

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 1900**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER, 1900.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed:—

- (1) Return to an order, relative to committals for trial from Thursday Island to Cooktown, made by the House, on the motion of Mr. Fitzgerald, on the 5th instant.
- (2) Fourteenth report of the Registrar of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks.

## QUESTIONS.

## SOUND TESTS FOR EMPLOYEES IN POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*) asked the Premier—

1. Is it true that the Postmaster-General has issued a general memo. calling upon all employees of the department to pass a certain test by sound?
2. Will all assistants in the Post and Telegraph Department who are classed as "professional" be compelled to pass the test mentioned in clause 2 of this memo. before receiving any promotion or increase of salary?
3. Will any "professional" assistant in the Post and Telegraph Department receive any promotion or increase of salary without being asked to pass this test?
4. Will the inspectors who are to report upon the competency of officers of the department themselves be examined to prove their competency?
5. Will the Postmaster-General differentiate between the head office and others?
6. Is it the intention of the department to take efficiency and length of service into consideration in all future promotions and increase of salary?
7. Will the Premier lay on the table of the House copies of the memo. referred to and all other papers connected therewith?

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) replied—

1. A general memo. has been issued calling upon all officers of the telegraph branch of the department, who desire authority to dispense with tapes to pass a certain test as to their ability to receive by sound.
2. With respect to any promotion or increase of salary, the case of each assistant will be considered on its merits.
3. This question is answered by the reply to question 2.
4. The inspectors or other officers whose duty it is to report on the competency of officers are officers of proved competency.
5. The Postmaster-General will differentiate between the head office and others to the extent set forth in the memo. referred to.
6. It is the intention of the department to take efficiency and length of service into consideration.
7. The memo. will be laid on the table of the House, but as the other papers connected with it are very voluminous, it is suggested that the honourable member call at the Post Office and examine them.

Mr. DAWSON: This is a matter for the public.

## SUPPLY OF COAL TO ADELAIDE STEAM SHIPPING COMPANY.

Mr. TURLEY (*South Brisbane*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. Has the Railway Department supplied the Adelaide Steam Shipping Company with any coal from the stock in possession of the department?
2. What was the quantity supplied, and for what purpose was it required?
3. What was the price charged for the coal per ton?

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The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*) replied—

1. Yes.
2. One hundred tons. It was required for the bunkers of one of the Adelaide Steamship Company's steamers.
3. The coal was lent to the company in exchange for 100 tons delivered at Townsville, where coal was urgently required.

## LADY MUSGRAVE LODGE.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) asked the Home Secretary—

1. Is the Lady Musgrave Lodge subsidised by the Government?
2. If so, to what amount?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) replied—  
No.

## SYNDICATE RAILWAY BILLS.

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. Was by-law No. 1, made by the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited, the owners of the Mareeba to Chillagoe Railway, submitted to the Crown Law Officers before being approved by the Governor in Council?
2. Did the Government submit to the Crown Law Officers for their consideration the whole or any of the syndicate railway Bills now before the Legislative Assembly?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1. Yes.
2. No; but the whole of the Bills were prepared by the Parliamentary Draftsman, and their provisions carefully considered by the Commissioner for Railways, and subsequently by the members of the Cabinet.

## MEN EMPLOYED EASING GRADES, ETC., SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY.

Mr. KATES (*Cunningham*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. How many men (other than permanent maintenance men) are at present employed in the work of easing grades, straightening curves, etc., on the Murphy's Creek to Toowoomba section of the Southern and Western Railway?
2. The average weekly number of men so employed since 1st January, 1900?
3. The average rate of wages paid to the men so employed during the present year?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1. The present number of men employed is eighty-three.
2. The average number of men employed since January last is 108.
3. The average rate of wages is 7s. per diem. This includes managers, mechanics, draymen. The average rate for labourers is 6s. 6d. per day.

## AGGREGATION OF GRAZING SELECTIONS.

Mr. BELL (*Dalby*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

1. Has his attention been called to the numerous instances of large aggregations of grazing selections in few hands throughout the Western and North-western portions of the colony?
2. If so, does he approve of a system which threatens to facilitate the substitution of new squattages for the existing old ones?
3. Will any official steps be taken to ascertain the grazing selections which are held in contravention of section 53 of 48 Vic. No. 28, and section 85 of 61 Vic. No. 25?
4. Will section 85 of 61 Vic. No. 25 be strictly enforced over the large area of country about to be taken up by grazing selectors?
5. Has he considered the advisability of introducing fresh legislation in order effectually to check the system of grazing farm aggregation?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. B. H. O'Connell, *Musgrave*) replied—

1. Not officially.
2. The Minister does not approve of any form of settlement which is illegal.
3. The officers of the department are instructed to take any necessary action to prevent breaches of the land laws.
4. Yes.
5. The matter is under consideration.

#### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

##### THE CHIEF JUSTICESHIP.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): I beg to ask the Premier, without notice—Whether there is any truth in the rumour that in the event of Sir Samuel Griffith resigning the Chief Justiceship, and running for the Federal Parliament, it is the intention of the Government to appoint the Attorney-General Chief Justice?

[No reply.]

#### PAPERS *re* MOUNT GARNET FREEHOLD MINING COMPANY'S TRAMWAY BILL.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): I desire to ask the Premier a question, without notice—Is the hon. gentleman prepared to lay on the table of the House, for the information of hon. members, all the correspondence and papers relating to the Mount Garnet Freehold Mining Company's Tramway Bill, which is now before the House?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All the papers were laid on the table on the 12th of September.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member mean to say that the papers are not lying on the table of the House now?

Mr. MAXWELL: Not the papers in connection with that railway.

The PREMIER: I may be permitted to explain that the papers have been laid on the table, and that the Clerk of the House informs me that he hopes to have them printed and distributed this week.

Mr. FISHER: Why not delay the Bill until they are printed?

#### RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to continue the office of the Commissioner for Railways, and to provide for his salary.

#### LEASES OF NORTHERN MINERAL LANDS FOR TRAMWAY PURPOSES.

On the motion of Mr. GIVENS, it was resolved—

That there be laid on the table of the House copies of all correspondence, papers, plans, and maps in connection with the leasing of 234 acres of land for tramway purposes to Samuel Dixon, in the Walsh, Tinaroo, and Hodgkinson mining districts.

#### MOUNT GARNET FREEHOLD MINING COMPANY'S TRAMWAY BILL.

##### SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*): I again express regret that the Premier has found it necessary to abandon the State policy concerning the construction of railways. He has no mandate, he has no authority, he did not tell the electors when appealing to them that he proposed to introduce a sheaf of syndicate railway Bills which were to take the place of the public legislation which is so urgently required by this long-suffering community. I regret that the haste has been of such a pressing nature that the Bill before us is not introduced in a complete

form. There are many provisions which should be embodied in the Bill if the Premier really wishes to protect the interests of the general public. There is no regulation concerning the style of carriage, the workmanship, or the material of the carriage that is to run on the line. Passengers may be compelled to travel in cattle trucks, in open carriages unsheltered from the weather. There is no penalty for the use of improper carriages and defective passenger accommodation; there is no provision that the engines shall consume their own smoke—a very necessary provision when we consider the passing of those trains through pastoral districts.

Mr. LEAHY: What about people consuming their own gas?

Mr. HIGGS: I did not think the hon. member for Bulloo would come up to time. My opinion of the hon. gentleman is that if hon. members on this side will only respond to his challenge to fight he will soon get very tired. The hon. gentleman, as Sir T. McIlwraith once said, goes through the House trailing his coat inviting somebody to tread on it. I don't mind treading on it if the hon. gentleman will insist on thrusting his coat in front of me.

Mr. LEAHY: You tell me that in Queen street.

Mr. HIGGS: Oh! Physical force, Mr. Speaker! Is that what we are to be threatened with—physical violence?

Mr. LESINA: Law and order!

Mr. HIGGS: If I respond to the bitter interjections which come from the hon. member, I am to be challenged to put up my hands in Queen street—I am to be asked to fight—to break the laws of the country—to indulge in a tussle with the hon. member on the footpath in Queen street because I choose to object to the schemes of the hon. member—because I resent his bitter interjections. Now, Sir, the hon. member has been a source of considerable interest to me in this Chamber—the hon. member for Bulloo. The hon. member is a study. The hon. member has had a very prosperous career in this country, and to his credit, because I understand that he has worked his way up from the bottom of the ladder. He is said to have been a fencer at one time—

Mr. DAWSON: He is a fencer yet.

Mr. HIGGS: And it is to his credit that he should have worked himself up to such a high position as the representative of Thargomindah—the representative of Bulloo. But it is not to his credit that he should endeavour to ape the airs and graces of the last of a long line of aristocrats. (Opposition laughter.) It is amusing to see him stalking into the library and calling the librarian's assistant as if he were some Simon Tappetit.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: The Home Secretary need not glare at me in that way. I suppose that if that hon. gentleman challenges me to combat it will be with pistols or sabres, as being a military gentleman he would never descend to fisticuffs. That would be something too common. Now let us proceed.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Hear, hear!

Mr. HIGGS: The hon. member for Lockyer is very anxious to get to business. I think that hon. member on one occasion found it necessary to attack the hon. member for Bulloo, and he charged him with having got a mortgage upon an hon. member of this House so that he could command his vote.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I never said such an unparliamentary thing in my life.

Mr. HIGGS: I think it is very appropriate that I should draw attention here to the absence from this Bill of a very necessary clause which is found in the Imperial statutes preventing a company from carrying prize-fighters along their

route. Prize-fighting may become very prevalent in Queensland. The South African war seems to be responsible for a good many things, and I do not know whether it may not be responsible for the militant and combative attitude of a number of members of this House; but I suggest that there should be a clause in this Bill as there is in the Imperial statutes preventing this company carrying prize-fighting parties along this line. The Secretary for Railways will see the clause if he looks up the series of amendments I have taken the trouble to get printed in connection with his Callide Bill. I understand that an amateur athletic club here is turning out boxers by the score, and that another athletic club at Breakfast Creek has a number of proficient. Although they are amateur institutions, there is no telling what may follow the example the hon. member for Bulloo wants to set by fighting in Queen street.

Mr. LEAHY: No; it is my boot I would use.

Mr. HIGGS: There is no telling what may happen if this kind of thing is to go on, and we may have parties of persons interested in prize-fighting going to the wilds of Mount Garnet, to carry on these tussles of skill and strength. I am not going to be at all disturbed by the challenge of the hon. member for Bulloo; but I wonder he did not say in the words of his compatriot: "Come out, and I'll put you out." I do not intend to modify my opposition to these Bills, because of the threats of hon. gentlemen. Probably in the time to come, when the private railway syndicates have got possession of Queensland as they have of America, they may have, as they have there, what I think is known as a "Bludger," to waylay honest politicians and newspaper men who dare express their honest convictions, and give them a beating.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It is the anarchist who waylays people.

Mr. HIGGS: The anarchist is the outcome of what hon. gentlemen in this Assembly propose to establish in Queensland. The anarchist is the outcome of trusts, huge rings, and monopolists. Legislators can deal with every class of offenders against the law but the anarchist. The man who sees what he believes to be a grievance requiring a remedy, and finding that legislature is slow to move, declares that he will himself endeavour to effect a reformation or lose his life in the attempt—that man cannot be dealt with.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. HIGGS: It is because the physical force anarchist is in existence in America as the outcome of the granting of huge concessions to private syndicates and monopolists, that I intend to do my level best to prevent the granting of concessions to private syndicates in Australia. I can see it growing. I can see that if the Ministry are able to get the Mount Garnet Bill and the half-a-dozen other Bills for private railways through the House, they will have trunk lines throughout the Northern portion of the colony, where in ten or fifteen years there may be a population of 1,000,000, and where in fifty years there may be many millions of people. This is why I will do my best to oppose these Bills. Hon. members opposite seem irritated at the opposition to these measures, and seem to think that it is trivial and absurd, but if they are successful in carrying these proposals they will in time to come, if they live long enough, regret the day when they proposed these departures from the policy of the country in the construction of railways.

Mr. LESINA: No; they will get up then and say they opposed it.

Mr. HIGGS: The evil outcome of the action of the Government in abandoning the policy of State railways is shown in the latest prospectus

issued to the public of Queensland, and which was brought before the House last evening by the leader of the Opposition. I could have wished that the matter had come before the House on a definite motion of adjournment that it might have been kept together and published to the public of Queensland in a concrete form instead of being sandwiched into a long debate upon the second reading of a Bill, and so that the Premier would not have been able to dispose of the matter by turning to other arguments connected with the Bill, but would have had to reply to the contentions of hon. members on this side. I am afraid that this Chillagoe Mines prospectus

may be lost sight of in the lengthy [4 p.m.] discussion that may take place on this Bill. You, Sir, have allowed considerable latitude to speakers, and as full discussion on this subject cannot be burked, it may be as well, on the second reading of this Bill, for me to lay all particulars before the House. I think this is a very, very serious matter—that promoters of these mining companies are to be allowed to go unchecked and undeterred, with the exception of a mild protest from the officials in the Mines Department. With regard to the prospectus issued by the Chillagoe Company Mines, No Liability, Mr. Dunstan, the Assistant Government Geologist of Queensland, is reported to say—

The properties belonging to the Admiral Sampson Chillagoe Company are comprised in the following leases:—

1. TARTANA HILL.—Lease No. 1217, area 40 acres.
  2. TARTANA NORTH.—Lease No. 1218, area 10 acres.
  3. TARTANA SOUTH.—Lease No. 1219, area 10 acres.
  4. MADRAS.—Lease No. 1224, area 10 acres.
  5. PRESIDENT MCKINLEY.—Lease No. 1221, area 10 acres.
  6. ROYAL STANDARD.—Lease No. 1260, area 10 acres.
  7. LILIAN.—Lease No. 1220, area 10 acres.
  8. ELVAN.—Lease No. 1223, area 10 acres.
  9. WANLOCK.—Lease No. 1222, area 10 acres.
  10. ADMIRAL SAMPSON.—Lease No. 1175, area 10 acres.
- Since acquired—
11. MONTE VIDEO.—Lease No. 1368, area 20 acres.
  12. MADRAS EXTENDED.—Lease No. 1369, area 80 acres.

All of these are situated to either the north, north-west, or west of Mungana (Girofla). The Wanlock, Elvan, and President McKinley are on Watson's Creek waters flowing into the Mitchell River; but all the others are in country drained by creeks running into the Walsh River.

The first paragraph appears to have been manipulated. The prospectus reads—

Each lease or mine is treated separately, and although I have had recourse to certificates and returns showing what tests have been made of the stones from many of them, yet in any deductions I have relied exclusively on the results of samples taken by myself.

The word "my" has been left out before the word "deductions." The prospectus goes on—

With the text matter of this report are submitted drawings of the leases, showing boundaries, outcrops of copper ore, lodes, workings, etc., and at the end of each will be found assay of results from the samples taken during my recent examination.

The words, "of each," have been inserted to suit the promoters of these companies, and some of these nine signatures to this prospectus must have been forged. Under the Criminal Code any person who signs a false document, knowing it to be false, with the intent to induce any person to do or refrain from doing any act, is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for three years. I invite the Premier's attention to clause 186 of the Criminal Code. The corrections which were sent to the *Telegraph* by two of the directors of the company are of a limited character. These corrections must have been made by the Mines Department, because no one else had access to Mr. Dunstan's original report; that is, unless

with the consent of the Mines Department. On the face of it, it appears that the corrected copy of Mr. Dunstan's report was supplied to the *Telegraph* by the Mines Department, and, as it appears, it is not a complete report, as can be seen by the certified copy of the report appearing in the *Courier*. The prospectus continues as follows:—

TARTANA LEASE, No. 1217.  
Area, 40 acres.

**Position.**—Tartana is situated on the eastern side of Bowler Creek, and about four miles above the junction of the creek with the Walsh River, and is about fifteen miles north-west from Mungana (Girofla). See accompanying map.

**Geological Features.**—Tartana Hill is comprised of alternating beds of quartzites and shales. The word "composed" is "comprised" in the original report—

The rocks have been subjected to considerable alteration, and are very much crumpled and contorted. They have a varying dip, but only oscillate a few degrees from the vertical, and have a general strike to the north-west.

The quartzites and shales are in layers of 3 inches or 4 inches thickness.

Here is a typographical error—the absence of the word "in"—

And it is in the immense number of these which make up the greater part of the mass of Tartana Hill. The remaining portions are nearly all shales, with beds of quartzites here and there.

The copper occurs mostly as carbonates and oxides disseminated through the layers of quartzites and shales; but it also occurs as veins filling up the joints found across the bedding planes of the rocks.

Here is a typographical error. After the word "found," in the original, are the words, "in many places."

Some of the veins have been formed on what may be faults, but nothing could be seen showing whether there are leaders from a main lode or simply small fissures filled by segregation from the surrounding formation.

Taking the deposit as a whole, there is no evidence forthcoming to show that it has emanated from a lode formation below the present outcrop, but to hazard an opinion I should say the whole of it has been an impregnation brought about in the first place by the crumpling of the rocks, and next to the resulting permeability of the rocks within the range of crumpling to aqueous mineral solutions. The copper minerals have been deposited not only in the joints, but also in the beds themselves, and it is quite possible that these beds have originally contained some solid mineral substance which, when coming in contact with the aqueous cupriferous solutions, has acted as a precipitant for the copper.

This would account for the presence of the copper in such finely disseminated particles in the stone, and may also account for the presence of the copper in some of the other deposits outside Tartana.

We may then consider the deposit as an impregnated zone of crumpled sedimentary rocks.

And here is an omission by the promoters of this syndicate—the omission of the words "and not as a lode formation." The prospectus then reads—

**Prospecting Work.**—The work carried out on the hill has been of a very satisfactory character in enabling an estimate being formed of the value of the deposit.

The intention, originally, of putting in drives and sinking shafts was not for the purpose of proving the value of the deposit as a whole, but to get out payable ore to send away at once for smelting. The work done, however, has served to show what the whole body of the stone will probably be like. The tunnel from the west—

There is a typographical error here—the omission of the letters "ern"—

side of the hill has been driven to cut out a vein of "tile ore," and carried in to a distance of 32 feet from the south.

The word "south" is "mouth" in the original.

Carbonates of copper occur throughout the length of the tunnel, and a sample of this ore taken from every portion of the tunnel as far as the cross drive (see plan of Tartana workings further on), and representing,

without picking, all grades of ore (except the tile ore previously removed) gave on assay the following return:—

Tartana Tunnel.—Gold, 0 oz. 4 dwt. 13 gr.; silver, 1 oz. 15 dwt. 12 gr.; copper, 7 per cent. per ton.

The startling alteration from  $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. to 7 per cent. was referred to last night by the leader of our party. Now the difference between  $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. and 7 per cent. is very striking. In money, of course, it means in the one case 5s. in £100 and in the other £7 in £100. To alter figures in that way in a prospectus that is published to the world in order to induce the unsuspecting public to take shares is a fraud.

Mr. DAWSON: Hear, hear! A swindle.

Mr. HIGGS: Now, seeing the Government took such trouble last session to pass the Criminal Code, in which provision is made for a case of this kind, it is their bounden duty to take action in the matter. Section 438 of the code reads—

*False Statements by Officials of Companies.*

438. Any person who, being a promoter, director, officer, or auditor of a corporation or company, either existing or intended to be formed, makes, circulates, or publishes, or concurs in making, circulating, or publishing, any written statement or account which, in any material particular, is to his knowledge false, with intent thereby to effect any of the purposes following, that is to say,—

(a) To deceive or defraud any member, shareholder, or creditor, of the corporation or company, whether a particular person or not;

(b) To induce any person, whether a particular person or not, to become a member of, or to intrust or advance any property to, the corporation or company, or to enter into any security for the benefit thereof;

is guilty of a crime, and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for seven years, with or without solitary confinement.

The HOME SECRETARY: Very poor stone-wall, and very thinly disguised.

Mr. HIGGS: Now, the Home Secretary is in charge of the Police Department. He has under his control a most efficient police service. We have in this prospectus an offence against the law; and if the hon. gentleman finds apathy on the part of his officers, he should put the law in motion himself. If a poor ragged fellow, who is hard up for a feed, steals a pair of boots from a shop in Queen street, he is sent to gaol. Yes, I thought that my remarks in that respect would prove too much for the hon. member—the fretful porcupine—who sits opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The hon. gentleman is called away.

Mr. HIGGS: I withdraw that.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You might naturally conclude that that was so without insulting the hon. gentleman.

Mr. HIGGS: The hon. member is so extremely touchy himself that really I may be pardoned if I allow my indignation to break out.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: The prospectus goes on—

Mr. FORSYTH: What has this to do with the Bill before the House?

Mr. DAWSON: Why don't you listen?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: I hope the hon. member for Carpentaria will not draw me off the track, because I shall probably say something to him, and he will invite me out, too, and then I shall have three duels on hand—with the Home Secretary, the hon. member for Bulloo, and the hon. member for Carpentaria. Why, I will not be game to go down the street soon, and I shall have to get the Home Secretary to allow a constable to accompany me.

Mr. FORSYTH: You will want a coat of mail.

Mr. HIGGS: Yes, or wear a coat of mail.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: The prospectus goes on—

A sample taken in the same manner from the end of the tunnel to the crossdrive and also along the cross-drive gave the following results:—

End of tunnel and crossdrive.—Gold, a trace; silver, 13 dwt. 1 gr.; copper, 12 per cent. per ton.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I rise to a point of order. I submit that the hon. member's remarks are entirely irrelevant to the question under discussion.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Mackay—

Mr. DAWSON: The Chillagoe mines are in the same district.

The SPEAKER: Will the hon. member be good enough to preserve order? The hon. member for Mackay has raised the question as to whether the remarks of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley are in order. It is not always easy to determined the precise relevancy of an argument. I understand that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is addressing himself to a certain prospectus in connection with the North Chillagoe Mine, and that he is doing that in support of the general contention of hon. members on that side that it is not desirable to confer upon private companies the powers contained in the Bill now before the House. I am not disposed at the present stage to rule the hon. member out of order, but I would ask him to remember that the question before the House is a motion for the second reading of this Bill, and that there are limits beyond which discussion should not be permitted.

Mr. HIGGS: I have every desire to keep my remarks within reasonable bounds. I am sure the hon. member for Mackay will see that it is no use endeavouring to burke discussion of this important matter by raising such frivolous points of order.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: I do not wish to get angry over this matter, and I can assure the hon. member for Mackay that I will do my best to make my remarks relevant to the motion for the second reading of the Bill. My remarks may seem prosy to the hon. gentleman, who is such an entertaining debater himself, but I may inform him that I regard the concessions that are being given to private railway syndicates as fraught with very great danger to the future of Australia, and especially of Queensland, and that I want to show that the policy of the Government, as disclosed by placing before this House half-a-dozen private syndicate railway Bills, this year and last year also, is leading to the birth of a class of promoters who are prepared to adopt any means to break the law, and to deceive and defraud the public. I am trying to show that this prospectus is the outcome of the departure from the State railway policy, and that it is the duty of the Premier, not to dismiss the matter with the wave of the hand as he did last night, not to claim credit for the Mines Department in a scornful tone, but to take up the matter in earnest and put a stop to it—to abandon the policy of private railway construction which leads to such results, and to return to a policy which will, I am sure, have the support and acquiescence of hon. members on this side of the House. The hon. gentleman should also put in motion the officers of the law who are charged with the duty of maintaining order and decency in the community, and honesty, of course, comes within the category of order and decency. When I was interrupted in that most ungenerous way by the hon. member for Mackay, I was referring to the fact that on page 12 of this prospectus the words "copper, 12 per cent." were printed. The certified copy of the report, it appears, contains the words "12 per cent.," but the original copy

says "12 per cent.," which is a very different thing. Of course we can see—that is, printers can see—that it is very easy for the full point to be blurred and to be almost undecipherable to the reader, so that we may pass that by and give the promoters the benefit of the doubt. The prospectus proceeds to say—

By grading and picking the stone the copper can be brought up to several per cent., and this can be further increased by the very rich veins of tile ore.

The return of over 4 dwt. of gold to the ton is a remarkable yield, and it will be the business of your mining manager to determine if this gold is scattered throughout the ore or occurring as rich shoots. On the data furnished above, and supposing all the gold in the sample to come from it, a shoot, say, 10 feet wide, would yield at the rate 1 oz. 2 dwt. 17 gr. per ton.

\* \* \* \*

A sample from Shaft No. 1—see plan of working—where no vein of rich ore is in sight, but where the copper is more uniformly scattered, gave the following yield:—

Shaft No. 1.—Gold, 1 oz. 1 dwt. 7 gr.; silver, 4 oz. 14 dwt. 17 gr.; copper, 75 per cent. per ton.

This shaft is connected at the bottom to the cross-drive leading off from the western tunnel, and the test indicates the stone to be richer away to the west—and above the level of the cross-drive—

"east" it is in the original—

of the tunnel, and above the level of the cross-drive.

An open cut has been made from the north-west end of the hill for a distance of 100 feet, and at the end an open crosscut has been made at right angles. A sample was taken of the ore in these workings by stripping from all the sides and the lower parts of the open crosscut, and this yielded the following:—

Open Cut No. 1.—Gold, 0 oz. 3 dwt. 6 gr.; silver, 0 oz. 19 dwt. 14 gr.; copper, 24 per cent. per ton.

This return further indicates the presence of gold-bearing stone, and also that the stone continues from the tunnel to the open cut.

A sample taken from the top of the open crosscut at the end of the open cut assayed as follows:—

Open Crosscut.—Gold, trace; silver, 2 oz. 5 dwt. 1 gr.; copper, 8.93 per cent. per ton.

From this and the preceding assay returns it is evident that the stone above the level of the open cut and—

and here is an insertion by the promoters—"tunnel, and between and around the open crosscut"—

and shaft No. 1 is rich in copper—

and here is a suppression by the promoters—"but poor in gold"—those words are left out—

and, further, that the stone at the level of the open cut and tunnel is poor in copper, but rich in gold. As the stone at the open cut and some portions of the tunnel near the mouth are weathered and jointed, it is quite possible the copper has been leached out and deposited at lower levels not yet prospected.

A quarry face has been opened to the south of No. 1 shaft, and is about level with the top of No. 1 shaft. Ore has been sent away from here, as well as from other parts of the mine, to the smelters at Girofla, and it has been sufficiently rich to pay working expenses, smelting charges, and transit by pack-horses over many miles of rough country.

A sample taken from this quarry face has in it none of this kind of ore, but was stripped from the face of rock exposed during the working out of these richer portions, so that the return is the minimum of what may be expected.

Quarry Face.—Gold, trace; silver, 1 oz. 9 dwt. 9 gr.; copper, 6.99 per cent. per ton.

I have purposely avoided taking samples of stone which does not show what the average would be, but as there are several tons of ore at grass at the mouth of the tunnel, and at the open cut, the returns from there will indicate how the copper yield may be increased by hand picking:—

Picked ore at tunnel mouth: Gold, trace; silver, 3 oz. 5 dwt. 3 gr.; copper, 10.77 per cent. per ton.

Picked ore at open cut: Gold, trace; silver, 3 oz. 15 dwt.; copper, 13.91 per cent. per ton.

Your company's agent has taken samples from the tunnel and open cut. From the former [4.30 p.m.] assays show nearly 30 per cent. of copper, and over 4 oz. of silver, and from the latter, over 12½ per cent. of copper and 7½ oz. of silver.

The words "with no gold in either case" were omitted by the promoters—an important omission.

Assays made for the purpose of determining which would be suitable ore for smelting at Girofla show returns up to 85 per cent. of copper, and from a certificate supplied me by Mr. A. Blakey, from the records of the assay books of the old Chillagoe Copper Company, it seems that a sample taken on the smelter floor of about 11 tons of ore gave, on assay, 22.6 per cent. of copper.

Now, here is another suppression by the promoters—

And a trace of silver, with no gold.

Those are words which might have an important effect on the success of the prospectus. On this page, 6, there is an important omission made by the promoters.

But none of them show more than a trace of gold. As they invariably show high returns of copper it is very probable that the stone carrying the gold will be very poor in copper. In taking previous "average" samples there may have been just a tendency to avoid taking stone carrying little or no copper, and without knowing how these samples were taken, or how the assays were made, it is quite possible the stone carrying the gold has been passed over or neglected in treatment.

Mr. Dunstan evidently did not take much notice of the promoters who wished him to overlook these mines. On that page it is seen that there are three most important suppressions—"but poor in gold"; "no gold in either case"; and the third, "and a trace of silver, with no gold."

Coming now to the workings to the south-east, which are about 150 feet from shaft No. 1—an open cut, No. 2, has been made from shaft No. 2 in an easterly direction, the object being at the time it was made to cut a rich vein of "tile ore." All along the sides of this open cut I have sampled the stone which was considered too poor to remove to the smelters, and from the assay returns a fair estimate can be formed of the quality of the stone across the hill at this place. The returns from assay are as follows:—Open cut, No. 2: Gold, a trace; silver, 6 oz. 19 dwt. 11 gr.; copper, 7.5 per cent. per ton.

Shaft No. 3 has been sunk below the level of the bottom of the open cut No. 2, but is now filled in with debris.

There is a typographical error here—the omission of the word "that." It reads—

But is now filled in with debris, so that no information regarding it is available.

Here comes an important suppression of something that appears in the Government Geologist's report—

I should infer, however, that the ore is of a poor quality, otherwise some care would have been taken in keeping it open for inspection.

The shaft probably turned out to be a duffer, and they filled it up, and then when the geologist goes to inspect the mines—the Government Geologist, in whom the country is likely to place confidence—when he infers that the ore is of poor quality, otherwise care would be taken to keep it open for inspection, this is cut out of the report by these promoters. I think this is another instance of fraud and false pretences on their part.

It is sunk in rather an important position, and quite possibly was put down to see whether the rich vein of ore found in the open cut continued in depth.

Supposing the shaft, then, came on poor stone, and that the rich copper vein pinched out in depth, we must rely on what the assay shows of the stone from the open cut. From our inspection of the surface—

There is another typographical error. It should be "an" inspection.

From our inspection of the surface between the quarry face and shaft No. 1 and the open cut No. 2, the ore in the quartzites and shales occur regularly disseminated and by no means poor in quality, and there is every probability that between these workings the whole of the formation would yield fair returns of copper. It is here I would strongly advise further prospecting work to be carried out, when the whole of the hill for 400 feet of its length will have been tested.

The shaft No. 2 is over 200 feet east from the No. 1 shaft, and about the same distance north-west from No. 2 open cut, and as there are no workings between

them, it is not known yet if the ore in No. 2 shaft is connected in any way with that more to the west. The surface from No. 2 shaft towards the other workings show copper freely, and several places exist where prospecting could be judiciously carried out.

Shaft No. 2 has been sunk 35 feet deep, and a sample picked from the whole of the stone taken out of the shaft (with the exception of about 6 tons of picked ore), gave the following returns on assay:—

Shaft No. 2—Gold, a trace; silver, 0 oz. 13 dwt. 1 gr.; copper, 7.32 per cent. per ton.

I was not informed of any stone from the shaft being removed for smelting purposes at Girofla—

Here is another suppression. "Picked" ore, the geologist says; the promoters leave the word "picked" out, and would leave the public to infer that this was average ore instead of something which had been picked for a special purpose—

and so infer that the 6 tons of ore represents the total amount of high-grade ore taken from the shaft. This high-grade ore assayed as follows:—

The word "picked" is again left out—

Ore at No. 2 shaft: Gold, trace; silver, 1 oz. 7 dwt. 18 gr.; copper, 22.99 per cent. per ton.

Stone can be obtained from this shaft giving on assay 47 per cent. of copper, but this return will be from a picked specimen, and do not represent an average yield by any means.

It is somewhat surprising that they left that in—

At the same time, it must be remembered that stone of such quality does exist, and will serve to increase the average of the greater bulk of the stone.

While on the question of—

Here is another suppression—the word "picked" is left out—

samples for assay, it may be mentioned that at least a dozen assays have been made of Tartana stone, and taken from all parts of the hill, giving returns of copper of over 20 per cent. per ton. Great care must be taken that these small bodies of rich ore are worked out with the larger and poorer bodies of stone—

And here is something left out which is a little extraordinary—

otherwise the return of the poor stone might be too low for working when the mine has been robbed of its rich patches.

Then the prospectus proceeds—

Towards the south-west of the No. 2 open cut the surface has not been disturbed, but there is abundant evidence to show that the copper occurs nearly all over the hill in this direction (the area is coloured green on the accompanying plan), and, although the deposits do not require developing just at present, they will be available for future use.

#### PROBABLE CHARACTER OF THE ORE BELOW THE PRESENT WORKINGS.

In the previous remarks about Tartana, the reference has been entirely confined to the ore on the surface, or what is found in the workings, but now we will consider the probable character of the ore below the workings.

The ores in and above the workings are exclusively oxidised ores—being carbonates or oxides, both being formed from the decomposition of sulphide ores—and although there is a large body of stone of this class in sight and at once available for smelting, yet it would be premature to determine what method of treatment should be adopted without knowing what class of ores will be found at and below water level.

Metallurgical treatment of surface ores is a different matter to the treatment of the ores found at water-level, and it will be necessary to at once determine what the nature of these ores are below water-level.

As the constant leaching out of the copper in the surface ores is going on, there is a corresponding concentration taking place lower down, and consequently the percentage of copper in the ores on the surface might be much less than the same class of ores near water-level; and as the copper is leached out of the surface stone, so also are other metals which might be associated with the copper, and so at water-level other minerals might be found having an important bearing on its treatment. Therefore, it will be advisable to put down prospecting shafts to test the ores at water-level, and when the sulphides are found the method of metallurgical treatment may be considered.

#### FACILITIES FOR MINING, SMELTING, AND TRANSIT.

The top of Tartana Hill is about 70 feet above the level of the tunnel, but the average height for about 400 feet along the hill would be about 40 feet, and a

width, perhaps, of 50 feet. This all carries copper, and would be available for stoping out. But the ore is found in so many places outside this block, particularly to the east around No. 2 shaft, that the quantity of stone may be considerably augmented. Much of this ore could be worked by incline tramways at a small cost, but the ore below the level of the tunnel will, of course, cost more for mining.

The stone is not of a hard nature, and sinking and mining will not be costly. Timber for mining purposes is not in abundance around the mines, but—

And here is an important omission of the words "it is said that" by the promoters. The geologist was not prepared to take the responsibility of saying that six miles from Tartana the timber was excellent for mining purposes, and he used the expression "it is said"—

six miles from Tartana the timber is excellent for all mining work, both on the surface and below ground.

The water question is not a serious one, and Bowler Creek affords a site for the construction of a dam for water conservation if the present supply is found insufficient.

A position for building works can be selected on a flat on the western side of Tartana Hill, and a great part of the ore required could be run direct to them from the mine if tramlines were laid down.

If it were deemed advisable to take the ore from the mine to be smelted at Chillagoe, no difficulty would be met with in constructing a line of railway to connect the two places; and in building a bridge across the Walsh River, which would be necessary, a site exists which is naturally adapted for the purpose.

The important suppressions on this page are: 1, the word "picked"; 2, the word "picked"; and 3, the word "picked." Three important omissions of words which might have led to the abandonment of the flotation of the company as a non-success. But probably the most serious manipulation and distortion of this geologist's report occurs on page 9. It proceeds—

#### TARTANA NORTH LEASE, No. 1218.

Area, 10 acres.

Position.—The lease adjoins the main Tartana lease, and is situated not the north but to the west of the Tartana workings. Bowler Creek runs through the lease obliquely. (See general plan of leases at Tartana at end of report.)

Geological Features.—The country rocks are similar in many respects to those on Tartana Hill, but they are not so siliceous, and, in consequence, while Tartana has remained a prominent feature in the landscape, Tartana North is low and ridgy. The general strike and inclination of the rocks also are similar to Tartana.

Prospecting Work.—Except tracing the outcrops of some of the copper ore along the surface, no prospecting work has been carried out, but its close proximity to Tartana Hill makes its position one of importance.

Samples taken previously by your agent show returns of from 12 per cent. to 48 per cent. of copper, and up to 4 oz. of silver per ton.

Here there is another important suppression of the words "but as there is no body of stone, these returns can be taken for just what they are worth." The suppression of that is extremely important, because had it been published, the general public who might be thinking of investing in this company would have hesitated to do so. Samples, you see, were taken by an agent of the company, who was an interested party.

#### TARTANA SOUTH LEASE, No. 1219.

Area, 10 acres.

Position.—The lease adjoins Tartana on the south-eastern boundary.

Geological Features.—The country is the south-eastern extension of the mass of tilted beds of rocks forming Tartana Hill, but the quartzites and interbedded shales have been contorted and disturbed, but the preponderance of shales have allowed more disintegration and denudation of the surface at this end of the copper-bearing rocks than on the hill.

Prospecting Work.—The trend of the rocks carrying copper—

The word "ore" is left out here by the promoters, for some reason or another—

are such that they appear to extend in a direction somewhat to the west of Tartana Hill, and although rich copper—

"Ore" is left out here again—

(as small veins of carbonate of copper in the quartzites, and as loose "floaters" on the surface) is quite common—

The word "floaters" is quoted here. I understand it is a term applied to certain good specimens which would be very valuable in forming an estimate of what a mine would be likely to be worth, and I should not wonder if the quoting of the word was intended to imply that this company put some "floaters" on the ground the geologist was about to examine. From what I have heard of the practices of gentlemen interested in the floating of mines, I should not be at all surprised to learn that that had been done in this case—

yet a good deal of discriminating prospecting work will require to be undertaken to ascertain what connection exists with the main outcrop of Tartana Hill. The position of the lease is unquestionably a good one, and although the strike of the rocks bear away to the west of Tartana Hill from this lease, yet the body of ore exposed at Tartana has its axis in the direction of Tartana South.

The prospectus speaks of the "longer" axis. Then there is the signature—

(Signed) BENJAMIN DUNSTAN,

Assistant Government Geologist.

Now comes an important mutilation, for the Government Geologist, according to his published report, states that he put at the end of the report a table of certain assay returns. That table was suppressed in this prospectus; but in its place was put another table, prepared by "Alexander Orr, F.G.S., Analyst," of Sydney. This table is a most elaborate one, showing highly successful results, and the great prospects ahead of this mine. This is the fraudulent interpolation—

Analytical Laboratory and Assay Office,

109 Pitt street, Sydney.

11th April, 1899.

CERTIFICATE OF ASSAY, No. 106/1.

Mines.	Copper per cent.	Gold per Ton.	Silver per Ton.	Lead per Cent.
		Oz. dt. gr.	Oz. dt. gr.	
1 Tartana	3.87	Trace	1 7 18	...
2 Tartana	29.73	Nil	4 1 16	...
3 Tartana	21.49	Nil	6 10 16	...
4 Tartana	12.76	Nil	7 10 0	...
5 Tartana	5.17	0 0 9	2 0 20	...
6 Tartana	15.35	Nil	6 10 16	...
7 Tartana	31.10	Nil	13 11 3	...
8 Tartana	47.67	Nil	5 11 0	...
9 Tartana	44.44	0 0 9	2 9 0	...
10 Tartana	31.61	Nil	0 16 8	...
11 Tartana	16.54	Nil	1 17 0	...
12 Tartana	27.89	Nil	1 9 9	...
13 Tartana	39.71	Nil	6 10 16	...
14 Tartana	41.29	Nil	Trace	...
15 Tartana N.	23.16	Nil	4 1 16	...
16 Tartana N.	30.25	Nil	0 3 6	...
17 Tartana N.	12.13	Nil	0 9 19	...
18 McKinley	21.59	Nil	18 15 16	...
19 Elvan	32.62	0 8 4	10 12 8	...
20 Wanlock	17.33	Nil	2 15 12	...
21 Lillian	22.06	Nil	0 18 0	...
22 Tartana N.	46.49	Nil	Nil	...
23 Tartana N.	31.52	Nil	1 16 0	...
24 Tartana	15.76	Nil	16 6 16	...
25 Madras	2.36	Nil	103 18 0	62
26 Wanlock	14.18	Nil	8 6 8	...
28 and 30 Royal Standard	11.64	Nil	6 16 0	...
29 Tartana N.	49.08	Nil	2 12 0	...
31 Monte Video	1.86	Nil	2 9 0	30
32 Admiral Sampson	20.09	0 0 15	15 0 0	...

ALEXANDER ORR, F.G.S., Analyst.

This table, as I said, was interpolated in the Government Geologist's report, and Mr. Dunstan's



table was suppressed. I will now take the liberty of reading Mr. Dunstan's table. It is as follows:—

TABLE OF ASSAY RETURNS.

Mine or Lease.	Gold per Ton.	Silver per Ton.	Copper.
	Oz. dt. gr.	Oz. dt. gr.	Per cent.
Admiral Sampson	0 3 6	6 5 18	22.2
Elvan	Trace	8 18 0	24.6
Elvan	0 1 15	15 9 0	38.7
President McKinley	Trace	11 5 9	15.6
Madras	Trace	38 7 16	51
Madras	Trace	26 10 6	69
Madras	Trace	20 18 3	Trace
Madras	Trace	4 1 16	Trace
Madras	Trace	2 15 12	Trace
Madras	Trace	4 8 4	Trace
Madras	Trace	1 11 8	...
Tartana	0 4 13	1 15 22	$\frac{1}{2}$ p.c.
Tartana	Trace	0 13 1	$\frac{1}{2}$ p.c.
Tartana	0 1 7	4 14 17	7.5
Tartana	0 3 6	0 19 14	2.4
Tartana	Trace	2 5 1	8.98
Tartana	Trace	1 9 9	6.99
Tartana	Trace	3 15 3	10.77
Tartana	Trace	3 15 0	13.91
Tartana	Trace	6 19 11	7.5
Tartana	Trace	0 13 1	7.32
Tartana	Trace	1 7 18	22.99
President McKinley	Trace	6 11 15	...

The three following assays were from the Monte Video Mine, close to President McKinley, and the samples were taken from all the exposed portions of the lode:—

Monte Video	Trace	3 0 16	...
Monte Video	Trace	1 18 5	Trace
Monte Video	Trace	0 5 13	...

Now out of nineteen assays there are two in which there was no gold at all, and [5 p.m.] in five only were there traces. The object of inserting a table which the Government Geologist knew nothing about, and suppressing the Government Geologist's table, was evidently because the publication of the table of the Government Geologist would not lead to the logical deductions of the promoters—the logical deductions which the leader of the white Labour party read last night—"a rich goldmine within a rich copper-mine." The publication of this table is a fraudulent misrepresentation, and surely somebody must be guilty of wrongdoing. On page 10 the prospectus goes on—

## MADRAS LEASE, LEASE No. 1224.

Area, 10 acres.

Position.—Close to and on the west side of Ashtonville Creek, and about two miles north-north-west from the junction of Bowler Creek and Walsh River, and about fifteen miles north-west from Mungana (Girofla). See accompanying map.

Geological Features.—The country rock is mostly a decomposed clay slate, but a greenish felspathic sandstone occurs in places. The trend of the country rock is generally north-west and south-east, and also in this direction the veins or lodes or mineral-bearing rocks outcrop.

The ore-bearing rocks are decomposed on the surface, and a difficulty is experienced in determining from appearances which are country rocks and which is lode matter. Veins, however, are seen which are more pronounced than the rocks on either side, and from the ferruginous character of the outcrops and the presence of arsenic it is probable they are veins of decomposed mispickel (sulph-arsenide of iron). Judging from what the underground workings show, these veins separate in depth.

And here is an important suppression again—"but there is no evidence to show if they pinch out or come together again." The prospectus then reads—

On the top of a ridge running parallel with the longer sides of the lease (north-west and south-east) the outcrops extend from one end of the lease to the other. In some places it is seen to pinch, but in many places it is several feet wide.

Outcrops of similar-looking stone carrying mineral are to be found outside the lease, and the appearances on the surface so promising, both as regards thickness and extent, that the advisability of at once extending the area of ten acres was pointed out to your agents. These outcrops may prove more valuable than those opened up on the lease, but absolutely no work has been done on them so far.

Generally the lodes—or what may be better termed lenticular deposits—are irregular both in thickness and in length, dying out and making again along the north-west and south-east direction, sometimes being only a few inches wide, sometimes several feet. The length of one such deposit, as an example, is 120 feet.

Prospecting work—Some time ago—  
"Some time ago"—words of the prospectus;  
"Some years ago"—words of the Government Geologist. Now, what was the idea of putting the words "Some time ago"? Was it because "Some time ago" sounds less ominous than "Some years ago"?—the words "Some years ago" conveying the idea that the mine is probably some abandoned shaft. An offence of that sort is not so grave as some of the others, and probably the judge would say, if the promoters were brought before him for having issued such a prospectus, that a sentence of six months would meet the offence. Of course the other offences would be more serious—

Prospecting Work.—Some years ago the mine was exploited for silver. Trenches were cut and shafts were sunk, and the stone sent away and smelted at Muldiva. The returns were good, but when the price of silver fell the mine was abandoned; the cost of transit being so heavy that, although the returns were good, they were not sufficiently remunerative for the work to be continued. Even now, taking the Madras outcrops as an isolated group, they, perhaps, would not be payable if worked by themselves, but in conjunction with the Tartana group of mines, and with railway facilities, there seems to be every reason that they should prove valuable properties.

At the north-western end of the lease a large amount of prospecting work has been carried out, and from the ore at grass, taken from an open cut 20 feet long—

"A 25 feet shaft" the prospectus says; but the original says "20 feet"—

8 feet wide, and 10 feet deep, samples were taken for assay, and gave the following returns:—

## MADRAS ASSAYS.

Samples of ore thrown aside as not rich enough for smelting: Silver, 38 oz. 7 dwt. 18 gr. per ton.

Samples of the debris at old heap from which ore was smelted: Silver, 26 oz. 10 dwt. 6 gr. per ton.

Samples of stone said to be similar to what was smelted: Silver, 20 oz. 18 dwt. 3 gr. per ton.

Sample from another old heap: Silver, 4 oz. 1 dwt. 16 gr. per ton.

Sample from another old heap said to be poor: Silver, 2 oz. 15 dwt. 12 gr. per ton.

Sample from ore at grass lately mined: Silver, 4 oz. 8 dwt. 4 gr. per ton.

Sample from stone thrown aside lately mined: Silver, 1 oz. 11 dwt. 8 gr. per ton.\*

Assays made by the Chillagoe Proprietary Company some years ago show a return in one case of 136 oz. of silver per ton, and a recent assay by your agent shows a return of 103 oz. of silver.

And here comes another suppression—"but I cannot state whether these are average returns or returns from picked samples." Now, that is gross suppression—a suppression which no honourable man or men would be guilty of—

Close to the open cut from which the previous sample<sup>s</sup> were taken a shaft has been sunk 40 feet deep, but now abandoned. The debris on the surface shows the ore must have carried galena and carbonate of lead (cerussite).

Another shaft, ten chains from the open cut, has been sunk on the underlie at an angle of 60 degrees, south-west to a depth of about 30 feet. Drives have been put in to the north-west and south-east at the bottom, and judging from the stone on the surface, must have been sunk some distance below the drives, but filled in subsequently, so the character of the ore below that could not be ascertained.

That paragraph contains an interpolation; the prospectus has something added to it. After the words "must have been" there is inserted the

words "driven for several feet. The shaft has been," which makes it read, "And, judging from the stone on the surface, must have been driven for several feet. The shaft has been sunk some distance below the drives," etc. The report purports to be signed by "Benjamin Dunstan, Assistant Government Geologist, Queensland, 21st October, 1899."

Mr. DAWSON: He was Principal Assistant Government Geologist in New South Wales some years ago.

Mr. HIGGS: That goes to show that the gentleman is very high in his profession, and that he is a capable officer, whose report should never be manipulated or mutilated in such a fashion, even if such mutilation were not a penal offence. I must admit that Queensland has a bad reputation, and the publication of prospectuses of this kind is not likely to rehabilitate her. That is a strong reason why the Government should endeavour to do something to demonstrate their objection to this kind of thing. The next lease is the

PRESIDENT MCKINLEY LEASE, LEASE No. 1221.  
Area, 10 acres.

Position.—Approximately twenty-two miles north, 10 degrees east from Mungana (Girofla). See accompanying map.

Geological Features.—Felsites abound in the neighbourhood, more or less decomposed, together with altered clayey sedimentary rocks, having a general north and south strike. One of the dykes of felsite, with a strike north-west and south-east, carries copper for some distance, and around this the lease has been pegged out. The dyke is 10 feet wide, and so far as seen on the surface carries copper for nearly 50 feet of its length. The dyke apparently has a slight underlie to the south-west, but there is not enough exposure to warrant a statement being made as to what is the true underlie. In some places the portion of the dyke impregnated with copper is about 2 feet wide, but this increases in other places to as much as 6 feet, while in depth, so far as exposed, the copper-bearing rock is persistent down to 10 feet. On the same line of dyke the rock carries copper away from the main outcrops, but whether there is any connection between the two outcrops has not been determined.

Prospecting Works.—Very little work has been done to show the extent of the deposit, but on the surface there are a great number of tons of copper ore exposed without any work being done on it at all.

The deposit may be considered a very promising one when it "becomes to be developed."

"Becomes to be developed" is quoted—

and, indeed, may prove to be more extensive than the surface indications show. From a sample taken from all exposed portions of the outcrop the following assay returns were yielded:—President McKinley: Gold, a trace; silver, 11 oz. 5 dwt. 9 gr.; copper, 15·6 per cent. per ton.

Your agent previously took a sample from the same outcrop, which yielded 21·5 per cent. copper, and over 18 oz. of silver per ton—

Here we have another suppression, the words "but I do not know if it were taken as an average sample or not." Immediately after that follows another suppression, the word "picked" being omitted before "sample" in the following paragraph:—

A sample said to have come from here gave a return of 42·5 per cent. copper, and another one 37·9 per cent. copper.

And, then, there is another suppression, the following words being omitted:—"But these undoubtedly must have been the richest that could have been found." The company's agents evidently sought the finest samples they could get, and brought them to the Assistant Government Geologist, and when that gentleman had examined and reported on them they struck out part of his report in order to mislead the public. Next I come to the report on the Royal Standard Lease, No. 1260, area 10 acres, and in this report, strange to say, there are no interpolations, manipulations, mutilations, or suppressions. It says—

Position.—Six miles north-west of Mungana. (See position from map accompanying.)

Geological Features.—The country rock is a decomposed ferruginous felspathic sandstone, alternating with irregular masses of limestone, grits, and breccias, more or less altered. Quartzites are also present in the neighbourhood, and interbedded with the felspathic sandstones. Towards the west this character of country gives place to schists.

The ore is a carbonate of copper (malachite, etc.), mixed with copper silicate (chrysocolla) and red oxide (cuprite), with lead sulphide (galena) and oxide (minium), and is contained in veins traversing the felspathic sandstones.

Prospecting Work.—The work done is of so small extent that no estimate can be formed of its value, but where the stone is exposed the ore looks well, and certainly warrants further work being done to prospect it.

The amount of ore taken out of the trench made would be about 3 tons, and would assay, at a low estimate, about 8 per cent. of copper.

The stone at grass is quite rich enough for treatment, and what should now be done is to prove its extent.

That is signed, "Benjamin Dunstan, Assistant Government Geologist, Queensland, 21st October, 1899." The next lease is the

LILLIAN LEASE, No. 1220.  
Area, 10 acres.

Position.—Less than a mile north of the Tartana group of leases, and on one of the branches of Bowler Creek. See accompanying map.

Geological Features.—The country rocks are a clayey and ferruginous conglomerate, interbedded with micaceous sandstones, and have a dip of 50 degrees north-east. The conglomerate can be traced for some distance along the surface, but is well exposed on the bed and sides of a creek which crosses the lease. At this creek the conglomerate is impregnated throughout with carbonates of copper (malachite and azurite), and there is no evidence of any movement or feature showing that the impregnation may have been brought about by a joint or fault in the beds, or by an intrusion of some igneous rock.

Prospecting Work.—Very little prospecting work has been done, but what there is shows the ore to be generally of the same quality, and to go about 10 per cent. of copper. Some tons of ore were taken out, but were washed away during a flood in the creek.

Here is a suppression. The word "recent," which appears before the word "flood" in the original report, is omitted, the promoters evidently wishing to convey the idea that the flood had not taken place in recent times, but that it might have taken place at the time of the deluge, when Noah built the ark. Then we have another suppression. Following the words last quoted this sentence appears in the original report: "The deposit may be only a small pocket of ore, and very probably is so, but," etc. These words are left out by these ingenious gentlemen, who wish to float a company with a capital of some £60,000, and the prospectus simply contains the latter part of the sentence as follows:—

To definitely determine this, the outcrop will require to be further prospected to the north-west and south-east.

A sample taken by your agent—

There the words "evidently picked" are suppressed—

gave a return from assay of 22 per cent. of copper per ton, so that it will be seen the conglomerate is not merely stained by the copper, and a return of 18 dwt. of silver per ton shows the possibility of this metal being an item for consideration.

Then there is another signature which Mr. Dunstan never wrote.

ELVAN LEASE, No. 1223.  
Area, 10 acres.

Position.—Approximately twenty-three miles north 10 degrees east from Mungana (Girofla). See accompanying map.

Geological Features.—The country rock is slate with a northerly and southerly strike, and is generally vertically bedded, but varying sometimes to a dip of 60 degrees to the east or west. Two veins are exposed on the surface and traversing the slates, but their general direction and inclination cannot be determined.

Prospecting Work.—Perhaps less than a day's work would represent the amount of labour expended on prospecting the two veins.

That is very interesting, considering how very anxious these men are to find work for the unemployed.

The larger one has been opened to the extent of four feet in length, two feet deep, and one foot wide.

That might be used for burying the man who gets knocked out in this great combat in Queen street between the hon. member for Bulloo and myself.

The smaller one has been exposed by a trench two feet long, six inches wide, and eighteen inches deep. To express an opinion on these outcrops is almost out of the question; they might only be a few feet in length and die out a few feet below the surface, but they, on the other hand, might prove to be very extensive.

There are no facts whereon to base an opinion of its value except it is on the results of the two following assays of samples taken from the two veins.

#### ELVAN ASSAYS.

Large vein.—Gold, a trace; silver, 8 oz. 18 dwt. 0 gr.; copper, 24·6 per cent. per ton.

Small vein.—Gold, 6 oz. 1 dwt. 15 gr.; silver, 15 oz. 9 dwt. 0 gr.; copper, 33·7 per cent. per ton.

A sample taken by your agent gave over 8 dwt. of gold per ton, a much higher return than mine.

The plan of lease shows the position of the veins on the property.

Another signature, which Mr. Dunstan never wrote—

WANLOCK LEASE, No. 1222.

Area, 10 acres.

Position.—Approximately twenty-three miles north 10 degrees east from Mungana (Girofla). See accompanying map.

Geological Features.—The country rocks are greenish and ferruginous felspathic sandstones and slates, with large intrusive masses of quartz felsites. An outcrop of the felsite occurs on the lease, and in one place an isolated mass or boulder several tons in weight is stained with green carbonate of copper. The mineral has been formed subsequent to the intrusion of the felsite and deposited as an impregnation.

Prospecting Work.—Only a very little work has been expended in prospecting.

Poor unemployed!

The outcrop is so isolated that there is only just the possibility of the ore continuing in depth, and the absence of any attempt to show the continuation or otherwise of the deposit below the surface whereon the mass is resting is to be regretted.

At present the stained surface of the rock looks very attractive, but a few days' more work would have determined its value, from a negative point of view, even if it robbed it of its fine appearance.

A sample taken from here by your agent gave a return of 17·33 per cent. of copper, and 2 oz. 15 dwt. 12 gr. of silver per ton; but even if the whole of the stone showing copper were to yield this as an average there would be only about 6 tons of ore in sight.

The plan of the lease shows the felsite intrusion (porphyry dyke) and the two localities where copper has been found—the one previously mentioned, and another close by, where some copper carbonate shows as a small outcrop.

(Signed) BENJAMIN DUNSTAN,  
Assistant Government Geologist.

Queensland, 21st October, 1899.

ADMIRAL SAMPSON LEASE, No. 1175.

Area, 10 acres.

Position.—Eighteen miles due west of Mungana (Girofla), and about three miles S.S.W. of Arbovin. (See accompanying map.)

Geological Features.—The country rocks are fine mica schists with gneiss, and in the neighbourhood bosses and dykes of a quartz felsite intrude the schists and gneiss.

The copper has been deposited in a formation thought at first to be a lode, but which is micaceous country rock impregnated with copper, and probably having its source in a line of faulting traversing the mica schists about north and south.

The appearance of the formation is suggestive of a lode, and the iron oxides deposited around the fault apparently confirms this idea—

Then there is something left out—"but it is only an impregnation"—

and the deposition of the copper along the cleavage planes of the micaceous rocks as they lie approximately horizontal is quite evident.

The width of the copper-bearing formation varies up to 3 feet—

Then these words are omitted—"but in some places it is about 1 foot thick"—

Along the surface there are several places where ore is exposed, but no difference in the character of the rocks which carry it can be noticed from the associated micaceous schists.

The ore is mostly carbonate and oxide in a felspathic matrix. It is not very siliceous, but rather ferruginous, and inclined to weather to a ferruginous clay.

Prospecting Operations.—A shaft has been sunk a depth of 20 feet to prove the vertical extent [5·30 p.m.] of the copper ore, but no work has been done to prove its extent along the surface. A large working shaft such as this one is suitable for all possible future requirements; but where the work is purely of a prospective character, perhaps results would have been more satisfactory if the ground had been better prospected, and the sinking of such a large shaft left till the extent of the deposit had been better known.

The word "left" there after the word "shaft" is left out in the prospectus.

There are about ten tons of ore at grass and a few tons in sight in the shaft.

And then these words are omitted from this prospectus—

But the prospects of a continuation of the ore are not favourable.

Then it proceeds—

It would be advisable to continue sinking the shaft for some distance further down, but with much smaller dimensions, and to put in prospecting drives north and south from the shaft.

Immediately after that there is the omission of these very important words—

And so determine the advisability or otherwise of abandoning the mine.

Showing that the Government Geologist evidently had an idea that it was possible it might turn out to be wise to abandon the mine.

The proximity of the shaft to a constantly running creek may cause some trouble in sinking, as the rocks are such as to allow free percolation of water along the lines of cleavage present in the schists, but the trouble would not be very serious, as the shaft could be puddled along the sides at this level and the sinking continued.

The ore at grass amounts to about 10 tons, and would average from 8 to 10 per cent. of copper. A sample selected for me by one of the men who sunk the shaft yielded as follows:—

Here the word "picked" has been left out before the word "sample," for the purpose of deluding the public. Then it goes on—

Gold, 0 oz. 3 dwt. 6 gr.; silver, 6 oz. 5 dwt. 18 gr.; copper, 22·2 per cent.

Samples taken by the agent of the company and assayed by Mr. A. Orr, of Sydney, gave the following returns:—

No. 1.—Gold, 0 oz. 0 dwt. 15 gr.; silver, 14 oz. 14 dwt. 0 gr.; copper, 20·9 per cent.

No. 2.—Gold, 0 oz. 0 dwt. 10 gr.; silver, 15 oz. 0 dwt. 12 gr.; copper, 14·7 per cent.

The following is a plan of the lease:—

And then the prospectus again shows the signature—

(Signed) BENJAMIN DUNSTAN,  
Assistant Government Geologist.

Queensland, 21st October, 1899.

Mr. Dunstan's "conclusion" is given as follows in the prospectus—

#### CONCLUSIONS.

With the description of each of the leases reference has been made to the prospecting work which has been done, or ought to be undertaken, to prove the ground, so it will only be necessary to consider matters now from a general point of view.

In the first place, the group of properties undoubtedly bear a most favourable comparison with any of the other group of properties in the Chillagoe district, and, what is certainly not an unimportant feature where Chillagoe mining properties are concerned, they have been selected simply on their own merit. Their value is not in any way influenced by their proximity to other successful mining properties, as they are miles away from the nearest of them.

In the next place, with regard to the development of the mines, it will be necessary to pay considerable attention to this department, particularly in its initial

stages. Undoubtedly you have immense bodies of ore, but first find out exactly what ore is available, and what its peculiarities are from a smelting point of view. Too much attention cannot be given in developing the resources of Tartana Hill, as this is the most important mineral deposit of the group, and it will be very important that this development should take place on scientific lines, and not by rule of thumb. Accurate plans of all the workings must be prepared so that the results of all tests of the ore, in a properly-equipped laboratory, and the character of the ore together can be recorded and studied.

Now, the promoters stop short there, and leave out this most important paragraph—

Lastly, comes the question of management. The mines are not phenomenally rich ones—and let this be clearly understood—but they are full of promise, and it lies almost entirely with your management, not the mines themselves, whether they result in failure or success.

That was omitted by the promoters of this company, and that it is a most important omission will be seen when we come to discuss the question of the provisional directors. To suppress an important paragraph like that is cheating. It is an offence against the law, and section 429 of the Criminal Code says on the subject—

Any person who by means of any fraudulent trick or device obtains from any other person anything capable of being stolen, or induces any other person to deliver to any person anything capable of being stolen, or to pay or deliver to any person any money or goods, or any greater sum of money or greater quantity of goods than he would have paid or delivered but for such trick or device, is guilty of a misdemeanour, and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for two years.

If the gentlemen responsible for the mutilation of Mr. Dunstan's report could be caught—and there are clever detectives in Queensland, who ought to be able to catch them—a jury having decided they were guilty, the judge would undoubtedly sentence them to a portion of that two years. On the face of it this prospectus is a fraudulent one, and the promoters of the company are guilty of conspiracy. We well remember that when certain individuals in Queensland, actuated by the worthy motive of trying to keep up the wages of a number of working men in the West of Queensland, banded themselves together in a union for that purpose, they were seized upon by the police, brought up, sentenced, and sent down to St. Helena for a term of years. Now, why is there any delay on the part of the Ministry to deal with the promoters of this £60,000 company for the issue of this garbled, misleading mutilation, supposed to be the Assistant Government Geologist's report? There are plenty of clauses in the Criminal Code which will enable the Premier to bring these gentlemen to justice. There are clauses relating to forgery, false pretences, cheating, and conspiracy. If the Government continue to stick to these private railway schemes, they must take some action to clear themselves and the Mines Department. The Mines Department has drawn attention to this grossly fraudulent prospectus. Some of the directors wrote to the newspapers, and withdrew their names from the prospectus. In this morning's paper there is a most interesting report stating that the provisional directors have come together again, and they waited on the Under Secretary for Mines to explain how it was that this report came to be issued in such a garbled manner. I hope the Premier will take the proper steps to clear the Government and the department in the matter. The Government Geologist's report was issued on 21st October, 1899—nearly twelve months ago. Now, does anyone believe that the provisional directors, when they issued this prospectus to the public, did not know of the existence of the original report, and did not examine it? If they did not, then they were very audacious men to put up as provisional directors,

for a business, the success of which would depend more on the management than on the richness of the mines. A letter appeared in the *Telegraph* on 18th September, 1900, signed by Thomas Jessop, chairman of the vendor company, and P. Duffy, one of the provisional directors of the North Chillagoe Mines, No Liability, as follows:—

Sir,—In your advertising columns we intend publishing a verbatim copy of Mr. Dunstan's report on these mines, certified by the Government Geologist, Mr. W. H. Rands.

Owing to several important errors in the copy of this report as it appears in the prospectus it has now practically been decided to withdraw that prospectus.

It will be the duty of the promoters to ascertain and make known how those alterations have crept into the report. Meanwhile you have our assurance that, until attention was called to the fact in the public Press, the directors of the vendor company, and the provisional directors and other officers of the new company, were wholly unaware of the stupid and unnecessary alterations made in the report.

Evidently the *Telegraph* Company refused to insert this letter unless it was paid for as an advertisement, because there was an asterisk after it. That signifies that the matter inserted is an advertisement. The *Telegraph* Company thought this was so serious a matter that they demanded that these gentlemen should pay about £1 10s. for the insertion of this letter. Now, at the end of that letter the words "stupid and unnecessary" are used. They characterise the "alterations made in the report" as "stupid and unnecessary." Those are the words they use with regard to the alterations and mutilations made in the Government Geologist's report. Unfortunately the mining industry is one which lends itself to the schemes of designing men. I can well believe that the strongest inducements are offered to a geologist to bring up a report on mines which would not be genuine. Every kind of hint is thrown out to the party making the report, that it will be better for him if the project turns out a success. Some hon. members may hold up their hands in horror at such a suggestion, but I know that what I say is perfectly correct. The very fact that it has been found necessary to have a Criminal Code of 730 clauses, dealing with all kinds of offences against honesty, decency and order, shows that these things are perpetrated in connection with mining. I think there is every reason why the Premier should at once abandon his private railway policy and go on with the public business of the country, in order that the fair name of the Government should not in any way be tarnished or smudged by the action of these persons who have issued this prospectus. There appears to be some difficulty in making the public acquainted with all these matters, but they should know them. Members must recognise that it is an outrage on public decency to publish such a prospectus, and the Press have not given the matter the publicity, in the way of comment and criticism, that it is entitled to. I hope the Minister will protect the Mines Department from such onslaughts as we see in the public Press to-day. Where was the Minister for Mines when this powerful deputation waited on the Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. A. R. Macdonald? I think he should have been present, and the Press should also have been present to report the proceedings. The *Courier* of this morning says:—

With the view of placing the Mines Department in possession of the facts relating to the unintentional mistake, the Hon. F. T. Brennan, Hon. John Archibald, Mr. P. Duffy (provisional directors), Alderman T. Jessop, M.L.A., Sydney (chairman of directors of the vendor company), and Mr. Tom Coventry, waited upon Mr. A. R. Macdonald, Under Secretary for Mines, at noon yesterday, Mr. W. H. Rands, Government Geologist being present.

It was a most irregular proceeding for those gentlemen to wait on the Under Secretary in that way, and I think that, when the leader of the white Labour party referred to this matter last night, the leader of the black labour party should also have referred to the fact of this deputation having waited on his Under Secretary. But, no; not a word! The hon. member for Woothakata gets up and asks a question, evidently with the intension of cutting the ground from under the feet of the leader of the Opposition, and the Premier replies—I suppose with the idea of leading the public to believe that the Government were giving the matter every attention. Now, if the Government meant business in the matter, they would not deal with it in such a lag-gard lackadaisical fashion. What we want to know is, who had access to this report of the Government Geologist? Did any person, at the instance of the company, go to the department and read that document? Did any provisional director, doing his duty by the public whom he was anxious to get into the company, go to the Mines Department and say, "Let me look at the original report?" One would have thought that any gentleman undertaking the serious responsibility of the management of a company with a capital of £60,000 would have deemed it his duty to go and look at the original report, and it is hardly credible that any provisional director did not go and examine the document. And, having examined it, can we believe that any provisional director would not recognise that there was introduced into the prospectus a table which had no place in the original report? I hope to further impress hon. members opposite with the necessity for abandoning the present private railway policy by pointing out to them the very great dangers of monopolies. In no other country in the world is there a growth of a tendency to establish private railways. Even in those countries which are supposed to be far behind us now, but which are said to have had a civilisation long before we Britishers emerged from the barbaric state—the Chinese. Better be careful now! This is the day of challenges, and if the Secretary for Railways is not very careful I shall invite him to fight a combat—

The SPEAKER: Order, order, order!

Mr. HIGGS: With bricks at 1,000 yards. In no country in the world is there a tendency to construct private railways except in Queensland.

Mr. BELL: What about India, where the Indian Government are encouraging them?

Mr. HIGGS: Well, India is an abandoned country. It is so heavily taxed that the unfortunate dwellers there have a famine about every year.

Mr. BELL: India is developing tremendously.

Mr. REID: In starvation.

Mr. HIGGS: My experience and reading go to show that all the better nations, anyway, are abandoning the private railway system and adopting the system of State construction and ownership. Why? Because a railway is really a road. Hon. members remember that not long ago there was a toll charged on Victoria Bridge, and they remember what an outcry there was at resorting to such a barbaric custom.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You have to pay tolls now, only in another way.

Mr. HIGGS: We cannot yet, and I do not suppose we shall for very many years have a system of free railways; but we have the next best thing to it, and that is a system of railways which are run merely to pay interest and the cost of maintenance. The State makes no attempt to make a big profit out of the railways for the purpose of paying dividends to individuals. If

there is any profit, the whole community share in the benefit. We in Queensland, always behind, apparently—behind in the federal movement, only going into it at the last moment—behind with our Federal Elections Bill, and probably sending down our representatives—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: Just as the Duke of York is about to open the Federal Parliament—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: We, who are always behind, are taking up an obsolete railway policy—

Mr. DAWSON: So as to remain consistent.

Mr. HIGGS: And giving up half the colony—the North and the Centre—to a number of gentlemen who want to get a number of concessions.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER of the Opposition: Gentlemen?

Mr. HIGGS: Well, there are gentlemen and gentlemen. The gentlemen who put out this prospectus with a garbled report are no doubt understood to be gentlemen. They are well-dressed gentlemen, and they occupy positions and enjoy privileges and liberties which are not granted to the unfortunate who is not known as a gentleman. We are abandoning that great portion of the colony—a very rich portion of the colony. Some people say that the North is the richest portion of Queensland—

Mr. DAWSON: So it is.

Mr. HIGGS: And that it will be the most populous in time, and the most go-ahead. We are abandoning that portion of the country to private railway syndicates, who will, by their railways, act as an obstacle on free interchange amongst the people who live in the North and Centre. Hon. members opposite will insist on saying that they have not abandoned the policy

of the State ownership and construction of railways, and that they do not intend to abandon that policy. But here half a colony is to be handed over to syndicates, who will construct these railways, which are really trunk lines, and which will in the future do the carrying trade for a very great population. An endeavour has been made to show that these lines are merely mineral lines—that is, merely lines for the development of the mining industry; but by-law No. 1, lately prepared by the Mareeba-Chillagoe Company, contains, I suppose, about 1,000 different articles for which freights have been fixed, showing that the proposers evidently intend to undertake the duties of full and comprehensive railway managers, and to deal with all kinds of products. All along their line there will in the very near future, I am sure, be settled a considerable population, and population engaged not only in mining, but in pastoral, agricultural, and other occupations which go to make up a nation's life; and all the persons who live alongside that railway will be at the command, at the mercy, of the managers of the company. And, as has been pointed out, the company are permitted to charge a considerable percentage more than the rates on State-owned and State-constructed railways. Hon. members opposite say that the charge is only to be 50 per cent. more than the rates on State railways, but my view is that the Mount Garnet Company and the Chillagoe Company will be permitted, according to law, to charge 150 per cent. more than the rates on Government railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. HIGGS: If it is nothing of the sort, why have not the framers of this Bill introduced into it the ordinary language which is adopted in cases of the kind? If only 50 per cent. was intended, why did they not use the words "50 per cent.?" Instead of adopting the usual custom

in such cases, they have said that the company shall not charge a price exceeding "one and a-half times" the rate charged on the State railways. Take £100, and multiply that by one and a-half, and you have £150. The wording of the Bill is that the rate is not to "exceed" one and a-half times the rate charged on State railways, and that means that the excess is one and a-half times that rate. One and a-half times is 150 per cent.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Multiply one by one, and the result is two, I suppose?

Mr. HIGGS: No, it is one. Multiply 100 by one and a-half, and is that not 150?

Mr. NEWELL: It is only 50 per cent. more.

Mr. HIGGS: The Bill says, "Provided that no tolls, fares, rates, or charges shall in any case exceed one and a-half times" the amount payable in respect of such goods, live stock, etc. If the fare were £100, one and a-half times that would be £150, and that is the excess the company is permitted to charge under this Bill. That is 150 per cent. If not, how do hon. members get 50 per cent.?

Mr. JACKSON: You will find all about what that means in committee.

Mr. HIGGS: Evidently there is a dispute about the matter, and if the majority at the back of the Secretary for Railways insist that one and a-half times the amount charged by the Railway Commissioner means only 50 per cent. more, I suppose the clause will have to go. But it does not matter what hon. members opposite may say; they may say that the words "shall not exceed one and a-half times" mean only 50 per cent., but if ever a case crops up in a court of law, the judge will say that the speeches of hon. members have nothing whatever to do with it, and he will put his own interpretation on the clause. I am surprised that the eloquent federal leaders who did so much to win a majority of the people over to federation, and spoke of the wonderful advantages that would accrue to Queensland in the way of settlement, should be so shortsighted as to allow the company a privilege of this kind for fifty years. The State fares and freights will come down with increase of population, but it does not follow that the company are going to reduce their fares—they will charge whatever they think is up to the limit of human endurance. The Minister for Railways, and I think the Premier too, said we shall be able to build another line if necessary in competition with this line. Does anybody think that a legislator would be listened to if he proposed to construct a tramway in opposition to the Brisbane Tramways Company—a company which has no doubt done some good to Brisbane, but which is making enormous profits, though they are said to have paid no dividends—enormous profits by charging very high fares?

Mr. JACKSON: What if the company were charging very high rates?

Mr. HIGGS: The tramway company are charging rates which are 100 per cent. higher, and in some cases 300 per cent. higher, than the rates charged on the State-owned tramways in Sydney. When a holiday comes the practice of the State railway manager is to endeavour to meet the people and encourage them to go out holiday-making by reducing the fares. As a rule, I think the charge is single fare for the double journey. In Brisbane, when the exhibition was on, when the State would have reduced the fares, the Brisbane Tramways Company had a number of special cars and charged the public 3d. each for carrying them even a distance of only 300 or 400 yards. I notice that the Chillagoe regulations contain a clause providing that the company may run excursion trains at any time they think proper, and charge any fares

they choose. I asked whether the by-law had been submitted to the Crown Law Office, and the Minister said, "No."

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said, "Yes."

Mr. HIGGS: I think the clause I refer to is an innovation that would not have been agreed to had the regulations been submitted to the Crown Law Officers to see whether they tallied with the Act or not. I think it must be illegal; and if it is, that shows the disadvantage of departing from the settled policy of State-owned railways. I think that on the eve of the establishment of an Australian nation we should hesitate before surrendering such a large extent of rich territory to private syndicates—to gentlemen who will be able to exact a toll on all those who have to use the railway line. I fear the great evils which are attributable to the combination of railway companies and huge rings and trusts in America. Any trust properly worked might be of great benefit to the community, leading to economy in management and the saving that would accrue from co-operative effort; but there is the disadvantage that through there being no competition of the owners, and the trust looking upon the public as people who may be squeezed, they fix the rates, generally speaking, so high that the public have to pay what is really a toll; and the employees of the trust have much more arduous work and much less pay than where the industry is under the control of the State. A very readable book on "The Evolution of Modern Capitalism," by William A. Hobson, contains this paragraph—

The tendency of the trust to strengthen its industrial position and at the same time to find a profitable investment for its surplus profits by fastening upon an earlier process of production, or a contiguous industry and drawing it under the control of its monopoly, is one of the most important evidences of the rapid growth of the system in America. The rapidity with which the whole railway system is passing into the hands of the two great monopolist syndicates, with the necessary result of stifling competition, is in some respects the most momentous economic movement in the United States at the present time. The magnificent distances which separate the great mass of the producers of agricultural and other raw products from their market make the railway their only high road, and the fact that except between a few large centres of population there is no competition of rival railways places the producer entirely at the mercy of a single carrier, who regulates his rates so as to secure a maximum of profit.

When we look at the Northern portion of Queensland, and see so enormously rich a country so sparsely settled, we may think there is something in the argument that we should allow investors to develop that country. But those who have any hope for Australia must know that under federation that country is not, if properly managed, likely to remain very long so sparsely settled. We have not very far from Brisbane a number of Cheshire farmers, who, extraordinary to relate, are camped waiting for land, in a vast area like Queensland. We have hopes that the country's lands will be administered in a business-like way by a business-like Government. I regret that hon. members did not see fit to allow the Ministry formed from this side of the House to hold office a little longer—to give the public an idea as to what the ex-Minister for Lands, Mr. Hardacre, could do in the way of administration. I am satisfied there would have been no talk of allowing large railway concessions for the purpose of settling the country. The people are only too anxious to get on the land, and all they want is to be permitted to get there. The old opinion that the lands of this colony could not grow a cabbage has been long since dissipated. The same thing was said about Victoria, which has now the reputation of being the "cabbage garden" of Australia. We know, on the authority of the

Agricultural Department officials, that we have an immense territory fit for agricultural purposes, and that a great deal of our agricultural land is centred around the very routes where it is proposed to construct these railways. I heard the hon. member for Woothakata say in effect last night that the land about this Mount Garnet Railway was fit for very little, but everything I can read goes to prove the contrary. The great difficulty is to find out exactly where these railway lines are going to run. The maps say the routes shown are only "approximate."

Mr. DAWSON: They are picking the eyes out of the Northern portion of the colony.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The eyes do not seem to be very valuable in the meantime.

Mr. DAWSON: No; look at the Government we have got.

Mr. HIGGS: No, the land does not seem to be very valuable in the meantime—but why is that? We have heard the hon. member for Toowoomba relate in this House the struggles the farmer has had to get land, and the obstacles placed in the way of settlement. Until late years every facility was given for the development of the pastoral industry only, and to assist it the Government of the day has thought it necessary to block agricultural settlement. That is the reason we have not a numerous and wealthy class of farmers on the soil of Queensland to-day. And because the party to which hon. gentlemen opposite belong has succeeded during a long course of years, since Queensland got separation from New South Wales, in holding the lands for the pastoral industry, should that now be advanced as a reason, that because the farmers are not there, we should hand the land over to investors to develop it by means of a railway? The hon. member for Cairns, very rightly I think, called for the correspondence regarding this Mount Garnet proposal; but the only correspondence I can find, bearing on the question, is this letter from Mr. Randolph Bedford, addressed to the editor of the *Wild River Times* :—

Sir,—In a recent issue of the *Toowoomba Daily Bulletin* there appeared an interview with Mr. C. Wilcox, on the subject of Chillagoe and Mount Garnet. In that interview Mr. Wilcox stated that Garnet would be connected with the Chillagoe Railway by a branch line from Wade's, and that although agitation was afoot for a line from Mareeba to Garnet *via* Atherton, he believed the Wade's branch line to be the "more sensible and practicable." Thus is crystallised the idle rumour of months past.

I think there is little doubt in the mind of any sensible person as to the routes. The proposal of the Chillagoe-Bedford and Mount Garnet, Limited, to build a line from Mareeba to Mount Garnet *via* Atherton, and with a short spur line into Herberton, has been before the Government for the last four months. It was remitted to the Commissioners for report, and the report of the Commissioners is favourable to my company being granted the concession. To anticipate any possible objection which may be advanced in the hope of Government undertaking the construction through Atherton to Garnet, let me say that *I have the absolute knowledge that the Government will neither build the line nor advance money for the purpose of building it*; and if the people of these districts decide to remain neutral in the matter of our proposed concession, and in the hope of securing construction by the State, they will be playing into the hands of the Chillagoe Company and the famous Go-Away-Come-Back branch from Wade's. Once the line is constructed from Wade's to Garnet, the people of Atherton, Herberton, and the Tableland may wait for a railway until half-past eternity, and not get it then. For once the objective point of Mount Garnet is destroyed by the building of another line to it—no matter how roundabout that line may be—the construction to the intermediate points such as Atherton and Herberton will have lost most of its feasibility.

And if the Go-Away-Come-Back route is allowed, it means that for ever and ever the shareholders of Mount Garnet and the mining population (who deserve even more consideration than the investors, because they have to live and work on the field) will be penalised by

an extra thirty-eight miles of freight on general supplies and an extra seventy-three miles freight on produce from Atherton. The Mareeba-Atherton-Evelyn-Garnet line is the natural line—the line *via* Wade's is an iniquitous proposal—a perpetuation of the ridiculous centralisation scheme which has cursed Australia even more than freetrade has cursed it—an attempt to haul the trade of the country out of its natural course in order to gratify the greedy diffuseness of a company which has already got all it can carry with any degree of decency. And its finance has not been of such a highly successful order that it can afford to double its liability in the attempt to secure—even at a loss to itself—the right to all the traffic of a province. The Chillagoe Company is, I suppose, the biggest proposition on earth for diffuseness of aim and extent of the field of operations, and when it tries to make its enormity even greater, and to make its gargantuan even more Palaestian, it is riding to a fall. Whichever way the proposal is taken, the proposal amounts to this—Mount Garnet will be kept waiting for its line until the Chillagoe line is completed and the Chillagoe furnaces running, or the Chillagoe Company will go out of its destined way to look after the interests of Garnet to the detriment of Chillagoe.

From all positions this scheme of the Chillagoe Company wants fighting, and fighting it shall have. This country is not to be run for the one company, and both as myself and as an impersonal shareholder in the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited, I object to this Chillagoe Company or its nominees, or any offshoot of it, receiving any more concessions. I am told that the Chillagoe Company believes that it can build a ten-mile spur from Wade's in the direction of Mount Garnet. I say that the Chillagoe Company is breaking the law if it builds a foot of rail in any spur line outside of the area of its 2,000 acres of special leases. The right to build branch lines was granted the Chillagoe Company only for the purpose of communicating with the company's own mines and bringing ore therefrom to a central smelter; but the company has no right for construction except for the purpose of communicating with its own mines.

On the question of routes—shortly this. From Mareeba to Atherton the country is well known—from Atherton to the heads of the Barron our line will tap the scrub lands and timber areas, and bring the Russell within twenty-five miles—it will open Herberton and bring Watsonville within five miles of the metals—it will bring Garnet within 106 miles of the sea. By our route Atherton produce and Barron Valley timber will be carried only thirty miles into Garnet, and the whole line will open up a big mineral district, a big timber area, and a great stretch of dairying country on the Tableland, which, up to now, has never had a chance.

By the Go-Away-Come-Back line, Garnet will be 134 miles from the sea as against 106 by our route, and Atherton produce will be carried 104 miles into Garnet as against 35 miles by our route. Also, the line *via* Wade's is through dead country, with, probably, not a ton of intermediate freight. And if the Chillagoe Wade's branch line to Garnet were allowed, who would pay the price—who would foot the bill for the unnecessary 33 miles of construction—who would be charged with the freight for the extra mileage? The shareholders of the Garnet in increased cost of supplies—the mining population of Garnet in increased cost of food and clothing.

I have written to the divisional boards of Herberton, of Walsh and Timaroo, and of the Barron; to the Herberton Chamber of Commerce, the Atherton Railway League, and the Mount Garnet Progress Association, asking for their co-operation in this matter, and I trust that you also will help us to prevent the commission of this wrong by the cormorant company. The people of Herberton, Watsonville, Atherton, and the Tableland, have stood by their districts gallantly, buoyant with the hope that the construction of a railway would one day give their region the initial force which is alone necessary to its success, and if they now stolidly pass over the latest threatening of suzerainty by the Chillagoe Company they are so much less than the manly men and progressive citizens they have been heretofore.—Yours, etc.

RANDOLPH BEDFORD.

Herberton, 10th June, 1899.

How did Mr. Bedford become aware of this absolute knowledge that the [7-30 p.m.] Government would not build this line nor allow advances of money to build it? Mr. Bedford is well known in the journalistic world, but there are very few people who had any idea that he was so much in the



confidence of the Government as to know, fifteen months ago, that the Government did not intend to build this line. I think the correspondence asked for by the hon. member for Cairns would show to what extent outsiders are in the confidence of the Government. I think it would appear advisable that this railway should be submitted to a select committee, in order to get fuller information. Evidently, there is a considerable difference of opinion in the district as to the route of this line; and on the authority of Mr. Bedford we have it that this Chillagoe Company is a cormorant company. I think a select committee would be able to obtain considerable information, and also would be able to decide as to the best route on the evidence they could procure. Different statements have been made by the hon. members for Woothakata and Cairns. The former says the people there want this line, and the latter member says they do not. A select committee could decide that matter. See what Mr. Bedford says in reply to the hon. member for Woothakata, who said that the land in this district was of very little value.

Mr. NEWELL: I did not say that.

Mr. HIGGS: I understood the hon. member to say that there was very little good land in the locality, except mineral land. I take it the hon. member does not wish to confine his observations to the land over which this railway is likely to run. If he does, then that is a mere quibble, and we on this side of the House challenge him if he says that the land through which this railway is likely to run is merely mineral land. Let the hon. member look at what Mr. Bedford says. The Cairns district is a very rich district, and that rich district comprises a very large area; and I say that these lines which are proposed will, in time, be as important as the State-owned trunk lines. It is only necessary to look at the map which has been prepared to see that. By and by, when we have federation and the Northern and Central divisions of the colony get separation—for which they have been so long asking—what will be the position of the people there? They will be under the influence of these syndicate companies. One of the dangers in handing over a large territory to such a company is shown in the case of Mount Morgan, and what happened at Mount Morgan will happen in other places under similar conditions, where any private company has controlling power. I would like to know how much show I would have to secure the Mount Morgan seat. But here is the fact: I have been able to win a seat in the municipal council for such a conservative constituency as the North Ward.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You might not do it again, though.

Mr. HIGGS: It is true that I may not do it again. My advocacy of certain reform measures in the municipal council may have brought about a combination which may succeed in defeating me.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: I recognise that. I may win a seat in a conservative ward like the North Ward, and I may gain a seat in this House for a democratic constituency like the Valley; but what chance would I have in a place like Mount Morgan? In the North Ward and in the Valley all classes are to be found, from the wealthy man to the poorest person in the community, and I have a chance there. There is not the same majority of working men voters in either of those localities that there is at Mount Morgan; but I would have no show at Mount Morgan, because I should not be in sympathy with the Mount Morgan syndicate, and because it is well known that the miners there have to consider their wives and little ones, and they have to consider

the prospect of the mine being closed down, and themselves thrown out of work, if the company's favoured candidate for Parliament is not returned. The hon. member for Mackay may say that is an exaggeration.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I say it is pure fiction, if you ask me.

Mr. HIGGS: I wonder the hon. gentleman did not say it was something frightful.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It will do to stone-wall, I suppose.

Mr. HIGGS: Now, do not make unkind remarks. We are getting on famously, after the little breeze of this afternoon, when there were all sorts of challenges to mortal combat. We are now getting along quietly and decently, and I hope hon. members will refrain from unkind interjections. At the Gympie election in 1893, when a Labour representative was returned for the first time, the companies there had such influence that a number of men were thrown out of employment. And in 1893, the hon. member for Charters Towers tells me, 800 men were thrown out of work on Charters Towers because the candidates favoured by the mining companies were not returned to Parliament. Because the men chose to exercise what was understood to be their God-given right of freedom of opinion, they were thrown out of work. Possibly their little children had not sufficient bread. They may have had to suffer the pangs of poverty. That is how the trust and the syndicate will work if they do not get their own way, and we can hardly wonder at working men hesitating before exercising their votes as they would in a free constituency. That is a valid reason for objecting to granting any body of men a power such as it is proposed to confer under this and other Bills to construct railways which will be the arteries through which will flow the commerce of the particular districts in which they are. We have not yet arrived at the stage when the company's representative in this House is of the character of the company's representative in America. I remember hearing hon. members laugh with scorn at the references made by republicans to the free institutions of America—and, certainly, in some respects, they had reason to jeer at the developments which have been the outcome of republicanism in America—or not the outcome of republicanism so much as of the abandonment of a true policy of Government by and for the people. Now, the representative of the company in this House—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: What I mean to say, Sir, is this—that the candidate or representative of a constituency in this House who has the support of the people generally, and also of the colony, is not of the same character as some of their representatives in the American Parliament. A very eminent writer—Mr. Henry George—now unfortunately dead—speaks thus of things in America—

The people, of course, continue to vote; but the people are losing their power. Money and organisation tell more and more in elections. In some cases bribery has become chronic. . . . As for the great railway managers, they may well say, to use the phrase of the greatest of them, "The people be damned." When the railway managers want the power of the people they buy the people's masters.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: A freetrader and an anti-socialist.

Mr. HIGGS: Henry George declared himself an anti-State-socialist, and he was a great believer in a single tax, and an absolute freetrader; but he was not a freetrader of the stamp of the hon. member for Mackay. He was a man who believed in the unrestricted interchange and exchange of goods. He did not believe in any revenue tariff. Absolute freedom of trade was his policy, and, as a complement to that belief, he also considered



that we should derive all the revenue for governmental purposes from the land, and, with very great eloquence, he went far to show the justice of a land tax.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: Henry George was not a believer in private railway syndicates. He did not believe in such a policy, but was for State-ownership. He recognised, as we are trying to prove to hon. members opposite, that a railroad is what its name says, a road over which passengers may travel and goods may be carried. I expect—and there is no offence intended to hon. members by this remark—I expect that in days to come, in years to come, if these syndicates get their way, and the country becomes closely populated, they will have their representatives in this House. It will be impossible to keep them out, because they will have control over the working-class voters, who will be afraid of dismissal, and will perforce vote for the company's representative, who will come into this House and do his level best to further legislation in the interest of companies and trusts generally, and against the interests of the general public. There is a certain small section of men in the community who have had a very hard struggle against adverse circumstances, and who have apparently succeeded owing to their own efforts, and they have got the idea that the majority of the community, who, being poorly educated, and through their monotonous toil not having the smartness of themselves, are an inferior type of humanity, doomed to occupy a certain state, that state being that they shall live and have their being merely to administer to the comfort of the ruling class. There is no doubt that such people will come into the House filled with the notion that the persons who toil and toil in factories and mines must so toil and toil because it is their duty to do so—because it is the state in which God has been pleased to place them—and they deserve nothing better. And if there are any Factories Acts or Early Closing Acts in operation those people will do their best to have them repealed. I do not at all agree with those who think that there are certain classes in the community who have to toil and toil for an existence, and who are created for that purpose.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: What has that to do with the Mount Garnet Railway?

Mr. HIGGS: It has everything to do with it. The hon. gentleman has the logical faculty largely developed, in fact so largely developed that at any time he is willing to indulge in a logical contest, and he has no room for anything else. But it is very easy for a logician to get into a perfect maze, and sometimes the hon. gentleman gets into a maze. I have been trying to show that this proposal to depart from the State ownership and construction of railways will be fraught with evil results, and that one of those evil results will be that the representatives who will in future come into this House with the seal of the companies controlling the electorate will do their best to block or repeal reform legislation, which may have a very great deal to do with the happiness or otherwise of a very great number of producers in the colony. Hon. members opposite have talked about the public nature of these proposals. But the public will only be affected by them to the extent that they will have to pay 50, or perhaps 100, per cent. more than they have to pay on State railways. The investors in the companies will be the only persons whom the railways will directly benefit. The railway before us this evening will interest beneficially only a very few people. There is other legislation on the business-paper which we know would interest hundreds and thousands of people in the colony.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: And you are blocking it.

Mr. HIGGS: The moment we disagree with hon. members opposite we are told that we are blocking legislation. I shall expect those hon. members who make that charge to send up a formal protest to the Upper Chamber, where they are discussing the Health Bill, because the Hon. A. C. Gregory says that Bill goes too far. I shall expect hon. members to tell those gentlemen that they are wasting the time of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Nobody says that about you.

Mr. HIGGS: The hon. member for Mackay has just said that we are blocking legislation by discussing this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are very entertaining.

Mr. HIGGS: I am sorry I cannot say the same about the hon. gentleman. I listened to the hon. gentleman without interrupting him, and I would say that if my remarks do not please the hon. gentleman, the House is extensive and the world is wide, and there is no compulsion to wait in this Chamber. I shall listen with very great respect to the hon. gentleman when he is carrying these Bills through committee, and I shall assist him all I can, and thus heap coals of fire on his head. However, in deference to the hon. gentleman, I shall conclude my remarks. I am really obliged to hon. members opposite, especially to the hon. member for Mackay, for the patience with which they have listened to my remarks. On some future occasion, on some Thursday afternoon, when the hon. member for Mackay is trying to stonewall and block some little effort of ours to advance the interests of the people, I promise to be quiet and to refrain from interjecting. I hope that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government will take notice of the discussion which has taken place here this afternoon. We have dealt with a very important matter in his absence. The hon. gentleman dismissed the matter last evening with a wave of the hand, and got on to some argument about the railway generally, without touching the very important question of that fraudulent prospectus issued by certain promoters of the North Chillagoe Mines Company. It is due to the Government and the country that the hon. gentleman should use the forces at his command to find out the perpetrators of that penal offence of publishing a misleading version of a report by the Assistant Government Geologist. If the hon. gentleman

does not do that, the country will [8 p.m.] be able to form its own opinion as to the reasons which prompted the hon. gentleman not to take action and prosecute the persons responsible for that outrage. I have only to thank hon. gentlemen for their kindness and patience in listening to my remarks.

\* Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE (Mackay): I don't know whether the word "patience" is altogether applicable to the frame of mind which we have been in during the time the hon. member has been giving us such a long and dreary harangue; but one thing is certain, and that is that we have had to bear it. I trust that we bore it with suitable fortitude. I had at one time the impression that the members of the Labour party, generally, were gifted with very long tongues. They were called in the past "jaw-smiths," and I thought that the vigour which earned them that appellation they had probably retained until the present day; but I am beginning to have very grave doubts now as to whether that is so, otherwise the hon. member who has just spoken—who has indicated his abhorrence of monopoly—would have had no particular necessity to monopolise so much of the talk himself. If the intention

of the Labour party is to give us their opinions and prevent business coming on, he might have shared this notoriety with some of his friends on the other side. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who was at one time editor of a paper—I trust that then he supplied the public with articles much more to the point than his speech this afternoon—has taken up four hours in ostensibly discussing the subject before the House—namely, the Mount Garnet Tramway Bill; but most of his time was taken up in reading a report which has appeared in both of the metropolitan daily papers, which is perfectly known to most members of the House, and which, it seems to me, is entirely irrelevant. If the hon. member proves that in some cases a fraudulent prospectus has been drawn up—even assuming that in this instance there has been something improper, and certainly it does appear to be so in this instance—it does not follow that all private enterprise is to be done away with. The hon. member may remember, and so may the hon. member for Charters Towers, that some time ago at Charters Towers there was a gentleman who I believe was employed as secretary to a miners' association, or some public association, and levanted with the money; and from that I suppose the hon. member for Fortitude Valley would conclude that there should be no more associations and no more secretaries; but I am not aware that proof of failure in one direction or one instance, or proof of fallibility or crime in any association or company, or of human beings is to say that it is necessary in future to have no associations and no companies and no human beings. Though the prospectus is not a bit worse than a good many I regret to say I have seen, apparently it was intended to beguile and deceive the public, and if in the ordinary course of law it is possible for the Government to move in the matter, I have no doubt that the Attorney-General and the Department of Justice will take action. And some action I think ought to be taken. The hon. member's speech, except he desired to show that because there is one fraudulent prospectus any future enterprise by companies must be done away with—unless his desire was to prove that, then the whole of the hon. member's speech was simply "prunes and prunella"—so much waste time, as a hon. member near me observes. The hon. member himself knows that from his point of view, as well as from mine, his remarks were absolutely irrelevant.

Mr. McDONALD: The Speaker would have pulled him up in that case. That is a reflection on the Speaker.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I will not cast any reflection whatever on the Speaker. The Speaker has a very difficult position to maintain, and I have no doubt that he did not interfere because the hon. member's remarks might be technically relevant; at the same time they were practically irrelevant, and the hon. member knows it very well.

Mr. HARDACRE: What has your speech to do with the railway?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: We have heard a great deal about syndicates. I don't know anything particularly objectionable to a company as a company. The leader of the Labour party had the candour to admit that he, perhaps, was a member of a syndicate—which is really another name for a joint stock company; and seeing that Charters Towers and Croydon are mainly developed by those syndicates—

Mr. DAWSON: Not a railway syndicate.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Syndicates, at any rate. That appellation is used in this House as a name of reproach. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley talked about measures being devised in the interests of "syndicates,

thieves, and swindlers." That is the way in which he talked of them, and on that I presume he justified a great deal of his speech. One would think that a syndicate was an invention of the evil one to enslave the human race, but the hon. member for Charters Towers candidly admits that Charters Towers is in the unsatisfactory condition at the present time of owing the greater part of its large output of gold to the successful operation of these very syndicates.

Mr. DAWSON: He does not admit anything of the kind.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: They are not railway syndicators, says the hon. member, but, nevertheless, they are syndicators to the extent of being joint stock companies, and they are private—that is to say, the State does not work all the mines there—and a very fortunate thing probably for the State, and certainly for Charters Towers, that it does not.

Mr. DAWSON: It would have been a good thing for the State.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: While the objection is taken that these mines should not be allowed to be opened by a private company, because the private company would do harm, yet it is urged that the State should open them—that the Government should take the chestnuts out of the fire for this abominable syndicate, which words are wanting to hon. members opposite to revile sufficiently. This abominable syndicate has taken up a large and a wealthy mine. I believe it will not be denied that it is a wealthy mine, and hon. gentlemen opposite suggest that the Government should take all the risk of taking these chestnuts out of the fire. Instead of letting the syndicate make the railway at its own risk, and stand the loss if the mine turns out a failure, the Labour party ask that the burden should devolve upon the taxpayers of the colony. If the syndicate's operations are so improper, then the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, the leader of the Labour party, and the hon. member for Charters Towers, should never dream of proposing that the Government, at the expense and risk of the taxpayers, should go and make a railway to enable these men who have got hold of Mount Garnet to make a huge profit with a very small amount of risk.

Mr. DAWSON: Do you think the line will pay?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I do not know in the least whether it will or not, but by the proposal from the other side the risk and loss, if any, will fall upon the taxpayers whom hon. members opposite pretend to represent, but whom they are willing to drag through all sorts of danger. If the mine pays well the railway will pay, but if the mine does not pay, the railway will not pay.

Mr. REID: And the Government will buy it.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: And the loss will fall upon the speculators.

Mr. REID: No, the Government will buy it.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The Government are not at all likely to buy a railway unless that railway is profitable.

Mr. DAWSON: Unless it is worn out, you mean.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The Government are not compelled to buy that railway. I wonder where hon. members will carry their powers of misrepresentation. I am not going off the track like hon. members who have been talking all round the compass. I desire to speak on the Mount Garnet Railway. Now, we have heard a good deal about the 50 per cent. chargeable by this company more than is at present charged on the Government railways. It has been pointed out already that it would not be an unreasonable thing if the fares at Chillagoe were placed higher than in the neighbouring of Ipswich. Wages about Chillagoe, I hope, are higher

than they are about Ipswich. But the comparison is not as between the fares about Ipswich and about Chillagoe, but, so far as the people are concerned, if they are going to use a railway at all. It is between the fares they would be charged on this railway and the only alternative—a bullock dray or a pack-horse. If persons are willing to pay 50 per cent. above present Government railway rates, it will be because that would be about 5 per cent. only of the carriage they would otherwise have to pay. They will not use that railway unless they can make a profit out of the transaction. It is quite evident that by the construction of the railway the public must be the gainers. It has been said that the railway might have been constructed under the Tramways Act, or simply as an addition to the mine. If I did not misunderstand the leader of the Labour party, he would have no objection to the line if it were constructed in that manner. What he objects to is that it should be a public roadway. Why, that seems to me to be the very reason why we should prefer the railway to be constructed as proposed, in the interests of the public. It is quite correct, I believe, that under the Mining Act a railway to carry merely minerals could be constructed by the company without coming to the House at all, under an Act which hon. gentlemen opposite have approved of.

Mr. Dawson: They have not approved of it.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: But there would be this difference, that while hon. members opposite would be considering the syndicators we are considering the public. We want to know where the public would be in that case. We say it is very much better that in the interests of the public the syndicate should construct a railway that will be open to carry passengers and public freight. In this way the public are served, and a great advantage follows to the public. If this railway were constructed under the Mining Act I can imagine the leader of the Labour party saying, "Why did the Government permit this to go through? Why, in some way or other, if there had been any chance to do it, did they not see that the railway would be open to the public?" There might be other mines in the neighbourhood, and if the hon. member for Croydon was interested in one of them, he might complain of the charges made by the company assuming that they could make charges if the line were constructed under the Mining Act, and I do not think they could. If he had a mine of his own in the vicinity, it would be shut up unless in virtue of such a Bill as this the company which owned the railway were compelled to carry for the public. If the wishes of some hon. members opposite were carried out, it would mean that monopolies would be established. The Government are endeavouring to prevent monopolies, as far as the public are concerned. It is quite evident that railways of this kind must be beneficial to the whole community as well as to the people more particularly concerned. We have the testimony of the hon. member for Woothakata—who, I think, knows more about the districts concerned than any other member, and who is a gentleman of good repute—that the operations of the Chillagoe Company have been beneficial and satisfactory from a district point of view. They have increased settlement, and have opened up many mines, and I think that this Mount Garnet line will be also very beneficial to that district. Hon. members on the other side say that the Government should build all these lines; but do they think the people are going to be deluded and beguiled by such a statement? Do not hon. members know that the Government cannot construct all these lines asked for, which are estimated to cost £20,000,000? There is a great

demand for railways now, and hon. members must know that the State cannot build them, and many of them are asked for on a very reasonable basis, but any hope of their being built by the State is perfectly illusory.

Mr. Dawson: Why?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: If the hon. member cannot use his intellect to see why, I cannot help that. He must know that the credit of the colony is limited. These railways cannot be made for many years unless by private enterprise, and the portions of the colony where they are required will remain in a stagnant and undeveloped condition. A railway cannot be obtained by the grace of God or as a gift of Nature. The arguments for State railways are various. One is that private railway companies do not keep up the rate of wages. Rivers do not keep up the price of wages; but would hon. members say they would close up rivers on that account? Now, it does not follow that because the Chillagoe Company, or the Mount Garnet Company, or any other company, have the right to charge rates 50 per cent. heavier than the Government rates that they will exercise that right or privilege. We find that in the United States, where there are more railways than in any other part of the world, the rates are far cheaper than anywhere else. Let me take one instance in Queensland. We have the Tramways Company in Brisbane, whose charges are a great deal less than the Government charges on the railways. As a matter of fact, this company will take you four miles for 3d. The Government, I think, charge about double that amount for the same distance. If some hon. members cannot catch their train after 11, they have to remain here for the rest of the night. But the Tramways Company has an excellent service, and they only charge 3d. up till 12:30.

Mr. Dawson: Have you gone home late at night in the trams?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Yes, frequently; and you can get a tram in the morning every ten minutes from 6:30. If you miss a train you may have to wait an hour. Now, we are not dealing with railways generally, but with a certain proposed line—the Mount Garnet line. I have pointed out that it does not follow [8:30 p.m.] that a company will charge higher rates than the Government, or give less accommodation. It is quite possible that it will give even better accommodation in every way.

Mr. Dawson: If it is anything like the Brisbane Tramways Company you will get more insolence from its servants.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I imagine that the hon. member will get insolence where I shall not. I am civil to the tramway employees.

Mr. Dawson: After 10 o'clock at night they will not wait for you.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: They will stop at the proper places.

Mr. Dawson: They will not.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I really do not know why the hon. member should bring up his private grievances in this House in this way.

Mr. Dawson: I simply want to give a direct contradiction to your illustration.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The hon. member's experience is very different from mine. It is a fact that the tramways run very much more frequently and to a later hour than the trains, and that through fares are cheaper than those on the railways.

Mr. Reid: The Government could run them just as cheaply.

Mr. DAWSON: They could, and give a better service.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: There is this point to be considered also—that the Government may run trains without charge at all to the passengers, but they would do so at the expense of the rest of the community. I do not think that the statement that the Government charge lower rates on their railways than a private company is a reason for voting for public railways at all, unless it can be shown that this is done out of the earnings of the railways. But, if it be a fact that the colony loses £300,000 per annum on those railways, it is not the slightest argument in favour of State railways so far as the general taxpayer is concerned, because he is called upon to make up the deficit. The Government can run anything they like without charging for the service, because they have the power of putting their hands into the purses of the general taxpayers, and they do it; and, while their service is apparently cheap to those people who require to make use of it, if it be at the expense of a large number of people who obtain no equivalent benefit, and who are saddled with the cost, I do not consider that it is a strong argument in favour of the State having control of that service. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley poses as a prophet, and says that members on this side will live to regret the attitude they have taken up on this question. I do not see it at all. It is all very well to make that prophecy, but there is an old saying that "you had better not prophesy till you know." There is no particular guarantee of the accuracy of the hon. member's forecast. Some prophecies may be realised, but we remember the attitude which was taken up by prominent members of the Labour party with regard to the South African war, and the Boers, and the contingents, and do not attach much weight to their prophecies, because we find that, in order to adjust themselves to circumstances which they did not foresee, they have got to turn their backs upon most of their prophecies at that time. I do not propose to talk the matter out, like the hon. member who preceded me. I have endeavoured to deal with the subject, and not to go into the question of public ethics; but I would like to refer to a remark which was made by one hon. member, and to which I made an interjection. An hon. member spoke of the effect companies would have upon the very frail virtue of hon. members on this side. I told the hon. member to speak for himself. I do not think there is any company which is likely to attempt to induce hon. members to do anything dishonest, and it is rather an awkward thing for the Labour party to say, because, at public banquets, at which they are occasionally present, when the health of the Parliament is proposed, they generally get up and make a eulogy upon the virtues of this Parliament, and say that it is quite equal to any Parliament in Australia, and so on. They say this with perfect complacency, but at other times, and in this very House, it is insinuated that hon. members would be corrupt if the slightest bribe was offered to them. It is possible that there may be corrupt persons in the world, just as in some countries in political affairs the spoils go to the victors, and they are not so pure politically as we are here. If it suits hon. members opposite they will say that public affairs in this colony are conducted fairly and honestly generally speaking, and without corruption, and, although they may profess to believe, I do not believe that the fact of there being a certain number of gentlemen, Mr. Moffatt amongst them, who are shareholders in this company, is one which hon. members can look upon with the slightest fear of their being corrupted. I venture to say we are not likely to

be approached by persons who are desirous of bribing us, and, in the second place, I venture to say—whatever any other hon. member may say for himself in regard to the matter—that it is quite foreign to the habits and modes of thought of hon. members, and of the people of the colony, to believe that there is likely to be any corruption practised because a certain syndicate happens to desire to make a railway. Why should they desire to corrupt anybody? Hon. members opposite say that this particular railway ought to be built by the State. Why, then, should there be any particular desire on the part of any company to bribe members of this House? I believe that hon. members who entertain such views with regard to the honour of members of Parliament are betraying their own frailty, and confessing their own weakness. For my part, I indignantly repudiate any such idea, and such opinions are distinctly derogatory to hon. members who utter them, and they express their modes of thought in a manner which is not altogether favourable to themselves.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*): The concluding remarks of the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat struck me as being somewhat peculiar. He seems to be labouring under the impression that hon. members on this side, while objecting to the Government proposals, have also accused hon. members on the other side who approve of these proposals of being the victims of corruption.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Your own organs accused your own members six months ago.

Mr. DAWSON: If the hon. member thinks that is the ground of our objection he is entirely mistaken. The objection that members on this side take is, not that the members on the other side who are opposed to us have been bribed or are corrupt in any way, but merely that they are mistaken—that what they believe is a good policy to be pursued in the interest of the country is a wrong one.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: What I said was that one of the arguments against private railways was that they might corrupt the Government and Parliament.

Mr. DAWSON: I want it to be distinctly understood that the ground of our objection to this proposal is not that hon. members on the other side have been bribed, or that they are corrupt in any way, but rather that the policy is not a good one. I challenge the hon. gentleman to quote a statement made by anybody on this side of the House in which either the hon. gentleman himself or any member of the House has been charged with corruption. I think we ought to debate these matters on fair lines.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Then you should not make these charges.

Mr. DAWSON: No member of this House has a right to set up an Aunt Sally of that description, and knock it down himself. If the hon. gentleman had been charged with corruption, then he would have been right in his indignation, if it was not simulated indignation, in repudiating that charge; but when there has not been the slightest suspicion of a charge of that description the hon. member is indulging in a very unfair line of criticism.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The statement was made.

Mr. DAWSON: I have already stated that I challenge the hon. gentleman to quote a statement made by any member on this side of the House in which such a charge has been made either against himself, or any member on that side, during the discussion on these Bills.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I should like to make an explanation. The argument used by the hon. member for Cairns against private railways was that these syndicates were so powerful, and their influence in America had been so injurious, that in all probability our legislators would be corrupted. The hon. member for Cairns made that statement, and you will see it in *Hansard*.

MR. DAWSON: I am very glad the hon. gentleman has made that explanation. Now we understand that the ground of the hon. gentleman's charge is that something may probably eventuate in the distant future, always provided that we follow on the lines of America. Then, in the distant future, some hon. members who will be sitting in this Chamber when the present members are dead and gone may be corrupted. That is the flimsy pretext on which the hon. gentleman simulates his indignation. I refer to this matter first because I wish it to be distinctly understood by hon. members on the other side of the House, who differ from us on the policy of the Government in introducing these Bills, that it is not on that ground that we object to them. We object to them on higher ground entirely—on the ground of public policy. The hon. member for Mackay—whom we are all pleased to listen to at any time, because if he has anything to say he says it well, even if he is wrong—seems to me to have entirely missed the point in this instance. The objection that we have to this proposal, to put it as briefly as I possibly can, is that if the construction of the Mount Garnet Railway is a good thing, if, as the hon. gentleman and the Secretary for Railways claim, it will open up a mineral field and develop the mining industry of the colony to such an extent that it will be an all-round benefit to the taxpayers of the colony, and will bring in a profit to the syndicate who undertake the construction of the railway—or tramway, as the Government call it—then I say that is the very strongest argument we could urge why the State should undertake the construction and maintenance of that railway.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I never said the line would pay; it is a pure speculation.

MR. DAWSON: At any rate, that is one statement I have to make. If the Government are satisfied that the line will pay, then it ought to be constructed by the State. On the other hand, if they are satisfied that it will not pay, that the wealth of the mines will not justify the construction of this railway, and that these foolish people who join in the syndicate will lose their money, then that is one of the strongest arguments that could be urged why the railway should not be constructed at all.

MR. FORSYTH: That is their lookout.

MR. DAWSON: The hon. member for Carpentaria interjects that that is their business. The hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill, the Secretary for Railways, made a remark to the same effect on a previous occasion, and said that if a private syndicate undertook the construction of the railway and it did not pay, it was their own lookout, and no Minister of the Crown, and no Government, should interfere with them. I dissent absolutely from that proposition. I say it is the duty of the Government to protect the people of this colony. If these speculators who are going to construct this line are our fellow-colonists, they must look to the Government for protection; if they are speculators outside the colony, then for the honour of the colony the Government should see that they are fairly dealt with.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The syndicate must look out for themselves.

MR. DAWSON: That is all very fine. The hon. gentleman may be going home to-night, with his month's pay in his pocket, and a sneak-thief may come along and steal the money from his pocket. Would the hon. gentleman then say that it was his own lookout—that he should have been a little more careful in protecting his monthly screw? No; he would report the matter to the nearest police station, the smartest detective in the service would go after the sneak-thief, and if he was caught and convicted he would be sent to St. Helena.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Because he has broken the law.

MR. DAWSON: I say that should be the law. But the hon. gentleman is trying to lay it down that because a man does this silly thing it is his own lookout, and that he should suffer the consequences of his own folly. If the hon. member for Mackay goes home to-night, and does not lock his door, and a burglar rifles his pockets, the hon. gentleman is not allowed to suffer the consequences of his own folly. We have policemen, magistrates, judges, and gaols for the punishment of men who do things of that description. We protect the hon. gentleman against his own foolishness. I am just reminded that a few years ago we had a firm here called "Tattersall," run by one George Adams; and I think that brought in about £30,000 a year revenue.

THE PREMIER: It did not.

MR. DAWSON: Very close to it.

THE PREMIER: It made more than that out of Queensland.

MR. DAWSON: The people who purchased tickets were not forced to do it, but the Government, to protect them from their own foolishness, passed the Suppression of Gambling Act, and George Adams is now in Tasmania. I dissent absolutely from the proposition that because a man does a certain thing he has no redress. The hon. member for Mackay is very fruitful in his arguments and illustrations. Sometimes he is happy; sometimes unhappy—mostly the latter. To-night he was particularly unhappy. He quoted by way of illustration the Brisbane Tramways Company, and said what a great benefit the establishment of that company had been to the people of Brisbane; but if there is one company that shows the evil of the paramount ownership of a public road in Queensland by a private company, it is this very Brisbane Tramways Company.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You stand alone in that opinion.

MR. DAWSON: I do not; and I venture to say that if a referendum of those who use the trams were taken it would be found that I am expressing their true opinion. As a matter of simple fact the Brisbane Tramways Company has the municipal council by the ears in North Brisbane, and has also got possession of the Government.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. DAWSON: There is not a single case where any complaint is made about the management of the company that is listened to either from the municipal council or from the Government. What you get from the Brisbane Tramways Company is more insolence than service. Only last Saturday evening—and this is only one of numerous cases that have come under my observation—a man wanted to get out of a tram at a place where trams are advertised to stop, and the tram would not stop. The man did get out, and turned three or four somersaults in doing so. Then the tram stopped and the conductor got out, took the man's name and address, and told the man he would very likely be summoned. He stopped there then about a quarter

of an hour, though he could not stop a second to let the man get out. I have had a buster from a tram myself.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Hence these tears!

Mr. DAWSON: So I happen to know all about it. I know that female relations of mine have desired to get out of trams at certain places, and the trams would not stop. They have endeavoured to get out, and have had busters. Since my last sudden acquaintance with mother earth, I have made it a rule to neither enter nor leave a tram until it absolutely stops, and the result is that about nine times out of ten it either does not stop for me in getting in, or I am carried past my destination in getting out. That is the high-handed manner in which this man Badger, the manager of the Brisbane Tramways Company, carries on this private tramway company. My experience is not singular. You can find hundreds of people, particularly those living in South Brisbane, to support the testimony I am giving now. So when the hon. member quotes the Brisbane Tramways Company as being such a convenience to the public, in the light of the evidence I have given he could not have made a more unfortunate quotation.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: And still they go on.

Mr. DAWSON: The public are absolutely compelled to use them.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Why?

Mr. DAWSON: If I can possibly help it, I never go into a tram.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: There is the 'bus.

Mr. DAWSON: You cannot always get a 'bus when you want it, but I never go into a tram if I can get a 'bus.

[9 p.m.] Complaints have been made to the municipal council about the conduct of the traffic by the tramway company, and what is the reply from the aldermen? That it is useless to take a case, because Mr. Badger has got them tied hand and foot. That is the invariable reply.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Who by?

Mr. DAWSON: By the council.

Mr. GIVENS: He has the Traffic Board by the wool, too.

Mr. DAWSON: An electric tram service is a thing to be appreciated, but to be best appreciated it should be in the hands of the municipal council or of the Government. Then I believe the public would receive civility and a decent service. At present they do not receive either. The only way of meeting that is to take it out of the hands of the private syndicate and put it into the hands of the council.

Mr. GIVENS: The council admit that they are incompetent to run it.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. member for Mackay advanced very many arguments in a way in which only the hon. member for Mackay could advance them, in favour of the construction of this tramway by a private syndicate.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Seeing that we cannot get it in any other way.

Mr. DAWSON: That is an assertion that is not supported by any evidence. It is not even supported by the Minister in charge of the Bill.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It does not require support.

Mr. DAWSON: Does the hon. member mean to say that it is impossible for this Government to borrow sufficient money to construct this line to Mount Garnet?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: And construct at the same time a great many other more necessary lines.

Mr. DAWSON: We are dealing now with one particular line. Does the hon. gentleman mean to assert that this Government is so poor in

itself, and so poverty-stricken in reputation, that they cannot get enough money to construct this twenty-seven miles of tramway?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: A syndicate's railway, at the expense of railways more badly wanted.

Mr. DAWSON: Dealing with this £20,000,000 we have heard of, there is a point that attention should be drawn to very sharply. The reason why they intend to farm out this line, as well as others, is because railway lines are necessary in order to develop the resources of the country, and the finances of the country will not permit of the State undertaking the construction and maintenance of those lines. This is the position taken up by hon. members opposite. In this connection they have opened their mouths very widely, and have said something about its being necessary to have something like £20,000,000 of money to construct the lines that are necessary.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The demands that have been made.

Mr. DAWSON: I have yet to learn, as a gentle and simple politician without experience, that Ministers in charge of the Treasury yield to all the demands that are made. I have a keen recollection of a demand that has been made on various Governments for many years, but it has not been acceded to. That is the demand for the Bowen line. I have a recollection of a demand made by the hon. member for Flinders for the Cloncurry line, that has not been acceded to.

The PREMIER: I never heard it.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. member was in the House at the time the money was actually voted for its construction.

The PREMIER: No, I was not.

Mr. REID: The Chief Secretary was.

Mr. DAWSON: I was not here then I know. But if the present members for Townsville were not here, the Hon. Villiers Brown was.

The PREMIER: No he was not.

Mr. DAWSON: I think the members for Townsville then were Mr. Macrossan and Mr. Villiers Brown. However, the money was passed for that line. When the hon. member talks about demands having been made, I ask how long was the hon. member for Port Curtis demanding that the gap should be filled up between Rosedale and Gladstone?

The PREMIER: Only one year.

Mr. DAWSON: How long have the hon. members for Rockhampton North and for Rockhampton been demanding that the gap should be filled up between Gladstone and Rockhampton? How long have Northern members been demanding the continuation of the railway from Clermont to the Burdekin Bridge or to Ravenswood? How long has the hon. member for Aubigny been talking about a railway from Goombungee to—to Wheelbarrow? (Laughter.) How long has the hon. member for Dalby been demanding the starting of a line from Yeulba to St. George? How long were the hon. member for Cambooya and the hon. member whom he succeeded demanding a line from Pittsworth to St. George? And, Mr. Speaker, if I may ask the question, how long have you, Sir, been demanding a line from Warwick to St. George? And we are to believe that, simply because a demand has been made, the consciences of hon. gentlemen opposite are so sensitive and their natures are so generous that they must accede to every demand that is made.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Claims are made for many railways more important than this.

Mr. DAWSON: There is a great deal of difference between a claim being made and a claim being acceded to, and that is the point I am endeavouring to make the hon. gentleman

understand. We have been told that if the State is to construct railways they must have £20,000,000 on account of the demands that have been made. As a matter of fact, what it is proposed to do now by private enterprise does not amount to £20,000,000.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I should think it didn't.

Mr. DAWSON: Then what is the use of the hon. gentleman making use of this fabulous sum of £20,000,000, unless it is to hoodwink and throw dust in the eyes of the public? In this connection, I venture to say that Queensland is such a wealthy colony and has such vast resources—and the people of the colony have sufficient energy and intelligence to use and develop those resources—that if £20,000,000 were required, we could borrow that sum more readily than any private syndicate or syndicates could.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Would you vote for a £20,000,000 loan?

Mr. DAWSON: No; not while the hon. gentleman is sitting on the Treasury bench. It appears to me a very foolish statement to make—that syndicates can do certain things which are necessary to develop our resources that the Government cannot do. Surely the reputation of this colony is sufficient to make it a successful competitor against any private syndicate! If not, the blame rests on the shoulders of those who are responsible for the government of the colony. I wish to make passing reference to an ungenerous statement made by the hon. member for Mackay. As a rule he is not ungenerous. He made a remark by way of argument that a certain secretary had got away with funds, and I have no doubt he made use of that argument in order to try and wound myself.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: How could it wound you? I had no idea of wounding you.

Mr. DAWSON: If that argument is carried further, all I can say is that if certain public treasurers run away with public funds over which they have control, we ought to have no treasurers at all.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is your argument.

Mr. DAWSON: We have had many painful experiences with regard to secretaries and treasurers; but that experience has not been half as painful and disgraceful as the experience we had in connection with the Queensland National Bank. If hon. members on the other side are going to throw slurs across this Chamber, they will get as much as they give. It is claimed that great advantage will result to the colony through the construction of these private syndicate railways—more especially with regard to the development of our mineral resources. I hold the same opinion that I have expressed on more than one occasion and which I also expressed as a member of the Royal Commission on mining—that the construction of these lines by private syndicate companies is not necessary in order to develop our mineral resources. Mining members—especially in the North, including the hon. member for Woothakata—have all contended that a more wise and liberal administration of our mining laws, and a better protection to those who desire to invest in mining, would do more to develop our mineral resources than anything else. I represent the premier goldfield of the colony, and as such I repudiate entirely that private syndicate railways are necessary to develop our mineral resources, as has been stated by some members who are backing up this Bill. If better protection was given to investors by the Government, that would do more to induce capital to come here and develop our mines than all these private railway concessions. I think the hon. member for Cook drew up a paragraph in

the report of that Royal Commission, and pointing out that in order to get outside investors to have full confidence in the mineral resources of the colony they would have to be given to understand that they would be protected by the Government.

The PREMIER: Are they not given that protection now?

Mr. DAWSON: I do not think so. No speculator with a wild-cat scheme is ever pulled up by the Government. If any proof of that is necessary it will be found in the document alluded to by the leader of the Opposition last night, and commented on by the hon. member, Mr. Higgs, this evening.

The PREMIER: The Government exposed that.

Mr. DAWSON: No. It is not fully exposed yet. I am perfectly satisfied what will happen about this very Bill. What happened in connection with the Chillagoe Railway Company? A number of shrewd speculators got a Bill passed through this House, and they put their concession on the London market, and scooped £100,000 out of it.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Most of them have their shares now.

Mr. DAWSON: And when this Bill is passed, the people for whom this Bill is being passed will do exactly the same thing—they will put their concession on the London market, and scoop in the dollars, and the *bona fide* investor has got to take the risk.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What difference does it make who constructs the railway?

Mr. DAWSON: It makes a great deal of difference. At the outset of my remarks, I endeavoured to impress upon the hon. gentleman that there was a great difference between the speculator and the investor. The man we want to encourage to develop our mineral resources is the investor, and not the speculator; and every action we take which will induce the speculator to come in and invest is injurious to the people of this colony. We should endeavour to deal with the investor direct, without the interference of the speculator, who does us more harm than good. I desire to reply to some remarks that were made by the Premier, if I am not out of order in doing so. They were not made exactly on this Bill, but, as they were repeated by the Secretary for Railways during this debate, I can reply to both hon. gentlemen at the same time. It is this: They express their surprise at the members for Charters Towers opposing the construction of a tramline, because there is a tramline at Charters Towers. They refer to the tramway belonging to the Mills' United. I wish to point out that that is a misuse of terms. The tramway at Charters Towers is a tramway which was brought into this House by a private member, and the Bill was passed as a private Bill. It empowered Mills' United to construct this tramline to their mine, joining the Northern Railway, for the purpose of taking their quartz and other material necessary for the working of the mine along their own private line and over the Government line. Of course the company has to pay as soon as their material touches the Government railway. But in no case were they permitted to cater for the public. It is absolutely a private line—that is, a line for the convenience of that particular company. In the strictest sense it is a private line. It is not allowed to carry goods or passengers for anybody in Charters Towers.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It is a monopoly.

Mr. DAWSON: It is not a monopoly. It is a private line for the convenience and the benefit of the company to whom it belongs.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Yes, a syndicate.

Mr. DAWSON: I believe the hon. member is a shareholder in that syndicate.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I do not think so. It does not pay any dividends.

Mr. DAWSON: They have not for some time; and perhaps that is why the hon. gentleman got out of it.

The PREMIER: Do not they carry quartz for some other companies?

Mr. DAWSON: No.

The PREMIER: Are you sure?

Mr. DAWSON: Absolutely certain.

The PREMIER: What about the Mills' United quartz?

Mr. DAWSON: The Mills' United own the line.

The PREMIER: The Day Dawn Block own the line.

Mr. DAWSON: No, they do not. There is a branch from it to the Day Dawn Block.

The Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: This is a frightful syndicate.

The PREMIER: The two mines use the line.

Mr. DAWSON: Having lived there for so many years, I ought to know something about it.

The PREMIER: How many branches are there to the mill at the Burdekin? Both companies use that mill.

Mr. DAWSON: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. The mill at the Burdekin belongs to one company.

The PREMIER: Yes; to the Day Dawn Block.

Mr. DAWSON: It belongs to the Mills' United; at least I understood the company purchased it.

Mr. LESINA: It does not affect the argument, any way.

Mr. DAWSON: Both companies use the portion of the tramline where it joins on to the Northern Railway. Then one branch runs off to the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham, and the other runs off to Mills' United. I believe the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham were the first to construct the line, and they purchased half the line that they use; but in no case is either company allowed by the terms of the Act to carry goods or passengers, or in any way to deal with the general public. They are strictly confined to the business of their own companies. They are not public carriers at all. Now, in this Bill, by some strange freak, or what might be termed a transient gleam of Scotch humour, it is called a tramline—a private line, which empowers the owners to cater for the public in all things the same as the Commissioner for Railways can cater on a public line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For the convenience of the public.

Mr. DAWSON: And it is called a private line.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: So it is. You have heard of the private ownership of public-houses, haven't you?

Mr. DAWSON: I have not heard a private house called a public-house, and I have not heard a public-house called a private house. There is quite a difference between the terms "public" and "private." A private line is a line that is constructed purely for their own private purposes and not for public purposes at all; but when they cater for the public it is a public line. Does the Secretary for Railways mean to say that all public lines are private lines, and that he runs them for his special benefit? I hardly think the hon. gentleman would have the audacity to say that, or even to think it. This public-private line is to be allowed to charge 50 per cent. more than the State railways. Criticism on that will come better in committee, and, if hon. members agree with me in committee, the owners of this line will only be allowed to charge what the Commissioner for Railways thinks is a fair

thing to charge and nothing beyond that.

I have nothing more to say now, except to confirm the fears of the hon. member

[9:30 p.m.] for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Higge, when he stated that it is a very dangerous thing to give large concessions to syndicates, because if you do not do as they wish you to do, if you do not obey their call at the moment they make that call, they will attempt to crush you. I believe the hon. member used the term "boycott," and I go all the way with him there. I believe that one of the greatest dangers we have to face in giving any concession to a private syndicate is that the man who is in their power will be absolutely crushed unless he is weak enough to do their bidding.

The PREMIER: Is that the case at Charters Towers?

Mr. DAWSON: I am very glad the hon. gentleman has made that interjection. It was the case at Charters Towers, but we are in the fortunate position that there is not one syndicate there, but a hundred syndicates. But notwithstanding that fact, when my colleague, Mr. Dunsford, and myself were returned as representatives of the Labour party in 1893, it so distressed the mining syndicates that they sacked something like 800 men from the mines on Charters Towers.

The PREMIER: That is news to me.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. gentleman need not say that it is news to him, because this is not the first time I have made that statement in this House.

Mr. GIVENS: It is absolutely true.

Mr. DAWSON: Yes, and the hon. member was one of the victims. As a matter of fact, the hon. member for Cairns complained that he had to leave Charters Towers, and he went to Cairns. I may also tell the Premier another thing, if he doubts my word on the matter. I have been about twenty-five years on Charters Towers. I went there as a small boy, and was the second boy on the field. I believe I always bore a fairly good character, but in a weak moment I dared to notify my intention of standing as a candidate for a divisional board, and I had the misfortune to subsequently succeed and get in, with the result that the firm for whom I had worked for somewhere about ten years did not require my services any longer, and I was so closely boycotted that for over two years I could not get a job on Charters Towers. Many a time while I was boycotted—and I am not likely to forget those who boycotted me—I have gone home without a shilling in my pocket, knowing that I had a wife and children in the house without a bite to eat. I therefore speak very feelingly on this subject; I know what it means, for I have been through the mill. I may also take this opportunity of saying that, notwithstanding the fact that I had—I will not call it a profession, but a good means of livelihood in my hands, I was obliged to pick a mullock-heap for a living, which I was not ashamed to do. I would do the same thing again if I was placed in similar circumstances. I say, if the vindictiveness of those who were opposed to me could press me to such extremes in a place like Charters Towers, where there are a large number of syndicates, what power—what crushing force—might there not be brought to bear where there is only one syndicate in a district?

Mr. J. HAMILTON (Cook): The hon. member who has just spoken has stated that he objects to tramways unless they are State tramways, and yet he says he is in favour of certain private tramways. He instanced two tramways at Charters Towers, which are owned by absentees—

Mr. DAWSON: No, they are not,



Mr. J. HAMILTON: And which are monopolistic, and which the public are not allowed to use for traffic. The hon. member expressed himself in favour of those tramways, but when we propose to build a tramway from the use of which the public will not be excluded, he objects to the proposal. He stated that what he objected to was the middleman, but that he is glad to work for the investor. In this particular Bill it is the investor we are dealing with. We are dealing directly with the owners of the Mount Garnet Mine, and not with any middleman. The hon. member also appears to object to the building of these tramways by syndicates because he fell out of a tramcar owned by a private company, and because trams would not stop where he wished.

Mr. DAWSON: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I never stop a tram to get on or off, and if he will take lessons from me I am sure that, under my tuition, he will learn to do it successfully.

Mr. DAWSON: Will you lend me your boots?

Mr. J. HAMILTON: The hon. member did not fall on his boots, but on his head, consequently he did not hurt himself. It would be very soothing to some hon. members if we had State tramways, and if the employees had to touch their hats to those hon. members. But I like to see independence among tram men so long as they are not insolent. I have travelled for several years on the trams, and have never found any insolence except on one occasion, and then I discovered that I was in the wrong. No doubt a State tramway on which hon. members could travel by showing their pass would meet with a great deal of support in this House. But to come to this Bill, I would point out it is simply a proposal to authorise the Mount Garnet Company to construct a tramway twenty-eight miles in length from their claim to junction with the Chillagoe Railway, for the purpose of carrying their ore. The company did not ask for any concession; they simply wanted to be allowed to construct a railway for the purpose of developing their own mine. But the Government said, "We will not agree to that, unless you allow the public to benefit by the line. On the other hand we will allow you to charge 50 per cent. more for fares and freight than are charged on Government railways." The Government did that because they recollected that they themselves used to charge 50 per cent. more in the North than they did in the South, and had only reduced the freights now because they had assimilated the rates in the North with those in the South. At the same time they recognised that they had to pay more for coal and labour in the North than they did in the South, and they knew very well that it would not pay the company to build a line to carry goods in North Queensland at the same rates as were now charged by the Government. The company have not asked for any mineral concession. But before referring to that, I shall deal with the statement made by the leader of the Labour Opposition that he had got the 50 per cent. reduction which has been made in the rates on the Northern railways. The hon. member is totally wrong. Some years ago, in 1893, the rates were 50 per cent. more on the Normanton, Cooktown, and Cairns lines than in the South, and the late Mr. Byrnes, Mr. Phillips, myself, and Mr. Browne assisted to get the rates reduced. Mr. Phillips did more than anyone else in the matter, and it is absurd to say that any one member got them reduced. Last night, when the Premier explained that our rates for carrying ore for twenty-eight miles were 2s. 9d., and according to the rates of the private railway 4s. 1½d., the leader of the Opposition said that was three times the amount charged in New South Wales. That is

not the case. It is even less than in New South Wales. New South Wales charges for twenty-eight miles 2s. 1½d. Now, what are the reasons given by hon. members opposite for objecting to this railway? The leader of the Labour Opposition alleged that if concessions are given they will be sold on the London market. I have only heard of one company having got a concession, and that was the Chillagoe Company, and that was not sold. The company was floated before they went to London, and they borrowed money in London on the security of their shares.

Mr. LESINA: Were they not based on the value of the concession?

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Partly, but the original shareholders are, generally, retaining their shares. In this instance there is no concession whatever. It is simply a freehold claim, and they wish to work their own claim, and the tramway is a portion of the machinery necessary to work it. They don't want to float it. They have 30,000 reserved shares, which are worth £3 each on the market, and that is sufficient to build the railway.

Mr. HARDACRE: You know they cannot work silver on freehold claims.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Since the hon. member was shown by a hard-up the bottom of a melted porter bottle and informed it was a valuable mineral, and spent two weeks in prospecting for more, he has considered himself a mining expert. The leader of the Opposition says that if the Government desire to buy the line at the end of fifty years they will have to give a big price for worn-out carriages. I am surprised at the hon. member making such a statement when, if he looked at clause 29, he would have seen that we would only have to pay 10 per cent. in excess of the value of the property at that time of purchase, and the property would be valued by a tribunal to which nobody could object. Another objection he urged was that the mine might be worked out at the end of fifty years. To think that a mining member could object to a mining company being allowed to construct a tramway on the ground that it would assist them to work their claim out too soon! According to that, he would prefer that a mine should be worked by one man for 1,000 years than that it should be worked by 1,000 men one year. My idea is to put as many men to work on the mine as soon as you can, and if you take out the stuff in two years instead of four, it is desirable in the interests of the colony and of labour to do so. Another objection the leader of the Labour Opposition made was that at the end of fifty years the mine might be left in such a state as to require great expenditure to reopen it. The mine is freehold, and at the end of fifty years nobody can enter on it. The hon. member must be at a great loss for arguments when he utters such absurd reasons as those against the construction of this railway. With regard to this report about which so much has been said, I may say that I asked Mr. Rands, the Government Geologist, about it, and he told me that directly he saw those interpolations he informed the Premier, and action was at once taken in the matter. That must have been before the leader of the Labour party knew anything about it, because the Government Geologist was the only man who had the original, and therefore could be the only man who could expose the discrepancies.

Mr. REID: His reputation was at stake.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: He took exception at once. I have heard him express himself strongly against giving private reports unless they are to be published by the Mines Department; and I am glad to see that it is the intention of the Premier that in future all private reports paid for by any individual are to be also published by the Mines Department. Most of the speech of the leader

of the Labour party was taken up with this report, but the North Chillagoe has nothing whatever to do with the Mount Garnet claim. According to the logic of the leader of the Labour party, if a miner after getting his lease tells any lies about it, no miner in future should get a lease again. On the same principle, if one man sins every man ought to be damned; and the only chance of salvation will be the sacrifice of some pure being. And who could be more suitable—who more spotless and unassailable than the spotless member who has never put his name to a mining prospectus? I am sure we could stand the sacrifice.

MR. FISHER: Who are the "we"?

MR. J. HAMILTON: If one Labour member made a foolish remark, according to the same principle no other Labour member should ever be allowed to speak again; and if so, the hon. member would be the cause of perpetual silence on his side. We are also told that the taxpayers will be defrauded of their just rights by the Government allowing private individuals to make this railway instead of making it themselves. If the Government had proposed to make the Chillagoe Railway from loan the Labour party would have howled at them for spending the money of the State in building a railway to benefit a syndicate. Mr. Moffatt had spent eight or ten years at Chillagoe, and had lost £40,000. No one else was working there, yet the proposal by his partners to make a railway was strongly objected to. The Labour party contended that it would not pay, that it was giving away the wealth of the colony, that there was no copper there, that the copper market would be glutted; they objected in fact to everything that would encourage settlement and benefit the people. Now, the leader of the party blames the Government for not having made the railway. He informs us now that he has no objection to the syndicate making this line to carry their own goods, so long as they have not the right to carry goods for the public. I do not see why the public should be shut out. He informed us that the public would have to pay 50 per cent. more than upon a Government line. That is so, but seeing that no Government line would be made there, and that neither side of the House would consent to a speculative line of the sort being made by the State, is it not better to allow the outside public to get their goods carried on this private line at 50 per cent. more than on a Government line, than to make them pay 500 per cent. more, as they would have to do if they have to pack all their stuff down to the port. That would simply prevent them working their mines altogether. But what is the policy of the Labour party? It is a policy which would benefit the syndicators, because the leader of the party advocates that the syndicate should only be allowed to build a line to carry their own ore, and would not allow the public to have any ore carried on the line. That would be just into the hands of the syndicate. There might be other mines there owned by poor men, and it would be under these terms utterly impossible for them to get their product to market. They might get it to market at a reasonable cost on this railway, but hon. members opposite would prevent that. The only alternative would be to send the stuff to port by packhorses, and the expense of that would kill any mine. The hon. member would simply play into the hands of the syndicate, and the result would be that they would eventually monopolise all the mines there, because they could work them at far less cost than anyone else could work them on account of the low rate of carriage.

MR. DAWSON: Don't you think the Railway Department could run a line as cheaply as a private syndicate?

MR. J. HAMILTON: They could, but at the present moment railways that would cost about £20,000,000 are asked for by various members of the House—railways which, I think, it would be desirable to make if we could get the money, because they would serve large centres of population. That being the case, it would be absurd to suppose that hon. members would consent to the State making these railways for private syndicates until the wants of their various electorates are satisfied. It would, besides, be impossible to borrow the £20,000,000 required in one, in six, or in ten years, and yet that would have to be borrowed first to construct other railways before money could be borrowed to make these railways to develop private mines. It is admitted that only £11,000 was subscribed out of the whole of our last loan by private individuals. That shows what the result would be now if we only wanted to borrow £5,000,000. Moreover, it is problematical, even if we had the money, whether it would be desirable to spend it on these speculative railways, for they are all speculative. The hon. gentleman said, "If the railway will pay, let the Government make it, and if it is risky we should not let private individuals make it." Is not all mining a risk? According to that theory mining should be prohibited. Then it might pay for a mining syndicate to build a railway where it would not pay the Government to build it, because the syndicate would be getting their profits out of the mine worked by means of the railway. We have instances in this colony showing how dangerous it is to build speculative mining railways to develop mining fields. There is the Mount Perry Railway, which cost £393,000. For years after it was opened it did not pay working expenses, and even now it is only paying 10s. above working expenses, and as it cost us 4 per cent. to borrow that money we are losing the difference between that and  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And that is not on the mining portion of it.

MR. J. HAMILTON: And, as the hon. gentleman says, that is not on the mining portion of it, and we would be getting nothing from it if it was not for the agricultural portion. There is also the Clermont Railway, which cost £194,000, and we are not receiving from it, over working expenses, half the interest we have to pay on the money borrowed to build it.

MR. KIDSTON: If the Government take it another twelve miles it will pay.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The copper mines at Clermont were closed before that railway was built.

MR. J. HAMILTON: I am stating facts. These railways were built because it was expected they would pay, on account of the importance of the mining interests in those districts at the time. That was the ground on which those lines were built; but the mines proved unremunerative, and are still, although copper has gone up. In what position would the Chillagoe district now be in if the Labour party policy had triumphed two or three years ago? That particular locality was then dead. Mr. Moffatt was the only man with sufficient public spirit to spend money there. He spent £80,000, and got only about £40,000 of it back. He was thinking of leaving it at the time, and if something had not been done the place would have been deserted. The Government, with a desire to develop the colony, entertained the project proposed, and what then were the objections of the Labour party? They said there was no copper there, that there was so much copper there that the market would be glutted, that it was only that the company might sell their concessions in London, that it

was a monopolistic scheme; none of which statements were true. I recollect the member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, stating that no railway would ever be made there under the Bill, but it is not the only time he has proved a false prophet. The result of that measure has been that over £400,000 has been spent there on labour, and on material produced by labour.

Mr. GIVENS: That is not true.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I will give £5 to the hospital if I cannot prove that statement to be true, provided the hon. gentleman will do so if I prove it true. They say that capital is not

wanted; but I think the people of the colony are opening their eyes to the present state of affairs. The

pastoral industry is nearly ruined; numbers of men are out of employment; and these companies are willing to spend millions of pounds in the employment of labour. They say that American syndicators possessed too much influence. The working men in America voted for their employers because they gave them good wages, and treated them well. If they didn't they could vote against them with safety under the ballot. The result will be the same here, and that is what the Labour party fear. They don't want the people to be happy and contented. Many charges were made against the Chillagoe Company, but not substantiated. We were told that one of the metropolitan papers was offered a bribe, and numerous charges of bribery filled the air, but no one was man enough to make a definite accusation. The hon. member, Mr. Kidston, lately said he had letters which would expose some hon. members of the House. The leader of the Opposition practically said the same thing. If these charges are true, they should be sheeted home to the guilty parties. No honourable man would make such charges unless he was prepared to prove them. If these hon. members could substantiate one of their charges they would be able to wipe all these measures from the business-paper, because the Premier said that if it was proved that any member had been approached in that way, he would throw all these Bills up.

Mr. KIDSTON: He did not say that.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Yes, he did.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): The hon. member who has just sat down invites us to a bet. He says that as a result of the concessions to the Chillagoe Company £400,000 has been spent in that district.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I said on labour and material.

Mr. LESINA: We don't desire to bet on these matters. We are not a betting crowd on this side of the House. There was a certain gentleman who frequented White's Club in St. James street, London, and while he was watching a game of cards he was invited to take part in a game of hazards. He said he had ten reasons for not doing so. The first was, he said, that he had no money; and that was considered quite a sufficient reason. So we have ten reasons for not supporting these private syndicate railways. We do not advocate them, consequently we are in a most poverty-stricken condition; and we cannot afford to bet.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: It's only a week's screw.

Mr. LESINA: According to the hon. member, owing to the benign influence of a private syndicate, what was once a howling wilderness has blossomed into a prosperous land, and the busy hum of industry is heard there—merely because this House in its wisdom passed a certain Bill granting certain concessions. But this particular company to whom these concessions were granted has not reaped much profit so

far. Statements made in a southern paper shed a lurid light on the methods of these syndicates. I find that Mr. Chapman, the chairman of the Chillagoe Company, admitted that floating 4,000 £100 debentures had cost £83,806; but this sum included everything. We should hope so. Also that the amount was high, but when they wanted to buy money they had to pay for it. The *Sydney Bulletin*, in its "Wild Cat Column" says—

The chances are that this company will soon want to borrow a lot more, and as they can give no other security but the mines themselves, the future of which is by no means assured, they will find that the next lot of money will not be got for nothing either. Strange that it took so long to clear this thing up! There is another matter which seemed to be cleared up to the satisfaction of the meeting, but not to that of the writer. Manager Stewart's estimate of ore proved to date was 500,000 tons, portions of which would be dressed and would produce 300,000 tons to smelt, approximately classified: 225,000 tons copper ore, 75,000 tons lead ore. Contents, 17,000 tons of copper, 15,000 tons lead, 1,000,000 oz. silver, besides appreciable gold. Directors wired asking if this was in addition to the 500,000 tons estimated by Mr. Stewart in his first report, before he took charge, and the meeting dispersed with the idea that it was; whereas it is clear by reading between the lines that one was a surface estimate of 500,000 tons, the existence of which was not established by development. Development, however, has since proved it, and there is only one half million tons and not two as the shareholders have concluded.

That is why they are trying to get off these Chillagoe puffs. That is why they are trying to get more concessions, and that is why the Chillagoe shareholders are desirous of shoving this railway on. The *Bulletin* continues—

Reconstruction in some form or other is inevitable; the present talk is of floating off some blocks. The railway is going to cost more than estimated, and so is everything else. It's a way things have generally. Building a railway or opening up a mine at less than the estimated cost would "stagger humanity." Much has been said about the number of leases owned by this company, but they are spread over such a large distance that the estimated tonnage given might represent a very small amount from each mine, and it is impossible to estimate the cost of working mines when they are so widely separated.

What have we got to consider when we are faced by a company like this? There is no member in this House, and there is no man outside this House—bar the persons who are interested in the company—who is possessed of the slightest bit of information with respect to the persons who want to construct this line. Does any hon. member know those persons? Does anybody know anything about them? Does anybody know what their banking account is? Does anybody know what their *bona fides* are? Does anybody know whether they belong to this colony, or to some other colony, or whether they are persons who have come from other parts of the earth? What are their guarantees, and have they got any guarantors? I look in vain for a reply to those questions. We are perfectly justified in asking these questions, because we are dealing with the national estate to some extent, and we are dealing with certain powers at present possessed by Parliament, and some of which it is proposed by this Bill to hand over to this Mount Garnet Company, which may consist of two persons, or of ten persons, or of 500 persons. As to their number we know nothing, and as to the other points that I have already indicated, we also know nothing. It is proposed under this Bill to give this company power to construct a tramway between Mount Garnet and some other point, for the purpose of enabling the company to work certain mining leases which the company possess at the present time. Power is also proposed to be given to the company to construct this line within three years after the passing of the Act; but, if they

fail to construct it within the specified time, they will be allowed another twelve months within which to construct it. That is four years altogether that the company will have as grace before they undertake to carry out the provisions of the Act. Now in four years that large horde of unemployed, who have been so pathetically held up for our commiseration by hon. members on the other side, will starve to death. What will become of that pathetic horde of unemployed whose large feet are beating tracks west and north and east and south, all over Queensland? We have been asked by hon. members opposite, who pretend to have at heart the interests of the horny-handed men of Australia, and who, as a matter of fact, hold a brief for the horny-handed men of Queensland, to consider the case of those pathetic persons who have been cast out of employment by the drought in the West, and of those homeless persons who have been dropped on our shores by the immigrant ships. Those persons have been held up for our commiseration. We have been asked to shed tears of sympathy over their unhappy lot. We have been apostrophised—and hon. members on the other side, when apostrophising us, have lowered their brows and pointed at us in a dramatic way, as if we were responsible for starving those unfortunate persons to death, and as if we were responsible for depriving them of employment. It has been alleged that in refusing to pass legislation of this character we are really preventing them getting work. But there is nothing in the Bill to compel the company to build the line for four years, and what will the unemployed do—what will the pathetic bagman do in those four years? Will he live on air all that time, or upon the newspaper facts, unsubstantial as they are, which are cabled out from time to time from the old country, notifying us of the progress made by the company in floating its concessions, and of the large amounts of money they are making out of them? The talk of hon. members on the other side about the necessity for passing legislation of this character to find employment for the unemployed is the veriest nonsense, and it is a good thing that we have the opportunity of tearing the mask of hypocrisy from the faces of those hon. members who pretend to weep crocodile tears over the unemployed. If there are so many unemployed as the hon. member for Cook says, why are the Government spending thousands of pounds in bringing immigrants to this colony? That is an argument we shall remind the Government of when we are discussing the Estimates. We will then remind them that they are bringing people here to compete with those who are now out of work in the colony, and then we will see if they will do the great elephant's trunk act, tearing up oaks at one time, and at another picking up sixpences. We shall see if they will then swallow these stories that they have been telling us to-night, in order to push on with this legislation. It seems extraordinary, and if any hon. member on the other side will turn his eyes inwardly and look at his conscience—always provided that he possesses a conscience—in this light he should ask himself: "Am I justified in the eyes of my constituents in voting to bring out people from the old country to compete with people already out of employment, and am I further justified in making the statement that there are people out of work here in order to argue in favour of the construction of private syndicate railways?" Either there are no unemployed here who want work, or there are unemployed here, and we do not want immigrants; but we cannot have the two things. The two statements are irreconcilable, and we shall have more to say about the matter when the proper opportunity arises. I find also, on looking over this Bill, that the

company are expected to deposit a certain sum with the Crown until such time as the line is completed, and, in the event of the tramline not being completed within the specified time, that money shall be forfeited. But I find an inconsistency in the Bill further on, because it says in another clause that the money which is deposited shall be refunded to the company upon the completion of the first five miles with due expedition. Now, if that £5,000, or whatever the amount is, is returned to the company after the first five miles are built, the provision empowering the Government to forfeit that £5,000 is of no avail. But that is a slight inconsistency which can be corrected in committee. I find also that the company can charge a maximum rate for the conveyance of goods and passengers of one-half times the rates charged at the time of the passing of the Act on the railway from Cairns to Mareeba. I find that a similar clause appears in every one of the five Bills which are now before this House. The rates to be charged by the Mount Garnet Company under this Bill are to be regulated by the scale which prevails on Government lines at the time of the passing of this measure. Speaking on a similar provision in the Callide Railway Bill, the *Courier* says—

The effect of this is that while Government rates may be reduced, company rates may be kept up; and while goods and passengers may be carried at a fair profit on one line they may have to pay through the nose on the other.

I think some modification should be made in that particular clause in the direction suggested by the *Courier* in the following words:—

Some modification should be made by which a reduction on Government lines may be followed by a reduction on the syndicate line. At any rate provision for a reduction might be included when profits rise above a certain limit, and when the volume of traffic warrants it.

Another argument that I should like to make passing reference to is one which was advanced by the Minister without a portfolio. The hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Dalrymple, said the credit of the colony was limited. The hon. member for Cook repeated that statement; and the Chief Secretary, the Premier, and all the other Ministers who have spoken have assured the House repeatedly during the discussions on these various measures that the credit of the colony is limited, in fact, so limited that we may practically regard it as crippled. We heard the hon. member for Mackay and the hon. member for Cook to-night indulging in a little calamity howling. The Secretary for Railways, when he introduced the first of these measures providing for the construction of railways by private syndicates, argued very lengthily to show that the State railways of the colony were practically a failure, because during a period of years the country had lost some £2,000,000 on them, and that argument has been repeated with wearisome reiteration by hon. members opposite. I regret that such a statement should have been made by a member of the Cabinet, because, coming from a gentleman occupying such a position, it will go abroad and be adversely commented upon in the other colonies and elsewhere, possibly to our disadvantage. The State railways are one of the chief assets of our national debt, and if members of the Government who have to administer those national assets begin to depreciate them, people abroad may believe their statements, and may conclude that our revenues are suffering, and that our railways are practically a failure. It appears to me that the persons who make those statements are calamity howlers of the very worst description. Yet night after night, for the sole purpose of securing the passage of these Bills authorising private syndicates

to build railways, syndicates composed of persons outside this Chamber of whom we know nothing, for the purpose of advancing the interest of those persons in these matters, those gentlemen are willing to traduce the fair fame of the colony. If this kind of thing is to go on, if responsible Ministers of the Crown are going to traduce the credit of the colony by such statements and for such purposes, it is the duty of members on this side of the House to stick up for our national assets and for the credit of the colony, and show to the people outside, to whom we have to pay interest annually, that our assets are good, but that the Government who administer the colony is not as good as it might be. But the argument will not hold water; there is no truth in the statement that our credit is bad. The *Sydney Bulletin*, of the 15th of September last, speaking about the arguments so frequently used by hon. members opposite, to the effect that the Government cannot borrow money to build these railways, says—

What a beautifully convincing argument can be manufactured in support of any fallacy if only a sufficient number of non-existent circumstances are assumed to begin with! This one rests on two assumptions—that the State can't raise the money itself to build the Cloncurry line, which is certainly false; and that the syndicate will build it sooner than the State or Federal Government would do, which is probably false. As the *Bulletin* pointed out last week, out of every 1s. charged to the users of North Queensland railways about 7d. goes in expenses, and 5d. in interest on borrowed capital. The 5d. represents interest at a little over £3 15s. per cent. The Cloncurry Railway Company is to be allowed to charge 1s. 6d. where the State charges 1s.—i.e., 7d. for expenses and 1d. for interest on capital, which is equal to borrowing the money at £8 5s. per cent. Whether the State borrows the construction money in England, or a private company raises the cash in England, the price of the railway is equally a debt owing by this country to England; only in the latter case the money will be paid to an English owner and called dividend, and in the former it will be paid to an English mortgagee and called interest.

The hon. member for Cook said that our last loan was practically a failure, or words to that effect. Now, it is the impression down south, among competent judges, that the Queensland loan just floated—one of the biggest loans we have ever floated—has been the cheapest big loan in our history. The *Bulletin* says—

Now Queensland has just floated a loan (the cheapest big one in its history) which cost £3 10s. or £3 11s. per cent. It was floated with some difficulty, certainly, but it is safe to assume that the money to build the Cloncurry line could be raised at 4 per cent.—less than half what the syndicate proposal will cost.

No syndicate in Queensland, or even in Australia, can borrow money at as low a rate of interest, or can offer such security for a loan, as the Government of Queensland can offer. With all the possibilities inherent in the country and people of Queensland, the Government can borrow money much more cheaply than any syndicate. It may be objected that we cannot borrow £20,000,000 to build all the lines required, but to that I answer that it is not proposed that we should build £20,000,000 worth of railways at one step. We must proceed slowly, and with reason. Queensland has made great progress in past years; its railways have been extended to thousands of miles, its population has increased to 500,000, and its revenue has run into millions. Has that progress been due to the construction of railways by private syndicates? No; our progress has been made under a policy which has for its foundation the system of State owned and State controlled railways, and to that system we should stick. This Tramway Bill, and the other Railway Bills which are before the House, are a departure from that policy, and I suppose that if a division takes place upon it, as

I hope will be the case this evening, the question will be decided by a party vote. It is part of the policy of the Government to depart from the settled railway policy of the country, and to go in for this new fangled idea of building railways and tramways by inducing foreign investors to invest their money in them. There is another matter to which I wish to make

allusion, because it has been referred [10:30 p.m.] to very frequently in connection with these private railway proposals.

It is said that we ought to allow these railways to be built by private speculators, because they will not be profitable for the Government to build. The statement is that the private speculator can make these lines pay where the Government cannot make them pay interest on the cost of construction. It is asserted that the dozen men who are awaiting the granting of this concession by the Parliament of Queensland can work the railway on more favourable terms than the Government of this country. There is, it is said, an agent at present in London—a member of the Upper House—waiting for the passage of the Glasford Creek Railway, and the moment it goes through no doubt a cable will be sent to him, and that gentleman will launch the property on the London market. A glowing prospectus will no doubt be issued printed in bronze ink on scented paper, and it will point out the great and glorious opportunities which people in the old land have for investing their savings in the great colony of Queensland. To these prospectuses will be attached the names of "M.M.L.A." and "M.M.L.C." of this legislature of Queensland as the glorified guinea pigs of the syndicate who are prepared to make any sacrifice rather than that the English investor should be deprived of such a very excellent bargain. Wealthy men will be induced to put their money into these concerns, poor men will likewise fall victims to the high sounding phrases of the directors of these mines and railways, and will be induced to put the savings of a lifetime into the venture. Then after a few years of painful anxiety and expense the company closes down, the mine is deserted, the machinery is allowed to rust, and everything connected with the company becomes defunct. It is that which depreciates the credit of the country, for every poor person who has been induced to put his savings into such a venture advertises the kind of swindle that can be perpetrated in the colony of Queensland. And if the venture turns out a success, who reaps the benefit? The company rake in the dividends which go off to the other end of the world and the colony sits by and looks on. Where does the Government come in? What advantage does it or the colony reap? The labouring classes of the colony may get a little employment at 6s. 6d. a day, and the labourer becomes body and soul the property of the corporation, but in what other respect is any advantage bestowed upon the State? My contention and the contention of those who sit on this side of the House is strongly, that if the company can make a success of these ventures the Government can make a greater success of them. If the company, borrowing money at a cost of from 6 to 8 per cent., can make dividends and increase the worldly prosperity of its shareholders, the Government borrowing money at 3½ or 4 per cent. can make an even greater success of the bargain. The argument is conclusive. I do not see that there can be any objection to such a line of policy, for it is a continuation of the line of policy which has been followed ever since Queensland was a colony—that the State shall construct and own the railways; and if it is profitable for a syndicate to make and construct a line of railway to a mining or other centre, then it must of necessity

be equally profitable to the State to do the same thing. Is it not the duty of the Government to find employment for the people? Is it not their duty to extend the industries of the country and make the wealth of the country available to those who live in it? Have they done so? They have to a certain extent. We have made and owned our own railways; we have developed without the assistance of syndicates our own mining fields, or some of them; and we are able by following out the same line of policy to still further find employment for our people, and still further extend and open up the avenues of employment and wealth. Reference was made by the hon. member for Charters Towers to a line that goes nowhere. Why does the Government not carry that line further? Look again to the Bowen railway, a railway which runs up to a gum-tree—and a very poor gum-tree at that—and stops there. How can it be expected to pay under such circumstances? And there is the line to Clermont in the same predicament. Let it be extended as far as the coal-mines; let the Government extend some of these lines at a comparatively small cost, and they will be repaid over and over again. Let them not act the part of political hypocrites, and pretend that they desire to find employment for the people, and to open up the industries of the colony, when their one desire is to hand over to syndicates everything that is best in the colony. And one word in conclusion: I have no desire to see introduced into our politics the impure, the unholy system of lobbying as it prevails in the United States of America. I have no desire to see our politics made dirty and corrupt by the clamourings of syndicates to have their wants satisfied within the walls of this Chamber. I have no desire to see this legislature rendered hideous by the clamourings of lobbyists to have their vested interests pushed ahead at the expense of the general welfare of the community. I desire to see syndicates excluded, to see our politics pure, and our Parliament actuated by a desire not to forward the interests of private individuals, but to increase the material welfare of the people, and to forward the industrial interests of the State.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*): I need hardly say that I intend to oppose the second reading of this Bill. It appears to me to be rather strange that the richest portion of the colony should be given over in a special fashion to syndicators. We are told by the accredited agent of the Government that Northern Queensland is one of the most wealthy mineral regions, not only in Australia, but on the face of the globe. Now, if that is really the case, I think it ought to be sufficient inducement to us to keep the control of our railways in that particular district in our own hands. We are in the unfortunate position that the railways in the Southern portion of the colony are not paying, and the taxpayers have to put their hands deep into their trousers pockets to make up the deficiency. In the Central division the railways are paying. In the Northern portion of the colony one railway is paying very well, and others not quite so well. But here we have a vast area of mineral country, and we know very well that where minerals are found to exist there is the closest settlement—closer than in agricultural or pastoral country. That being the case, it appears to me to be extraordinary that the gentlemen who are charged with the administration of the affairs of the colony should wish to allow that valuable portion of the colony to pass into the hands of syndicates. I really don't know whether to charge this to their stupidity. It appears to me extraordinary that any Government should be guilty of such unbusinesslike action. Millions have been spent in making railways where they don't pay, yet

here is a district where most valuable minerals exist in great quantities, and where railways might be supposed to pay if they would pay anywhere, and the Government seeks to hand over the construction of these lines to private companies. Any Government anxious to carry on the business of the country in the interests of the people of the country would not seek to give away the Northern portion of the colony in this fashion, but would keep it in their own hands; and I cannot see why they should take this step, except, perhaps, for the reason given by the hon. member for Cambooya—that if they get syndicates to develop the Northern portion of the colony there will be all the more cash available for railways in the Southern portion of the colony. That seems not only a selfish policy, but also an exceedingly shortsighted policy. I am not sure that the people of the North are not themselves very much to blame for the present condition of affairs. They must know very well what kind of treatment they would get from a Brisbane Government. It is true that the Premier is a Northern member, but we know that the hon. gentleman could not hold the position forty-eight hours unless he had the Southern members behind him, and that if he did not carry on the Government in the interests of the Southern portion of the colony he would not be kept in his present position. I am of opinion that the people of the North, for their own safety, should have carried on the agitation for separation till they brought it to a successful issue. At one time the movement was very active all over the North, and it would have been a God's blessing to them if they had obtained separation. They would not then have been in the position they are in to-day—that of a doomed community. If these syndicate railways are passed—I hope they never will become law, but if they do pass—they will simply consign the people of the Northern portion of the colony to a position of virtual slavery. They abandoned their agitation for separation, and now we find a proposal made by a Southern Government to bind them in every limb, and make them subject to syndicates that will suck the life-blood out of them. On several occasions previously attempts have been made to hand the mineral wealth of Northern Queensland over to syndicates, but fortunately on each of those occasions the attempts of those syndicates have been defeated. I hope that on this occasion also we shall be able to hold the fort and be successful in beating off those people who seem desirous of enriching themselves at the expense of the public of a particular portion of this colony. In reading over the debates on the land-grant railway proposal of 1892, I find that exactly the same reasons were given then as are given now. Sir S. W. Griffith said that Queensland had come to that position that she either had to take land-grant railways or none, that the credit of the colony was exhausted; and speaker after speaker repeated the same old parrot tale. Yet we find that since then over 300 miles of railway have been constructed with borrowed money, and we find that £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 of cash have been borrowed from John Bull, and, so far as I am aware, our credit is not exhausted yet. The Minister for Railways professes to be quite appalled at the £20,000,000 worth of railways that are asked for at the present moment in different parts of the colony. The hon. gentleman ought to know by this time that that has been the way ever since the colony was a colony. How long has the hon. member for Maryborough been clamouring for a line to Gayndah? I suppose for the last twenty-five years.

Mr. ANNEAR: Thirty years.

Mr. STEWART: Just consider that, and he is still clamouring, and is likely to clamour. In my district we have been agitating for a short line—the Yepoon line—almost twenty years, and we have not got it yet—we are still clamouring. And the same thing applies all over the colony. When the hon. gentleman thinks of this nightmare of the £20,000,000 which he is asked to expend on railways, it actually keeps him from sleeping, and as a refuge he flies to private enterprise. How does it come that some of the lines asked for in the Southern part of the colony have not been offered to these syndicates? Why not ask a syndicate, for instance, to construct the *via recta*? Why not ask a syndicate to construct the connection between Gladstone and Rockhampton.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You would not ask a syndicate to construct any of them.

Mr. STEWART: Why do not syndicates offer to build an extension of the Central Railway out into the Western pastoral country? The syndicates take very good care that they do not touch any of these railways. We may safely conclude that when a syndicate comes along and offers to put money into a railway—especially in a mining district—it is pretty well sure that the speculation will turn out a success. The gentlemen whom we find mixed up in these syndicate proposals are very shrewd business men, and they are not likely to make mistakes. All over Australia mining railways pay better than any other class of railways. The Silverton tramway pays a dividend of 50 per cent. per annum; indeed, I believe the percentage is very much higher even than that. It is about thirty miles long, and cost a little over £150,000 to build, and the net revenue last year I think was £80,000. That is a mining railway or tramway. We have here the Mount Morgan line, which has only been two or three years open, and last year it actually topped all the Queensland railways by paying 11 per cent. Does anyone imagine that if Charters Towers was not upon the Hughenden-Townsville line, the Northern line would pay as well as it does? Again, I am certain that the coast line between Brisbane and Gladstone is very much assisted by the large mining population on Gympie. We have been told by the hon. member for Cook that the Mount Perry line, which was built to a copper-mine, has not paid, and that the Clermont line, which was also built to a copper-mine, has not paid. But the hon. gentleman did not tell us that shortly after the Mount Perry line was built the value of copper fell materially. One hon. gentleman interjected that the Clermont line was not built until after the Clermont copperfield was practically exhausted.

Mr. KERR: That is a fact.

Mr. STEWART: If it is, it deals effectually with the argument of the hon. member for Cook. But how many lines in the Southern portion of Queensland are there that do not pay. We have got a line to Southport that costs the country somewhere about £40,000 per annum. We have a network of railway lines about Brisbane, not a single one of which pays. But would any hon. member advance that as a reason why all railway building should be stopped?

Mr. LESINA: The Mount Perry line would never have been built if McIlwraith had not been interested in it.

Mr. STEWART: As the hon. member says, the Mount Perry line would never have been built if the late Sir Thomas McIlwraith had not been interested in it. It was a political line, pure and simple, and yet the hon. member for Cook tries to bolster up his weak and tottering case by such examples as those. If we find it the case that not only in Queensland, but all over Australia, railways to mining fields pay

better than any other railways, why is our Government so anxious to hand the richest mineral field in Australia over to syndicates? I can conceive of no reason, which is fit to be mentioned in this House, or which the Speaker would permit me to mention, perhaps that expresses my opinion upon the subject as nearly as I would be allowed to express it here. That being the case, I conceive that it is my duty, and the duty of every hon. member who desires to see pure and upright government, to oppose by every means in our power this deliberate attempt to hand the richest portion of the colony over to be exploited by private syndicates. Member after member on the other side has got up and pointed out what a benefit railway communication would be to this district. I do not deny that. No hon. member on this side has ever advanced the statement that the building of a railway to a mining field would be a bad thing. But what we claim is this: There are railways and railways, and while a railway owned and controlled by the State might be a blessing to a particular locality, a railway owned and controlled by a private syndicate might, and very probably would, be a curse to that particular locality. That is the statement we have always advanced. That is the gravamen of our argument and the foundation of all our contention, and I think we have been able abundantly to prove its correctness. Now, what would be the position of this Mount Garnet syndicate if it were to get the powers demanded in this Bill? The people of Mount Garnet will be compelled to pay double the carriage they ought to pay.

Mr. GIVENS: In some instances three times the carriage.

Mr. STEWART: As the hon. member says, in some instances they will have to pay three times the carriage. Is that benefiting the people of the district?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is better than a bullock dray.

Mr. STEWART: It is, but it is not as good as a State railway from Atherton direct to Mount Garnet. Will the hon. gentleman say it is? It is better than a wheelbarrow, and better than a bullock dray, but the country is not confined either to a wheelbarrow, a bullock dray, or a packhorse. It is going to build a railway from Mareeba to Atherton, and why not continue it from Atherton to Mount Garnet?

Mr. GIVENS: That would not suit the syndicate.

Mr. STEWART: That is the only reason I can discover. Hon. gentlemen opposite are far more anxious to do what is agreeable and profitable to the syndicate than what is for the benefit of the people of that locality. Hon. gentlemen may perhaps tell us that it would not pay the Government to construct a railway between Atherton and Mount Garnet, but I will just read for them what their own surveyor says upon that subject, and if the House wants any stronger evidence than is contained in this report, it is very hard to please. The hon. member for Cairns read this before, but it will bear repetition, and I think this sort of thing cannot be too often dinned into the ears of hon. gentlemen opposite. This is the report of Mr. Surveyor Longland on the proposed line from Mareeba to Mount Garnet. He says—

With reference to immediate traffic, I am of opinion that the transport of the marketable timber at present standing in the immense scrub between the Upper Barron crossing and Millstream Creek—a distance of twenty-two miles—will be a big factor in making this line pay for some years to come. The principal timbers of value are red cedar, bean-tree, beech, silky and red oak, walnut, kauri pine, and white pine. When this timber has been cut, and the scrub opened up, the amount of rich



agricultural land available for close settlement should make this district the greatest agricultural producing area in the colony.

Is the Hon. the Minister for Railways listening?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh yes, I am.

Mr. STEWART (*continuing reading*):

As the conditions for farming are most favourable—viz., one of the best climates in the colony, owing to the altitude of the locality, a fair annual rainfall of about 52 inches extending over a whole year, a plentiful supply of water in the various springs and wells, and the really magnificent soil. This scrub land, I am informed, extends right through to Cardwell on the coast, and I estimate that there are 100,000 acres of scrub land unalienated within ten miles of the route on the eastern side. The Evelyn table and forest may be described as first-class pastoral country, and there is about 100,000 acres unalienated and available for grazing homesteads, and suitable for combining farming and dairying. The tin centres of Herberton and Watsonville will benefit the traffic on the line, as a good even road can be got from the top of the range into Herberton. As stated in my wire of to-day, I am of opinion that this portion of the line has a payable future before it, even if Mount Garnet and its copper lodes were not the objective point of route.

Now that, I think, is good enough for anything. The surveyor says that even if Mount Garnet did not exist, that, with the timber and with the rich agricultural land in that particular locality, there is not the slightest doubt that the railway can be made to pay.

Mr. KERR: Almost you persuade them.

Mr. STEWART (*continuing reading*):

This mine has at present—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have permitted the hon. member to read portion of the report which has already been read to the House because I understood that he wanted to base his argument upon it, but if he continues to read from the report I am afraid he will be transgressing the rule regarding repetition.

Mr. STEWART: Well, I have no desire to go on, Mr. Speaker. I was merely reading the report to emphasise my argument that it would pay the Government to build a line direct from Mareeba to Mount Garnet—a line which would serve the people of Mount Garnet better, much more effectively, and much more cheaply than the proposed line. That is the sole reason why I read this report, and I think it is a report which ought to be conclusive evidence to the Government, unless they are more anxious to serve—which apparently is the case—the syndicates than to serve the people of Mount Garnet. Now, I find that on the other route—that is, the route proposed to be taken by the syndicate—there is no agricultural land of any particular value, or even grazing land. The land is entirely valueless for the purposes of either agriculture or grazing. There is nothing but minerals, and nothing permanent, so far as can be discovered, in that particular locality. That being the case, I do not see the slightest reason why the Government should hesitate whether the building of this particular line should be handed over to the syndicate, rather than be built by the Government.

Mr. GIVENS: The people of the district do not want it built by the syndicate, anyhow.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. gentleman says that the people of the district do not want it built by the syndicate. The fact that the people of the district do not want it built by the syndicate would not cause me to alter my opinion, nor would it if they did want it. If they said, "We desire this railway to be built by a syndicate," I would not, upon that ground, advocate it, and for that reason I do not oppose it simply because the people there oppose it. I oppose the building of this private line upon general grounds, or grounds of principle, because I believe that

although, apparently, they may do a little good for a time, in the long run, instead of benefiting the community where they are constructed, they do them direct injury. That is the reason why I oppose it. I believe it will be much better for the people in this particular district to wait a few years for a railway and get it built by the State than to get one now constructed by a private syndicate. What would be the position of the people in that particular locality when the syndicate gets into full operation? Why, every storekeeper in that district will be at the beck and bow of the syndicate. We have it in this Bill that no differential rates can be charged, but we know perfectly that no legislature is able to prevent differential rates being imposed. We have it in this Bill that the company will be bound to carry the goods of any person or company which complies with the by-laws of the company, but we also know very well that the company can carry out these by-laws in its own fashion. We know that it can do a great many things, violating the spirit of a by-law, without breaking the letter. They may place a hundred and one impediments in the way of people whom they do not specially desire to serve, or who may be odious to them for some reason or other. We know perfectly well that no private individual can possibly be on the same footing with a private syndicate as with a State railway. If he has any complaint to make against the syndicate he will very soon experience the difficulties that will be placed in his way, and, instead of his path being made easier on account of the complaint, the probabilities are that it will turn out very much the other way. Now, take the other mining companies. I have no doubt that in that district there are many other mines which will be opened out in the years to come. Does any hon. member imagine that this particular company, holding, as it will do, the railway, and having certain mine concessions—does any hon. member imagine that it will brook competition in its own particular line? Will it not do everything it possibly can to get the whole of the mineral wealth of the district in its own hands, and holding, as it will do, the only means of communication, will not that be a very easy matter for it to accomplish; and then it will have all the political influence, for we know perfectly well that no man there dare offend a political syndicate such as this. If he does he had better soon clear out of the district, because he would not be able to make a comfortable living there. I think there will be a regular reign of terror if these exploiters are allowed to have their own way. Any persons who are not prepared to submit to the behests of the parties in power will find it very difficult to carry on their ordinary avocations. As far as the working classes are concerned, I think that unless they bend their knee continually to these syndicates, they had better clear out. There is another danger, this particular enterprise may become over-capitalised. We know that these syndicates change hands, and that very often there is a boom and then the burst comes soon afterwards. After these syndicates come into operation, there will be a cry for cheap labour, especially in the Northern portion of the colony. I believe that over-capitalisation will be the result of these matters which we are considering to-night. Although the system of private railways is bad enough, still the employment of alien labour would be much worse. It is provided that no aboriginal or alien can be employed on the tramways; but we all know that Acts of Parliament can be amended. I draw the attention of the public to the danger which exists in these measures. Some people in the old country say if alien labour is employed,



British capital will flow into the country in streams. It is said that if you employ cheap alien labour—something like the Kaffir labour in South Africa—the mineral resources will be developed. I believe the step that the Government are taking to-night is a step that will directly lead to the employment of cheap coloured alien labour. The Minister for Railways says that the mines cannot be developed without the assistance of private enterprise. After the experience of forty years, we find ourselves compelled to fall back on private syndicates. Would a private syndicate have built a line from Brisbane to Toowoomba? I don't think so. We have over 3,000 miles of railways in the colony now. How many of these miles would have been built by private enterprise from the beginning of Queensland's career? I think not one-half would have been built by private enterprise. I don't think Queensland would have occupied the position she does now if all our existing lines had been built by private enterprise. Our present system of railway construction has been very successful in the past, and why should we depart from it? I say the present system has been a magnificent success. The Minister for Railways says they have not. He also says the House would not sanction the construction of this line as a State railway. He does not know anything at all about it. He is simply drawing upon his imagination when he says such a thing. Why has he not given the House all the necessary information, and why does he not bring in a Bill to give hon. members an opportunity of showing whether they will vote for it or not? I suppose the hon. gentleman does not want to do that. He falls back upon the assumption that the House would not pass the Bill; but, as I have said, he never tried, and until he does, he really cannot say whether the House would pass the Bill or not. Another reason the hon. gentleman gives is that our credit is exhausted. Well, I am not so very sure about that. We went to England not so very long ago for a loan and we got it. We had to pay a little more for it than for one floated a year or two ago, but that was merely a temporary affair. I do not believe that the price of money will continue high for any considerable period; and, even if money had to be borrowed at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  or 4 per cent., surely it would pay the colony better to have these railways constructed by that means than to hand over the building of them to syndicates which will have to borrow—not at 4 per cent., but perhaps at 5, or 6, or even 7 per cent. I am certain that the credit of the colony is much better than the credit of any syndicate. And there is another thing—the colony can manage its railways more cheaply than any syndicate could possibly do. We find that the Chillagoe Railway Company has had to pay very much through the nose for the money it has borrowed. The people who got the concession from Parliament, I suppose, have got out, and the present shareholders have got to hold the baby, and a very heavy baby they are likely to find it, if articles that are appearing in the public Press are to be believed. They have had to borrow money at ruinous rates. The company will very soon be over-capitalised, and probably will be in very serious straits, and then we shall have a demand for cheap alien labour. That will be the demand of everyone of these syndicates, and that, I believe, is the result which hon. members on the other side are deliberately planning to bring about. I do not intend to say very much more upon the subject. We shall have an opportunity of dealing with the Bill when it gets into committee, I suppose, and, if we cannot block the passing of the Bill, we can do our best to draw its teeth, and make it as little noxious as possible.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 34.

Messrs. Philp, Dickson, Murray, Dalrymple, Rutledge, Foxton, O'Connell, Callan, Campbell, T. B. Cribb, Cowley, Boles, Bell, Story, Stephens, Keogh, Plunkett, Forsyth, Curtis, Annear, Mackintosh, J. C. Cribb, Hanran, Kent, Stephenson, Bridges, Armstrong, Stodart, Newell, Moore, Leahy, Petrie, J. Hamilton, and Grimes.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Browne, McDonnell, Lesina, Turley, Fisher, McDonald, Hardacre, Dawson, Kidston, Kerr, Reid, Fitzgerald, Bowman, Dunsford, Jackson, Dibley, Higgs, Givens, W. Hamilton, Maxwell, Ryland, and Stewart.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Forrest, Smith, G. Thorn, and Bartholomew.

Noes—Messrs. Groom, Fogarty, Jenkinson, and W. Thorn.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that the House do now adjourn. The first Government business to-morrow will be the second reading of the Port Norman, Normanton, and Cloncurry Railway Bill.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): Of course I thoroughly expected that the hon. gentleman would pursue this policy, and I am rather glad of it. As the same time I think he should tell the House when he intends to go on with the Estimates. The hon. gentleman will be coming down soon and asking for a lot of Supply in advance.

Mr. REID: We should refuse to give it to him.

Mr. BROWNE: I am not going to say that we should refuse to give it him, but I contend that it is not at all constitutional for the Government to keep going on with other business without touching the Estimates; and then ask the House for a vote on account. The hon. gentleman stated, at the end of last week, that he was going to set apart one day this week for the Estimates. We have now, after to-morrow, only one half-day for Government business left this week, and I should like to know when the hon. gentleman intends to deal with the Estimates.

The PREMIER: I will let you know to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at thirty-eight minutes past 11 o'clock.