Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1898

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[WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER, 1898.

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

DISEASES IN STOCK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Deputy Governor assenting to this Bill.

BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, this Bill was read a first time, and its second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

QUESTIONS.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MR. J. H. DODD.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Premier—

Has Mr. James Henry Dodd, of the Postal Department, received leave of absence?—If so, for how long, and does he receive full pay?

The PREMIER replied—

Yes, for six months on full pay.

COLOURED ALIEN POPULATION.

Mr. DRAKE asked the Premier—

Will he give effect to the promise made by the late Premier, on the 1st September last, to have a special return prepared, for presentation to Parliament during the present session, showing approximately the number, distribution, and occupations of the coloured alien population of the colony?

The PREMIER replied—

Immediately after the promise was made, instructions were issued for a rough census of the coloured alien population of the colony to be taken at the earliest practicable date. The census was taken on the 1st instant, and as soon as the results are received the return will be prepared and laid before Parliament.

MINING BILL

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On clause 26—"Power to grant mineral lease"—

Mr. HAMILTON said he had given notice of a new clause to follow clause 25. The clause, which covered about a page, had been distributed to hon. members, but for the same reason that he had not moved his amendment on clause 25 he would not propose this clause. He found that various members had sheaves of amendments to move, and it would be perfectly impossible for them to pass the Bill this session if all the suggested amendments were discussed. As he had a sincere desire to see the measure become law, considering that "half a loaf was better than no bread," he would not press his amendment, but would leave the matter to which it referred to be dealt with by regulations, and hoped others would act similarly.

Mr. BROWNE thought the hon. member for Cook had withdrawn his amendment because the Minister himself had introduced an amendment the previous evening dealing with the labour conditions; but he should have preferred the amendment of the hon. member for Cook. He had a new clause to propose, to follow clause 25, as follows:—

Exemption from labour covenants may be granted by the Minister on conditions to be prescribed by regulation.

Provided that the term of any such exemption shall not exceed six months continuously.

This was a matter of so much importance that it should be discussed from every standpoint. There was a great deal more reason for adopting this amendment since they had passed the clause reducing the labour conditions from one man

for one acre to one man for four acres than there was previously. While he quite agreed with the hon. member for Cook that British capitalists and others did not believe in everything being left to the sweet will of the Minister, he also claimed that the rights and privileges of the people on the goldfields of the colony should not be left to the sweet will of the Minister. When discussing the previous clause last night, the Minister stated that two-thirds of the leases in the colony not on gold at present were under exemption. That had been reiterated by other members. The Minister also gave one instance of a lease that had been under exemption for six years. The senior member for Charters Towers had stated that during the whole course of the inquiry no complaints had been made about the hardness of the conditions affecting exemptions, or about exemptions being refused. On the other side the Minister had said he had heard of no complaints against the too free use of exemptions. But the records of *Hansard* alone showed that for years past there had been a continual outcry on all the goldfields in the colony against the too free use of exemptions.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I never heard of it.

Mr. BROWNE: As far back as 1890 he found from *Hansard* that Mr. Hodgkinson, an old warden, who had been twice Secretary for Mines, and had been for many years engaged in mining, speaking from the Opposition side of the House on 6th August, said with respect to the speculators who were always asking for exemption—

> They exempt to-day because there is too much water; they exempt to-morrow because there is a drought; and they exempt the next day because they are going to get expensive machinery. No matter what the pretence is, the rule is exemption.

A little further on in his speech that gentleman used the following words, to which he would direct the attention of the Committee, as they bore out his contention that the matter was one which should be dealt with in the Bill and not by regulation :—

> It is almost impossible for any Minister for Mines to change this state of things, because such excuses and such reasons are given before the local courts that really the Minister for Mines would have to indict these people for perjury, and he would not be in a position to prove the accusations.

When the thing was dealt with by regulation the Minister had not the power to put his foot down.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He can alter the regulation.

Mr. BROWNE: If there was something in the Bill to show the extreme limit for which exemption could be granted, there would be no excuse for those people to bring pressure to bear upon the wardens and Minister, as it was known they had done. He was not wedded to the exact wording of the amendment; all he wanted was to get something into the Bill that would place some check upon the too free use of exemptions. His proposal was to give the Minister power to say at once to applicants for exemption: "The Act says distinctly this cannot be done." He intended to show how exemptions had been granted for many years, but he had no wish to cast any slur in what he said upon the present or upon any other Secretary for Mines. They had made some big mistakes in the matter, but he did not attribute personal considerations to their actions at all. For years past on Croydon the whole trouble had been in fighting exemptions. The hon. member for Barcoo was on Croydon in 1889 when an attempt was made to hoodwink the warden to exempt the whole of that field from the labour conditions from March until the next wet season. A petition got up quietly by men calling themselves "mineowners" was sent down to Mr. Macrossan, and that gentleman sent it back with instructions to the warden to grant the exemptions if he thought them necessary. He happened at that time to be president of the Miners' Union; the thing leaked out, and Mr. Hoolan came to him to see what could be done. This was only twenty-four hours before the exemptions were to be granted, and Warden Towner at once allowed the case to be heard in open court. The reason stated for asking the exemptions was that there was no water to crush the stone, but he was able by incontestible figures to prove that there was water enough to crush thousands of tons of stone more than there was at grass on the field. He was very pleased to say that Warden Towner at once refused to grant the exemptions asked for. Since then cases of the kind were continually coming up. The senior member for Charters Towers referred to the Lucknow, and pointed out how the too free use of exemptions affected the labour on goldfields. That happened on Croydon too, and the hon. member for Barcoo was there at the time also. It was not a supposititious case at all. In 1890 a small strike occurred over an attempt made to reduce wages, and the first thing the owners of the claims did was to lodge applications for exemption. In his official capacity he again appeared in open court against them, and when the warden understood that what those people wanted was to hang up their claims to secure a reduction of wages he refused every one of the applications. But had there not been a strong opposition and a strong miners' union there at the time to fight the thing through the exemptions would have been granted in both those cases. Then there was the case of the Mark Twain claim, which the Secretary for Mines would remember. Last August an application was put in for the forfeiture of that claim, which had been seized by the Royal Bank for a debt. The agent for the bank appeared in opposition to the forfeiture, and he admitted in open court that there had not been a tap of work done on the lease for two years. It had had exemption for the whole of that time; but the agent said they were going to work again shortly, and the work was offered to the two men who applied for the forfeiture. They refused the terms offered, as they believed they were entitled to the lease. The lease was not forfeited after two years' exemption, and the bank still held it. Only two months after, admitting that no work had been done for two years, they coolly came and asked for six months' exemption.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They didn't get it.

Mr. BROWNE: No, the warden refused it; but there were any amount of places where cases as bad or worse had got it. Only last year the hon. member for Woothakata received a petition from constituents of his on the Hodgkinson asking him to see the Minister and protest against further exemptions there in regard to certain mines.

Mr. NEWELL: They are not working now. The leases have been forfeited.

Mr. BROWNE: A short time ago Warden Mowbray, on Gympie, drew attention to the lot of exemptions; and here was a case to which he would refer—a case on the Palmer—because it was stated that a Labour man was monopolising the ground with exemptions. He did not want to say that Labour men were immaculate; it was the system that he was protesting against. If three men took advantage of a bad law, the chances were that the fourth man would do the same, whether he was a Labour man or a capitalist. He had a Press report of some comments made by the present acting warden in Maytown on an

application for six months' exemption of the Ida P.C., which was the property of the Queensland National Bank. No objections were lodged, but the acting warden said he intended taking evidence, and put the Queensland National Bank agent into the box. The agent deposed that he believed there was no intention to work the ground, but the exemption was wanted to secure the machinery scattered over the surface. In deciding the matter the warden—

Pointed out that while he had been in charge of the field no attempt had been made to *bonâ fide* mine the ground. Monthly reports sent in only consisted of "oiling and cleaning machinery," and latterly of "burning the grass." In granting a lease for goldmining purposes it was intended that the ground should be mined. The same old excuse was made every six months, with slight variations. Although there was no objection to the present application, he would discountenance these periodical applications. Unless some effort was made to work the mine, he would not recommend any exemption in future. This system of locking up and shepherding mines must be checked.

That was what the warden was reported to have said. Of course the warden was speaking of the three years he had been in charge of the field; but he (Mr. Browne) knew personally that for fourteen years there had been no attempt to work the ground, and an examination of the reports in the Mines Department, if laid on the table, would show that the biggest monopoly in Australia had existed in Maytown since 1884 in the shape of leases held by Drury, as agent for McIlwraith, McEacharn, and Co.

Mr. HAMILTON: They have been out of their hands for years.

Mr. BROWNE: Since then they had been held under different shapes and forms by the Queensland National Bank. He could go from field to field and show, even from the official reports, the prevalence of this evil. The exemption clauses were put into the Act for a very good purpose, and there would always have to be exemptions; but the exemption clauses which were intended to benefit struggling mineowners had been used by people who simply wanted to monopolise the ground and hold it as cheaply as they could without fulfilling the labour conditions. All he was attempting to do was to get something embodied in the Bill that would fix some limit. There was a clause in the regulations which said that any claim taken up under a miner's right must be *bonâ fide* worked six months before exemption was given. In South Australia that principle held good with regard to leases, because three months' work must be done before exemption was granted. After six months' exemption another three months' work must be done before exemption was granted again. Under our law there was no limit. A lease was applied for, and immediately the lease was recommended application was made for exemption; at the end of the six months machinery or something else was wanted, and exemption was applied for again. There was no attempt to do any work, but they were continually getting fresh exemptions. That was never intended when provision was made for exemption in the Act. He was certain the senior member for Gympie, with his experience of mining, did not believe in exemptions being granted to men who never intended to work, but simply wanted to monopolise the ground. Hon. members had no idea what the terms for these exemptions were going to be. He did not, as a rule, take much notice of what was said by "the man in the street," but what anybody could hear in Queen street a month or so prior to the introduction of the Bill, had come true as far as the Bill was concerned; and it was reported that instead of the exemption clauses being made more strict, the intention was to make them more liberal.

Mr. STUMM: That is not fair. The Minister says the opposite.

Mr. BROWNE: They did not want to let everything rest on the will of the Minister. They wanted to get as much into the Bill as they could, and take the responsibility from the Minister. He did not know that they had ever had any unscrupulous Ministers, but they might have, or even if a Minister were not unscrupulous, he might have very liberal ideas as to the granting of exemptions, over which Parliament would have no control. The Secretary for Mines had seen the advantage of putting the covenants regarding labour conditions into the Bill, and he was contending that the same course should be followed in regard to exemptions. Month after month there were outcries from the different goldfields in connection with exemptions, and when a warden felt inclined to refuse them instances were immediately quoted to him where exemptions had been granted under similar circumstances; so that it was very hard for him to put his foot down. He therefore hoped the Secretary for Mines would see his way to put something into the Bill that would limit these exemptions, and leave him and the wardens free to exercise their own discretion inside that limit. It would be very much better for the officers of the department, and he was sure it would be better for the mining industry to have these restrictions mentioned in the Bill, and therefore he proposed this amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What the hon. member now proposed was really the regulation, because under it exemption could not be given for more than six months, although the exemption might be extended. On Gympie and Charters Towers very little time was given, except in special cases, which were recommended by the wardens. These applications for exemptions had to come before the warden in every case; he heard evidence on both sides in open court, and made a recommendation; but the recommendation was not always acted upon. In some cases he had granted exemptions where the warden had not recommended them, and in other cases he had refused them where the warden had recommended them. There was a case of a mine at Charters Towers which had paid between £300,000 and £400,000 in dividends, and in that case he had refused an exemption. But there were other cases in which he knew the parties had spent all their money, and he had granted exemptions, such as the case of the school reserve at Charters Towers, the owners of which had spent over £40,000, and had not received one penny out of the ground. They applied regularly for exemptions, and there had never been a word against them. The Minister's hands should not be tied in cases of that sort. The practice had been, and would be in future, especially as the labour conditions were eased, not to grant more than six months, unless there were some very extraordinary circumstances. Of course where they knew there was any collusion exemptions were refused, but it was not always possible to know.

Mr. BROWNE: I suggested to the commission that every applicant should be put on oath and made to swear that he had no connection with the previous owner.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That question was always asked. He sympathised with the hon. member, but it was already the practice not to grant more than six months.

Mr. BROWNE: I mean that there shall not be exemption for more than six months continuously.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He understood what the hon. member meant, but how would they define what was "work?" If the

owners oiled the machinery for a week that might be called "work," for which a further exemption might be applied for. The matter would have to be left to the wardens and the Minister, who would always be guided by public opinion. Public opinion was very strong on a goldfield, and if continual exemptions were granted, there would very soon be complaints in the Press and by the public against the warden who did it. On the Palmer the other day, Mr. Pegus, the acting warden, took evidence in regard to some leases held by the Queensland National Bank, and in one case he granted two six-months' exemptions continuously, and then an additional three months; but if they did not grant exemptions on these outside fields the leases would come back into the hands of the State. The hon. member for Croydon might think that a very good thing; but it was not, because the State ceased to get any rent for them, and there was less labour employed. He had granted two six-months' exemptions on the Hodgkinson, but notwithstanding that, they had the mines back on their hands. There were three or four leases on the Hodgkinson which had been bought by a syndicate for a small amount, good prospecting work was being done, and there were many other cases where large sums of money had been spent without getting any return, and it would be very hard if such mines were forfeited. As long as he continued Minister he intended to make exemptions much harder to get than in the past. He had no very strong objection to the amendment, but he thought the matter should be left in the hands of the wardens and the Minister. He was as anxious as any man to see the mines of the colony developed, and he thought it might often be the means of introducing capital if they gave more liberal conditions. If the member for Croydon would make his amendment read "two exemptions of six months," he would accept it. In some cases six months was too long, but not where people had spent a lot of money and got no return. They should discriminate in the regulations between the man who had taken up a lease for the first time and one who had spent a lot of money on a lease. It would be very hard in the latter case to forfeit the lease after six months.

Mr. BROWNE: If you fixed the limit in the Act you could discriminate in the regulations.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If it was fixed in the Act they could not go beyond the Act. If the amendment were passed many leases would have to be forfeited at once.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The very thing which the Minister desired to continue was the cause of all the trouble in the past. Parliament had no control practically over the regulations. If the matter was fixed by Parliament, then it might be wise to allow the details to be dealt with by regulation, but the administration of the regulations had overridden the Act in the past. The Minister said that public opinion was brought to bear through the newspapers, and that those exemptions could not continue, but public opinion was only brought to bear when it was too late. Look at the case of Ravenswood, and how some of the mines had been hung-up by the Queensland National Bank! The town itself was almost hung-up because of the very thing complained of. What was desired was that they should gain something from the experience of the past, and it was a most dangerous thing to allow the matter to be dealt with by regulation. He thought six months' exemption would cover all the cases likely to be met with. In the past many mines had been proved to be payable at the time the exemption was granted, and men were willing to take them up and pay from 10 to 15 per cent. tribute; but the Minister said in effect that he did not care whether the gold was there or not—he intended to study the convenience of the owners. When the Mining Commission was sitting at Ravenswood, Mr. Brady, speaking on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce and Mines, said—

> That evidence be given the commissioners, showing that one of the principal causes of the depression upon Ravenswood is due to the large area of ground held under exemption, and should not be renewed by the Government.

It was no use saying that there was no cause of complaint. There was just cause of complaint; so much so that miners had been compelled to desert Ravenswood. Some had gone to Charters Towers, others to Mount Leyshon, and he regretted to say that many had left the colony. The mines were payable, yet those men were compelled to look for work elsewhere.

Mr. SMYTH: Which mines are payable?

Mr. DUNSFORD: He would read further the evidence of Mr. Moran, a practical miner, as given before the commission—

> Do you consider the exemption clause is a necessary one in the Act? I believe exemptions are necessary sometimes, but the privilege is especially abused at Ravenswood. It is on account of the exemptions that the present depression exists.
>
> There is valuable land under exemption? Yes; and held by people who have no intention of working it. I am referring to the bank; they are holding it to sell out.
>
> What is the land you are referring to? The General Grant, the Sunset, and the Black Jack leases.
>
> How does that land come to be exempted? The bank foreclosed on it when there was three months' pay owing to all the men. The bank paid for the last month, but the men are owed two months' pay yet. They offered to take the mine on tribute and pay 5 per cent. to the bank, and in order not to hamper the bank in any way they offered to take the tribute from month to month. That was refused, and the land has been locked up for twelve months. I consider it a disgraceful thing that with such an offer they were not allowed to have a show on it.
>
> If the bank had accepted the offer do you think the men were in a position to carry out the agreement? Yes.

It could not be doubted that those men, whose names were given, and whose living depended upon it, were desirous to carry out their contract. The Minister would agree with him that that sort of thing should be stopped, and not carried on from six months to six months and from year to year. And it had a most serious effect on goldmining townships. The very life of a business was that labour must be employed, and if men could not get employment they could not pay their bills. In that particular case there were forty or fifty men who never got their wages, and the tradesmen suffered. In the early part of the session he had quoted a passage from the *Northern Mining Register*, in which the special correspondent of that paper at Chillagoe said that the whole field was hung up with the connivance of the Mines Department. The writer gave the history of a number of mining leases there, how they got their exemptions, and how men and land were lying idle. At Charters Towers the Mining Association had special men set apart to go to the court and take exception to the granting of exemptions. But as a rule miners could not do that; they became marked men, and were made to suffer for it. At Gympie, the other day, according to the *Gympie Times*, the Orient Surprise Company applied for a further exemption, when Warden Mowbray said the leases had been lying idle for eighteen months, and not a sod had been turned on the ground How was it possible, when the regulations said six months, that a purely speculative company should hold leases for eighteen months and never a sod turned? The Minister's contention fell to the ground that those matters should be left to the regulations and to the administration. Warden Mowbray followed up that remark by saying

he did not think the ground was ever likely to be worked, and that he had written to the Minister recommending that no further exemption should be granted to that and to sixteen other leases, and that the New Guinea concession was a fool to it. Mr. Tozer, the son of the Agent-General, who appeared for the applicants, urged that nobody had ever lodged an objection to the granting of exemptions. Did the Minister contend that where no objections were made exemptions should be granted? He was aware that that course had been generally followed. If a plausible case was made out the warden, as a matter of course, recommended the exemption and passed it on to the Minister, who, having no evidence before him, similarly, as a matter of course, granted it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Was the exemption granted in that case?

Mr. DUNSFORD: It was not recommended by the warden, who said that when he first heard of the ground being applied for he supposed it had something to do with a new dairy company—that somebody might be taking up a station. Such a state of things ought not to be allowed to continue. No doubt the Minister did not desire it to continue, but practically it got out of his hands because he could not inquire closely into each case as it came before him, especially when he was perhaps half asleep after an all-night sitting of the House. He hoped that the amendment would be carried, although it was not as perfect as it might be.

Mr. HAMILTON: The hon. member had taken the ridiculous suppositious case of the Minister going to his office half asleep and granting an exemption to some person who was not entitled to it, but that would apply just as much to a first exemption as to a second. The hon. member for Croydon had referred to the Palmer as an instance where, through exemptions, the field had been locked up. It was a libel to say that that field, which was one of the largest in Queensland, had been locked up on account of the few acres of exemptions granted to the Queensland National Bank. To show the absurdity of the statement he would give hon. members a few facts. At first advances were made to the owners of various claims by the Queensland National Bank, and afterwards they gave the owners clear receipts and expended £60,000 in trying to develop the lines of reef they held, after which they left them. In 1883 the area held on the Palmer by the Queensland National Bank was twenty-five acres; in 1884 it was twelve acres; in 1890, sixteen acres; and in 1897, two acres. In the face of those facts it was utterly ridiculous to say that one of the biggest fields in Queensland had been locked up until now by the exemptions granted to the Queensland National Bank. He objected to one thing that had been done on the Palmer and elsewhere. One acre, perhaps, was taken in order to hold the machinery and the shaft—the key of the position—which prevented other persons from developing that particular line. In 1890 the Queensland National Bank held four acres on the Louisa, two on the Ida, eight on the Gregory, and two on the Queen. In order to stop that, he had suggested to the Minister—and the suggestion had been put into the Bill—that the mininum number of men to represent any lease should be three. That would prevent the key of the position being held by a company taking up one acre holding the shaft, and employing one man to shepherd it.

Mr. DAWSON: The question raised by his colleague about tributers was about the most important in connection with exemptions that could be raised. The Minister in charge of the Bill was not unacquainted with the opinions of mining members on the question, because a request on the subject had been preferred to the hon. gentleman by his colleague and himself, and the question had been repeatedly raised when the Mines Estimates were going through. Their contention was that it should be the rule of the department that a warden should not recommend, or the Minister grant, an exemption, while there was a party of miners willing to work the same ground on tribute for a period, and to pay a percentage for the right of working.

Mr. SMYTH: They might gut the mine.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. member, with his long experience, knew that it was utterly impossible for a party of tributers to gut the mine, because they only took up a block of ground. He was not particular whether it was inserted in the Bill, or whether it was provided for by regulation, but there certainly should be something as a guide to wardens and to the Mines Department that exemptions should not be granted to any mining company, while there was every reason to believe that the ground would be worked. The great thing they desired on a goldfield was that the ground should be continuously worked, as long as it could be profitably worked. The mere fact that a man was in possession was not a sufficient justification for tying the ground up for six or twelve months at the sweet will of the Minister. If other people believed they could work the ground at a profit, they ought to be allowed to try, on agreeing to pay the original owner a certain percentage for the right of working. That was only a fair proposition, and, as a matter of fact, the present Secretary for Mines was so far in favour of the suggestion that he did it at present to a limited extent. He remembered one case where the proprietors had a dispute with their men; they did not find it convenient to pay the men their money when it was due; the men objected; and the result was that the company applied for exemption. The men were willing to take the mine on tribute and pay 25 per cent. for the right to work it, and when that fact came before the Minister he refused the application, saying that he was not prepared to grant exemption where men were willing to pay even 15 per cent. for the right to work a mine on tribute. That was one of the Mosman Company's leases—Eastward Ho. He would suggest that a regulation should be framed providing that no exemption should be granted to any company while there was a party of miners willing to work the ground and to pay 15 per cent. for the right to do so. The great mistake the Committee had made was in passing the provision reducing the labour condition from one man to one acre to one man to four acres, with the right of exemption. It would not have been so bad if they had made the condition one man to four acres, without the right of exemption. But they should have stuck to the one man to one acre provision, and have provided that on the recommendation of the warden exemption might be granted to an extent which would allow lessees to employ only one man to four acres, or that total exemption might be granted for a period of six months. If that had been done they would have escaped the dangers of indiscriminate exemptions. In his rider to the majority report of the Mines Commission he particularly mentioned the matter of exemptions and labour conditions. The evidence obtained by the commission showed that neither employers, nor miners who worked for wages, nor men who worked their own ground themselves, had made any demand for such a provision as that contained in the Bill—that lessees should only be required to employ one man to four acres under any circumstances, and have the right of exemption always. The most they asked was that special conditions should be granted to them as a right until a sha t was

sunk, or a reef was found, or the ground was proved payable, and that after that strict labour conditions should be enforced. At present exemption in such cases was granted by the Minister as a favour, and miners wanted it as a right. He had no objection—and he did not think any hon. member had any objection—to men having easy and liberal labour conditions while they were sinking a shaft or proving their ground, but once ground was proved to be payable they should be forced to fulfil strict labour conditions.

Mr. HAMILTON: If ground is payable no man would be more anxious to put on men than the owners.

Mr. DAWSON: That was a fiction which he had successfully replied to several times. However, as he understood that an agreement had been arrived at with regard to the proposed new clause he would not continue his speech.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the clause was altered a little it could be made workable, and he would be prepared to accept it. He would suggest that the clause be amended so as to read "total or partial exemption from labour covenants may be granted," etc., "provided that the term of any 'total' exemption shall not exceed six months continuously."

Mr. BROWNE: With the permission of the Committee he would alter his clause so as to make it read—

> Total or partial exemption from labour covenants may be granted by the Minister on conditions to be prescribed by regulation:
>
> Provided that the term of any total exemption shall not exceed six months continuously.

With reference to what had been said by the members for Charters Towers he might say that he should be very glad if the Minister would frame regulations providing that where miners were willing to work ground on tribute it should not be allowed to lie idle.

New clause, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. JENKINSON had a new clause to propose as follows:—

> Every application for exemption or partial exemption shall be advertised at least once in a newspaper circulating in the district, and such advertisement shall give the name of the applicant and the area and locality of the lease.

It was the custom at present to advertise such applications, but it was not compulsory; and a very great deal of trouble at present was caused by the fact that the applicant merely advertised the number of the lease without giving any distinguising characteristic by which it could be easily identified, and miners were unable to find out what leases were applying for exemption. The clause he proposed would meet that difficulty.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There was no occasion to move the amendment at all, because he would take care that it was provided for in the regulations. There were plenty of outside fields where there were no newspapers at all.

Mr. JENKINSON was satisfied with the hon. gentleman's statement, and therefore would not move his amendment.

On clause 26—"Power to grant mineral lease"—

Mr. BROWNE moved a consequential amendment upon lines 23 and 24, omitting the words "Asiatic or African alien,' with a view of inserting the words "alien who by lineage belongs to any of the Asiatic, African, or Polynesian races."

Mr. STEWART: The amendment might be a consequential one, but it did not go nearly far enough, and the matter was of sufficient importance to be dealt with upon every occasion that presented itself. If the clause passed as proposed with the amendment, the inhabitants of India, Hongkong, the Straits Settlements, and the kaffirs from South Africa would be able to come here and engage in mining upon an equal footing with other British subjects. Very soon, unless affairs took a different trend, Egypt would be a British dependency, and Egyptians would be able to do the same thing. Was that the idea of the people of Queensland with regard to alien races? They knew it was not, and why should they not carry out the idea of the people in their legislation? Why leave the door open to hordes of Indian aliens to come here, British subjects of Her Majesty the Queen though they be? Why tear down the white flag of Australia that flaunted so proudly at the masthead of our institutions? Why should they not shut the door against all alien races? Syndicates having gained extended areas and reduced labour conditions would before long assail the third position and cry out for cheaper labour. And they would find that cheaper labour by importing it from India and all the other places from which those coloured British subjects could be drawn. Therefore, everybody who wanted Australia kept for the white man would insist on an extension of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Croydon. He had no desire to stonewall the Bill on this question, but he thought it necessary to explain his desire, his will, and his anxiety on this coloured labour question.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your anxiety.

Mr. STEWART: Yes. He knew that politics were merely a diversion to the hon. gentleman, but he (Mr. Stewart) looked upon the Government of the country and the building up of our institutions in quite a serious light. The weal or woe of the millions to come afterwards depended, in a great measure, on how the foundations were laid. If they were laid on a rock, solid and secure, comfort and prosperity would follow, but if they were laid on the mud the whole thing would topple over, and he believed that in this alien question they were building upon the mud. Under this clause, and under the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Croydon, Australia was not reserved for the white man; and he would be happy if the hon. member could see his way to withdraw his amendment in order that he (Mr. Stewart) might submit another amendment to the Committee.

Mr. HAMILTON: According to the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon, all aliens of Asiatic, African, and Polynesian lineage would be prevented from taking up leases. They all agreed to that, because there was a real danger from Chinese and Japanese. But the hon. member for Rockhampton North proposed to add coloured British subjects—an amendment which should not be accepted. In the first place, he had never heard of a case in Queensland where any coloured British subject ever desired to take up a lease; in the second place, as it was very likely that Her Majesty would not give her assent to a Bill casting such a slur upon British subjects, the rejection of the Bill would open the door to a class of men from whom danger was to be apprehended, and against whom provision had been made in the Bill before the House. He hoped the hon. gentleman's amendment would meet the fate of a similar amendment moved by the hon. member when he sat alone the other evening, every member of his party having left him and walked over to the Government side of the House.

Mr. BROWNE was sorry he could see no reason why he should withdraw his amendment. At an earlier stage of the Bill he brought forward an amendment going a great deal further than this, and after an all-night sitting a compromise

was effected, the result being that they had got more advanced legislation against coloured aliens than ever they had before in Queensland. He admitted that it did not go so far as he would like, but still it was a good step in advance. He had no fear that anyone would think he was backing down on the question, because it was well known that both inside and outside of Parliament he had fought as hard as any man against coloured aliens being allowed in Queensland. But this was a Mining Bill. In one section they had precluded certain persons from holding rights and privileges on goldfields, and now they had come to the mineral clauses he proposed this amendment to keep them off mineral fields. For that reason he could not see his way clear to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. CROSS did not think the remarks of the hon. member for Rockhampton North in regard to the hon. member for Croydon's amendment were justified. There had been no man who had been more consistent in his desire to keep out all kinds of coloured aliens than the hon. member for Croydon, but the hon. member for Rockhampton North said that neither the clause in the Bill nor the amendment before the Committee would prevent coloured aliens from coming here, and he wanted the amendment withdrawn so that he might propose something more drastic. The essence of legislation in an Assembly such as this, where there were many opinions represented, was compromise. The hon. member for Croydon had accepted a compromise, and had achieved very great progress indeed, which he was naturally proud of. The argument against an extension of this restriction—that Her Majesty would not sanction the Bill—proved too much. If they were to be threatened and overawed by being told by Ministers that the Royal assent might not be granted, they had better reconsider their position. This was a self-governing colony. They had duties and responsibilities cast upon them, and if their wisdom and experience showed them that there was great danger of their standard of civilisation being reduced by an incursion of coloured races, they should legislate, regardless of the British Government. Of course it might be unconstitutional to exclude British subjects, but the difficulty had been got over in the other colonies, and therefore he did not see why this Committee should hesitate in agreeing to the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon. It did not matter that coloured British subjects had not applied for mining leases in the past; the fact remained that they had the right to do so, and he declined to believe that the British Government would hesitate in assisting Australians to protect themselves. Another argument was that if they prohibited Japanese from coming here, they might raise the ire of the Mikado, who might come here with his wonderful fleet and little brown soldiers, but he had no fear of that. It was their duty to preserve their country for white people, and no Parliament here would be worthy of the name if it did not forcibly and manfully stand up for that principle. Some few years ago a very stringent law called the Aliens Restriction Bill was passed in New South Wales, and they were all told that it would not receive the Royal assent. That was the case, and the Bill was modified, but even then it justified the purpose for which it was introduced.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member will excuse me, I would point out that we are all agreed as to the principle of this amendment, which was decided on clause 22. This amendment is only introduced here by the hon member for Croydon to make the Bill in order.

Mr. CROSS: I was not aware of that, and therefore I shall conclude my remarks.

Mr. STEWART: Although they had passed the clause which embodied this principle, the matter was still open for discussion. Hon. members might always change their minds if they thought proper.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the matter open for discussion now is the amendment before the Committee. The question before the Committee is that certain words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause.

Mr. STEWART: He was opposing the amendment, and would give his reasons for doing so. He did not think it went far enough. The hon. member for Cook gave two reasons why he thought the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon was sufficient. The first was that there was no danger of British coloured subjects coming to Queensland; but how could they tell what danger loomed in future? A few years ago anyone who suggested that the colony might be overrun by Japanese would have been laughed at. He remembered very well addressing a meeting in Rockhampton at the time Sir Thomas McIlwraith went to Japan, and hinting that he was probably on the lookout for cheap labour. Whether that was so or not, almost immediately after that visit the Japanese began to dribble into the colony; they had a very strong hold here now, and if they were permitted to increase in numbers they would have great difficulty in dealing with them. He did not think there was as much danger from the Japanese as from the Hindoos. They knew that India was the home of a seething population, that a large number died there every year from starvation, that the seasons were very uncertain, and that it was very badly governed; so that the position of the people was most undesirable. Such being the case, it was very probable that some of these people might be on the lookout for "fresh fields and pastures new," and if they discovered their rights as British subjects they might make a descent upon Australia. Even if they did not find out Australia for themselves, capitalists wanting cheap labour might point it out to them; and not only that, but they might even provide them with "the sinews of war" to come out and make their homes here. There was just as much danger from the Indian coolie as from the Japanese subject, and they should guard as carefully against one as the other. The hon. member for Cook pointed to the danger of the Act not receiving Her Majesty's assent if certain provisions were embodied in it. The hon. member occupied an important position as a legislator, and held an important official position in the House, but it appeared that he was such an important person that he actually was in the confidence of Her Majesty.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must see that his remarks do not in any way apply to the amendment, and I ask him to seriously discuss this question.

Mr. STEWART was never more serious in his life. The question was the most serious with which they could possibly deal, and the man who would trifle with it was unworthy of being an Australian citizen. He thoroughly agreed with the sentiments expressed by the hon. member for Clermont, who desired to make this country a white man's country, irrespective of what Her Majesty or anyone else might wish. If Her Majesty chose to become the protector of all the alien servile black races in the world, that was no reason why they should be compelled to take them to their bosoms, and sooner than submit to anything of that kind they should sever the connection between Australia and Great Britain. Should such people be forced upon them he had no doubt men would be found patriotic enough to do the proper and right thing. Now was the appointed hour; now

was the day to lock the gates against those coloured races, and they were losing a splendid opportunity of placing on record their ideas on the subject. If the Government were actuated by patriotism they would extend the provisions of the Bill so as to exclude all coloured races, but as he had said before—and hoped to say again—he did not believe the Government desired to shut out coloured races. He believed, on the contrary, that it was part and parcel of their policy to introduce alien servile labour.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in making that statement. It in no way applies to the amendment. I must now call the attention of the Committee to the tedious repetition and irrelevancy of the hon. member, and I warn him that if he continues this line of conduct there is only one course open to me.

Mr. STEWART was sorry to hear that he had not only been repeating himself, but tediously repeating himself. He had no doubt that the sentiments to which he gave utterance were distasteful, not only to the Chairman, but to other hon. members opposite, but that was no reason why he should remain silent.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind the hon. member that there is nothing personal in the matter. I am only here to do my duty. I have no feeling whatever in the matter, and I am sure the hon. member on some future occasion, if he wants to get business through, would appreciate what I am now saying.

Mr. STEWART did not accuse the Chairman of partisanship. It was quite possible to be mistaken without being a partisan. He submitted that he had uttered no word that was not relevant to the question. No doubt his remarks would be paid no attention to in that Chamber, but he spoke to a larger audience outside; and if his words had no influence in the House, perhaps they might have in a quarter where warning and advice were most needed. He believed that before long the electors would settle the alien question over the heads of some gentlemen who did not desire to see it settled.

Mr. GLASSEY thought they were all agreed as to the danger of allowing a large accession to the coloured alien population of the colony, even though they were British subjects. The amendment before them followed naturally upon one already agreed to, and was necessary in order to make the Bill symmetrical. While they did not desire to see any increase in that undesirable class of colonists, yet they must recognise that there were a certain number already here who were deserving of some consideration. The clause previously passed recognised that fact, and that was all that was desired to be accomplished by this amendment. At the same time there was a strong spirit animating the country generally that the coloured races should be kept out of Australia, and that it should be the home of white people. Whether that was acceptable to the British Government or not, they were determined that the continent must be preserved, at all hazards, as a home for the white races. But he had no fear on that score, especially after the case mentioned by the hon. member for Clermont. As he had stated, the object of the amendment was simply to bring the clause into harmony with one previously passed.

Mr. STEWART: There was one matter he wished to mention before the question was disposed of. The hon. member for Croydon said a compromise had been arrived at between himself and the Secretary for Mines on that question, and that the Opposition were bound in honour to adhere to that compromise. He wished to say that that compromise had not been carried out. The proposition actually carried was as different from the one originally moved as chalk from cheese. The original proposal shut out all the coloured races.

Mr. GLASSEY: It would also have shut out those who are already here.

Mr. STEWART: He did not think it would. He was as anxious as the hon. member to conserve the rights of aliens who were already here; and as far as he was concerned there had been no departure from the compromise arrived at.

Mr. BROWNE: It was hardly correct to say that the compromise was arrived at between the Minister and himself. It was arrived at between the Minister and the Executive of that party. The alteration in the wording was made by the Government draftsman—Mr. Shand, he believed—who had given a legal opinion for it. The amendment adopted did not go so far as he wished; but they were only dealing with a Mining Bill, and when it came to the question of the exclusion of aliens from the colony he should be prepared to go as far as anyone in keeping them out.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended put and passed.

Mr. JACKSON moved the insertion of the following new clause to follow clause 26—the first dealing with mineral leases:—

> Total or partial exemption from the labour conditions may be granted by the Minister on conditions to be prescribed by regulation; provided that the term of any total exemption shall not exceed six months continuously.

The same clause had been adopted with regard to goldmining leases, and he thought it should also apply to mineral leases. He understood the Minister had no objection to it. When the clause was under discussion previously he was unavoidably absent from the Chamber and was unable to speak on the question. He desired now to make a few remarks on the Ravenswood exemptions referred to by the hon. member for Charters Towers, Mr. Dunsford. It was felt as a very great hardship, by the miners particularly, that those mines should be exempted, because there happened to be a large sum of money owing to them at the time in the shape of wages——

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member not to go back to the question of exemptions of goldmining leases, which has already been disposed of, but to confine his remarks to his amendment, which relates to exemption of mineral leases.

Mr. JACKSON: It would save time, because he had an amendment to propose further on, but which he intended to withdraw if the present amendment was carried. If he had been in the Chamber when the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon was proposed he might have objected to it. At any rate, he would have been able to refer hon. members to the clause of which he had given notice to follow clause 41 with regard to exemptions, and if he were ruled out of order now he could bring the question up on that amendment. Considering that about £2,000 had been owing by one company on Ravenswood, it was regarded as a hardship that the exemptions should have been granted, but it was felt a much greater hardship because the miners who had been working in those mines were willing to work them on tribute. He might just refer to the amendment he had intended to propose to follow clause 41. It was to the same effect as the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon with respect to goldmining leases, but, whilst the hon. member's amendment left the conditions to be provided for by regulation, his

amendment would have laid the conditions down in the Bill itself. It was to the following effect :—

Where the holder of a mining lease shall prove to the satisfaction of the Minister that on account of unexpected or unforeseen difficulties in exploring or working the mine, or by reason of the want of water or on account of having too much water upon or in the said mine, or for want of machinery, or from exhaustion of capital, it shall be lawful for the Minister, by order in writing, to grant partial or total exemption from labour conditions for a period not exceeding six months.

The next paragraph provided for holding an inquiry, and then came the principal part of the amendment—

Provided that if it shall appear in evidence at such inquiry held by the warden that any application for exemption from labour conditions is opposed on the grounds that any party or parties of miners are willing to work such mine on tribute on terms that may appear reasonable and just, the Minister shall refuse to grant to the holder of the lease any exemption from labour conditions.

That would have been an admirable provision to insert in the Bill, but as the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon had been accepted, it knocked out his amendment. While referring to the question of not granting exemptions where miners were prepared to work the mines on tribute, he might just say that in the appendices to the report of the Mining Commission there was a communication from a gentleman at Herberton, who represented most of the leading men of Herberton, and those gentlemen proposed that something similar to the amendment he had intended to move to follow clause 41 should be put in the Bill. He begged to move the new clause.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES had no objection to the amendment, as it was on the same lines as the amendment already made with respect to goldmining leases.

New clause put and passed.

Clause 27—"Exemptions of lands from mineral leases"—put and passed.

On clause 28—"Rent, term, and area of mineral lease"—

Mr. DUNSFORD moved the omission of the words—

The area, save as hereinafter provided with respect to coal mines, shall be such, not exceeding one hundred and sixty acres, as may be from time to time prescribed,

with the view of inserting the following :—

The area applied for to work tin, silver, or antimony, within the limits of any proclaimed goldfield or mining district specially notified by proclamation in the *Gazette*, shall not exceed forty acres; beyond such limits the area shall not exceed eighty acres. The area applied for to work minerals other than tin, silver, and antimony shall not exceed one hundred and sixty acres.

This was a copy of the present regulations dealing with mineral leases, regarding which there had been no complaints. There were three different areas fixed for the different minerals and the richness of the find. He would like to hear what those hon. members had to say who were specially interested in mineral fields.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES could not see his way to accept the amendment. He did not think any harm would ensue from granting large leases to work tin, silver, and antimony. As a matter of fact antimony was not as valuable a mineral as copper, and to profitably work the minerals he had mentioned required very expensive works for smelting, concentrating, and so on. At one time they used to sell the land containing those minerals, but that had been discontinued for a long time, and they now leased the land. In New Zealand the area was 320 acres, and in Victoria 640 acres, and the rental 2s. 6d. per acre per annum. Here it was proposed to charge 10s. an acre, and he thought that that charge and the labour conditions would prevent any quantity of land being taken up unless there was an intention to work it.

Mr. NEWELL thought the junior member for Charters Towers could not have given his proposal very much consideration. Why should he single out tin, silver, and antimony? If he knew anything about the subject he must know that the greater portion of the tin obtained in the colony had been got on the surface, and that the surface shows were now pretty well worked out. A large expenditure of capital was now required to make mining for tin payable. It could not be carried on with a windlass and bucket, but the very best appliances were required. Some tinmines that he knew of were down 400 feet—possibly in some cases they had to sink deeper—and there was very small inducement at present to invest capital in that industry. Goldmining had a fascination about it that was not to be found in connection with tinmining, and as a consequence fewer capitalists were induced to embark in the latter industry. There were not very many tinmines on proclaimed goldfields, and if they wished to foster the industry of mining for tin, silver, and antimony, they must offer every possible facility, inducement, and encouragement to capitalists to work those minerals. He trusted that the Minister would not accept the amendment

Mr. DAWSON was in hopes that when the hon. member for Woothakata, who was the member for tin, silver, antimony, copper, and bismuth, addressed the Committee on that amendment he would have given them some reason why the present law should be altered. What his colleague had proposed was an exact copy of the regulation already operating on mineral fields, and if the hon. member for Woothakata had found that the existing law was hard on those who held mineral leases he ought to have given proofs of that. The amendment was simply seeking to put into the Bill what was already in the Act as it stood now. The hon. member for Woothakata had asked his colleague, Mr. Dunsford, why he differentiated between tin, silver, and antimony and copper, but the question should really be asked of those who were responsible for framing the law as it now stood, because copper was not included under that particular heading up to date. They saw no reason why it should be now. Under the old law in mining for tin, silver, and antimony an area of forty acres was given within the limits of a proclaimed goldfield or mining district, which was the same as a mineral district, and outside the limits eighty acres were granted —the extra forty acres being given to induce people to prospect outside fields already proclaimed and proved payable. The proposal of the Minister went much further than that, for it not only covered the reward claim of forty acres, but it doubled the whole lot and granted 160 acres. The remarks he had made about increased areas on goldfields applied with equal force to mineral fields. If the 160 acres were allowed it would mean that about half a dozen companies taking advantage of that provision would be the owners of the whole of a mineral field, and the rest of those engaged in the mineral industry would be wages men—a few owners and a large number of servants. What fault had the hon. member for Woothakata to find with the existing law? He had done well and was now doing well, and what complaint had he to make against the present law? He did not know of any, but if there were any special advantages to follow the increase of the area granted for tin, silver, bismuth, and antimony from forty acres to 160 acres they were entitled to know what they were. He would sit down now to

give the hon. member for Woothakata an opportunity of telling the Committee what those advantages were likely to be.

Mr. NEWELL: Under the old Act, before the Act at present in force, if a man went out prospecting he could get a freehold on paying 30s. an acre. Under the present law a man could take up as many areas of forty acres each as he liked, and that was quite as good as what it was proposed to put in the Bill. Everyone knew that minerals were not like gold, and men required a larger area to work them. It should be remembered that they had only just agreed to grant fifty acres for gold.

Mr. DAWSON: Under special conditions, bear in mind.

Mr. NEWELL: Capitalists must get a larger area than forty acres on a mineral field if they were to be induced to invest their money in that class of mining. They would not undertake expensive works on a small area. They had an instance of that before them last year when the Chillagoe people required a concession of 2,000 acres to build their railway. They agreed to pay an extra 10s. an acre for it, but that did not matter so much to them as getting the increased area. That was what they looked upon as the equivalent for their expenditure. Unless the area was extended they would never get capital to develop their mineral ores, which, to treat them properly, required more expensive machinery than gold. The senior member for Charters Towers knew the mineralised quartz on the Etheridge, and that would not be worked unless special facilities were given. If a concession was given in that case, he believed someone would be found prepared to work those ores. One hundred and sixty acres was not too large an area. An ordinary miner could take up any area up to forty acres at present, but what could he do with it? There were very few individual miners working copper and silver ores and tin who were not prepared to sell to any capitalist that might come along, and also to advise the capitalist to take up as much land as he possibly could alongside. He did not see anything liberal about this. Though at present the maximum area of a lease was forty acres, leases could be amalgamated. This was only what he considered offering an inducement to people to bring more capital into the country, and large tracts were not being given away without conditions being imposed. If on a forty-acre lease so many men had to be employed, he did not see why on a 160-acre lease there should not be a proportionate number of men employed. As for 160 acres being a large area, he thought 11,000 acres had been taken up in his district, and that was only a very small portion of the whole district. Almost everyone who gave evidence before the Mines Commission said that capital should be induced to come to the country, and the weight of evidence was in favour of making the conditions more liberal. If a man went out prospecting, and opened up country for those who came after him, he should get some recompense. As for 160 acres he did not think companies would be induced to erect very expensive works with that area; he thought they would want a good many 160 acres before they erected works of any magnitude. They had not yet got the proper machinery for treating all the ores, and they must induce capitalists to come who would treat all the ores, and by so doing they would be keeping the money in the colony. If the 160 acres would induce capitalists to come with the conditions imposed it would be a good thing for the colony, because the expenditure of capital meant the employment of men, and more employment meant greater prosperity. The junior member for Charters Towers had spoken of the prosperity of the goldminers; and if the hon. member would go round the district of which he had been speaking he would find the people quite as happy as the miners on Charters Towers. He did not see any hardship in this 160 acres. If they could take up fifty acres in gold country, 160 acres was a very small area to allow people to take up in mineral country.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Under the present Mineral Lands Act there was a limit to the extent of a lease, but leases could be amalgamated to any extent.

Mr. BROWNE: £10 for each amalgamation.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That was so, but if the Minister was satisfied he could authorise the union of leases to any extent under the present law, and as far as he could learn the power had not been abused. With the exception of the district represented by the hon. member for Woothakata, there was no work outside coal being done on any mineral field in the colony.

Mr. DAWSON: There was a great difference between mining for gold and mining for other minerals. That had always been recognised in the past, and therefore they had two different sets of conditions. The hon member drew a comparison between them, and said that if fifty acres was not too much upon a goldmining lease, the area of a mineral lease ought to be increased. But he should remember that they had only increased the holding on a goldmining lease from twenty-five acres to fifty acres, while he wished to increase the area on a mineral lease from forty acres to 160 acres, and such a large increase was not justifiable. He had asked the hon. member, who represented the only live mineral field in the colony, to show any case of hardship that had arisen, or give any other reason why this large increase was demanded by those engaged in the industry; but so far the hon. member had not made any reply to that request, and he questioned very much whether he could. So far as the evidence given before the Mining Commission was concerned, there was nothing of the kind at all. They had decided the area and labour conditions in regard to goldmines, but there were no labour conditions at all in the Bill regarding other mines. It would be merely a matter of regulation, and if the Minister liked he could make it one man to every 160 acres. If he liked to peg out a mineral lease now, all he would have to pay to the Mines Department would be 10s. per acre per annum, and therefore the analogy drawn by the hon. member for Woothakata was not a good one. In addition to the greater increase in area, there was no provision in the Bill, and no promise from the Secretary for Mines, in regard to labour conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The present labour condition is one man to every five acres.

Mr. DAWSON: That was provided by regulation, but as the Bill stood it would be left with the Minister whether the condition was one man to ten acres or one man to the whole 160 acres. It would be outside the control of Parliament altogether.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is an amendment suggested by the other side.

Mr. DAWSON: They had not to deal with suggestions, but with the intentions of the Minister. He would also remind the hon. member for Woothakata that the increase to fifty acres on gold leases did not apply all round, because they had provided that a certain time must have elapsed, and certain conditions must obtain, before the extension of twenty-five acres could be granted; so that the increase in regard to goldmines was conditional, but it was quite different in regard to mineral leases, because the increase would be unconditional. He was sure the

Secretary for Mines would see the distinction he was pointing out, and he contended it was just as necessary to impose conditions before an extension could be given in the case of a mineral lease as in that of a goldmining lease. He knew this proposal would not be acceptable to the mining community, and it would remove the incentive to prospecting, which was one of the finest things they had. If they held out the inducement of a reward for the discovery of new mineral fields, they went a long way towards inducing miners to prospect every available foot of country, but by increasing the area to 160 acres they would entirely do away with all inducement to prospect. If inducements to prospect were held out men would go beyond the limits of proclaimed fields, knowing that if they were successful they would be certain of a reward. With regard to mineral mining, the reward had been in the shape of an increased area, and in the case of goldmining an increased area and a monetary reward. The hon. gentleman—who discovered Herberton—had had the inducement before him that he would get a reward if he made a discovery, and to take away the inducement would certainly limit—indeed, it would be fatal to prospecting. Therefore he drew the attention of hon. members to the absolute necessity of introducing some safeguards, especially as two clauses further on there was a provision that 320 acres might be held without any restriction or condition. Two or three men might take up the whole of a field and make everyone else subject to them.

Mr. HAMILTON: The last speaker said that under the 160-acre provision six monopolists could take possession of a whole field. That would mean about one and a-half square miles; but the member for Woothakata showed that 11,000 acres, or seventeen square miles, had been taken up in his district, and said that was nothing to what remained. The hon. member also said that the large areas proposed to be granted would monopolise the copper country from the working miner. But working miners could not take up and work copper-mines at a profit unless they were exceptionally rich on account of the large outlay required to make it pay, and seeing that that was the case it was to the interest of the working miner to induce capitalists to take up the copper country. Every additional inducement given to the capitalist would benefit the working miner by giving him employment. In South America, after £500,000 had been spent in machinery and appliances on the Anaconda Mine, satisfactory results did not accrue. It was then decided to expend an additional £1,500 on machinery and appliances. Owing to the expenditure of that additional sum, the mine had become one of the best paying ones in the world. What had taken place in the hon. member for Woothakata's district proved that larger areas were desirable, because all those who had taken up mineral land there had considered it desirable to acquire more than 160 acres. Under the law now in force any man could get fourteen square miles of country if he took it up in different areas. As for the argument that these large areas would discourage prospecting, he really could not see the force of it. He would support a proposal to give prospectors larger areas.

Mr. NEWELL: The member for Charters Towers told the Committee that he (Mr. Newell) was induced by the reward to go out and look for the Herberton field. As a matter of fact, there were no rewards in those days. At that time mineral lands could be bought, and it was only after the discovery of Herberton that Mr. Macrossan had the Act repealed, and prevented the selling of any more mineral land, except that which was sold to the prospectors of Herberton and the Cape Tin Field. Even then they could only get sixty acres at £1 10s. an acre, and were required to spend £1 an acre.

Mr. DAWSON: Did you not go out to look for gold?

Mr. NEWELL: No. He went to look for tin. The hon. member seemed to have forgotten the evidence given at Herberton by Mr. Dempster. After saying that inducements should be offered on an old field like that for the introduction of capital, he was asked—

> In what way do you suggest that should be done? From my personal knowledge, capitalists have come to the conclusion that the tenure under the existing law is only a three-days' tenure, and that the extent of country granted is too small.

In answer to a further question, the same witness said—

> If a company made a declaration to the warden or the Minister that they were prepared to spend £10,000 in connection with a lease, they should be granted 100 acres of ground, and so on in proportion up to 500 acres, with a twenty-one years' lease.

That was the opinion of a man who had been connected with tinmining for many years, and who ought to know a little about it.

Mr. DAWSON: Do you agree with him?

Mr. NEWELL: Without going quite so far, he was of opinion that 160 acres was not too much. That would not stop prospecting. It was working men, not capitalists, who went out prospecting, and if one of them found a good show he took a twenty-acre lease or two twenty-acre leases, and because he could not work it he sold it to the first capitalist who came along, and the capitalist finding the ground too small to be worked profitably, wanted to take up more. A survey fee had to be paid for each lease, which entailed a considerable expense. If a man could take up 160 acres he had only to pay for one survey.

Mr. JACKSON: He thought the amendment a very liberal one, and intended to support it. In the Victorian regulations of 1896, it was provided that for silver, copper, tin, and other minerals, the maximum was fifty acres, although more could be granted on the warden obtaining special permission from the Minister. In New South Wales the maximum was eighty acres. He did not see why, in a young colony like Queensland, they should be more liberal than in the older colonies, where a great deal more prospecting had been done. He hoped the amendment would be carried, although he did not expect it, seeing that hitherto all the divisions had been taken on purely party lines.

Mr. HAMILTON: In Victoria, although fifty acres was the maximum when application was made directly to the warden, still there was no limit whatever when the applicant applied first to the Minister for permission to apply to the warden. But there was ten times the mineral land in Queensland, and the hon. member's argument seemed to be that they should give a smaller area because they had more ground to deal with.

Mr. STEWART had come to the conclusion that all the weight of argument, all the common sense, and all the desire to conserve the interests of the colony lay with hon. members on his side. He had also come to the conclusion that the anxiety to play into the hand of the absentee, the desire to create a boom, and the determination to carry the Bill without regard to common sense or the rights of the community lay on the side of the Government with their large and servile majority. In the district represented by the hon. member for Woothakata, to which that clause was supposed to specially refer, three witnesses had been examined. Messrs. Ringrose and Haldane had made very little, if any, reference to larger areas. It had been mentioned

in a general way that larger areas might be beneficial, but the only witness who had condescended to particulars was Mr. Dempster. He would not repeat the evidence quoted by the hon. member for Woothakata, but there was further evidence which might very fairly be read for the information of the Committee:—

By Mr. Dawson: You talk about large areas. What do you consider a small area? The area allowed under the present conditions.

What would you consider a fair area for a large company? If they are prepared to spend £10,000 I would grant them 100 acres. If £20,000, I would double it.

Do you mean £10,000 a year, or over the twenty-one years? Over the twenty-one years.

As a guarantee for the expenditure of the money would you insist upon their placing a sum of money in the hands of the Minister? Certainly.

There was no proposal in the Bill insisting upon a company making any deposit with the Minister—

What proportion would you insist upon their paying? Such a sum as they could not very well afford to forfeit.

If they spend 10 per cent. of the £12,000 in the twelve months you think they should obtain exemption for six months? Yes.

Do you think it would work satisfactorily on this or any other field if a company could lock up the land for six months after every year's work for twenty-one years? I think so, considering that we have so many thousand acres which at present are only a howling wilderness.

Although, according to that witness, Herberton at the present time was "a howling wilderness," the time was very near at hand when the district of which Herberton formed a part would be a separate colony, and it would not then be "a howling wilderness." What was now being attempted was to give away the vast resources of the Northern portion of the colony before Queensland was split up into three colonies. That appeared to be the design of the Government. If the people of the North had been wise, they would have had separation from the South long ago, and they would have been in a position to deal with their wealth in their own way; and from what he knew of them he was certain that they would be the last people in the world to hand it over without rhyme or reason to foreign syndicates. The only plea the hon. member for Woothakata had advanced in support of the clause was that by giving larger areas they would induce the foreign capitalist to come in. Was the foreign capitalist a god that they should bow before him in that fashion? Were they going to be punished for their worship of the golden calf in the same way as the Children of Israel had been? Would that calf be ground up into powder, and would they be compelled to drink it to the dregs? He believed they would. He believed the first links of the chain of slavery that was going to bind Queensland were being forged by that Bill. The men who were pushing the Bill through the Assembly were the enemies of the people of Queensland, and he believed they knew they were the enemies of the people of Queensland. They were betraying the interests of the people. No measure that had ever passed through that Chamber had been more likely to injure the colony than the Bill on which the Government had set their hearts.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the Bill is not now before the Committee, but the amendment of the junior member for Charters Towers.

Mr. GLASSEY: Isn't that a part of the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure the leader of the Opposition has off by heart—if he has not, I have—Standing Order 258—"When a clause or amendment is under discussion, a member speaking shall confine himself to the matter of that clause or amendment." I have no desire to pull up the hon. member, but if this Committee is to do any business hon. members must stick to the question before it.

Mr. STEWART: With all respect he said the Chairman had just delivered himself of the most astonishing piece of information he had heard since he came into the House. The Chairman said the Bill was not before the Committee. What was before the Committee, if it was not the Bill?

Mr. CROSS: A clause of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member has not the amendment in his hand, and I will read it again for his information. [Amendment read.]

Mr. STEWART: The hon. member for Clermont seemed to be in an extraordinary hurry for the question to be put, but if he represented a mining constituency as the hon. member did, he would fall on the floor of the House before he would see this Bill pass. But to come back to the question, he submitted that he was dealing with the amendment, inasmuch as he was dealing with the extension of area and the results which he believed would follow that extension. It appeared to him that the majority of the Mines Commission were not guided by the evidence that was brought before them, but that they were merely guided by their own inclinations or that they had their instructions. He believed they had their instructions, and he ventured to say that had they been judges sitting on the bench bound to give their decision according to the evidence, they would never have recommended the extension of mineral areas as proposed in that Bill. Mr. Dempster gave the following further evidence:—

What ratio of increase would you give in proportion to the amount proposed to be invested? I could not say. I think 1,000 acres on an expenditure of £100,000.

He did not know particularly much about that question, but if any company came forward prepared to spend £100,000 in return for getting 1,000 acres, he should be inclined to say, "Go ahead, and good luck to you." But there was no such proviso in that clause. Then Mr. Dempster was asked—

About the lodes in this district, is more than one lode likely to occur in 100 acres? Yes; there is a possibility of half-a-dozen or more.

That meant that a company might make an immense fortune out of 100 acres. A man or a company engaged in mining took all the risks of the enterprise; they went in to make a fortune, to win or to lose all. But the Government by that Bill did not ask the people who invested in mining to risk anything. They practically said to them, "Come along, we will give you the country for nothing; you can hold it on the very easiest terms; we will give you a lease for twenty-one years, and at the end of that period we will renew it; you know perfectly well that the processes are always being cheapened, that the price of labour is getting lower, and that probably the value of minerals will go up; if you are lucky you will heap up an immense fortune, and if you are not lucky you will lose very little." That, in effect, was what they said to the speculator. But to continue the evidence of this witness—

And a company with 100 acres would monopolise the whole of them? But there is a possibility of more of the lodes being payable.

Mr. Smyth then asked the witness—

Do you not think that a company should prove itself to be possessed of so much capital before getting any concession? Certainly. That would answer all purposes.

The poor man would undoubtedly be out of it under that Bill.

Mr. STUMM: This clause is precisely the same as the existing law.

Mr. STEWART: Hon. members on that side had been contending for the last hour that the area was increased from forty to 160 acres, and their statements had not been contradicted. Which authority was he to believe—the hon. member for Charters Towers or the hon. member for Gympie? He certainly believed the hon. member for Charters Towers. But the hon. member for Gympie might mean that under the existing law people might get larger areas. That was quite possible. Nobody contended that they could not get larger areas by dodgery and trickery, but under this Bill those people could get the larger areas without any dodgery, and they had only to resort to their old dodges and tricks to increase their areas indefinitely. He hoped the Minister, who was not disposed to be extreme, would accept a compromise and agree to the proposed amendment.

Mr. NEWELL: The hon. member admitted that he knew very little about this matter, and for his edification he would remind him that the present Act said that "the area shall be such, not exceeding 160 acres, as may be from time to time prescribed," and in clause 59 it was provided that the area for working tin, silver, and antimony within the limits of a proclaimed goldfield or mining district should be forty acres, and outside those limits eighty acres. The present Bill was a consolidating measure, and they were providing in it for just what was the law at the present time.

Mr. CROSS quite agreed with the amendment, but he was not in the habit of filling *Hansard* with talk upon a subject with which he was not familiar. He was as willing as the hon. member for Rockhampton North to fall on the floor of the House to prevent any serious wrong being done to the colony, but he acknowledged some duty to his party, and did not advocate things and call for divisions upon which he was entirely left. The hon. member for Rockhampton North should not have taken up his remark in the spirit in which he did. He admired the hon. member's pluck in doing what he thought was right, but they had men on that side who did know what they were talking about on that question, and who had contributed valuable assistance in the consideration of the Bill, and he was prepared to be guided by them.

Mr. DAWSON understood the Minister was going to make some statement to meet their objection to the clause.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What was proposed now was to keep to the present law. There was no alteration proposed. The junior member for Charters Towers was quoting from the present regulations.

Mr. DUNSFORD: I admit that; but I want it in the Act and not in the regulations.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It was impossible to put everything into the Act. Wolfram was worth £10 or £12 a ton, and 160 acres would not be too much to work that. Under the present Act more could be given, because there was power to amalgamate leases to an unlimited extent.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Do you believe in that?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No; he was going to limit it. He would limit it to 320 acres, which he thought ample for any mineral lease.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Will that be in the regulations?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: At the present time he did not see any reason to alter the present regulations, except with respect to antimony, which ought to be put with copper.

Mr. JACKSON: But you are not thinking of increasing the area.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES thought the area should compare with the price of the mineral worked. Very likely the area for wolfram and antimony would be increased. To work antimony successfully it must be treated on the spot. With the minerals worked at present, and the minerals that might be found, it was impossible to say how many acres should be the limit. In New South Wales there was no limit of area, the condition being that £5 per acre must be spent in three years.

Mr. DAWSON: The prosperity of the mining industry in Queensland, take it all round, was greater than in any other colony.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Not in silver and coal.

Mr. DAWSON: So far as was known there was not in Queensland a silver-mine to be compared in richness or value to what there was in New South Wales. The conditions and the area had nothing to do with making silver-mining better in New South Wales than in Queensland. And the same thing applied to coal. There was a lot of coal in Queensland, but it was of such inferior quality that it could not compete with New South Wales coal; and that was why the coalmining industry was more prosperous in New South Wales than in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Clermont coal is as good as any in New South Wales.

Mr. DAWSON: As a matter of fact, the Ipswich, Bundanba, and Burrum coal could not be stacked on the surface, and it took four days to put 2,000 tons of coal on a ship in Brisbane, while it took only twenty-four hours to put the same quantity on at Newcastle. It was the quality of the New South Wales coal that made the coal trade better there than it was here; it was not on account of the labour conditions or the enlarged area. With regard to gold, that did not operate, because gold was the same price the world over. The Minister had promised that he would make the regulation stiff, but there was one thing that had been forgotten throughout the discussion. As the law stood a man who held a miner's right could only exercise the right to mine on a goldfield, he could not go on a mineral field, and a man who held a mineral license could not go on a goldfield; but under this Bill one right covered both fields —and a man with a general license could go on any field and mine. The danger of that would occur in this way: It very often happened that gold was found with other minerals. A field might be proclaimed a mineral field, and inside that area gold might be found associated with other minerals. A man who took up a mineral claim would be entitled to 160 acres, and would be actually taking up gold. He could work that by holding his mining license, whereas if it was purely a goldfield he would be restricted to fifty acres, which he would have to work under certain conditions.

Mr. HAMILTON: Clause 32 provides for that.

Mr. DAWSON did not think clause 32 covered that.

Mr. SMYTH: Where gold predominates, you have to work it for gold.

Mr. DAWSON: He was talking about the right of a man to take up a certain area, and there was nothing in clause 31 or 32 defining the area or the labour conditions that would apply. If a mineral field were proclaimed, and gold were found in association with other minerals, men could mine for the gold under the plea of mining for other minerals. Take the case of the Mount Success. According to the assayers it was a very difficult question to decide whether the silver or the gold predominated. That field at first adjoined, and was now an extension of, the Ravenswood Gold Field, so that a man there might take up 160 acres and work it with one man to ten acres, while in the adjacent territory a man would be strictly confined to fifty acres

under special conditions, and one man to every four acres. Such conditions were not fair, and he hoped the Secretary for Mines would take steps to safeguard the department against swindling of that description.

Mr. CROSS agreed with the remarks of the hon. member for Charters Towers, except in regard to the quality of Queensland coal. The evidence taken before the Mining Commission showed that the Ipswich coal was not equal in quality to the New South Wales coal; and experts had acknowledged that there was no better steaming coal in Australia than that found at Clermont, which could stand stacking for a long period and retain its excellent quality. Of course Newcastle was a seaport town and was connected with all the collieries by rail, whereas Clermont was 220 miles from Rockhampton, and the freight increased the price of the coal. He hoped the Secretary for Mines would accede to the request of the hon. member for Charters Towers.

Mr. DUNSFORD: His object was to insert in the Bill what was already in the regulations, and the Minister could not object to that unless he contemplated amending the regulations. If he intended to do that he should have informed the Committee. All such matters as this should be contained in the Bill itself, because the regulations could be continually altered, and they were not under the control of Parliament. The clause provided that no matter how rich the land might be, or where it was situated, 160 acres might be taken up; the next clause but one provided that another area of 160 acres might be taken up by the same person without any labour conditions at all, so that really the area was being increased from forty acres to 320 acres. He hoped the Committee would seriously consider whether they were justified in sacrificing the wealth of the colony to such greed.

Mr. DAWSON would point to the evidence of Mr. William Stafford, of Ipswich, on page 213 of the Mining Commission's report. He said that he had had thirty years' experience in coal-mining, and he went on to say that he noticed there was a recommendation that the Government should erect shoots to store coal——

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that we have not yet got to that part of the Bill which deals with coal. The question now before the Committee is the amendment of the hon. member for Charters Towers, Mr. Dunsford. I trust the hon. member will confine his remarks to that amendment.

Mr. DAWSON would like to draw attention to the fact that the question of coal was raised by the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill. He made a certain statement.

Mr. LEAHY: That does not put you in order.

Mr. DAWSON: He had made a statement in reply to objections that had been raised against his colleague's proposal. His words had been disputed by the hon. member for Clermont, and he merely wanted to show that he was not giving his own authority, but was speaking on the authority of a man with thirty years' experience. He wished to prove that he had not made a false statement with any intention to mislead the Committee. Mr. Stafford had pointed out that the reason he had alleged was the real reason why Queensland was not so prosperous in coal-mining as New South Wales. It was not a matter of extension of areas or of labour conditions, but of quality.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member does the question of the quality of the coal bear on the amendment before the Committee?

Mr. DAWSON: Undoubtedly.

The CHAIRMAN: I think I was quite right to allow the hon. member for Clermont to make the explanation he did.

Mr. DAWSON: And am I not quite right in showing that I am right in what I say also?

The CHAIRMAN: I think the matter has gone quite far enough.

Mr. DAWSON: It is a kind of brotherly love business.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must keep to the question before the Committee.

Mr. DAWSON: When an hon. member was contradicted point blank, was he not in order in producing his proofs? He made a distinct statement in reply to the Minister; that statement was disputed, and he had proof in his hand to show that he was right.

Mr. CROSS: What does Stafford know about Clermont?

Mr. DAWSON: Mr. Stafford knew more about coal than the hon. member was ever likely to know. The Minister had quoted the condition of other colonies, particularly New South Wales, to show that the large area and the easy labour conditions made mineral mining, and especially coalmining, more prosperous in New South Wales than in Queensland. He disputed that statement, and he had proof to show that it was the inferiority of the article that had made the industry in Queensland not so prosperous.

Mr. STUMM rose to a point of order. They were discussing an amendment that had nothing whatever to do with coal.

Mr. MCDONALD: That is no point of order. Why do you not state it?

Mr. STUMM: The point of order was that the hon. member was not discussing the amendment before the Committee——

Mr. DAWSON: That is not a point of order; it is assertion.

Mr. MCDONALD: The Chairman is the judge of that.

Mr. STUMM: And the discussion is not relevant to the question before the Committee.

Mr. DAWSON: Before you give your decision I draw your attention——

Mr. LEAHY rose to a point of order.

Mr. DAWSON: Two points of order cannot come together.

Mr. LEAHY asked whether it was in order for any hon. member to get up and make a statement on a point of order when his opinion had not been invited by the Chairman? The practice was for the Chairman to give his ruling, and it was then competent for any hon. member to move that the ruling be disagreed with; or if the Chairman wished to invite the opinion of hon. members before he gave his ruling it was open for him to do so. The Chairman had not invited the opinion of hon. members.

Mr. DAWSON desired to explain——

MEMBERS on the Government side: Chair, chair! Order, order!

Mr. DAWSON: He was perfectly willing to bow to the Chairman's ruling, but——

MEMBERS on the Government side: Chair, chair! Sit down!

Mr. HAMILTON: The Chairman is on his feet. Sit down! Chair, chair!

Mr. DAWSON: I am not going to sit down for the interjections of hon. members. Let hon. members mind their own business. I rose to speak before the Chairman rose, so there is no occasion to call "chair."

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Stumm, rose to a point of order, and asked me whether I considered the remarks of the senior member for Charters Towers relevant to the question before the Committee. Standing Order No. 110 says—

> Upon a question of order being raised, the member called to order shall resume his seat; and after the question of order has been stated to Mr. Speaker by the member rising to the question of order, Mr. Speaker shall give his opinion thereon, but may first invite the opinion of the House. But it shall be competent for

any member to take the sense of the House after Mr. Speaker has given his opinion, and in that case any member may address the House on the question.

On the point raised by the hon. member for Gympie I think there is no need whatever for me to invite the opinion of this Committee. I am of opinion that the hon. member was decidedly out of order. I drew the hon. member's attention on two occasions to the fact that he was not discussing the amendment before the Committee, and that is my ruling—that the hon. member is not in order in referring to the question of coal any further on the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. DAWSON was very sorry to have to do it, but he was going to move that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to. If the hon member for Bulloo had not been quite so strict upon a mere matter of technical procedure, the difficulty might have been avoided. He was not desirous of disputing the Chairman's ruling, but he refused to sit down at the dictation of hon. members. He would only resume his seat in obedience to the Chairman. What he intended to do was to draw attention to the fact that the word "coal" was relevant to the amendment. If hon. members would only turn to clause 28 they would see that the last subsection read—

The area, save as hereinafter provided with respect to coalmines, shall be such, not exceeding 160 acres, as may be from time to time prescribed.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand the hon. member has moved that my ruling be disagreed to, and he must let me put the question to the Committee.

Mr. DAWSON: He had not finished his speech yet, and he was entitled to give his reasons. He would conclude with the motion, and the question could not be put until he had resumed his seat. He did not think the ruling was one that could be upheld by anyone who understood the procedure of the House and the Standing Orders. He did not think the Chairman could find anything in any of the standard authorities to the effect that the line of discussion he had taken up was out of order, seeing that the express term he had been using was in the clause under consideration.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is not in the amendment.

Mr. DAWSON: The amendment was that certain words be excised with the view of inserting certain other words, and the words proposed to be excised had reference to coalmines.

The CHAIRMAN: Let me point out——

Mr. DAWSON: Is there going to be a duel between you and me, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know anything about a duel, but I am going to exercise my authority while I am in the chair. I would point out to the hon. member that the time to discuss coalmines will be when we come to that part of the Bill dealing with them. The words proposed to be omitted are "same as hereinafter provided with respect to coal."

Mr. DAWSON: As a matter of fact the amendment dealt with no other mineral than coal. If hon. members objected to the slightest deviation from the strict letter of the law, they may object to any mention of silver, antimony, copper, or anything else but coal, which was the one mineral mentioned in the words proposed to be omitted. But there was another thing besides the strict letter of the law, and that was parliamentary privilege and procedure. It might not be found in the Standing Orders, but it had been the practice ever since he had been a member of the House that when a Minister in charge of a Bill used any particular illustration it was competent for other members to reply to that illustration.

Mr. HAMILTON: It was not an illustration; it was only an interjection by the Minister.

Mr. DAWSON: No; it was most distinctly used as an argument by the Minister in order to induce members to reject the proposed amendment. Taking the clause itself and the custom of Parliament, he held that the Chairman's ruling was not in accordance with the custom of Parliament, or with the Standing Orders, and was entirely against parliamentary privilege ever since they had had a Parliament; and he therefore moved that it be disagreed to.

Question—That the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to—put.

The PREMIER: It seemed to him that the words in the clause "save as hereinafter provided with respect to coalmines," implied that the area with respect to coalmines was a question to be determined at some subsequent period. The subject had been alluded to by his hon. colleague, but a Minister in charge of a Bill was allowed a certain amount of latitude——

Mr. McDONALD: Not more than any other member of the House.

The PREMIER: Was allowed a certain amount of latitude by way of explanation, and the privilege of comment was allowed to other members; but the hon. member had certainly unduly trespassed upon the indulgence which the Committee was always willing to afford in that direction.

Mr. DAWSON: I had no opportunity to speak.

The PREMIER: He wondered that the Chairman had allowed the hon. member to proceed the length he did when it was expressly stated in the clause that the area in respect to coalmines was to be discussed hereafter. The hon. member might have referred to the matter as briefly as his hon. colleague did.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I only referred to it by an interjection.

The PREMIER: As the Chairman had given his ruling he felt bound to support him, and he thought the hon. member would be wise if he withdrew his motion, and let the Committee proceed with the discussion of the Bill in an orderly manner.

Mr. GLASSEY: Surely the Premier did not contend that the Minister in charge of a Bill was permitted to use arguments in order to carry the particular question under discussion, and that other hon. members had no right to reply to those arguments. Hon. members were quite prepared to allow the utmost latitude to the Minister in charge of a Bill, but it was competent for hon. members to combat any arguments he might advance. He trusted the hon member for Charters Towers would pardon him for saying it, but, as the conduct of the Chairman generally met with the approval of both sides of the Committee, he asked the hon. member to withdraw his motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES did not think that he had mentioned the word "coal" while on his feet. He had made two or three interjections about coal in New South Wales and coal at Clermont.

Mr. TURLEY: When they took into consideration the whole of the circumstances they must come to the conclusion that the member for Charters Towers was perfectly right in moving that the ruling of the Chairman be disagreed to. The amendment in clause 28 was to omit lines 4, 5, and 6, and insert certain other words, and if members did not agree to insert those words they would not vote for the omission of lines 4, 5, and 6. But in the event of their agreeing to omit those words, they were asked to insert certain other words, among which were: "The area applied for to work minerals other than tin, silver, and antimony shall not exceed 160 acres." Did anyone contend

that coal was not a mineral? Although not expressly stated, it was covered by those words, and the hon. member for Charters Towers was perfectly in order. Even if it was admitted that coal was excluded from consideration in the clause as it stood, it was certainly in order to refer to coal in connection with the words proposed to be inserted, and he would vote with the hon. member if he pressed his motion to a division.

Mr. SMYTH thought the Chairman's ruling was quite right, as coal was expressly excluded from clause 28. They did not deal with coal until they came to clause 45, and hon. members who were not biased would support the Chairman's ruling.

Mr. McDONALD: They had to read the clause in connection with the proposed amendment. Of course, if the proposed amendment was not to be taken in conjunction with clause 28, the Chairman might be technically right, but the words which it was proposed to insert certainly included coal. It was all very well for the Premier to say that Ministers ought to be allowed certain latitude, but that was out of the question altogether. Ministers were allowed latitude by courtesy, but not by the rules of the Assembly. The Secretary for Mines said that the mineral industry in New South Wales was in a far better position than in Queensland, and he had specially mentioned coal.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Only by way of interjection.

Mr. McDONALD: The senior member for Charters Towers then gave certain reasons why the mineral industry in Queensland was in a less flourishing position than in New South Wales in that particular line. The hon. member for Clermont then rose to defend his constituency. The hon. member for Charters Towers then endeavoured to put himself right, and after the argument had gone on for a considerable time, he was called to order. If the hon. member was out of order, then the Secretary for Mines and the hon. member for Clermont were equally out of order. He quite understood the Premier saying that he must support the Chair. Whether the Chairman was right or wrong, the hon. gentleman was bound to do that. It would be a very poor Government that would not support the Chairman's rulings. When the Opposition sat on the other side, he had no doubt they would pursue the exact course adopted by the hon. gentleman. That was the way that Parliament had been run in the past. However, he thought the hon. member for Charters Towers was perfectly right in his contention, and if he called for a division he should support the motion.

Mr DAWSON: Out of consideration for the request made by the leader of the Opposition he would not press his motion to a division. But before withdrawing the motion he should like to say that there was no other course open to him but to make the motion. He desired to make a statement before the Chairman gave his ruling, but was not given an opportunity of doing so, and he was actually compelled by the action of the hon. member for Bulloo to move that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to. Had he been allowed to make his statement, there would have been no necessity for the motion. The Minister certainly only referred to coal by way of interjection, but the hon. gentleman must not forget that every interjection of a Minister was reported, and was just as important to the public who read *Hansard* as a speech. That was the reason why he went on to discuss the matter. With the permission of the Committee he would withdraw his motion.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I put the question I should like to say that since I have been a member of this House the Chair has always allowed reasonable limits for one member to answer another when a charge has been made against him, and that limit was allowed the hon. member for Clermont to answer the hon. member for Charters Towers.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

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

AYES, 34.

Messrs. Dickson, Philp, Dalrymple, Chataway, Foxton, Murray, Cribb, G. Thorn, Grimes, Smyth, McMaster, Fraser, Hood, Bell, Callan, Collins, Petrie, Leahy, Moore, Macdonald-Paterson, Finney, Bartholomew, Morgan, Corfield, Newell, Stumm, Bridges, Stodart, O'Connell, McGahan, Armstrong, Stephens, Hamilton, and Tooth.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Glassey, Keogh, Cross, Kerr, Dunsford, King, McDonald, Dawson, Sim, Drake, Jenkinson, W. Thorn, Curtis, Dibley, McDonnell, Turley, Jackson, Browne, Daniels, Kidston, Hardacre, and Stewart.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Smith and Lord.
Noes—Messrs. Fogarty and Maughan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 29—"Covenants and conditions of mineral leases"—

Mr. BROWNE proposed the following new subsection to follow subsection 4—

A covenant that there shall be employed on the lease one man for every five acres or fraction of five acres unless exemption or partial exemption has been granted.

This was on the same lines as the amendment introduced in a similar clause referring to goldmining leases. He did not suppose the Secretary for Mines would have any objection to introducing a labour covenant into the clause, but there would probably be a difference of opinion as to the number of men to be employed. In his amendment he provided for the number of men required under the present regulations. With regard to goldmining leases, the Committee had decided to liberalise the conditions to the extent of four times what they were before, and he supposed that—carrying out the same intention with respect to mineral leases—they would be asked to allow one man to twenty acres. He had previously given his reasons for objecting to further liberalise the labour conditions, and he would not repeat them now. He did not see any reason why they should provide that in the future only one-fourth of the labour would be required that they had insisted upon in the past.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES was not disposed to accept the amendment, but he was prepared to accept one making it one man to ten acres—double the number at present required. If the hon. member would amend his amendment to provide for that he would accept it.

Mr. BROWNE preferred that the hon. gentleman should move his amendment on the one he had submitted.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the hon. member would withdraw his amendment, he was prepared to move an amendment providing for one man to ten acres.

Mr. BROWNE preferred that the amendment suggested should be made upon the one he had submitted.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES moved that the amendment be amended by omitting the word "five" and inserting "ten."

Mr. DAWSON thought it a good thing to have the labour conditions with regard to mineral leases introduced into the Bill itself, as they had done with respect to goldmining; but he should be very sorry if the Committee accepted the proposal to fix them at one man to ten acres. To his mind that was an awful thing.

He knew of no case in which claimholders or leaseholders had met with any difficulty under the present law; and even if they had, there were provisions in the present law to enable a man who had a hard case—who had spent a large sum of money and a considerable amount of time, and who had not been able to fully develop his lease; wanted a breathing space and time to recover from his misfortunes, they provided machinery to allow him that breathing space by giving him the right to apply for exemption, total or partial. It was giving away their mineral lands to say to a company, or an individual, that they might take up ten acres and need only employ one man on that area. They were on the road to ruin; they were going to paralyse the industry if they carried on in that manner. He hoped the Committee would induce the Minister to stick hard and fast to the present provisions requiring one man for five acres, with the right of partial or total exemption—and that permitted only where a sufficient case was made out in open court.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In New South Wales, where there was a great deal more of mineral development going on than in Queensland, the labour conditions were that the lessee must spend £5 an acre within three years.

Mr. DUNSFORD: That is what is making the mineral industry there anything but prosperous.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It was much more prosperous there than in Queensland. In South Australia the labour condition was one man to ten acres. The Committee had decided that only one man to four acres should be employed in goldmining; and they could not, therefore, say that one man to ten acres was too much for mineral leases. The existing law required one man to each acre for goldmining, and in the face of the decision of the Committee he was justified in asking that there should be only one man for twenty acres on mineral leases —but he did not ask that. He did not agree with the senior member for Charters Towers that they would be giving away their mineral lands. People did not care about taking up mineral lands when they had to pay 10s. per acre per annum for them. That was a sufficient check, and in Victoria the rent was only 2s. 6d. The only mineral country they had being worked was about Herberton and Chillagoe. There were thousands of acres on the Cloncurry which no one would take up, and which never would be taken up until they had a railway there. So it was all over Queensland. There was plenty of mineral country in the South-west lying idle. He was anxious to see people come here and take up our mineral lands, and they ought to be offered liberal conditipns. One man to ten acres would never develop any mineral field. Unless it was near a railway they would have to put up expensive smelting works, and he knew that £40,000 had been spent at Muldiva trying to get silver, and it had been thrown up. There was very little being done on our mineral fields, but he hoped Chillagoe would be in a flourishing state as soon as the railway was built.

Mr. BROWNE: He admitted that the Minister's proposal was in line with what had been done in regard to goldmining leases, but he had fought against one man to four acres in that case, and he was just as much opposed to one man to ten acres in this case. A man could take up, under a miner's right, nearly two acres, and if a leaseholder employed one man to five acres it was a fair thing. The reasons he had advanced against extending the area and relaxing the labour conditions with regard to goldmining leases, were equally applicable to the case of mineral leases.

Mr. DUNSFORD: In listening to the Minister pleading for these very easy conditions for the capitalist one would think that the silver lodes, the copper lodes, and the tin lodes of Queensland were very poor indeed; that the great mineral fields of Queensland were not in themselves sufficient to induce capitalists to come here without some special inducements in the shape of large areas and easier conditions. He was a firm believer in the mineral wealth of the colony. He believed our goldfields and mineral fields could stand on their merits—that they would go ahead in a legitimate manner, and that plenty of capital would come without any of these undue means being used. Though there had been any amount of inventions and discoveries, still it was impossible to produce one ton of copper or one ounce of gold or silver without the active factor of manual labour, and such being the case, why should it be the desire of the Minister to make the conditions such that these mineral fields could be locked up? Larger fortunes had been made out of silver-mines than out of goldmines, and more labour should be employed on that which produced greater wealth—the strictest labour conditions should be imposed where the greatest amount of wealth was produced with the least expenditure of capital and labour. Instead of one man to ten acres there should be ten men to one acre to equalise matters in comparison with the goldmining industry. And the same thing applied to copper, especially just now, when they knew that copper contained a large percentage of gold. In New South Wales a copper mine was worked and made payable, not only because of the copper it contained, but because of the gold it contained. The present condition was one man to five acres, and that was liberal enough. He believed the Minister originally intended that the condition should be easier still, and that it should be left to regulation, but he had since altered his mind and thought it wiser to include it in the Bill. He objected to the proposal that there should be only one man to ten acres, because it was so easy for mineowners to arrange a lockout when the men refused to accept lower wages or have their hours of labour increased. His colleague had previously cited a case in New South Wales where the men had to submit to a reduction in wages, although the Secretary for Mines there was in sympathy with them, and therefore he hoped hon. members would not give way. In order that the industry should prosper it was necessary that men should be employed, and he did not think the present conditions were strict enough.

Mr. CRIBB wished to know how the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon could be applied in the case of putting down a shaft in a coalmining lease of 320 acres. It would be impossible in putting down a shaft to employ the number of men that would be required by the proposed amendment. The fact of putting down the shaft might be considered continuous working, and the labour conditions be made to apply.

Mr. HARDACRE: As he was not a mining member he had kept quiet, but he could not keep quiet when he saw such an outrageous proposal as this made. It seemed as if the Minister thought a mineral lease was less than half as valuable as a goldmining lease, but that was not the case at all. As a rule, ground containing minerals was more valuable than a goldmining lease, in proof of which he might quote Broken Hill, and Mount Bischoff, in Tasmania, which had yielded dividends amounting to nearly £1,500,000. A mineral lode might be 100 feet in width, while a gold-bearing reef might not be more than one foot. The whole object of labour conditions was to prevent men taking up claims

that they did not intend to work, and it did not matter whether it was a goldmining lease or a mineral lease. With regard to gold, one man to four acres was not more than enough to ensure that the ground would be properly worked and developed, and it required just as many men to work a mineral lease as a goldmining lease. The proposal of the Minister would permit of people taking up areas without working them at all. Take the case of the Cloncurry copper mine.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Freehold, a lot of it.

Mr. HARDACRE: Was that not the worst possible thing that could happen? Did the hon. gentleman advocate giving freeholds without conditions? Why was not much of the land in that district worked? Would lightening the labour conditions enable it to be worked? Not at all. It would be worked if it was profitable to work it, but it was not worked because it was too far away from market. Yet the Minister put it down to the fact that the labour conditions were too heavy. That land would not be taken up in any case with the condition of one man to ten acres.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Some men at all events would have got employment.

Mr. HARDACRE: Some few would, no doubt. But that was no reason for allowing leases to be taken up on absurd conditions, because the men who would work the land to greater advantage were excluded. As soon as a railway went out there the land would be taken up and developed. A *bonâ fide* man would take up the central show; the outsiders would do nothing until the first man had proved his claim, and then they would sell at a very high price to somebody else who ought to have been allowed to have the land on reasonable conditions in the first instance. The present system not only ncreased the cost of production, but blocked production, because the price asked for was prohibitive for a long time. There was no relative value between mineral leases and goldmining leases; and in any case it was not a question of value but of developing properly the mine and seeing that claims were taken up for *bonâ fide* purposes.

At five minutes to 10,

Mr. DUNSFORD called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. HARDACRE: The proposal of the Minister ought to be objected to most strongly, and he was prepared to fight the question to the bitter end. The proposal with regard to goldmining leases was not so bad, but this was beyond all reason. Did the Minister not know that the Cloncurry mines were of immense richness? When railway communication reached there bigger fortunes would be made out of mineral areas than, perhaps, out of any goldmine in the colony, with the exception of Mount Morgan.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is true of hundreds of square miles not taken up.

Mr. HARDACRE: It might be perfectly true with regard to unknown country, but it certainly was not true with regard to the colony generally. If it was true of a large part of the rest of the colony it was true with regard to the Cloncurry district, and therefore the Minister's proposal was all the more objectionable.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Labour conditions or no labour conditions, they will not work the Cloncurry mines.

Mr. HARDACRE: When the railway reached Cloncurry the mines would be worked, and would pay better than most goldmines. The proposition would only lead to monopoly and shepherding, and he hoped the mining members on his side would set their faces strongly against it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: As he had previously pointed out, the labour conditions were one man to one acre on goldmining leases, and one man to five acres on mineral leases. Having made the goldmining condition one man to four acres, the same ratio in mineral lands would be one man to twenty acres. But the two classes of mines were quite distinct. A big crushing of gold could be carried on the back of a packhorse, whereas the baser metals required railway carriage to make them pay, to say nothing of putting up very costly smelting and other works. There were thousands of square miles of mineral land at Cloncurry, and not a lease had been taken up. Why should not inducements be given to men to take that up, especially when they might have to wait for years before railway communication rendered the mines payable? Men would not take up mineral land and pay rent for it—even with one man to ten acres—for the mere sake of holding it. In nine cases out of ten men who took up leases and waited for somebody else to buy them, lost their money. To induce men to take up that North-western country they ought to make the conditions as light as possible, because they would have to wait for railway communication unless they hit upon something extraordinarily rich. One man to five acres had not been an inducement, and easier conditions might result in more leases being taken up. In New South Wales the conditions were much more liberal, with the result that the output of minerals was much greater than in Queensland.

Mr. HARDACRE: Broken Hill would have gone on just the same if the condition had been one man to one acre.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That did not follow. If a Broken Hill was discovered in Queensland the owners would not be satisfied to put on one man to ten acres; they might put on twenty men to an acre. The present proposal would stimulate prospectors to look for minerals, and if they hit upon a payable thing the more men they put on the more money they would make out of it. In South Australia they had one man to ten acres, and a great deal of mineral wealth had been got in that colony in past times. The copper-mines of South Australia had been the most profitable in Australia. Of course, one man to ten acres was only the minimum; if anyone found a good thing, the more men he put on the more he could make out of it. His clause would operate much more in favour of the poor man than of the rich man.

Mr. STEWART: Instead of becoming less valuable, their mineral resources ought to be becoming more valuable. With regard to the Cloncurry copper lodes, they all admitted that if they only had one man to 100 acres, those mines would not be worked at present, simply because there was no communication. But they were twenty years nearer to railway communication than they were in 1878. As to the minerals themselves, their relative value was also increasing. No doubt copper brought a higher price twenty years ago than it did to-day, but the processes were now a great deal cheaper, and communication was much easier, both with the coast and with the markets of the world; in addition to which there was not a copper lode in Australia from which a certain percentage of gold was not obtained, which, in some cases, paid for the whole cost. Tin was in rather a bad way at present, but the day of tin might come any time. Everyone must admit that our coal measures were of much greater value now than they had ever been, and as population increased their value would go on

increasing. Silver was cheaper than it had ever been, but who knew when they might be seized with the bimetallic craze, and then silver would appreciate?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: And gold will depreciate.

Mr. STEWART: It would depend altogether on their position. If they were a gold-producing country, they would not favour bimetallism, while, if their silver deposits became more valuable than their gold deposits, they might alter their opinion. He believed that their mineral resources were daily becoming more valuable, and instead of making them more accessible to persons who merely desired to make a future profit, they should make it more difficult.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Lock up the land, I suppose.

Mr. STEWART: This proposal directly lent itself to locking up the land. They had had the very same argument with regard to agricultural lands. He supposed that at some previous period in the history of the colony some members protested against the sale of agricultural lands, and that other members argued that no one would be so foolish as to buy large areas and keep them lying idle. But they knew that that had been done, that settlement had been obstructed thereby, and that finally the Government had to buy back those very areas so that people might settle on them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We have done very well out of the bargain.

Mr. STEWART: How could they tell that they might not be placed in a similar position in the near future with regard to their mineral lands? If the land laws of the colony had been administered in a common-sense way, they would have had three times the population on the Darling Downs; in fact, they would have had a larger population over the entire colony, and Queensland would have been more prosperous than it was. The same principle applied to their mineral lands.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We are not selling them.

Mr. STEWART: It was practically selling them if they gave a twenty-one years' lease, and then gave a renewal of twenty-one years. That was forty-two years altogether, and it was as good to a company as a freehold. If there was anything in the argument that the lightening of the labour conditions would encourage the inflow of capital, why did not the hon. gentleman take a big dose of his own medicine, and make it one man to 100 acres instead of one man to ten acres? If increasing the proportion from one to five to one to ten would encourage the inflow of capital, surely an increase to one to 100 acres would still more encourage the inflow of capital. The whole thing was taking a leap in the dark, and the hon. gentleman did not know what he was doing.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr. STEWART: It was the easiest thing in the world for one man to say to another that he did not know what he was talking about; but that was not argument.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is your argument. You say the Minister does not know what he is doing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Your argument is that the more people you pile on an acre of country the greater will be the output.

Mr. STEWART: That was not his argument. His argument was that the present law had been found to work well enough in experience.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are killing time.

Mr. STEWART: He was not killing time. They might kill many things, but they could not kill time.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He means that you are wasting time.

Mr. STEWART: He was not wasting time.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You have talked more on this Bill than any other member.

Mr. STEWART did not think so, but he was only doing what he was sent there to do, and what he was paid for doing—to work in the best interests of the country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If that is your object you are a frightful failure.

Mr. STEWART: He might be a failure, but if he wanted to become an able advocate, the only way in which he could become expert in the business was by continually advocating something.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will address himself to the amendment before the Committee, and I must respectfully ask Ministers not to assist the hon. member in obstructing the Bill, as they have been doing for some time.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART regretted that the Chairman had come to the conclusion that he was obstructing the Bill. He was not obstructing the Bill, but he thought the Chairman's rebuke to hon. members opposite, who desired that the Bill should pass, was very well deserved. The only other point to which he wished to direct attention was that they had the same labour conditions for a place in the position of Cloncurry as for a place near railway or sea communication, though the value of a deposit must be very much greater—other things being equal—where communication was handy than it was away in the far interior. It would be a very good thing if they had some kind of classification of their mineral lands. He knew that it was rather a difficult thing to do, but it was not entirely impossible, and under such a system they could deal with their mineral wealth in a much more rational manner than they could under the existing system.

Mr. HARDACRE: The Secretary for Mines had said that he knew very little about the subject. He thought that while the hon. gentleman might know a good deal about goldmining, he knew very little about mining for the baser metals. Anyone who knew anything about mining for silver and other base metals knew that it required more costly machinery to develop such mines than it did to carry on goldmining; but that was no answer to his argument, because when a company was erecting costly machinery they could always get exemption. He (Mr. Hardacre) agreed with the Secretary for Public Instruction that as a matter of economics they ought to lighten as much as possible the labour conditions in cases where persons were *bonâ fide* working or prospecting a mine, but while doing that they should guard against opening the door to the monopoly of large areas for the purpose of preventing mines being taken up by persons who were willing to prospect, work, and develop them. The only question they had to concern themselves with was what labour conditions would be sufficient to prevent the taking up of leases by persons who desired to monopolise and shepherd them. His contention was that exactly the same conditions were necessary to prevent that with respect to mineral areas, as were necessary to prevent it in the case of goldmining areas—not one man less or more—and if to prevent that one man to 100 acres would be sufficient, not one man more should he put on. He reminded hon. members that before a mineral area was proved

payable, or declared payable by the warden, a man could hold a prospecting area of 160 acres with only his own labour.

Mr. STUMM: Do you mean to say you can do that with a mineral lease?

Mr. HARDACRE: He meant to say that a man could take up a prospecting mineral area of 160 acres and work it by himself until the warden came along and declared it payable. He had done it himself. But when the prospecting area was declared payable, and the prospector had to take out a lease, he had to comply with the labour conditions, and it should be remembered that with the costly machinery necessary to work minerals it would not be declared payable unless it was very rich indeed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member and other hon. members had pictured the terrible evils that would befall the colony in consequence of men being enabled to take up large areas for speculative purposes employing very little labour or a smaller amount of labour than hon. members opposite considered desirable. But the hon. member had himself reminded them that a man at present could take up a prospecting area of 160 acres, and hold it as long as he was prospecting.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; for six months.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: When he could probably get a renewal, or pass it on to a friend to hold it for another six months. While he gave hon. members opposite credit for the best intentions and a desire for the well-being of the colony, he claimed for members on his own side—who he thought were in the majority on the question—just as sincere a desire to promote the well-being of the colony. The difference was in the methods they adopted. Hon. members opposite believed in doing a very small business and in imposing very hard conditions; while on his side they believed in doing a very much larger business by encouraging people to come here to work under conditions less onerous. The majority of claims taken up in the past, and which would be taken up in the future, were claims which did not prove profitable; and they believed that by encouraging people to come here they were doing the very best thing possible to open up the country and to ultimately cause the greatest amount of labour to get employment. If they made easy conditions—but not comparatively easy conditions when the conditions existing in other colonies and countries where minerals occurred, and with which they had to compete, were considered—if they made easy conditions, they would probably succeed in bringing capital here. What would happen if they made stiff conditions would be that they would not get the same amount of land taken up. Those who argued against the proposal of the Secretary for Mines seemed to think that persons would not act upon their own volition; that people would not be governed in connection with business by considerations of profit. If the conditions were made fairly liberal ten times as many people would be induced to come here, and that would be more profitable to the working man and to the colony.

Mr. HARDACRE: Will they be *bonâ fide* men?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They believed in attracting *bonâ fide* men, and they believed that *bonâ fide* men would be scared away if the conditions appeared too onerous. With regard to the difference between goldmining leases and mineral leases, what hon. members opposite were willing to concede in the case of goldmining leases, they were not willing to concede in the case of mineral leases.

Mr. BROWNE: We did not concede to the other.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: At any rate they accepted it with a fairly good grace. In the case of such minerals as silver and copper there was not only the cost of obtaining the mineral to be considered, but also the cost of treating the ores, and people were not going to be attracted here to put a large amount of capital into mining and manufacturing the material—if he might call it so—with conditions that were not sufficiently liberal. The object of the Government was to make the conditions so fair and reasonable that people would be induced to work our mineral lands, and give a large amount of employment, but if people were prevented by onerous conditions from coming here the land would be locked up, and would not afford employment to anybody. If that contention was right they would ultimately succeed—not by piling people on a given acre, but by having a large number of acres worked upon—in attracting those who would give a great deal more employment than would be the case if they insisted upon more rigorous terms. It was for that and for no other reason that the Minister for Mines had eased off the conditions. Whatever hon. members might say in regard to the judgment evinced——

Mr. MCDONALD: Are you stonewalling?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The labour conditions proposed were somewhat similar to those which at present existed in the other colonies, which must be taken into consideration. The idea of hon. members opposite appeared to be that all industrial operations were carried on solely by coercion, whereas they were really carried on by the voluntary efforts of free men bent upon making profit. It was not a good thing to refuse to do business at all if one could not command higher rates than those obtained elsewhere, and it would not be well for this colony to be more thrifty in regard to its land than our neighbours if it was going to tell against the development of our mineral wealth. The object of the Minister for Mines was to do a larger business by the adoption of a plan which would induce people to take up and work our mineral lands.

Mr. NEWELL contended that companies gave more employment to working men than was given by private individuals. As to the fear that land would be locked up or only a few men employed, there was not a company that would not employ as many men as could be put on if they could make a shilling a week out of the labour of each man. The hon. member for Rockhampton North said the tin industry was in a very bad state, but he could inform the hon. member that it was beginning to rise in price again, and was now in a better position than it had been for the last five years.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the new subsection—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 21.

Messrs. Glassey, Keogh, Hardacre, McDonald, Kerr, Daniels, Cross, Jackson, Dawson, Kidston, Browne Turley, Jenkinson, Groom, Drake, King, W. Thorn, Dibley, Dunsford, Stewart, and Sim.

NOES, 33.

Messrs. Dickson, Murray, Foxton, Philp, Chataway, Dalrymple, Macdonald-Paterson, Tooth, Stephenson, Stumm, Finney, Newell, Callan, McMaster, Castling Collins, Corfield, Morgan, Bell, Petrie, Moore, Bridges, Bartholomew, Hood, Grimes, Cribb, Hamilton, Fraser, Leahy, Smyth, Stodart, Armstrong, and Stephens.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Fogarty, Maughan, and Curtis.
Noes—Messrs. Smith, Lord, and G. Thorn.

Resolved in the negative.

Question—That the word proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put and passed.

Question—That the new subsection to follow subsection 4 be inserted—put and passed.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, the words "not exceeding £100" were inserted after the word "penalty" in subsection 6, and the last paragraph of the clause was omitted.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at one minute past 11 o'clock.