; but it is impossible for this House to pass any measure that will prevent carelessness amongst the miners themselves. We may do all we can in this House, but they must do something for themselves. I will just draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to one paragraph in the last Victorian report, and I do this because it might go out that the owners of mines have not been protecting their men. That may be inferred from the remarks made by some hon. members. The fact is the owners have done their part, and done it well, and I know of no accident occurring during many years, especially at Gympie, that cannot be traced to the carelessness of the men themselves. Now, listen to what the experience in Victoria has been. The report says :—

“It is now fourteen years since the Regulation and Inspection of Mines Statute came into force, and no better proof of its beneficial operation can be given than that afforded by contrasting the mining fatalities in the years 1874 and 1887. In the former year (the first in which any official record was kept) the number of deaths through mining accidents was ninety, whilst last year the number was reduced to twenty-eight, being the lowest yet recorded. The Inspector of Mines at Ballarat, in referring to the marked decrease in the number of accidents in his district, attributes it to the diligence exercised by the mining managers in carrying out the provisions of the statute, and to the fact that the miners themselves are now beginning to see that these provisions were intended for their especial benefit and protection.

“There is still, however, room for further improvement. Mining—as I have pointed out in previous reports—is essentially a dangerous calling, and therefore demands more than usual care on the part of those who follow

it. But, as a matter of fact, hitherto there has been no class of workers more careless than miners. Even last year, although no very glaring case of neglect occurred, many thoughtless acts were committed, through which injuries were inflicted on the actors themselves or on others. Amongst these foolish acts (the particulars of which are given in statement No. 1) may be mentioned the following, viz. :—Standing in the shaft under an ascending load ; leaning over the mouth of a shaft in use ; reaching across machinery in motion ; smoking near blasting powder ; standing in the way of a descending cage ; neglect to timber dangerous ground after warning ; clearing a blocked-up shoot from the lower end ; improperly riding on a descending tank ; continuing to work a boiler, knowing it to be unsafe ; using over-charges of dynamite ; neglect to use the straps provided for men ascending or descending in buckets ; continuing to use ropes, knowing them to be unsound, &c.”

Now, that is the result in Victoria, and no legislation will prevent such carelessness. In our own report I will just read what Mr. Fryar says in regard to this matter :—

“As on the last occasion, and indeed on every occasion of writing such a report as this, I am bound to state that many of the accidents have arisen from acts of gross carelessness on the part of the sufferers themselves, and in most cases where no vigilance on the part of the management, nor any rules or regulations for the guidance of the men, could have been of any avail in preventing the natural result following acts of culpable recklessness, some of which can scarcely be accounted for on any other plea than that of insanity or determined suicide.”

And Mr. Shakespeare says exactly the same thing. I hope hon. members will not conclude that there has been in the management of the mines in this colony such recklessness on the part of the employers as to cause the deaths that occur when they hear such testimony, but that they will endeavour so to legislate for the protection of the owners, as well as for the protection of the miners, that they will not shut up the mines which give the men employment. If we make these laws and regulations too rigid and stiff, the result will be that capital will not embark in those mines, and the consequence will be that some of the mines will be shut up. I shall not attempt to go through the details of the measure, but I desire to point out to the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill that in using the pruning knife upon the Victorian statute he has used it too freely. There are some very good provisions in the mining statutes of Victoria which are eliminated from this Bill, and I hope to see them restored when we get into committee. When I returned to the colony a short time ago, from a long trip, I noticed the faces of many of the men with whom I had been familiar, and I was astounded to see the effect that dynamite had had in two years upon the men working in the mines, and I can safely say that there is a canker in the midst of our mines from the free use of dynamite without proper ventilation. It is a serious matter, and one which is quite untouched in the Bill. The Victorian regulations dealing with this matter have been eliminated from this Bill, and I can assure the hon. gentleman in charge of the measure that it is absolutely necessary they should be included, as there is a slow poison, unknown to the men themselves, which is destroying the vitality of the men in the mines of Queensland. What should be done is more than I can say. I see they are doing all they can in Victoria in the matter. There is so much competition in these explosives now, and such is the desire to work the mines at a profit, that explosives are used that are very dangerous in character and detrimental to the working men. I hope that the discussion which has taken place in Victoria will be continued here, to see if we cannot devise some means by which we can preserve the safety of the miners in this particular. I shall not detain the House any more on the matters connected

with the Bill. There is one subject I might mention, and that is this, and it has come under my special notice in a legal way—the difficulty of defining by law at the present moment under what Act the employer is to be got at. You find, when an employer is charged with being liable for any accident, the first thing they do is to look at the Employers' Liability Act. That is not severe enough, and then they try to get at the employer under the common law. Failing that they say, "There is a possibility of getting at him under the Mines Act." I noticed this the other day in Maryborough, where I found a man who would not proceed under the Employers' Liability Act, although there was no reason why he should not. Nor would he avail himself of his common law rights, which gives every man his remedy; but at last he said: "I find some regulation in the Mines and Collieries Act, by which it was the duty of the employer to do something, and his neglect to do that will give me my remedy." Now I trust the general principle of defining clearly what are the remedies of persons, and the liabilities of employers will be clearly laid down, so that capital may have some opportunity of being used properly in the colony, whilst at the same time every encouragement will be given to the men to pursue their onerous, difficult, and risky occupation.

Mr. LUYA said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not intend to speak upon this question until a few moments ago. I have carefully perused the Bill, and can congratulate the Minister for Mines and Works upon having introduced it. The hon. member for Wide Bay read an extract from the Victorian mines inspector *re* boilers. The 24th sub-section of clause 20 deals with that. It is provided there that, in order to prevent accidents, every six months every boiler shall be subjected to hydraulic test. Now, Sir, I wish to remark that that is no test at all. It is merely an outside test and has nothing to do with the inside of a boiler, and on goldfields the water used being generally mineralized water has a tendency to eat away the inside edge of the rivets. No outside examination of a boiler will show that defect, and the only sure knowledge that could be got would be by an inside inspection of the boiler. I think, therefore, it would be better if a compulsory examination of the boilers were made by the inspector, on the same principle as marine boilers are inspected and tested. In those cases the inspector goes inside the boiler, and afterwards affixes a Government safety valve, which he locks after he has set it, and it is set so that no more steam can be used in the boiler than the amount which is absolutely safe to use. Under the clause as it stands the inspector may say that the boiler is not fit to carry more than a certain amount of steam, but the engineer will carry whatever amount he thinks proper, and very often men are so foolhardy that they will carry a great deal more steam than the inspector says should be carried. The clause does not say that the inspector shall regulate the pressure to be carried, but if the inspector affixed a Government safety valve he would know the amount of steam that had been used. I take exception to the hydraulic test. It is an outside test and it is a cold water test. The cold water test is very much more severe than a pressure of steam, because there is no expansion of the boiler. A boiler may be tested until it is just at the point of bursting, yet there is no indication of that. I have known a boiler tested up to 120 lb. pressure, and three weeks after it exploded under a pressure of 45 lb. of steam, so that it had been actually damaged by the test. Now, I think the system adopted in marine inspection is far the best, as the boiler is tested with warm water, so that there may be expansion. Boilers tested in the found-

dry yards are tested with cold water; but it is a very dangerous practice, and I do not think any engineer will recommend the cold water hydraulic test. If the system I advocate were adopted I do not think the remarks of the Victorian inspector would be applicable to Queensland. But to make everything secure beyond doubt I think all land boilers, whether used for mining or other purposes, should be under Government supervision.

Mr. HUNTER said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very pleased indeed to find the Government giving such early attention to this the greatest industry in our colony, and also to hear the very able speeches that have been delivered this evening on this question. I think it must be generally admitted that there is material in this House to revise and make good a measure that will thoroughly meet the requirements of the mining industry. The hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Tozer, in speaking on the Bill, mentioned the fact of so many different Acts being in force under which actions could be brought in mining cases, and that is one of the things that struck me. I have been closely connected with mining for the last five years, and can assure the House that miners do not know what Act to turn to for any particular thing. I think it is a pity that a great deal more cannot be embodied in one Act, and a restriction made, that other Acts of Parliament shall not apply. Then the men would have some chance of becoming acquainted with the law under which they were working. Of course the first things we have are the Acts of Parliament under which we work, and the next the administration of those Acts. Now, I think the administration of the Mining Acts generally in the wardens' courts can be greatly improved, and I am going to offer a suggestion to the Government, which I hope they will consider. We know that mining districts are ruled by wardens, and I am sorry to say that in many cases when new goldfields are found, the wardens appointed are very inexperienced. I am not going to refer to any particular warden, but I think it is known to most members of this House that where new goldfields have been found and where large numbers of persons have taken to mining, very great complications have arisen through the wardens not thoroughly understanding, not only the Acts but their duty generally, in regard to mining. What I would suggest is, that in each district a commission be appointed of practical miners who would have the same powers and privileges in the warden's court as justices of the peace have in an ordinary court; that they should carry their membership wherever they went, and then when a warden who had had little experience found himself in difficulties, he could derive valuable assistance and advice from this commission. There are many cases brought before the warden's court in which the warden has been entirely ignorant, after hearing the evidence, as to how to give his decision. Then, again, we have cases in which there are no wardens within reach, and the miners have to appeal to a justice of the peace, who probably knows far less than the warden. I have spoken of these commissions in several mining districts, and the suggestion has been favourably received; and I trust the Government will consider the advisability of adopting it. The appointment of inspectors is another thing to which I think attention should be paid. There should be a little more competition. I think, when a mining inspector is wanted for any part of the colony, applications should be called for in the principal newspapers circulating in the mining district, so that the Minister should have a number of persons to select from. To my knowledge, entirely unsuitable appointments have

been made; and I believe the reason is that proper notice is not given to the public, and that the proper persons do not get a chance of making application. In going through the Bill, I find it provides for the appointment of managers, and those managers are to possess certain experience and ability. I think some provision ought to be made for claims held by two, three, or four men working their own ground, which might be situated 100 miles away from a warden. It would be very hard if these three or four men, who own the mine and are working it, have to go outside themselves and appoint a manager who could draw plans, and so forth. I think some provision should be made for these small claims. In my district a great amount of the work being done is done in that way—in little parties—and I know it would be very hard on them indeed, because the material is not on the field, to have to go down to Charters Towers or Gympie and advertise for mining managers to comply with the Act. That would mean that the claims would be thrown up in many cases, and it would retard the development of the country. We have, of course, a great many large companies in Queensland, but they can all be traced back to the time when the properties worked by them were worked by a man and his mate or three or four men. The development of all the mines has been begun in that way, and it will be seriously retarded if these men on taking up a claim are obliged to appoint a mining manager. Again, Sir, more encouragement should be given to the prospectors of this country, and the development of mining in this colony will be delayed if some provision is not made to meet the cases to which I have referred—where little parties are working at places so far from a warden. As to the inspection of mines, the Minister for Mines and Works said this evening that miners' unions should have some power in that matter. I do not believe it would be a correct thing to give this power to any union. There is one great union—the Amalgamated Miners' Association of Australia—with a head branch in Melbourne. That association is well looked after, and has branches I believe in every mining township in Queensland. I know there are branches on Charters Towers, Gympie, Croydon, the Etheridge, and all the goldfields I know, and I think that if some power in the matter of inspection was placed in the hands of those people it would be well placed. But there are little associations which crop up on every goldfield, sometimes through trivial disputes with employers, and any such power given to them might be misplaced. Another provision is included in the Bill rendering the owners of a mine liable to a penalty in the event of the mining manager leaving the claim. A mining manager might be away for three or four days, and the mine owners might have to pay the penalty in ignorance; and I think it should be shown that the absence of the manager was known to the owners before they rendered themselves liable to the penalty. With regard to annual reports of crushings, I agree with what has been stated by some previous speakers. I think every crushing should be registered, within three days of the cleaning up, in the warden's office, under a heavy penalty. Great swindles are being worked every day which could be prevented if all these returns were made known. In many cases a party may have a rich piece of ground, and have a crushing and circulate a false report of the crushing, and the men holding the next claim might abandon their mine in the belief that it was not worth working. I think the furnishing of returns would be a great protection to mine owners and the public generally, especially to persons holding shares in limited liability companies. I think there

should be some place where every shareholder could find out all that is going on in the mine in which he is interested. I can assure hon. members that that is not the case now. Any assistance I can give the Government in carrying this measure with beneficial amendments I shall be happy to give, and I hope the same spirit will animate hon. members generally until the Bill is passed.

Mr. SAYERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I believe it has been stated over and over again that a Bill of this sort is badly required, and I am very glad to see it has been brought before the House, and I hope it will become law this session. I see the first part of the Bill deals with miners and others working for ore, and I think the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill might include quarrying. It is a dangerous occupation, and is largely done by men who have been miners also. Powder, dynamite, gelatine, and all the other explosives of the day, are used in the work, and I hope the Minister for Mines and Works will see his way to include it in the Bill. Now that we have a Bill of this kind before the House, we should try to make it as perfect as possible, so that we may not have to tamper with it again next year. I will be as brief as I can because, I take it, a good deal of time will be occupied over this Bill in committee. I hope the Minister will not try to push it through to-morrow night, because it is the wish of the mining members to meet once or twice before the Bill goes through committee to prepare any amendments they may think necessary to submit. The appointment of inspectors under the Bill is a matter I have thought upon for sometime. I know that on the goldfield I represent it is the wish of the miners that they, who are the people who pay the taxes to the Government, should have a voice in the appointment of an inspector of mines. The idea has occurred to me that in a place like Charters Towers every holder of a miner's right should have a voice in the appointment of the inspector for the field to this extent: That when there are several candidates for the position a poll should be taken, and the votes sent down to the Minister, who would, doubtless, select the man receiving most votes if there was nothing against him personally. That would give the miners greater faith and confidence in the mining inspector than they have at present. The working miners look upon the inspectors of mines in most instances—whether rightly or wrongly I am not going to say—as acting more in the interest of the owners and capital than in their interests. They think also, that if a working miner complains to an inspector of certain things in a mine, the owners get information of the man who complains, and he is quietly put on one side. That idea has got possession of the public, and if the Minister can see his way to let the inspector be in some way amenable to the voice of the public it will be a very good thing, because as long as an inspector acts fairly and honestly the large majority will not cavil at his action. It has been said—I think by the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson—that the protection of miners by the owners has been neglected, but I know that in Charters Towers there have been very few instances since the opening of the field in which the owners have not done all in their power for the protection of the men. There are mines on the Towers at the present day with every known appliance for the safety of the men—far more than the Act requires. There are many little things in the present Act which it is impossible to see after, as I know from experience. Managers may take every precaution to make the miners thoroughly conversant with the rules, yet there is a fine if certain things are not done, though it is impossible for the manager to see that they are done. The matter of taking a naked light occurs in the regulations. In gold mines it is always the rule

to take naked candles; and it would be impossible for the mine owner or manager to be there to see that the miners went into a drive with anything else but a naked light. And I have never known any danger to arise from the practice, even when powder or any other explosive was being used, when the men were careful. Then there is a penalty attached to not having fixed lights in drives, but I fail to see the necessity for the provision. There may be no one going into a drive but the men working there; and they have their own lights, so that there is no necessity for fixed lights. It only means a useless expenditure. Some of the drives on Charters Towers are 400 feet or 500 feet long, and to keep them lit up would be a great expense to the mine. Though we are taking every precaution we can—and I thoroughly believe in doing so—for the safety of the miner, I hope we shall not do anything to compel mines to close owing to unnecessary restrictions and expense. Another matter is, that notice of the appointment of a manager has to be given to the inspector, to the warden, and to the Minister for Mines. I agree with a certain part of that clause but I hardly think it necessary for a company on Charters Towers to write to the Minister for Mines and Works in Brisbane, after having given notice to the inspector and the warden, as to the appointment of the manager. Take the Croydon, for instance. Very likely by the time the notice reaches Brisbane the manager may cease to be the manager of the mine of which he is appointed manager by the company giving the required notice. I know these things appear very simple to deal with, but mining companies have to do all they can to keep down expense. They generally give a secretary about £1 a week, but with all this extra work they will have to pay £3 a week. We look upon a secretary as being a little bit superfluous, because his work does not turn out any gold; but we pay him because we must have a secretary. By the 21st rule in clause 20—

“Every brace or pit-bank shall be properly covered to protect the workmen from the inclemency of the weather.”

While there is a portion of that with which I agree—I believe the brace should be covered, and it could be done and made a fixture—I do not agree with the other part, because where the tips are run out it is impossible to do so. It is impossible to fix a shelter over the pit-bank because it is changing day after day.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS:** He does not need to.

**MR. SAYERS:** I am glad the hon. gentleman says, “He does not need to.” With regard to engine drivers I believe it is very necessary that they should qualify themselves, and I am glad the provision has been inserted. At the same time, there has been a great deal more made of this matter than there is any occasion for. A short time ago there was an accident on Charters Towers. The engine driver was a man with a certificate from the board in Victoria. It was remarked there at the time that if this unfortunate man had been a Queenslander without any certificate, a great outcry would have been made, and it would have been said, that if he had been a man with a certificate no accident would have occurred. I may say that accidents very often occur through unforeseen circumstances. I do not know of an accident on Charters Towers that has been caused wilfully. Men do things that they have done hundreds of times before, and there is no accident; then they do it again, and through something unforeseen, over which they have no control, an accident occurs. I agree with the hon. Minister for Mines and

Works, that boys under a certain age should be prevented from having anything to do with the machinery. I know there have been cases where boys have been put in charge of machinery before they have had any knowledge. I am very glad to see the clause here, and also the clause in regard to the eight hours' work. We have never, at Charters Towers, so far as mines are concerned, had any other than the eight hours' system, and four hours on Saturdays. The engine drivers, I am very sorry to say, have been employed for twelve hours, and I think, as I have often stated, that that is too long. But there has been no law to prevent an engine driver being employed for twelve hours on a summer night, and it is impossible for him to do that again next night if he cannot sleep during the day. But that has been done, simply through one or two employers trying to save a few shillings, and I am very glad that it will be prevented in future. Before I sit down I would like to ask the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill—he can tell us to-morrow—if there will be any specific provision made for cases where a man ought to be able to recover from the owner or manager of a mine, if he meets with any accident involving loss of life or limb? I know of several instances where accidents have occurred, and I have been in the court and heard the evidence given, and the judge has simply nonsuited the plaintiff. That means that, after a man has lost every shilling he owned, through some technical point he has no remedy whatever, and I would like to see the hon. gentleman make some simple arrangement for deciding these cases without taking them to the District Courts and Supreme Court. If a man meets with an accident and loses a leg, for instance, he is not in a position to sue a company in the Supreme Court or District Court. A company can take him to either of those courts, and by some flaw on the part of the solicitor who got up the case, the barrister on the other side can apply for a nonsuit, and the judge grants it. That simply means ruin to the plaintiff, and I would therefore like to see some cheaper and simpler means devised, in the case of accidents, by which compensation can be sought. It would be far better, both for the employer and employé, and there would not be any waste of money in legal expenses as there now often is. There should be some cheap remedy for a man who loses a limb, or for a woman who loses her husband. I shall most heartily assist in every way I can in getting the Bill through the House.

**MR. POWERS** said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall take up very little time to-night, because the necessity for the Bill seems to be recognised by both sides of the House. Nearly all the speakers have confined themselves to the details which we can attend to in committee. When I heard that the Bill was to be presented this session, I obtained some copies of it from the Government Printing Office and sent them to the miners in the Burrum district—which I have the honour to represent—and they have gone through them. I sent them up in April last, and on the 20th of May I received a letter stating that at a general meeting of miners at Torbanlea a copy of the Mines Regulation Bill was read out, and it was passed that the Bill be received as satisfactory, by a unanimous vote of the miners. That is a colliery that, if it does not employ the largest number of miners in the district at present, employs quite as large a number as any other. They had that Bill for a month and have no fault to find with it, therefore it appears to fall in with the views of the miners. I also sent copies to Howard, which is the largest centre of population, and asked if the miners there had any complaints, and so far as I have heard they have not. I have heard that the colliers in the Burrum district are quite satisfied with it. I have had great

satisfaction in listening to members who have had practical experience by actually having worked in mines, and I will assist in making the Bill a workable measure, as far as I can.

Mr. GLASSEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to say something on this question, but as it is now late, and we are at an early period of the session, I hope that hon. members on both sides will agree to an adjournment. I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the House will agree with me that there is no necessity for the adjournment of the debate. There has been a general consensus of opinion on both sides of the House that this is a Bill which ought to go to a second reading, and the measure can then be dealt with in committee. This is a very early hour in the evening, and up to the present we have had a very easy time, having adjourned nearly every evening at 6 o'clock. We might just as well continue the Bill to its second reading. Not one substantial reason has been given to show that there is any probability of a division being taken upon it. The hon. member for Bundamba has had many opportunities of expressing his views at an earlier period of the debate, and even now it is only ten minutes after 9 o'clock, and very early to adjourn. I think we may fairly go on with the second reading of the Bill, as it appears there is nothing very contentious about it, and get it advanced as far as we can upon its way to become, as I hope it will, an Act upon our statute book.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I would like to ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker, upon this point: The hon. member has moved the adjournment of the debate, and, having done so, he has made a speech. He moved the adjournment of the debate with the object of making a speech to-morrow, and I ask your ruling, Sir, whether he has not, by that speech, prevented himself from making a speech on the second reading.

The SPEAKER: There is no doubt the hon. member, in moving the adjournment of the debate, has spoken, and in giving his reasons for moving the adjournment he has forfeited his right to speak again, except with the consent of the House.

Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put and negatived.

Mr. GLASSEY said: Mr. Speaker,—May I be permitted to ask whether the House will extend its indulgence to me while I offer a few remarks on this subject?

The PREMIER: Hear, hear! We will offer no objection.

Mr. GLASSEY: My reason for not before making the observations which I propose to do now was that I was extremely anxious to hear some criticisms on one or two grave omissions which I notice in the Bill, and I did not wish to refer to them if they had been touched upon by other speakers, as I believe there is an opinion abroad that my mission here is chiefly to find fault with those who may have their money invested in mines and other industries of that character. On that account I was anxious, if possible, to avoid making reference to some very material omissions which I see in the Bill. I quite agree with the opinion expressed by the Minister for Mines and Works in his opening speech, that this is a very important question, and one that deserves the fullest consideration that can be given to it by members of this House, inasmuch as it is a measure for the protection of the life and limbs of those who are engaged in a very difficult, very arduous, and very irksome employment. I also

entirely endorse the remarks which the hon. gentleman made respecting the enormous loss of human life and the many cases of serious bodily injury among those engaged in mining year by year, and, with the permission of the House, I will offer a few observations on that very important point. In the district in which I was last engaged as a miner—namely, in the north of England—one of the largest and one of the oldest and best regulated coal-mining districts probably in the world, where legislation has done much, and where good management in addition to that legislation has also done much, to protect those employed in that industry, the destruction of human life has been considerable year by year, as will be seen from the figures I am about to quote. In the two northern counties of England, namely, Durham and Northumberland, there are employed nearly 92,000 miners, and in the year 1887 there were 160 fatal accidents, or 1.75 per 1,000 of those employed. Of these 87 were married men and the rest were single; there were 87 widows and 153 children deprived of their bread-winners. The number of persons permanently disabled during that year was upwards of 335. There the mines are remarkably well conducted—conducted on the highest principles of science; and legislation, so far as it can, affords every protection to the life and limbs of those engaged in mining operations. Coming to the Bill now before the House, I would say with respect to the provision regarding the appointment of inspectors, which is embodied in clause 5, that I should like to know on what principle those inspectors are appointed, and what are the qualifications they have for the position they are supposed to fill. I have always contended that some board, such as is proposed to be established for determining the competency of engine-drivers, should also be established for the examination of mining managers, and that persons wishing to occupy the responsible position of manager should appear before the board, and undergo some test to show that they are capable, and possessed of the requisite qualifications. I take it that if it be important that engine-drivers should pass an examination to establish their competency, it is also highly important that managers and inspectors of mines should show that they possess the ability to manage mines properly. For years past it was contended in England that those who manage mines should pass an examination, and by the very important Act of 1872—which, I may say, has been found in practical working to be defective in many particulars—it is laid down conclusively and enforced, that before a person engages in the particular work of managing a mine, he shall pass an examination before a board appointed by the Government for that purpose. Section 26 of that Act—the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1872—stipulates that—

“Every mine to which this Act applies shall be under the control and daily supervision of a manager, and the owner or agent of every such mine shall nominate himself or some other person, not being a contractor for getting the mineral in such mine, or a person in the employ of such contractor, to be the manager of such mine, and shall send written notice to the inspector of the district of the name and address of such manager.

“A person shall not be qualified to be a manager of a mine to which this Act applies unless he is for the time being registered as the holder of a certificate under this Act.”

I am sorry to say that the Bill now presented by the Minister for Mines and Works, and in perfect good faith—I make that admission at once, the Bill is introduced in perfect good faith for the protection of those engaged in mining—contains no such provision as that which I have read from the English Act of 1872. It is highly important, both in the interest of the miners and of those who have invested their money in mines,

that persons who are appointed managers should pass an examination and so prove their competency to do the work appertaining to their office. I say it is to the interest also of those who have capital invested in mines that only persons with the requisite qualifications should be appointed managers, because they would then have the satisfaction of seeing that their money was properly expended, and not laid out, as at present, in mere experiments with, I am sorry to say, not very good results. If it be important, as I have said, that a manager should undergo this examination, it is certainly of far more importance that an inspector, whom I regard as the person to hold the balance equitably between the public and those engaged in coal mining, should be a man, not only of the highest character, but of the highest qualifications; and those qualifications ought to be tested in the manner I now suggest. In the old country, where mining is a very old industry and is very largely developed, the Government insist that only the ablest persons, men who have shown their competence by their practical skill and knowledge, shall be placed in the position of inspectors. Some method should be established here whereby not only managers should undergo an examination, but also that inspectors should show that they are, if anything, more competent than those whose labour they have to inspect; and to enable them to thoroughly perform their exceedingly responsible task they too should undergo an examination. With respect to the inspection of mines, I agree with what was hinted at by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow. I believe it is an established fact—at all events it is believed to be such in the mining districts generally—that when inspectors of mines are about to visit the pits in their respective districts—I have no desire to cast any stigma on anyone engaged in any mine in the colony—and there should happen to be any deficiency in the regulation of the mines, it is often made known to the managers to that mine or those in charge of the mines that the inspector is about to pay a visit to that district, and it unquestionably stands to reason that those mines will “have their Sunday clothes on” when the inspector visits them. I would therefore respectfully suggest that when the Bill goes into committee it should be provided that no inspector shall communicate in any way with any manager, or any person interested in the management, or any proprietor of the mine he is about to inspect. He ought to pay his visit when he is least expected, so that he may see the mine working in its ordinary state, and not when it has been specially prepared for his reception. I come now to the 3rd sub-section of clause 7, where provision is made—

“To examine into and make inquiry respecting the state and condition of any mine or any part thereof, and the ventilation of the mine.”

Who is to be the judge as to the ventilation? There should be some stipulation as to the amount of air to have in the mine embodied in the Bill, as is done in the coal mines regulations in New South Wales. There it is laid down that the minimum amount of ventilation shall be 100 cubic feet of pure air circulating about the working places and travelling roads for every man, boy, and horse, engaged in the operations of the mine. That is a safeguard which will prevent quarrelling between the inspector and the manager as to whether the mine is properly ventilated or not. Without it the manager will say there is sufficient ventilation and the inspector may say there is not. Who is to judge? The absence of such a provision is a defect in the Bill. I admit it is a matter of detail, but it is a very important detail, and I trust that an amendment of this character will be accepted by the

hon. gentleman when the Bill gets into committee. Another matter to which I will advert briefly is with respect to clause 9, which provides that—

“The persons employed in a mine may, at their own cost, appoint two of their number to inspect the mine, and the persons so appointed shall be allowed once at least in every month to go to every part thereof, and to inspect the shafts, levels”—

and so on. I would suggest that the miners ought to have the privilege or right to appoint any two persons, whether they are working in the mine or not, because sometimes, when suggestions of this kind are made, the persons making them, or those appointed by their fellows to do the work, may be considered as disturbers of the equilibrium of the mine, and at the first opportunity be got rid of without any reason being vouchsafed to them for their dismissal. I come now to clause 19, which provides that—

“No person in charge of machinery used in connection with any mine, or for the treatment of the products of any mine, shall be so employed for more than eight consecutive hours at a time, or for more than eight hours in any twenty-four hours; such period of eight hours to be exclusive of any time occupied in raising steam and in drawing fires and exhausting steam in connection with the machinery in charge of such person, and exclusive of meal-hours, and of any time in which such person is employed in case of breakage or other emergency.”

I think those who are engaged in this particular work, and who have looked forward with some degree of hope that they were about to get the eight-hours system established in their midst, when they see this clause, will be woefully and wonderfully disappointed. The persons engaged in this particular branch of the work, with human lives and valuable property depending upon them, will still have to labour much more than eight hours a day. All who know anything about mining will agree with me that when a man leaves the handle of his engine he ought to be at liberty to go to his home and let somebody else do the necessary work of drawing the fires and damping the boilers for the night. Of course, where there is a double shift of men—where two men are engaged at one engine, the one relieving the other—there will be no necessity for insisting on the important amendment which I propose to make on this matter; but where there is only a single engineer, as in most of the mines in Queensland, a man after being engaged at that very difficult work for eight hours is employed at least an hour and a-half afterwards in the damping down of his boilers, the cleaning of his engine, and preparing it for the next day's work. Besides that, he has to attend to his duties at a very much earlier hour than he would have to do if the clause simply stipulated that a man shall work eight hours, and eight hours only, and that any work with respect to raising steam in the morning or drawing fires at night should be done by some other person than the man in charge of this particular branch of business during the day. I have received a letter from a most intelligent engine-man in my district in which he objects very strongly to this particular clause, and expresses a wish to be relieved at the end of his eight hours' duty from further work. Another point, Mr. Speaker, to which I should like to refer briefly is in regard to shafts. I see there is no provision made for the safety of shafts, at least no absolute security. What there is is very vague in my opinion. Sub-section 7 of the general rules says—

“Where the natural strata are not safe, every working or pumping shaft shall be securely cased, lined, or otherwise made secure.”

There, again, who is to be the judge of the safety of the shaft? I am not aware that the inspection of shafts particularly was embodied in the Mines

Act of 1881. There is the difficulty again as to what may be considered a safe shaft. A case came under my own observation bearing particularly on this point. It occurred in my own district, in one of the West Moreton coal mines. On the 28th March, 1887, a fall of stone took place from the sides of the shaft, which broke the cage in such a manner that it had to be taken out and replaced by a new one. The fall referred to was not the first that had occurred, which proves that the shaft was not all that it ought to be. There again, Mr. Speaker, you will agree with me that some provision ought to be made that persons who are sinking for coal or any other mineral should register themselves or the company, and that the inspectors for that particular district where the work is being done should receive instructions to visit the shafts during the time they are being sunk to see that they are properly furnished with tackle and appliances for the safety of those engaged in sinking operations, and to see where the strata are not safe that steps are taken to make them secure. If that were done such accidents as those to which I have referred—of stone falling from the sides of the shaft—would not take place. Another clause to which I take exception, and which I am sure will lead to considerable heart-burning, is clause 23, which provides—

“Every person employed in or about a mine shall, before commencing and whilst at work, satisfy himself of the safety of the tubs, chains, tackle, windlass, ropes, or other appliances he uses; he shall cease to use anything unsafe; and every such person who witnesses in or about the mine anything likely to produce danger of any kind shall forthwith report the same to the mining manager, and on leaving work he shall report to the man relieving him the state of that part of the works where he has been employed, or otherwise he shall be guilty of an offence against this Act.”

I take it, Mr. Speaker, that if the person employed is to examine everything in and in connection with the mine where he is to be occupied all day before he starts to work in the morning, much of his time will be unnecessarily employed in that particular direction, and very little work will be done by him. But the chief objection to this clause is the fact that the man must satisfy himself as to the safety of everything, thereby depriving him of the benefit of the succeeding section, which makes provision for the employer to compensate any employé injured through the negligence of the owner or his agent, because, in the event of a person injured seeking redress in court for any injury, the very first objection raised would be that he should have satisfied himself of the safety of the works and appliances. So that, when we come to deal with that clause, I hope the objectionable part I have pointed out will be so amended as not to put working men in such a false position. In addition to that, the operation of the clause would unquestionably bring men into conflict with the management, by making complaints of that sort, and render them liable to dismissal and hardship, by depriving them of their means of subsistence. I will ask hon. members to afford me a little time while I refer to clause 27, which relates to eight hours' labour. I am sorry the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill did not extend the benefits to be derived from this clause to men engaged in contract as well as day work. No doubt he is aware that most of the men engaged in coal-mining, and particularly those employed underground, are paid by contract; but I find that this clause relates only to those engaged by the day. I presume that in future those who are working by contract will be at liberty to go up and down the mines at any time they like as at present. I think that is a mistake, and that the Bill is defective in that particular direction. I think we should prohibit as far as possible, by statute, persons from being employed below

ground, or even above ground, for a longer period in one day than eight hours. The matters to which I have referred relate to mines in general, and I now come to the second portion of the Bill dealing with collieries. I noticed during the remarks of the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill that it did not take him very long to dilate upon that portion of the Bill so far as coal-mining is concerned, and I hope he will pardon me if I point out many grave omissions that I think exist in it, particularly in relation to the production of coal. Now I shall refer to clause 38, which says—

“If at any time it is found by the person in charge of a colliery, or any part thereof, or by the inspector, that by reason of noxious gases, or of any cause whatever, the colliery or the said part is dangerous, every workman shall be withdrawn therefrom, and the mining manager or inspector shall inspect the same (and if the danger arises from inflammable gas shall make such inspection with a locked safety-lamp); and in every case shall make a true report of the condition of such colliery or part thereof; and no workman shall, except in so far as is necessary for inquiry into the cause of danger, or for the removal thereof, or for exploration, be readmitted into the colliery or such part thereof as was so found dangerous until the same is reported by the mining manager or inspector to be safe. Every report shall be recorded in a book kept at the colliery for the purpose, and shall be signed by the person reporting.”

That, of course, is taken from the old Act. Now there are managers, I am sorry to say, engaged in the management of coal mines who never saw gas in all probability—men who have had experience, perhaps, and may be of considerable capacity in the management of gold mines and copper mines and other mines, but who have not the slightest knowledge of the gases that may be met with in the coal mines of Queensland. Though these gases may not yet have been met with in any mine, they may be so met with at any time in any of our mines. I may say in passing that it is not a new thing in Queensland for gas of an explosive character to be met with. I have now in my possession some material I obtained from a person who was burnt in one of the mines in my own district some nine or ten years ago, and what occurred then may occur again at any moment; and I say it is of the utmost importance that every precaution should be taken to prevent such occurrences. I quite agree with the remarks made by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, as to the dangers which may arise in coal mines which do not arise in other mines, and I hope that if the Minister in charge of the Bill cannot see his way clear to make all managers undergo an examination as to their competency, he will at least see that some process be gone through by which managers in charge of coal mines shall show that they are competent, and that they know the difficulties which they are likely to meet with, and are prepared to overcome them. The latter part of the clause, relating to a book to be kept at the mines for the purpose of recording the reports of the persons inspecting them, is in the Act of 1881. I venture to say that you cannot find a single book of this character in a single mine; and if this part of the Bill is to remain inoperative, as has been the case in the past, we may as well not pass measures of this protective character at all. Again clause 39 provides—

“Whenever a safety-lamp is required to be used, it shall be first examined and securely locked by some person who is duly authorised for that purpose by the manager, and who shall keep the key thereof. And no one except the person so authorised shall have in his possession or shall use any key or other contrivance for the purpose of opening any safety-lamp.”

That is all in the Act of 1881, and I am not aware that you could find a safety-lamp in any of our coal mines if you tried. I do know of one not

very far from my own dwelling, but I have not yet discovered any more in my travels in the coal-mining districts of Queensland, notwithstanding that this provision has been in force seven or eight years. In the reports of the Royal Commission which has sat in England for some seven or eight years inquiring into the best methods for reducing the loss of life in mines, it is reported on the highest authorities that gas may be met with at any time in coal mines, although they may have been worked for a series of years without gas of a dangerous nature having been seen; and by that gas valuable lives may be lost at any time and much property may be destroyed. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that persons acquainted with this particular work should be in charge of those mines. It is not to be permitted, as it is at present, that men should be engaged in this haphazard fashion—fairly good men in their own way, and desirous of doing what is right, but from want of knowledge and skill it is impossible for them to do what is proper for the preservation of the lives of those engaged in coal-mining operations. There is one good provision in the portion of the Bill relating to coal-mining, and I am exceedingly pleased that the Minister for Mines and Works has seen his way clear to adopt this in the Bill—and that is the necessity for having two openings to all mines where more than ten persons are employed. That is a good provision, and one that took many years of agitation before it was obtained in England. I remember being in the mines prior to the year 1862, when meetings were held and petitions presented to the then existing Parliament asking them to afford, as it were, a back door of escape from the mines, so that if anything occurred to the main shaft the persons underground could escape by means of another shaft, so that human life would not be sacrificed to the same extent, and an enormous amount of poverty and hardship caused, such as always accrues to those dependent upon men working in the coal mines when these accidents happen. I am pleased to see that the Minister has taken this precaution before a dire calamity has occurred in the coal-mining districts of the colony. It required a fearful calamity in the district I worked in in 1862 before the necessary legislation could be got. By an accident that occurred there, 204 human beings were lost. They were not burned, nor killed by fire, nor by a fire-damp explosion; but in consequence of a single shaft being closed by the breaking of a beam, and no entrance being possible for the time being, and there being no ventilation, those 204 human beings perished in an unconscious condition. Need I speak of the hardships, the difficulties, the privations, and the gloom and distress that overtook that neighbourhood when that fearful calamity took place? Therefore I congratulate the Minister for Mines and Works particularly in framing this clause to prevent a calamity of that character, whether large or small, taking place in our coal mines, where there is no access except by one entrance; and if anything took place in those mines what would be the consequence? I rejoice heartily that the Minister has seen his way clear to establish this clause enforcing two openings in the mines, so that there may be means of escape. It is necessary to have two openings for ventilation purposes, so that there may be a free circulation of air down one shaft and that it may be conveyed through the workings and the impure air sent up the second shaft. Clause 40 therefore provides for two things, which are alike beneficial to the miner and proprietor. The 3rd section of clause 40 provides that a penalty shall be enforced for not having two openings in the mine, so long as there

are not more than ten men employed. That number I think too large, and I should like to see it reduced to six. There is another very serious omission in the Bill which is not a matter of detail, but a matter of principle and great importance. That is, that no provision is made as to the means of ventilating mines, whether by furnace or fan. In all well-regulated mining districts it is stipulated that the mines shall be ventilated, either by furnace, which is the old system, or the more modern appliance of a fan. That provision is missing from the Bill; and I would further point out, that at the present day the furnaces are sometimes damped down at night, and the miners suffer in consequence through the air not being as pure as it should be during the following day. The same remark also applies where the fan is not in full operation both day and night. Those appliances should be kept going, not only at night, but on Sundays and holidays as well, because it invariably happens that disasters take place after the furnaces have been damped down, or when the fan has been stopped, and when more or less foul air accumulates in the mine. And the very important provision ought to be made in the Bill which is provided in most of the Acts relating to coal-mining. I refer to the division of mines for ventilation purposes into what are technically known as "splits," where a limited number of men only can be engaged, instead of a large number, in which latter case the air has to travel a long distance before it reaches the farthest parts of the workings. Therefore it is very desirable that the mines should be divided into sections for that particular purpose, and that a limited number of men should be engaged in each section, so that the men engaged in one section may receive as fair a share of fresh air as those engaged in another section. The method of reporting fatal accidents is not sufficiently provided for in the Bill, and I should respectfully suggest that a more stringent mode of reporting these accidents should take place, and that the person in charge of the Mines Department for the time being should, if he thought fit, pursue the same course as is now adopted in England. There, if it comes to the knowledge of the Home Secretary that there is any deficiency in the management of a mine, or anything which is likely to endanger the safety of those working in it, or if a fatal accident should happen, he may institute a special inquiry, and if there has been any real defect of management or machinery, then of course inquiry will elicit the matter, and the persons interested in the individual who may have been killed have an opportunity in consequence of that investigation of seeing how far the accident was attributable to carelessness or recklessness in connection with the management of the mine. They have their remedy at law, and are assisted by the evidence which may be produced at the special inquiry. There is one provision I should like to see in the Bill, and that is a safeguard for the workmen to prevent them from being victimised, as I am sorry to say they occasionally are. I refer to the making of complaints in connection with the ventilation or any other deficiency in the mine. The men should have the right to communicate privately to the inspector of mines for the district, and the inspector should not be permitted to divulge the names of the individuals making the complaints to the proprietors or managers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: They can do that now.

Mr. GLASSEY: Yes, I know they can; but I think there is no provision made that the

inspector shall not give the names of the individuals who communicate with him. And following that up, I should also like to see another provision made that, in the event of the inspector not doing his duty, upon the receipt of a petition signed by four or six workmen to the Minister for Mines and Works respecting the dereliction of duty on the part of the inspector, the Minister should hold an inquiry, and, on proof of the statements made, the Minister should deal with the inspector as he thinks proper, and see that his duties are discharged in accordance with the laws as laid down.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: So he could now.

Mr. GLASSEY: So he could now, I admit, if he thinks proper, but it rests with the Minister to say whether he will cause an inquiry to be made or not, and I think it should be stipulated that the Minister for Mines, if he is satisfied with the genuineness of the report from the men, shall cause an inquiry to be made and deal with the inspector accordingly. I have always held that no man should be above the law, and an inspector of mines is practically master of the situation at present. Whilst I wish to cast no reflection upon gentlemen who may be acting in that capacity at present, and so far as my knowledge of them is concerned I think they are men of ability and desirous of performing their duties, still it is possible that an inspector of mines, like other people, may be sometimes negligent in the performance of his duty, and, in order that protection should be given to workmen, I think a provision should be included by which the Minister for Mines and Works should under the circumstances, deal with an inspector in the way I have suggested. Another matter is that there is no provision made for inquests upon the bodies of persons who may have been killed in a mine. I think there should be some provision made such as there is in the old country, that certain proceedings should be taken in the interests of the relatives of persons killed in mines. I think the process in operation at present is far from being all that could be desired. I do not know whether hon. members have read the report of the proceedings in connection with the inquiry into the death of a man killed in a mine in my district lately. I think some stipulation should be made for the holding of inquests, and I respectfully suggest that the matter, instead of being left in the hands of justices as at present, should be dealt with by a police magistrate.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: What case do you allude to?

Mr. GLASSEY: The case of young Marsh, who was killed in Jones's mine a short time ago.

The PREMIER: What local magistrates do you allude to?

Mr. GLASSEY: I say these matters should be taken out of the hands of local magistrates and placed in the hands of police magistrates, who hold a superior position and are more independent. Local magistrates are generally influenced by surrounding circumstances which would not affect police magistrates, and therefore I suggest that the men who are beyond influence in any way should be the persons entrusted with the inquiries, where those unfortunate occurrences take place. I would also suggest that the relatives and friends, or those engaged in a mine where any person has been killed, should have the right to appear at these inquests, and put such questions as they think proper to the persons who may be regarded as responsible for the deaths of the persons killed. Whether persons have been culpable in the past it is not for me

to say, but in the future there should be inquests held upon the bodies of persons killed in mines, and the relatives of the persons killed should have the right to appear personally or by counsel, and put such questions as they think proper to ascertain the real cause of the death of the individuals in whom they were deeply interested. There are many matters I might refer to, but which I do not wish to touch upon at this hour of the night, but I should like briefly to refer to one very important one, which deserves consideration not only at the hands of the hon. gentleman in charge of this Bill, but at the hands of every legislator in this Assembly. It is the leaving of small coal or slack in a mine. It is well known that small coal or slack, or coal dust, has been proved to have largely contributed, in many instances, to explosions in coal mines; and it is held by some very competent authorities not only to contribute largely to explosions, but to have been the cause of explosions itself, which have been attended with considerable loss of human life, and much hardship has of course followed. I hope, in connection with this matter, I shall be pardoned for a moment while I read the opinion of the Royal Commission on this particular subject, because it bears very largely upon the safety of persons engaged in coal mining. This small coal or slack also contributes largely to the destruction of coal-mining property, inasmuch as it is liable to ignition, and underground fires take place involving the destruction of considerable property, and if there should be any gas in the neighbourhood of those fires an explosion may take place with very serious results. This report of the commission was published in 1886. I do hope that hon. members, notwithstanding they are asked to spend a little time in listening to what I admit may be dry material to them, will treat this matter seriously, because it is not a matter to be treated lightly, and all I desire to do is to point out the weakness of the Bill, and to suggest as far as my humble ability will permit, means and remedies to prevent serious accidents from occurring from various causes that operate from time to time in mines. "Spontaneous combustion" is the heading of the matter to which I wish briefly to refer, and the Commissioners say—

"This source of anxiety and damage, too frequently leading to fatal accidents, is fortunately limited to particular districts, and to certain seams. Its occurrence is most frequently to be dreaded in the gob or excavated places where considerable quantities of small coal and rubbish are left behind and in which the access of air and some amount of moisture promote decomposition of pyrites, and of certain varieties of coal of a porous or finely-divided character. Moreover, it is often observable that where pillar-working is proceeding, and remaining portions of the pillars are subjected to crush and to movements causing slipping and friction, that the temperature is greatly augmented. Hence arises a very common opinion, that where the coal is much comminuted, and even ground to powder, the temperature may be increased to the fring point."

The point I wish to impress on hon. members is, that we leave large quantities of small coal or slack in the mines here, because we conduct our operations by the same old-fashioned method of riddling which was adopted as long ago as I can remember, and that is going back to the year 1857—the year I first went down a mine. We have not our screens at the pit banks, but we riddle the coal below ground, sending up the round, and leaving a large quantity of slack in the mine. Large quantities of slack are left in the mines here and they from time to time create underground fires. There is one burning at the present time in a West Moreton coal mine, and has been burning for some time. These fires not only do much damage to the ventilation but are a source of great danger when there is gas in the neighbourhood; where they occur disasters

may follow. Therefore, I should be glad if the Minister for Mines and Works will accept an amendment dealing with these matters, and prohibiting in future small coal being left in the mine. Fires have also occurred, I believe, at Aberdare, the colliery of Mr. Lewis Thomas, and at Mr. Gulland's mine, the New Chum Colliery; and as the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, has already stated, there was an explosion at the Bulli Colliery in March, 1887. It was proved conclusively by the evidence taken before the Royal Commission which sat on the question, that coal dust contributed largely to the enormous loss of life on that occasion. Therefore it behoves us now, in legislating on this matter, to guard as far as possible persons engaged in coal-mining operations, which are much more dangerous than other mining operations; and I trust that when we go into committee on the Bill the Minister will accept such amendments as will deal with some of the matters to which I have referred, and also to others to which I have not referred, owing to the lateness of the hour. I trust also that the same spirit which has animated members generally who have addressed the House to-night will be maintained, and that in committee every member will do his best to make the Bill as effective as possible for the preservation of life and limb of the miners, and also for the protection of the property of those who have invested their money in mines in various parts of the colony.

Mr. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise merely to say a few words with respect to gold-mining. My constituents will be glad to know that the Minister for Mines and Works has in the early part of the session taken steps to improve an Act which has been a great benefit to the mining community. We find, according to the report of the Inspector of Mines, Mr. Fryar, that in my district there have been only five fatal accidents, and that four were the result of carelessness. It has been already said that no legislation will prevent accidents altogether; but the present Act has had the effect of saving many lives, as far as my district is concerned; and that is due chiefly to the energy and watchfulness of Mr. Fryar, who is one of the best officers in the service. He was not so well up in his duties at first, but he very soon knew them thoroughly, and now he is an expert, especially in connection with gold mines; in fact, he is thoroughly up to all the ins and outs of all the classes of mines under his supervision. There are many things in the Bill that may be shown to be objectionable, but when we are in committee we shall be able to give our reasons why we think they should be struck out; and there are some things that I should like to see inserted. There is a case at present *sub judice* in Charters Towers in connection with an engine driver who lowered two men by the engine break; and we might have a clause inserted without any discussion dealing with such cases. Then with regard to working eight hours. The hon. member who last spoke referred to coal-mining, where they work only one shift. In my district a valuable plant was destroyed through the carelessness of the engine driver going away before the fire was properly extinguished; and I think the provision against working too long hours is quite right. It is the men's fault very often that the hours are long, because many of them would rather work four hours a day longer for an extra 10s. a week; and some employers prefer to give £7 a week to two drivers instead of giving £9 a week to three. I am glad to say that in the largest mine in my district, employing 190 men, there is not a man or a boy who works longer than eight hours; in fact, the hours on that mine are forty-five a week. I do not think it is right for

one man to keep another out of employment by working extra hours. I do not believe in two men working twelve hours a day where three men should be working eight hours a day. The safety of the lives of many men depends on the engine drivers; and when they work too long hours they cannot do their work properly. In fact, some of them when they should be resting are about the town trafficking in shares or knocking about, and come to the mine thoroughly unfit for their duties. Some persons are not included in the Bill who ought to be, such as the feeders of the crushing machines. They are working twelve hours a day for £2 15s. per week, while others work eight hours a day for £2 10s. For the sake of 5s. per week extra, they are willing to work four hours extra. It is not altogether the fault of the employers. Many of the employés are interested in mines, and think that if they get a few shillings extra per week they may get into something good in a year or two. But we should prevent them working twelve hours. We should preserve their health. The hon. member for Wide Bay referred to the health of the miners; but I can say this: that on Gympie we are as careful as possible. If an accident happens the employés take us to the Supreme Court, and one man was awarded £750. But he received very little of that, the lawyers had most of it. I agree with the remarks made to-night by some hon. members that provision should be made in the Bill by which any action taken against a company for damages should be brought under the Employers' Liability Act. The amount that is to be paid to a man in case of accident is clearly stated there, and if a man is maimed for life he is to be paid three years' wages. I do not wish to see barristers or solicitors employed. I do not like them; but they are a necessary evil and we cannot do without them. I will not detain the House any longer; but in committee we shall have an opportunity of criticising the Bill clause by clause and making it perfect. The Act we have now has been a very serviceable one, and I hope the passing of this Bill will make the miners see that the legislature is on the lookout to preserve their lives.

Mr. LISSNER said: Mr. Speaker,—As the representative of a mining district I must express my satisfaction with the Bill. I thank the Minister for Mines and Works most heartily for trying to legislate in favour of an industry which deserves a great deal more legislation than it has hitherto received. I am not going into the details of the Bill now; it is not necessary to do so on the second reading. I believe in the principle of it, and when it goes into committee it can be dealt with more particularly. There are a great many members in the House representing the miners—more of them than we have ever had before—and I have no doubt that the Bill will be a first-rate one when it comes out of committee.

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

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that the House do now adjourn. I may mention that the Government business to-morrow will be the second reading of the Gold Fields Act Amendment Bill and then the Mines Regulation Bill in committee.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 10 o'clock.