

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 1900

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THURSDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER, 1900.

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

PETITION.

ENDOWMENT TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES—LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

Mr. CAMPBELL (*Moreton*) presented a petition from the Caboolture Divisional Board, drawing attention to the unfair operation of the present system of endowments to divisional boards, and suggesting a scheme of differential endowments; also praying that the Local Government Bill be introduced and passed at the earliest possible opportunity.

Petition read and received.

PASTORAL LEASES ACT OF 1869
AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Governor intimating that His Excellency had, on behalf of Her Majesty, assented to this Bill.

QUESTIONS.

REGRADING AND RELAYING FASSIFERN
RAILWAY.

HON. G. THORN (*Fassifern*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

Is it the intention of the Railway Department to carry out the necessary works in connection with the lowering of gradients and placing heavier rails on the line from Ipswich to Harrisville?

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

Not immediately

STATE OLD AGE ALLOWANCES.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*) asked the Home Secretary—

1. Is the Minister correctly reported in the *Courier*, of the 18th instant, when he is represented as having stated to a Press interviewer that there are cases where the State old age allowance of 5s. per week is made to old people who own a little property; but that the property in such cases is made over to the Crown, and finally passes to the Crown on the death of the pensioner?

2. If correct, is the condition of transfer of property to the Crown always insisted on before relief is given?

3. Is this condition regarded by the Minister as a test of the *bona fides* of the applicant for an old age allowance; if not, what test or condition is applied when the applicant possesses a little property?

4. What rule is adopted by the Minister when considering an application for the old age allowance by aged persons who earn a little money at wages or otherwise?

5. What number of persons received the old age allowance, and what was the expenditure during the years 1897, 1898, 1899, and the first six months of this year?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) replied—

1. Yes, approximately. I desire to call attention to the fact that the designation used for these payments is not "State old age allowance"; they are merely an outside maintenance in lieu of being sent to Dunwich.

2. Yes; but if the case appears to be one of any urgency temporary relief is given pending the transfer.

3. It is regarded as one of the tests.

4. Each case is considered on its merits.

	No.	Amount.
5. 1897	116	£1,017 9 4
1898	144	1,255 13 3
1899	427	3,628 18 10
First six months, 1900	705	3,692 3 10

ACCIDENT AT HAMBLETON MILL.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Premier—

1. Is he aware that the corpse of a Japanese was found in a large treacle vat in the Hambleton Mill recently?

2. Is he further aware that said corpse is supposed to have fallen into the said treacle vat a few days previous?

3. Will he cause inquiries to be made to ascertain whether said treacle has gone into general consumption?

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

I have no information regarding the matter referred to.

NORTH CHILLAGOE MINES COMPANY.

On the motion of Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*), it was resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of this House, copies of all correspondence between the Department of Mines and Geological Survey Department and the promoters, directors, or secretary of the North Chillagoe Mines Company, with reference to geological report on their mines.

1900—3 K

LOST POLICIES BILL.

POSTPONEMENT.

On the Order of the Day being read for the second reading of this Bill,

Mr. BELL (*Dalby*) said: I beg to move that this Order of the Day be postponed until Friday, the 9th November. Since the Bill was introduced I find the Government have introduced in another place a comprehensive measure which contains in effect the clauses which are embodied in my Bill. It is undesirable to proceed with the two measures at the same time, and I therefore propose to postpone my measure until November, by which time I shall be able to see if the Government measure is going through. If at that stage I find the Government measure is not likely to be passed this session, I shall persevere with my measure.

Question put and passed.

VETERINARY BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. BELL: The Bill, the second reading of which I now move, is a measure, the general principles of which are to be found on the statute-books of a great many Anglo-Saxon communities, notably in Great Britain and in Victoria. It is the expression of a desire felt by many learned bodies—such, for example, as the medical profession and the dental profession—to protect by statute law the members of a body who have taken great pains over a lengthened period, and at great expense, to qualify themselves in a particular department of human interest. Now, we find in these days, at this period of the nineteenth century, that we are resolving a great many departments of human affairs into scientific forms, and reducing them down to a scientific basis, and even such a matter as relates to the cure of the ailments of horses is being practised as a profession by a number of men who go to as much pains to qualify themselves for the object they have in view as that other body of men who undertake to qualify themselves for the cure of human ailments. What the veterinary surgeons find in this colony, and have found in other countries, is that after they have elaborately and efficiently qualified themselves for their duties, other persons who are devoid, if not wholly, at all events very largely, of the scientific attainments which go to qualify a man as a veterinary surgeon, proclaim themselves as qualified veterinary surgeons, and assume to themselves all the airs and privileges of persons who are so qualified.

Mr. KERR: And many of them are better than the so-called qualified veterinary surgeons.

Mr. BELL: Medical men and dentists have found that in their own interests it is desirable that their qualifications should be officially recognised, and should have some statutory protection. But measures such as this Veterinary Bill, the Medical and Dental Acts are not merely pieces of class legislation, in the interests of particular bodies of men. They also, in their other aspect, are as much for the protection of the general public. If a man wishes for the services of any other person to deal with his horse or dog, or other animal, he likes to be able to distinguish between men who have been at some pains to qualify themselves and men who have not taken that course. Just now I heard the hon. member for Barcoo, whom I confess I have not hitherto associated with horse-flesh, interject that there are a number of men who are unqualified, but who are more competent to deal with the ailments of horses, or the different departments of veterinary surgery, than persons who really have the stamp of some veterinary institution.

Mr. KERR: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. BELL: Well, the hon. member need be under no apprehension as to the future of his friends, because so long as they do not proclaim themselves veterinary surgeons there is nothing in this Bill to prevent them following their profession to their hearts' desire. The only embargo laid upon them is that they must not proclaim themselves qualified veterinary surgeons, which undoubtedly they are not. This Bill will permit veterinary surgeons, who have passed through a veterinary college in Great Britain, on the continent of Europe, or in America, or who have passed some qualifying examination in this country, to call themselves "veterinary surgeons," and to sue for and recover their costs. But men who are not so qualified are very properly debarred from holding out to the public an inducement to employ them upon grounds which really do not exist. No doubt there are some men who have an instinctive capacity for dealing with animals—men who have gone through no academic course of qualification. No doubt also there are men who have an instinctive capacity for dealing with human ailments, and who have not qualified for the duties by any academic preparation. One instance that occurs to me at the present moment is that of a Mr. Hutton, who, ten or fifteen years ago, had an enormous practice in London, because he had a distinct natural instinct in the setting of bones and in surgery, an instinct inherited, I believe, from his father; and so far as I know neither Mr. Hutton, nor his father before him, ever qualified themselves in the orthodox manner. Mr. Hutton enjoyed a very large practice indeed, larger by far than that of many highly qualified medical men, but he was debarred, and I think very properly so, from holding himself out as a duly qualified surgeon.

Mr. KERR: He was not debarred from charging fees.

Mr. BELL: Of course he was not, any more than the hon. gentleman's friends will be debarred from charging fees.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They will be debarred from recovering fees under this Bill.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BELL: And I think very properly.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Why?

Mr. BELL: Because undoubtedly they are not qualified veterinary surgeons. If a man wants to practise as a veterinary surgeon, and recover fees for it, he should be qualified as a veterinary surgeon. I do not think the hon. gentleman would encourage any man who pronounced himself a medical man being entitled to recover fees for medical attendance. I think the cases are absolutely parallel. Recollect that as civilisation goes on we are appreciating the influence of science in every path of life, and veterinary surgery has not that narrow and restricted meaning which it had fifty years ago. It does not now solely deal with horses, but all departments of animal life. I am quite sure the hon. member for Barcoo, with his well known humane instincts, would not care to encourage unqualified attendance upon the animal world. This Bill may probably be improved in several respects in committee, but it is not a radical measure, for it has been in operation in Victoria and in Great Britain with the very best effect, and I am sure that if in this colony this Bill is passed into law it will give a proper status to a body of men who undoubtedly deserve it.

The PREMIER: On behalf of the Government, I offer no objection to the second reading of this Bill. I think the mover has given excellent reasons why such a Bill should become law in Queensland. We will leave ourselves free to improve the Bill in committee, if possible. So

far as I can see, the Bill is necessary, and I think we should have qualified men in all branches. It is necessary now that a man should be qualified who deals with the ailments of human life. We have also a Dental Bill on the same lines, and I think animals should also, as far as possible, be dealt with by scientific men. We are a great stock colony, and the stock of the colony are of great value to it. I think we should do all we possibly can to have qualified men dealing with all animal ailments, and I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*): The hon. member for Dalby, in introducing the Bill, said that I had interjected that there were unqualified men who were quite as capable veterinary surgeons as men who had passed through qualifying examinations. I did not make the interjection without some knowledge of the subject. The hon. gentleman taunted me by saying that he was unaware that I knew anything about horseflesh. I may not, like the hon. member, pose as an authority on horses, and I may not have had the hon. member's opportunities of posing in this colony as an authority on horses, but I think that after I have served seven years' apprenticeship under a veterinary surgeon in the old country, and have worked at my trade under a veterinary surgeon's supervision, and when I can produce credentials from veterinary surgeons and letters of introduction to veterinary surgeons in Melbourne when I came out to this country, it proves that I know a little about the ailments of horses. Though I may not pose as so high an authority, perhaps I know as much about the

[4 p.m.] ailments of horses as the hon. member for Dalby. I believe that under this Bill I could really have myself qualified, because I can produce credentials which I think would entitle me to be registered, but I have no desire to do so. The hon. member for Dalby seems to have a mania for introducing Bills. We have had him introducing a Dentists Bill, and then he came along with a State Children's Bill. Now he produces a Veterinary Surgeons Bill and wants it passed into law. I can remember at one time I was very severely taken to task by one of my constituents over the hon. member for Dalby's Stallion Bill, the Bill to impose a tax on stallions. This Bill, so far as I can understand it, is to establish a close corporation. Now, why did not the hon. member, if he wished to bring down a comprehensive measure, include the farriers of the colony, who are men who have a great deal to do with the ailments of horses and cattle? He says the object of the Bill is not to debar men who are not qualified by a diploma or in some other way to get a certificate from this board; his object is to debar them from recovering any fees for their services. He instanced the case of the celebrated Mr. Hutton, so well known in England, as his father was before him, as being an expert in the setting of limbs and reducing dislocations. That gentleman was often employed in preference to the leading doctors in England, and many cases in which they had failed to reduce a dislocation were successfully treated by him. Now Mr. Hutton could charge a fee, though there is a very close corporation there.

Mr. BELL: He could not recover it.

Mr. KERR: It is similar with horses and cattle and other animals. A man may treat their ailments successfully where there is no veterinary surgeon to be got. It is all very well for the hon. member to bring in this measure for the cities and the towns. There may be veterinary surgeons in Brisbane, or in Rockhampton, and Townsville, but I do not know that there are any further North than that. I am certain that there is no veterinary surgeon practising in Longreach or in Charleville, or

in other of the large centres in the Western portions of the colony, where horses and cattle and other animals need treatment just as much as they do in Brisbane. This Bill, however, means that any person who knows how to treat animals if he is called in and treats an animal successfully, and is not paid for his services, is debarred from suing for his fee. That, I think, is going a little outside of what is reasonable. I think the hon. member wants to legislate too far ahead. He talks about the advanced legislation of the Labour party, but I think he is going ahead of that legislation very much. Now, he speaks of qualified men. I can remember in my experience in the old country that in a county town there were two veterinary surgeons. One was the son of a blacksmith, and had followed his occupation as a blacksmith until he went to the Edinburgh College of Veterinary Surgeons, under Professor Dick, and obtained his diploma. The other was a very successful man also, but one was designated by the owners of horses as "Dr. Death," because whenever they called him in to attend an animal, that animal was sure to die. Anyone who knows anything about farming in the old country knows that Clydesdale horses are very valuable. I have known them to be sold in the auction ring for 80 guineas and 90 guineas each. Now, any person who owns a valuable animal like that is very particular, and when he calls in a duly qualified veterinary surgeon, and death takes place after he has treated the animal, he does not like to have another treated by that person. But if he knows any other person he has confidence in as being able to treat an animal successfully, he would not be allowed to employ him under this Bill.

Mr. BELL: Yes, he would.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: But he could not recover.

Mr. KERR: He could not according to this Bill. If a person wanted to get out of the payment of the fees to the man who had successfully treated an animal, he would be able to do so, and that person would be unable to get any compensation. He would not be able to sue, and he could get nothing for the services he had rendered. Why should that be so? The hon. member aptly pointed to the example of Mr. Hutton, who was an expert bone-setter, and no doubt there are other men with quite as great a natural aptitude for the treatment of animal ailments. I dare say that there are several members in this House who have known men who were good veterinary surgeons, but who had passed no examinations in any college. Yet these were men they would have every confidence in sending their animals to be treated by them. I have known men who are not qualified in the sense that they have any certificate or diploma, but whom I have seen perform operations and attend to horses, cattle, and other animals equally as successfully as veterinary surgeons who hold very high degrees in the old country.

Mr. BELL: They could still do so under this Bill.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: But they cannot recover.

Mr. BELL: They will be able to make a special contract.

Mr. KERR: Why should they be compelled to make a special contract? Then, again, this is only a hybrid Bill after all, because a man who is qualified in this colony is not qualified in the old country.

Mr. BELL: As soon as we take steps to qualify men here, they will recognise them in the other colonies.

Mr. KERR: If I read the Bill aright, it distinctly states—

"Recognised veterinary diploma" means a veterinary diploma recognised for the time being by the Queensland Veterinary Board constituted under this Act as furnishing a sufficient guaranty of the possession of the requisite knowledge and skill for the efficient practice of veterinary surgery, and as entitling the holder thereof to practise veterinary surgery in the British possessions or foreign country wherein the diploma was granted.

This Queensland diploma will not qualify veterinary surgeons to practise in the old country. I would like to know from the hon. member for Dalby, who has asked for this Bill? Do the veterinary surgeons here want to be more fully protected? I have travelled among people who own horses, cattle, and other animals; but I never heard any of them clamouring for a Bill of this character, although there may be a few veterinary surgeons who want it. Therefore, I shall oppose the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. STEPHENS (*Brisbane South*): I do not desire to speak at any length on this measure. Knowing something about horses, I must say I cannot see any harm in the Bill; but, on the contrary, I think it will do good in many ways. Under clause 13, if a man sticks up a signboard, saying he is a veterinary surgeon, without having any diploma, he can be prosecuted. I think that is a wise provision. I knew a so-called veterinary surgeon, who once was asked to treat a horse, and he sent a boy into town to a chemist, who told him to bleed the horse; but this man, after making several endeavours to do so, said the horse had no blood. The chemist afterwards sent out a blister, and this man, imagining it was a medicine, gave the horse this blister down its throat. Of course the horse's throat swelled, and the animal was suffocated, and died. This was five years ago, and I suppose the same man is curing some animals and killing others to this day. I can tell the name of this man, whose place is between here and Caboolture. I can also tell the name of the chemist and the owner of the horse. This sort of business should be stopped. The hon. member for Barcoo says this Bill is only asked for and beneficial to veterinary surgeons in towns; but I think it will help these men to the country to whom he refers. If these men in the country cannot recover fees, they can get them beforehand. I think if a man goes to the trouble of sending for a veterinary surgeon, he would be quite willing to pay in advance, and you can recover under a contract. I am with the hon. member for Barcoo in trying to stop close corporations. This Bill does not restrict persons from practising who have not a diploma. I believe I could get a diploma under it myself, and it merely provides for prosecuting a man who puts up a false signboard. I know that many veterinary surgeons do not care whether this Bill passes or not; but stockowners ask for some protection in this connection. I know that horses have been treated in a most absurd manner by unqualified men. If the Bill does not please the hon. member for Barcoo, in detail, he can deal with it in committee; but I think we should allow the second reading to pass.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*): I think the hon. member for Barcoo has misunderstood the hon. member for Dalby. The hon. member for Dalby had no intention to taunt the hon. member about knowing nothing about horses. With regard to the matter of the Bill being in advance of the age, I think that Queensland, till now, has been behind the age in this respect. We have gentlemen in our midst who hold diplomas which I contend are as good as any diploma that can be given in any part of the world. I know one gentleman in this colony,

who has had great experience in veterinary work, and his son, who has had a thorough training, is now practising with him here. They held high-class certificates. What would have been the effect if no other country had taken steps in this matter? Why, these men would have been without any certificates at all. But are we always to depend on what is done in other countries? We ought to do our duty and recognise what other countries are doing for us, and we should take steps which will tend to put us on a level with them, so that our veterinary surgeons obtaining diplomas or certificates here can practise in their countries. It is due to a man who holds certain diplomas that his rights and privileges with regard to his profession should be recognised, not only in Queensland, but elsewhere. It is, of course, for the benefit of the public that such measures as this are passed. I hold very strongly that the constitution of what is sometimes called a close corporation in connection with a profession is only justifiable so far as the establishment or constitution of that corporation is beneficial to the public, and that the members of that guild are certainly not the first persons who should be considered in connection with any legislation. It is only so far as they are of benefit to the public that any guild or corporation should be permitted or tolerated. We have, for instance, the medical profession. That is very properly regulated by statute. We are endeavouring at the present time to place that profession on a better footing by legislation which is now before this House. We also must recognise the fact that we have on our statute-book Acts which relate to cruelty, not only to human beings but to animals, and it seems to me that a very large amount of cruelty might be done to animals by unqualified persons who are acting as veterinary surgeons. For that reason it is very desirable that such a Bill as this should be introduced. Those men who, at great expense, have gone to other countries to qualify for the profession of veterinary surgeons, and veterinary surgeons who originally came here from other countries to practise their profession, should have some protection; but so far as the practice of veterinary surgery by unqualified persons is concerned, the public are still more deeply interested. The instance given by the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens, is one which has its amusing side.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: It was rather over-drawn.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know. The hon. member gave it as a fact, although very properly, he did not mention any names. The instance which he gave is quite typical of many which I could give. I have not seen exactly similar cases, but I have distinctly seen animals killed by the ministrations, let us call them, of persons who were neither qualified in theory nor in practice to deal with such cases.

Mr. KERR: But this Bill qualifies those persons who have been doing it for ten years.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am glad the hon. gentleman has mentioned that—that is supposing they have been practising as veterinary surgeons.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: The hon. member for South Brisbane said that he could get a diploma under this Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: I cannot see how you can avoid that. The same difficulty arises whenever you inaugurate legislation of this sort. There are certain persons who, rightly or wrongly, have acquired vested rights under the insufficient law which prevailed at the time.

Mr. BELL: It is the lesser of two evils.

The HOME SECRETARY: The sooner we grapple with the question and get rid of those persons or allow them to die off in the course of

time, the better. It only shows that legislation of this sort cannot take place too soon. The longer you put it off, the more people of that kind you will have, and the greater will be the evil. I may point out to hon. members that there is not in this Bill that which is in Medical Bills—that is, a penalty for practising as veterinary surgeons. A man may practise veterinary surgery, but, so long as he does not hold himself up to be a duly qualified veterinary surgeon, there is nothing to prevent his attending to horses, cattle, or any other animals, and receiving a fee for so doing.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: He gets no protection under the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why should he get protection? What protection does he want more than that? He is not a qualified man, holding a diploma, and, therefore, the Bill says he shall not be at liberty to charge fees unless he has made an agreement for a certain sum to be paid to him for services performed, exactly in the same way as any other person who is employed makes an agreement of a similar kind. By this Bill the administering of medicine to horses or other animals, or the performance of operations on them, is not made illegal. All that the Bill says is that, unless a man who is not a duly qualified veterinary surgeon has made an agreement with regard to payment for certain work which he is asked to perform, he shall not be able to recover.

Mr. MAXWELL: Will the agreement need to be registered?

The HOME SECRETARY: What is the use of asking a nonsensical question like that? Bills are submitted for the consideration of persons who are supposed to have a reasonable amount of intelligence. If a man who is not duly qualified performs an operation on a horse or any other animal, he is not doing anything which is illegal, or that he is prevented by law from doing, and, therefore, so far as I can see, there is no reason why he should not be able to recover from the owner of the horse or other animal, or to receive from him, the amount which the latter agreed to pay.

Mr. CURTIS: He would not be precluded by this Bill, would he?

The HOME SECRETARY: As long as he does not hold himself out as a veterinary surgeon, he is all right. That is the main point. Clause 8 says—

No person shall be entitled to recover any charge in any court of law under the last preceding section of this Act unless he shall prove that he is registered under this Act.

That is to say, he cannot recover it as a charge; but if a man enters into an agreement, I take it he is bound to fulfil that agreement, and can be compelled to do so in a court of law, because that for which he has agreed to pay is not a service which the person performing that service is prohibited by law from performing, and in that respect this Bill is decidedly an advance. I do not think it goes one bit too far. Surely what we all desire to see is that only those persons who are duly qualified and hold proper diplomas shall hold themselves out to be veterinary surgeons, and shall practise as such. There is nothing in the Bill which will prevent any person in the bush, where there is no veterinary surgeon, from doing veterinary work under agreement, but he cannot hold himself out as being a veterinary surgeon.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Supposing there is no veterinary surgeon in a place, and an unqualified man is called in to perform an operation on a horse and the horse dies on his hands, can the owner of the horse sue him for damages?

Mr. BELL: I think he gets more protection under this Bill than he has now.

The HOME SECRETARY : You would have to show neglect, just in the same way as if the hon. member entrusts his watch to a watchmaker, who has no diploma or certificate, and that watchmaker absolutely destroys his watch through neglect, the hon. member would have good ground for an action against the watchmaker. In exactly the same way if a person undertakes for fee or reward to cure

[4.30 p.m.] a horse, and he neglects to do what he has contracted to do, he would be liable, but it would be necessary to show negligence.

Mr. W. HAMILTON : A horse may die under the hands of either a registered or an unregistered person.

The HOME SECRETARY : The same thing obtains now, and the law in that respect will not be altered one whit by this Bill. It is purely a question as to whether a man who has undertaken to perform a duty for fee or reward, takes reasonable care that the work is done in a proper way to the best of his knowledge and skill, and if he does that, and it would be very difficult to prove the contrary, he would not be held liable. Of course if he is called in in a friendly way to attend to an animal, without fee or reward, probably something like wilful negligence would have to be proved against him before he could be made responsible. I am afraid that I have been drawn into making a longer speech than I had intended to do by the interjections of hon. members, but I think the interjections and my replies have tended to elucidate the matter. I shall have very much pleasure in supporting the Bill because I believe the tendency of it is good, and I sincerely trust that it will not be very many years, following on the establishment of a university in this colony, before we shall be able to turn out our own veterinary surgeons after they have gone through a proper course of study.

Mr. CURTIS (Rockhampton) : I shall have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill. I think that duly qualified veterinary surgeons should be protected against those persons who may choose to sail under false colours, representing themselves as duly qualified veterinary surgeons when they are not entitled to do so. I have often heard it said by practical men engaged in the meat trade that the only persons who are qualified to inspect meat for export or otherwise are duly qualified veterinary surgeons, and that there are altogether too few of those in the colony at the present time ; and I think that in itself, considering the extent to which we are interested in the export of meat, is a sufficient reason why we should be willing to give some protection to duly qualified veterinary surgeons. It appears from what the Home Secretary has said that notwithstanding clause 8, which debars unqualified persons from suing in a court of law for their fees, if an unqualified person enters into a distinct agreement that he shall be paid for his services he will be able to recover payment. If that is correct, I do not see that any person who does not hold a diploma will suffer any hardship under the Bill, for he will still be able to recover payment for any services he may have performed. It would, however, be manifestly unfair to persons who have given years to the study of the science of veterinary surgery, that anyone who is not so qualified and who does not hold a diploma, should be allowed to advertise himself as a duly qualified veterinary surgeon and compete against them. I can quite understand the objection that people living in the country would have to the Bill if there was no protection given to persons having some knowledge of veterinary surgery and practising as surgeons even though they hold no diploma, but it has been pointed out that they will have all

the protection they now enjoy. If the Bill does not provide sufficient protection for those people it can be amended in that direction in committee. At all events I hold that the man who is duly qualified should be protected against the unqualified person who sails under false colours, and I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill and to support any amendments that may be deemed desirable when the measure is in committee.

Mr. TURLEY (Brisbane South) : The hon. member for Dalby seems to be the "picker up of unconsidered trifles" in politics. A Veterinary Bill was introduced here in 1897 by the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens, and it was read a first time. But it obtained so little support, and dragged on so long, that it was discharged from the paper on the last day of the session. Since that time we have had no Bill of that character introduced into the House. I was very glad to hear the remark of the hon. member for Rockhampton that it has been said by experts that it is absolutely necessary, in the interest of the public health in a colony where we deal so much with dead meat, to have the benefit of intelligent veterinary surgeons as inspectors. When the Slaughtering Bill was going through this House in 1898, hon. members on this side strenuously contended that the persons to be appointed as inspectors under that Bill should be duly qualified men. But what support did we get from hon. members opposite? Did they support our contention, and say that they believed that only duly qualified men should be appointed to those positions, with the object of protecting the public health? Nothing of the sort. We were told that it only required an ordinary individual to go round and inspect meat.

Mr. CURTIS : That was absurd.

Mr. TURLEY : We were held up as absurd, because we asked the Government to insert a clause in the Slaughtering Bill providing that only duly qualified persons should be appointed as inspectors under that measure ; and we were told that it was impossible to carry out such a provision, as there were only a very few qualified veterinary surgeons in Queensland, and most of them were in the Government service. There were five, we were told, duly qualified in the Government service, and young men working under them who would be duly qualified as inspectors, at any rate, under the Slaughtering Act.

Mr. DIBLEY : And well qualified, too.

Mr. TURLEY : And I know there has been a veterinary surgeon giving instruction and delivering lectures at the Technical College.

Mr. BELL : And holding examinations.

Mr. TURLEY : Not as regards veterinary surgeons, but examinations in regard to persons qualifying for the duties of inspectors of stock under the Slaughtering Act. I have spoken to qualified men outside who have held the opinion pronounced here by the hon. member for Rockhampton, that you want highly qualified men in that position, as well as in the position in which the hon. gentleman says it is necessary to have qualified men—in the handling of horses and other animals.

The HOME SECRETARY : What was the use of putting that into the Bill if you had not got them?

Mr. TURLEY : Just now the hon. gentleman asked if we were to be continually dependent on outside countries. Does the hon. gentleman mean to tell me that, in the whole of the Australian colonies, there are not men qualified to carry out that work?

The HOME SECRETARY : You know there were not ; and that is the reason it was omitted from the Bill. There were not enough of them.

Mr. TURLEY: Yet the hon. member who introduces this Bill tells us there are Australian colonies where men are not allowed to practise unless they hold diplomas. Are we to believe that the men are not trained in the colonies where diplomas are issued, and are we to believe that they have to depend on older countries for the supply? I think there are plenty of men in Australia who are duly qualified veterinary surgeons. If there were not, there would not have been an Act passed in Victoria for the protection of the interests of that particular class of people.

Mr. BELL: Not merely for their protection, but also to hold examinations and give diplomas in the future.

Mr. TURLEY: I think there is a good deal in the 13th clause of this Bill. I recognise that it is not right to allow any person to practise as a duly qualified man unless he possesses the qualification. I am satisfied that when a man holds himself out as a duly qualified person and does not possess that qualification he is a fraud; but then we come to the other question of a man being allowed to recover for services rendered. That is practically the crux of this Bill. The Home Secretary says this is not the same as under the Medical Bill; but if there is anything wrong with me I am allowed to consult any person I choose, whether he has a shingle out or whether he has not, whether he is engaged in curing the ills of humanity by electricity or hydropathy, or any other method, and pay him, and he is allowed to practise upon me and cure me if possible.

The HOME SECRETARY: You can get anyone to cure your horse.

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. member said they were under a penalty.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not.

Mr. BELL: He cannot recover.

Mr. TURLEY: The difference between this and the Medical and the Dental Bills is that they are dealing with human beings, and it seems to me, in spite of anything a person may hold regarding cruelty to animals, that cruelty to a human being is worse than cruelty to a dumb animal.

Mr. BELL: I don't think so.

Mr. TURLEY: I believe that the dumb animal does not feel so acutely as the human being. It has not the sense; it has not the intelligence, and consequently, in my opinion, it does not feel as acutely physically as the human being, and therefore the human animal requires more protection than even the dumb brute does. It is taught by scientists that even the savage is not as acute in his physical feelings as the civilised human being, and I think it is also true when we go lower down in the scale than the savage and get to the brute animal kingdom.

Mr. BELL: I don't see the bearing of your argument.

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. gentleman pointed out in his speech on the Bill that this was similar to the Medical Bill in that it was for the protection of animals that might be handled by persons allowed to practise.

Mr. BELL: It is a case of "Love me, love my horse."

Mr. TURLEY: I do not know that that exists to a very great extent amongst a large number of people, if we take what the Home Secretary says—that a very large number of cases of cruelty to animals have come under his own knowledge. That is not a maxim that can be applied in every case at any rate. The hon. member says this is not class legislation. I contend that it is distinctly class legislation. It is legislation that is introduced with the object of protecting a certain number of people.

Mr. BOLES: Five.

Mr. TURLEY: I don't know whether it is only five, but if that is so it seems to me that that is coming down to very narrow class legislation.

Mr. BELL: You do not put that interpretation on the Bill, I am sure.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am sure they don't care whether it passes or not.

Mr. TURLEY: We are getting into a tangle. There is nobody wants the Bill. The profession do not want it; the hon. member for Port Curtis says the profession consists of five persons; the Home Secretary says he is certain those five persons don't want it. Who does want it?

Mr. CURTIS: We require a larger number.

Mr. TURLEY: Yet we are told that this Bill, even if it passes, will not interfere with the qualified person. How, then, are you going to get a larger number if the qualified person is in the same position without the Bill as with it? There may be in a district a person who is regarded as one who is qualified without having passed an examination—who has done a good deal of this work, and is consulted by those who know him. The Bill seems to be not for the protection of the qualified person in that direction; it simply does away, as far as we can see, with the idea of a man who renders service getting paid for it. Now, under the Medical Bill, as the hon. gentleman rightly pointed out, no person who treats another for a disease and who is not able to prove that he is duly qualified can recover payment. I can allow any person to cure me, and yet that person is not allowed to sue me for payment. While I agree that that is very necessary in the case of large numbers of persons who have come to Queensland—the Sequahs and other long-haired individuals who say they can cure every disease that flesh is heir to—yet it is pointed out that we have only a very limited number of these qualified veterinary surgeons in the colony, and it is proposed to place obstacles in the way of the man who can render efficient service to the brute creation, and prevent him from recovering remuneration. It seems to me that there is no reason why you should refuse to that person the remuneration which he has earned unless you have previously entered into a written contract with him. As far as I understand the matter, it is perfectly correct not to allow that man to call himself a veterinary surgeon. Every member is perfectly satisfied on that point. The hon. member points out that the Bill is for the protection of a number of men who have taken the trouble to qualify, and the hon. member for Barcoo points out that there are any number of men who have not obtained diplomas who can render very valuable services, and whom this Bill would crush out.

Mr. BELL: Have you read clause 5?

Mr. TURLEY: I have read the Bill all through. I see what the hon. gentleman means. He refers to that part of the clause which reads "or has practised veterinary surgery in Queensland for ten years previous to the passing of this Act." But I would point out that that is rather a long time. There are a lot of people in Queensland who are able to deal with horses and cattle from the experience which they have acquired who have not been practising as veterinary surgeons for ten years in Queensland. They have not qualified in a veterinary school; they have no diplomas, yet at the same time they are recognised as competent persons.

Mr. BELL: We can amend that in committee if that is your objection.

Mr. TURLEY: In committee, if the Government are prepared to support the hon. gentleman in his contention, we should be doing a great deal of harm to a number of respectable citizens.

Mr. BELL: You know very well that the Government do not often assist private members with their Bills.

Mr. TURLEY: I have known the hon. member to get considerable assistance from the Government, and I may point out that the Premier has said that he is prepared to give the hon. member a general support.

Mr. BELL: You know what that means.

Mr. TURLEY: Yes, but the hon. gentleman said he reserved to himself the right to move amendments in committee if they were considered necessary. I was going to make a comparison between this Bill and the Dental Bill, which the hon. gentleman himself introduced. I think there was a clause in the Dental Bill which said that any person who had been practising dentistry in Queensland for twelve months prior to the passing of the Bill should be entitled to be registered by the society. Now, it appears to me that when dealing with a Bill of this nature, which relates to the treatment of the brute creation, we should be equally as liberal as when dealing with a measure which affects human beings who, as I have said, are far more sensitive than the brute creation. We have been told that in regard to this particular subject Queensland is altogether behind the age. That may be. I believe they have similar Acts in force in England and in Victoria, but I wish to point out that the establishment of the principle of keeping abreast of the age has never been opposed by this party. What we have asked always is that Queensland should keep always right up to date in connection with the protection of persons who earn their living by labour. Here is a Bill introduced for the protection of a body of persons who we are told do not number altogether more than half-a-dozen; but I would point out that there are large numbers of persons in Queensland who are equally as needful of protection as that small body of persons, and that we have been asking for a number of years that the Government and the hon. gentleman, and those who sit alongside of him on the other side, should give their assistance in seeing that those who are unable to protect themselves shall be protected by legislation. If we are behind the age in regard to this question, we are ages behind the times in dealing with numbers of persons who earn their living by the sweat of their brow. I myself have no objection to this Bill, except on the ground that I think a man should be allowed to be registered, even though he has not been practising veterinary surgery in Queensland for ten years; that he should be able to recover for the work he performs, and that he shall not be liable, even though his work may go wrong in some respects. It is said that doctors make mistakes and bury them six feet under the ground, because a doctor is able to give a certificate of death in the cases on which he attends. I do not say they make wilful mistakes.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: A doctor is responsible for malpractice.

Mr. TURLEY: There are many cases reported in history where certificates have been given in the way I mention, and on inquiry doctors have owned up to having made mistakes. I think it was Dr. Abernethy who owned up that the mistakes he had made during his life would fill a good-sized churchyard.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Dr. Abernethy was a great humourist.

Mr. TURLEY: Most decidedly he was, but it does not follow that because he was a great humourist, he would make a statement like that.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: He made it as a joke.

Mr. TURLEY: He made it as a general statement, and the hon. gentleman knows, from his experience of life, that there are medical men both here and in the old country who would admit that they have made mistakes in the practice of their profession. But the fact is that they have not had to answer for malpractices, or anything of that sort. It seems to me that when there are so very few persons to be legislated for, as appears to be the case here, there is no necessity for any violent hurry, and that we should go easy.

The hon. gentleman should certainly [5 p.m.] endeavour to meet the objection raised so far as those persons are concerned, and should see that they should be able to recover remuneration for the work they do without entering into a written agreement or an agreement before witnesses. The hon. gentleman must know as well as I do that if a person is practising and a man comes to him to do some work he does not enter into an agreement about the matter. He trusts to the honour of the person who seeks his services that when they are performed he will get the remuneration he requires. But if the person who seek his services does not happen to be honest, under this Bill he could take his beast away after it was cured and then say to the man who cured it, "You have done your work satisfactorily, and you are a good and faithful servant, but I do not see any necessity to pay you any remuneration." I would point out to the hon. gentleman that if he followed the tenets which, I think, are followed by hon. members on this side of the House, he would see that we are always prepared to go slowly in the matter of legislation. We do not wish to burst up things all at once. There is nothing of a revolutionary character about the party on this side of the House.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: What about the 1890 platform?

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. gentleman knows that the 1890 platform is not the platform of the Labour party.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: No, I don't.

Mr. TURLEY: He knows as well as I do that what he chooses to term "the 1890 platform" is not the platform of this Labour party. He knows very well that that was a small platform promulgated at that time—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It was a wholesale platform.

Mr. TURLEY: But it was not put to the country as the platform on which the Labour party intended to contest the elections. What I wish to point out is that while outside the points I have mentioned we have no particular objection to this Bill we think that we should get a great deal more support from the hon. gentleman for the sort of legislation we have been endeavouring to introduce into this House for the protection of persons who are quite as good citizens as the man who has gained a diploma, and perhaps as intelligent, though their intelligence has not been run into a particular groove. The man who follows the trade of a carpenter or a blacksmith has quite as much right to protection as the man who has gained sufficient information and skill to be able to pass an examination and obtain a diploma as a veterinary surgeon.

Mr. BELL: I quite agree with you; and very likely I may bring in Bills next session in that direction.

Mr. TURLEY: I am very pleased to hear it, and the hon. gentleman will have all the support he needs from me to the fullest extent I can agree with him, the same as with this Bill.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Do you include politicians?

Mr. TURLEY: Politicians are protected to a certain extent at present. The hon. gentleman has often declaimed against statements made on this side because we were too much protected, and has said, "You dare not say that outside," or "Come outside and make that statement," that he might take us into court.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I do not think I ever made that statement.

Mr. TURLEY: I think I have heard the hon. gentleman make statements like that. This Bill, I point out, is altogether different from the Medical and Dental Bills in the provision made for the constitution of the governing body. Under this Bill it is purely under the Governor in Council, who appoints three persons.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Then there will be only two left for them to deal with.

Mr. TURLEY: There must be very few persons in this profession left in Queensland when the Governor in Council is allowed to appoint three of them as a governing body. Under the Medical Bill, the medical fraternity were not satisfied with the Governor in Council appointing only a certain number from their body. They recognised that no one was more qualified to know the qualifications and gauge the efficiency of the men who ought to be on the board than they were themselves as a body. The dentists have told me the same thing. They do not object to the Governor in Council having the right to appoint one or two men to the governing body, but they do object to the Governor in Council having the right to appoint all the members of their council. But under this Bill the council is to be composed of three persons, all of whom are to be appointed by the Governor in Council. If what the hon. member for Port Curtis has pointed out is true, it will be something like the American army—all colonels and no privates. If there are only five in the profession, and three out of the five are to be appointed a governing body by the Governor in Council, that body will have a very small electorate to govern.

Mr. BELL: There are many more than five qualified, in the sense that this Bill means qualified.

Mr. TURLEY: If it is amended as suggested in committee I could understand that there would probably be more, but not as the Bill stands.

Mr. BELL: Even with the ten years' experience there are more than five; but I am quite prepared to accept an amendment in that.

Mr. TURLEY: I am glad to hear that, as the Bill as it stands would be prohibitory of a large number of men who have a considerable amount of skill. The members of this party are prepared to support legislation to give a reasonable protection to all persons in the community, but they do not want to single out any small number of persons, and ask that a wall shall be built around them to protect them from other persons qualified to do the same work. In the event of other persons being able to do this work, it seems to me that they should also have the right to recover remuneration for it. If a duly qualified carpenter goes to work he has a right to summon his employer for the wages due to him. If a man was stupid enough to employ me as a carpenter, and I went to work for him, he would have to pay me the wages agreed upon, or the usual standard wages of the trade, or I could summon him for them.

Mr. BELL: I should be quite prepared to discuss that in committee.

Mr. TURLEY: Will the hon. member be prepared to accept an amendment to the effect suggested in this Bill.

Mr. BELL: I will consider the argument, but I cannot say offhand whether I will accept such an amendment or not.

Mr. TURLEY: But the hon. member knows the argument, and he knows the argument of the Hon. Secretary.

Mr. BELL: I must have time to assimilate and digest them.

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. member can assimilate a simple argument like that. The hon. member is learned in the law, and he asks me to believe that he cannot assimilate a simple argument as to whether he thinks a person should be able to recover remuneration for services rendered. I know the hon. gentleman would not require two minutes to make up his mind on a question like that, and that is why I think it would be necessary, at any rate, for an amendment such as that to go in, because I would like to point out to the hon. gentleman, as he has often pointed out to us—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: He was right there, evidently.

Mr. TURLEY: He was right, but it was a practice we have always followed, and that is, to go easy in legislation. Legislation is all an experiment. The hon. member has taught us that lesson since we came into the House; and he has told us it so often that we have at last got to believe the hon. member. When you get the university which it is proposed to establish in Queensland, you will get a considerable number of men who are able to spread themselves over the colony—men who are duly qualified to be registered under this Act—then I could easily understand a provision being brought into the Act by amendment, that only those persons who were duly qualified should be allowed to recover for fees. I could easily understand that position, but I cannot understand the position being taken up that while we have not the qualified men, the man who is qualified to render services because of the knowledge and skill that he has acquired, though not perhaps in connection with any school, shall not be allowed to recover. It seems to me that that is the whole of the argument, and I do not think the hon. gentleman has a leg to stand upon in opposition to an argument of that kind.

Mr. BELL: I do not say I am opposed to it.

Mr. TURLEY: If the hon. member is prepared to accept an amendment to that effect, I take it that the members on this side of the House will be perfectly willing to support the hon. member, because, as I say, the principle of the Bill seems to me to be that a person who is not duly qualified to perform certain services shall not represent himself to the community that requires certain services to be rendered as a duly qualified man.

Mr. BELL: Unquestionably.

Mr. BOLES (*Port Curtis*): I think the hon. member in charge of the Bill should be complimented upon the manner in which he has introduced this question and on the interest that he has taken in humane matters, not only at the present time, but for years past. I think he is to be complimented on the interest that he has shown in the matter of our domestic animals. This is an age for regulating, and it seems to me that there is a certain rage for regulating whatever we require. I do not think it has been shown by an hon. member who has preceded me that this Bill is really wanted. On the other hand it has been shown already, so far as veterinary surgeons are concerned, that we have only something like half-a-dozen of them in Queensland. We have a good many of what are called "bush" doctors or cow doctors, and in my experience, extending over a large number of years amongst stock, and especially amongst horses and cattle, I have found that those

men called "cow doctors" have been very much more successful, and been more highly appreciated, than a great many of the men who are supposed to hold diplomas from some university. That has been my experience. I say that in the outside districts there are men who, though they do not put up their sign, have been known to the general community for a number of years as persons who have a fair amount of knowledge in connection with diseases in domestic animals; and these men have been resorted to often, even when a veterinary surgeon has been available, and they have been highly successful. In my own district, at the present time, I know of one man who undertook the treatment of an animal which a veterinary surgeon, or a reputed veterinary surgeon, had ordered to be shot, and within three months he turned it out cured. If a man like that could carry on under this Bill, I would not be against it; but I doubt whether he could.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: He would have no status under this Bill.

Mr. BELL: He has not generally held himself out as a veterinary surgeon?

Mr. BOLES: No, he has never held himself out to be a veterinary surgeon, but men like that do not put out their signs as veterinary surgeons. They are generally known in the community as persons with a fair knowledge of doctoring horses, and so forth. They are often the only people within range, and are naturally resorted to when anything occurs, but I take it that under this Bill they would have no *locus standi* to claim fees for services rendered. In fact, I doubt very much, if any injury were done to a beast under their treatment, whether they would not be liable to heavy damages. Therefore, feeling as I do, and having the knowledge which I have amongst stock, and the experience I have had among experts, I do not see the necessity for a Bill of this kind. Here we have experts in connection with the Stock Department. Well, I remember, with regard to tick inoculation, that that was introduced by a gentleman at Mount Morgan, named Mr. Rams, a considerable time before the local experts got word of it, and before it was known in New South Wales. He submitted the matter to the then Colonial Secretary, Sir Horace Tozer, but it was pooh-poohed. After a time, we heard that the thing had been performed in America, and since then our local experts have taken up the question, and have found that there is something in it. Now, this man is a layman, and would not be allowed to practise under this Bill; but he got his experience by experimenting with the ordinary black tick, and inoculating dogs and pigs. This Bill would give such a man no *locus standi*. It only recognises the qualified man. If a person renders certain services, and I have confidence in that man's skill and treatment, why should he not have the same rights to recover payment for services rendered as any other labourer? That is the principal reason I have for objecting to this Bill. We have one or two gentlemen that are only laymen in our district, and one of those men is a man who thoroughly understands veterinary matters, but he has never had any diploma, nor has he been to any university. His name is Mr. Walters, and I say there is not a better man in the district to take a horse or a beast to, if there is anything wrong with it. I am quite certain that his services would be sought in preference to any veterinary surgeon who may come to Port Curtis. I am opposed to this Bill; but if the second reading is passed I shall support any amendments in committee that I think effectual.

Mr. GRIMES (Oxley): There is just one point that I would like to refer to. I think the

hon. member for Dalby is going further in this Bill than he really intends to. Clause 7 reads—

Every person registered under this Act shall be entitled to practise veterinary surgery in any part of this colony, and to demand and recover in any court of law, with full costs of suit, reasonable charges for professional advice and visits, and the costs of any medicine or other medical or surgical appliances supplied by him to his customers.

And clause 8 reads—

No person shall be entitled to recover any charge in any court of law under the last preceding section of this Act unless he shall prove that he is registered under this Act.

I think clause 8 will prevent any chemist or druggist from recovering his fees for attending horses or cattle or other animals in country districts.

Mr. BELL: No.

Mr. GRIMES: I think this matter should be made clear. Otherwise I do not see very much objection to this Bill.

Mr. MAXWELL (Burke): I take the same view as the hon. member for Barcoo with regard to these people who follow the profession of veterinary surgeons. I remember a case that occurred in New South Wales, where a ram's teeth had to be drawn, but we have very little information about this operation. My boy some time ago bought a horse, and that horse had the misfortune to lose its tail. I called in a carpenter, and I can assure hon. members that he performed the operation of replacing that horse's tail very successfully. As long as men, although they have no diplomas or certificates, can treat animals properly, they should be allowed to recover their fees.

Mr. STORY (Balonne): I can see that we are likely to have altogether too much of this sort of legislation. Under this Bill no man can assist his neighbours in doctoring their animals and recover his fees unless he is duly qualified. He can recover nothing unless he has taken out a diploma. We have a great deal of this legislation—we have the Dentists Bill, this Bill, and other Bills, which will force people to employ certain men. As far as my district is concerned, any measure of this nature would be utterly absurd. If men there had to obtain the services of certain duly qualified veterinary surgeons it would cost them more than an animal was worth.

Mr. BELL: You have not read the Bill.

Mr. STORY: Yes, I have, and I say there are scores of men who are quite able to help their neighbours in this way, who are not duly qualified. I am altogether opposed to any legislation of this character. I think, myself, that it is undesirable, and I am of opinion that this is a bad move. I shall vote against the second reading of every one of these Bills, and, if they pass the second reading, I shall endeavour to amend them in committee in the direction I think proper.

Mr. DUNSFORD (Charters Towers): I do not think the hon. member has read the Bill, as was remarked before. There is nothing in it to prevent anybody employing an unregistered man to doctor his horses or cattle.

Mr. STORY: One clause says that no unregistered person shall be entitled to recover his fees.

Mr. DUNSFORD: That is a matter between the two particular parties; but an unregistered man can get his fees in advance. There is nothing to prevent that, and agreements may be entered into in this connection. I think this is a good measure, because at present there is no protection in this category to the public or to duly qualified men. It seems to me that the man who has the biggest placard, gets the biggest business, at present. Legislation of this kind, I think, is good, because it not only affords protection

to the owners of animals, but to the animals themselves. It will tend to reduce the sufferings of animals, and will also tend to improve their breed. Many farmers are endeavouring to improve the breed of their animals, and the services of duly qualified veterinary surgeons will materially assist them in that direction. I shall support the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. SMITH (*Bowen*): I should like to know if this Bill is asked for by the people generally, or if it is asked for by a few veterinary surgeons.

Mr. STEPHENS: By the people.

Mr. SMITH: I have never heard any outcry from the people for it. As the hon. member for

Ballonne says, we are going to [5:30 p.m.] make close corporations of all these professions. The consequence will be that no man can practice unless he holds a certificate to show that he is duly qualified. The Dental Bill, the Medical Bill, and this Bill are all over-legislation, and, if we are going in for legislation of this sort, the more remote parts of the colony will suffer. Under this Bill a man will be unable to practise as a veterinary surgeon with any hope of reward, and no one will be fool enough to spend his time, and perhaps his substance, in assisting his fellowmen in those remote parts. It is all very well for a place like Brisbane, or for large centres like Warwick and Toowoomba, where veterinary surgeons can make a living by their profession, but in the remote parts of the colony it is utterly impracticable for a veterinary surgeon to make a living, and, so far as those districts are concerned, this legislation is entirely uncalled for. I would have no objection to the Bill being made to apply to Brisbane and other large centres, but, seeing it is quite impracticable in remote districts, I intend to vote against the second reading.

Mr. FOGARTY (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): The hon. member for Bowen is quite right in saying that the country has not asked for this Bill. We have been told that there are only five duly qualified veterinary surgeons in the colony. I notice that the Bill provides for a board to consist of not less than three duly qualified veterinary surgeons, but I suppose it is quite within the province of the Governor in Council to increase the number to five, and I presume there will be fees attached to the office. There will then be no qualified persons to practise under this Bill.

Mr. BELL: Do you know what a qualified man is under the Bill?

Mr. FOGARTY: Yes.

Mr. Bell: Well, what is it?

Mr. FOGARTY: I am not allowed to discuss the clauses of the Bill—the rules of the House prevent me doing it. I am quite prepared to deal with the details of the measure; but under the circumstances I must confine myself to the general principles. I know that if I had a valuable animal which required attention, I would certainly prefer to call in some ex-oxen conductor with whom I was acquainted—a man with practical experience—in preference to any veterinary surgeon. I hope that the Bill will not become law, as there is no necessity for it, and nobody has asked for it. If the Governor in Council chooses to appoint the five duly qualified gentlemen at present in the colony as members of the board, I presume they will require a secretary who will need to be paid a salary, and I suppose that salary will have to come out of the consolidated revenue. Hence the burden will fall upon the taxpayers of the colony, and if my view is correct that this Bill is not required, we certainly cannot afford to throw money away on any such object. It is well known that we have no money to spare, and

later on we shall be called upon to elect representatives to the Federal Parliament, when additional taxation will have to be imposed, so that it is exceedingly desirable that we should not expend a shilling that is not absolutely necessary. There is not a shadow of doubt in my mind that this Bill will entail a certain amount of expense upon the people of the colony, for which they will receive no return. It may be of benefit to the five members of the board and to the secretary, but I cannot see that the colony should be called upon to pay a considerable amount of money for the benefit of six individuals. I do a considerable amount of travelling in the Southern part of the colony, and I have never heard, either directly or indirectly, any demand made for a measure of this sort. It is only a short time ago that a valuable horse of mine required treatment. I did not call in a professional veterinary surgeon, but an ex-oxen conductor.

Mr. JENKINSON: Commonly known as a bullock-driver?

Mr. FOGARTY: Yes. He treated the animal successfully, and if I had called in a professional man, it is quite possible, if not probable, that I should have lost my valuable horse. It is well known that there are people who are not willing to pay their debts, and there might be men who would be mean enough to seek the assistance of a non-professional, and then refuse to pay him, although his services had been of considerable benefit to him. The bushman—if I may use the term—would not, under this Bill, be in a position to go into a petty debts court. He is knocked out of court by the provisions of this Bill if it becomes law. It is simply a matter of honour between the person employing him and the bushman who treats the beast successfully. I do not think it is wise to place a measure of this sort on the statute-book, and I am satisfied that 88 per cent. of the people of the colony think the same way as I do in the matter. It may be the means of a bogus lot of veterinary surgeons cropping up. I have no hesitation in saying here—and what I say here I am quite prepared to say outside—that some of the men who have been appointed as inspectors under the Diseases in Stock Act have no special knowledge. They simply received a diploma from some technical class, and the chances are that it is a class in connection with a technical college in the country, the members of which have no special knowledge. I know, from personal experience, that where technical classes exist the board of control have no knowledge of the subject, though it is quite possible that the instructor or teacher may be an expert, and that it does not require a great deal of work to obtain a certificate from such colleges. As far as diseases in stock are concerned, I would much prefer the opinion of some old bushmen to that of the so-called students from these technical colleges. I would even prefer the opinion of the hon. member for Woolloongahba to that of such students. The opinion of a practical butcher on a question of diseased meat would have more weight with me than the opinion of some of the inspectors appointed under the Act. I do not think there is any provision made in this Bill for the payment of fees to members of the board, but we may rely upon it that provision will be made for that in the regulations framed by the Governor in Council. If fees are not forthcoming there will be considerable difficulty in obtaining the services of any experts on the board. There is no necessity for the Bill, and, speaking with a considerable amount of country knowledge, I am of opinion that the country has no confidence in the proposal. When a similar measure was under discussion in New South Wales four years ago the then Colonial Secretary

of that colony stated that there were not five capable men in New South Wales. If they had not five capable men there with a much larger population, I do not think we would have five in Queensland. For the reasons I have given, if a division is called for, I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BELL, in reply: I should like to say a few words in reply. The chief lines of criticism made in regard to this Bill consist in the arguments of those who contend that those who hold themselves out as qualified to practise some special business in life should, for the protection of the public, undergo some qualifying test, and of those on the other hand who think that it is not necessary in the public interest that that test should be applied, and that the greater license which the absence of that test implies is likely to prove better for the public weal on the whole. I agree with the remarks made by the hon. member for South Brisbane on that point, and I am always disposed to welcome any measure which impose a test upon any man who holds himself out as specially qualified in any business or department in life. I was quite in earnest when I interjected, in the course of his speech, that I would even go so far as to support special tests for farriers or blacksmiths, or for any men who hold themselves out as specially qualified in anything. I disagree entirely with those hon. members who hold the opposite view, and who believe that the doctrine of *laissez faire* in these matters is a wise one. The other line of criticism which calls for comment in the chiefest degree is that which says that there is a clause in this Bill that provides that non-qualified men whose services are availed of shall be forbidden to sue for payment for their services. I do not bind myself to any particular course on that point; but it seems to me that the arguments brought forward in regard to it are cogent, if not conclusive. If an amendment in the direction which has been indicated is proposed in committee and carried, I shall not take that as a reason for not going on with the Bill, even if I do not support the amendment. But it is on the cards that I may support it, and I do not think hon. members can ask me to say more on that point. This Bill gives a status in this colony, which has hitherto been wanting, to a body of men who have taken special pains, either by the acquisition of a diploma in some institution established for that purpose, or by experience in practice during the course of years, to qualify themselves for the work they hold themselves out to the public as fit to do. With regard to the criticism of those hon. members who are nervous as to the effect this measure may have on stockmen and other people who are disposed to offer their assistance, either in a benevolent way or for a monetary reward, in the treatment of horses and other animals in the far Western district, I may say that that nervousness is quite baseless, as those people will not be interfered with by this Bill in any way whatever. This is a private member's Bill. I have made no attempt to whip on this subject. I do not know what the numbers may be if a division is called for on the motion for the second reading, but I am sure that if hon. members defeat me on the second reading of the Bill, they will have done a great deal more than throw out the Veterinary Bill—they will undoubtedly have put an obstacle in the way of private members carrying any legislation at all, for it will be an absolute discouragement to any man to bring forward private legislation. I appeal to any hon. member who has had charge of the passage of a private Bill through this House, and ask him if it is not, as a matter of fact, the most disagreeable work he can have to do in Parliament? If you do your work thoroughly, you should go

round to every member and endeavour to enlist his support for the measure. I have not done that; perhaps I ought to have done it, but if hon. members are going to hold out the threat, as it were, that if an hon. member does not use his personal friendship in order to get support for a Bill it will be thrown out, then hon. members will be striking a great blow at private legislation, and running in the teeth of those professions in regard to private business which have been made by hon. members on both sides of the House, and particularly by hon. members on the other side. I hope, therefore, from that point of view that the Bill will not be defeated on the second reading; and I further hope that on account of the merits of the question itself it will not be defeated, as I am perfectly certain it ought not to be.

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

AYES, 41.

Messrs. Philp, Foxton, Rutledge, Dickson, Dalrymple, O'Connell, Murray, Dunsford, Hardacre, Kidston, Rowman, Jenkinson, W. Hamilton, Dibley, Curtis, Aunear, Bell, Forsyth, Turley, Higgs, Ryland, Groom, Campbell, Kates, Hanran, Moore, Stephenson, T. B. Cribb, Keogh, Armstrong, Stephens, McDonnell, Fitzgerald, Petrie, Tooth, J. Hamilton, Kent, Grimes, Leahy, Lord, and Newell.

NOES, 12.

Messrs. Stewart, Bridges, Dawson, Kerr, McDonald, Givens, Lesina, Plunkett, Maxwell, Boles, Story, and Smith.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Friday, the 12th October.

ADVANCES TO SETTLERS.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of the debate on this motion (*vide* page 793),

Mr. KATES (*Cunningham*) said: I can hardly be expected to go on with this debate now, as there is no time left for private business. This bears out what I said last week—that private members ought to have the whole of Thursday at their disposal. Not being able to go on with the motion to-day, I move that the resumption of the debate be made an Order of the Day for Friday, the 26th October.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I think the hon. member is asking for too long a postponement. Why not put it down for to-morrow? I think the day mentioned by the hon. member is too long to wait.

The HOME SECRETARY: If you talk it out, you will make it worse.

Mr. PLUNKETT: It cannot make it much worse.

Question put and passed.

At 7 o'clock, the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

RAILWAY COMMISSIONER'S BILL.

FIRST READING.

The House, in committee, having affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to continue the office of Commissioner for Railways, and to provide for his salary, the Bill was introduced, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

PORT NORMAN, NORMANTON, AND CLONCURRY RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*): I have great pleasure in rising to move the second reading of this Bill,

perhaps the most important that has been introduced into this Assembly for some considerable time, because I feel assured that if the House sees fit to adopt it, it will be productive of great good to the colony, and more particularly to the remote part of the colony which will be affected by it. Some thirty-three years ago, I think, Mr. Ernest Henry, who was one of our earliest explorers, in travelling from Hughenden towards Cloncurry, discovered the Cloncurry copper deposits, and he at once set about and sought whatever assistance he could at that time utilise, with the object of developing this enormous wealth. His first action was to bring down certain samples to Clermont for assay, and having satisfied himself of their value, he went back and lived on the field for a considerable time. He eventually got a number of persons to assist him, went to the old country, and there succeeded in getting the assistance of some gentlemen who had capital to put into such enterprises. He sold the mine to these gentlemen for a considerable sum of money. They invested, I think, £120,000 from time to time in an effort to develop the resources of the district, but the mineral deposits being so far from the coast, and the cost of land carriage being so great and so difficult, they found, after years of unsuccessful effort, that it was practically useless to attempt to develop the resources of the district without railway communication. The possibility of railway communication with the Cloncurry district has been before the country, I may say, for the last twenty or twenty-five years. It has been looked upon as an absolute necessity that railway communication should be provided in order to develop the mineral resources of the Cloncurry district. However, time has passed by, and no effort has been made in that direction by successive Governments, I believe largely owing to the fact that they did not feel justified in asking the country to expend the large sum of money which undoubtedly would have been necessary.

Mr. McDONALD: But the money was voted.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Nothing at all events has ever come of it, and I think there is hardly any Government likely to be in power that would have the hardihood, I might say, to ask this House or the country to construct the line, seeing, as I have already pointed out, that the hands of the Government are full and overflowing with demands for railway construction that will be of more general good, and develop the resources of the colony to a much greater extent than the construction of this line will do. Hence the Government have not attempted, in the interests of the taxpayer, to enter into this enterprise.

Mr. GIVENS: Why spend £150,000 on a new Lands Office?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is getting away from the subject altogether. The situation now is that after years of fruitless effort, a number of gentlemen have come forward who have sufficient capital and sufficient enterprise to embark on the construction of this railway. I may say that they have secured the freehold of most of the mineral deposits of this locality.

Mr. McDONALD: Not true.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is the information I have got. Unfortunately I labour under one great disadvantage. I always look upon it as a great disadvantage in dealing with matters of this kind, where railway lines are required, in not having a personal knowledge of the country.

Mr. McDONALD: You could get that information from the Mines Office. There are only twelve freeholds there, and there are 300 or 400 leases.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What good would that do you?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would prefer to see the country for myself. The most valuable information a man can acquire is that acquired by practical experience and knowledge of the country he is talking about. However, there are many hon. members of this House who have that practical knowledge of the country, and I suppose that before this debate closes the condition and character of the country and its surroundings will be made known to the House, and, through the House, to the country. I think it is high time that district had some consideration in this respect.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear! I quite agree with you there.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The people there have been crying and waiting, with a patience that can hardly be over-estimated, for this line. So far as my knowledge goes I really hope, think, and believe, that their hopes will be realised in the near future by the passing of this Bill. It has been repeated over and over again in this House that these proposals are unpopular in the country.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I deny that *in toto*.

Mr. HARDACRE: How do you know?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can assure you, from the information I have about this proposal, and the information received from the district affected by this proposal, there are not 2 per cent. of the people in the Gulf districts who are not in favour of this line.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: How many people are in favour of the Bowen line?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Only an hour ago I received urgent telegrams on the subject. One from Cloncurry, dated this afternoon at 3.41 p.m., to this effect—

On behalf of the ratepayers the divisional board wish you every success with the second reading Port Norman to Cloncurry Railway Bill which if passed will confer a great boon to this district and the colony at large.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Who sent that?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is signed "R. C. Hensley, clerk of Cloncurry Divisional Board." I have another urgent wire from Normanton addressed to myself—

Understand you move the second reading Cloncurry-Normanton Railway Bill to-night. All ratepayers in my division are unanimous in favour of it and join me in wishing you every success.

ROBT. CURRIE

Chairman Carpentaria Division.

MEMBERS of the Government: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I want to dispel this idea that the people are not favourable to these proposals.

Mr. BROWNE: Why don't you try?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I understand that the public journals of the country, to a very considerable extent, disclose the opinions of the country.

Mr. REID: When the syndicates pay them!

Mr. McDONALD: Their opinion about you is not very good.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I hope it is quite as good as their opinion of the hon. member. If not, I stand at a very low ebb in their estimation indeed. I should be sorry to place myself on a level with him in any way.

Mr. McDONALD: I would commit suicide if I thought you could.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This is the opinion expressed in a leading article in the *Cloncurry Advocate*.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was not my intention to read the whole of it, but as hon. members say "Oh, oh!" I shall read more of it than I intended to do otherwise. Hon. gentlemen seem rather to pooh-pooh this, and I will give the House the benefit of it. The very fact of their pooh-poohing it makes me think it should get some hearing. It is dated Cloncurry, 16th August—

So far as a large number of the Cloncurry electors are concerned, Mr. McDonald seems determined to accentuate in their experience the hoary proverb that those who sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind. A small majority of voters here favoured Mr. McDonald's candidature at the last election, and the time has now arrived when they have reason to regret that they assisted to return him as member for the Flinders.

Mr. McDONALD: He has been writing me down for twelve years now.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (continuing):

The construction of a railway from Cloncurry to deep water is on all sides admitted to be the premier and supreme desideratum in connection with the rapid progress and permanent prosperity of this district—

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:

the one thing needful to send it ahead by leaps and bounds—the only means by which it can be transformed from the sleepy hollow of the past and present into a busy centre of population and mining development; but Mr. McDonald boldly declares that he will not support the construction of such a line either by private enterprise or by the State. He goes further, and tells his political adherents here (making them pay for the information by "collect" wire) that he will use every effort to defeat the building of the railway by a syndicate. This attitude on the part of Mr. McDonald is naturally highly unsatisfactory to all his political opponents, but it is no more than they expected. To many of his bosom friends and political supporters, however, the stern refusal of their member, even for their dear sakes, to waive one jot or tittle of his opposition to the principle of railway construction by private enterprise is a nasty jar—an eye-opener—a set-back—at which they can only stand aghast and wonderingly repeat the words of Bret Harte, "Do I sleep? Do I dream? Do I wander in doubt?"

Mr. GIVENS: You do. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:

"Are things what they seem, or are visions about?" And yet even Mr. McDonald's most bitter opponents cannot charge him with inconsistency.

MEMBERS of the Labour Opposition: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:

He has signed the Labour platform—

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:

and if he supported any railway construction by other than State funds, he would be false to his declarations of allegiance to the lines of that platform, and would deserve to be treated with the contempt always felt by honourable men for renegades, political or otherwise. As to how far Mr. McDonald might, with becoming grace, and without any sacrifice of principle, sink his prejudices when an obstinate determination to push them to extremes is calculated to seriously affect the best interests of an influential and numerous section of his constituents, is quite another question. A public meeting of Cloncurry residents, and a number of gentlemen who assisted to put Mr. McDonald at the top of the poll on more than one occasion, have asked him to waive his opposition to the Bill now before Parliament for the construction of our railway. There is nothing unreasonable in that request, and the position he takes up in his reply is not in any way creditable to his perspicacity or his construction of what the legitimate duties and functions of a *representative of the people* are. He rides the high horse too arrogantly, and evidently forgets that he is not invested with autocratic authority to lay down the lines on which the residents of this town shall think and act. He has certain ideas; he deserves honour for having the courage of his convictions and for sticking loyally to his principles; but are not the principles and convictions

of others worthy of some deference and respectful consideration from him? He should not forget that even abler statesmen than he have not disdained to make compromises for the good of the people—that there is such a thing as honourable compromise—that minorities are entitled to representation—and that he only exhibits the effrontery of a boor, the vanity of a popinjay, and the ignorance of a two-legged donkey—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:

when he practically tells the people of Cloncurry that they do not know what their district needs to ensure its progress and prosperity, and that he must be recognised as the sole and heaven-appointed judge and arbiter in such a matter. If Mr. McDonald were to content himself with again placing on record his objection to the construction of any railway by private enterprise, his action could not be condemned by any man of impartial mind; but when he bumptiously asserts that he will use every means in his power to defeat a project which is generally admitted to be an indispensable condition to the welfare of this district, it must be seen that Mr. McDonald cannot any longer be regarded as the representative of Cloncurry, and that the interests of its people would have been far safer in the hands of the veriest fool they could have sent into the House than they are in those of one who does not scruple to clearly show that he aims at being top of the class and cock-of-the-walk in the school of political knavery.

Mr. HIGGS: I suppose you would object to those personalities if they were applied to your side.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will read this from the *Croydon Mining News*—

Formerly this paper strongly opposed the principle of private construction of railways, and we would persevere in that opposition to the bitter end if we believed there was even a scintilla of hope that the Government would undertake the construction of the Cloncurry line. But we now contend that each proposed line should be considered separately and on its merits. We believe that the salvation of the Gulf depends upon the opening up of the country by means of railway extension, and we know that we have nothing to hope for in working out that salvation from a Southern Government composed of any political party. Therefore we are prepared to discuss the merits of any proposal to construct the Cloncurry line, and if in such proposal the rights of the people are properly and sufficiently safeguarded, to give it a fair, outspoken, and strenuous support; provided always that the terms of the proposal are submitted in their entirety to public criticism and approved of by a majority of the community likely to be affected thereby.

I could read a great many quotations from the various public meetings that have been held in that particular district, and they show that the people are not only united in their desire for railway communication, but I take it, they think that it is absolutely necessary in order that they may be able to live in the district, and to carry on its industry.

Mr. BROWNE: I have been at it in this House ever since I have been here.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have already pointed out that we have a very large colony, comparatively sparsely populated, and the demand for railway construction over that enormous territory is probably greater than the Government can successfully meet. Therefore this line is not considered one which the Government should construct. Moreover, it is a line purely into a mining district and for the development of private property. That private property is held by the gentlemen I have already spoken of. I do not think it would be a fair thing to make the country run the risk of an enterprise of this description seeing that the success of the railway—the profitable working of the railway—depends entirely upon the profitable prosecution of the mining industry in that particular district. That is one of the reasons why the Government would not be warranted in constructing a line to that place at this particular time. I think the hon. member for Charters Towers last night said if it will pay the company to construct a

line of this description it will also pay the Government; but I have already pointed out that it is too much of a speculative character for the Government to take it in hand. Therefore, I consider it is wiser, in view of the present state of the country, of the present financial condition of the colony, and of the prospects of dear money and the difficulty of procuring money—I think it is very much wiser on the part of the Government to assist private enterprise in building this railway line. The proposal is hedged round with every conceivable safeguard.

Mr. BROWNE: For the syndicate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member may think that. I consider them safeguarded—perhaps the hon. member does not look at them in that light. The Bill is practically upon the same lines as the Bills that have been already before the House. The maximum rate which the syndicate will be able to charge on the railway lines will be 50 per cent. more than the Government line.

Mr. REID: As usual.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Now, I think for that particular district that is not an unreasonable regulation, because the railways of that district are at the present time being worked at very much greater expense than the lines in the Southern district. I have brought a comparison with me which will be very useful. Of course, coal, labour, and everything else is very much dearer in the Northern parts of the colony than elsewhere.

Mr. BROWNE: Why talk about coal when you know they do not use coal.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Fifty per cent. will not cover the difference in the cost of working by a long way. The average cost of working per train mile on Queensland railways for the year ending 30th June, 1900, was 2s. 11½d. The cost of working the Normanston Railway is 7s. 5½d. per mile. Hon. members will see that the 50 per cent. would not cover that by a long way.

Mr. GIVENS: It may be over 100 per cent. in fifty years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The cost of the Cooktown Railway is 6s. 10½d. per mile; the Cairns Railway, 6s. 0½d.; Townsville, 2s. 6¼d.; Bowen, 5s. 6d.; Mackay, 5s. 5½d.; the Central Railway, 2s. 7¼d.; the Southern Railway, 3s. 0¼d., so that hon. members will see that 50 per cent. will not cover the difference by a long way. The provisions of the Bill are probably fairly well known to hon. members of the House. It empowers the construction of a railway 247 miles in length, also four tramways—60, 25, 30, and 65 miles in length respectively. The route is from Port Norman to Normanton, thence passing through Magowra, Donors Hills, Talanta, Kamilaroi, Coolullah, Euston, and Port Constantine. The tramways are to act as feeders, and one goes south-west as far as Chatsworth. The term for the construction of the line is five years, but if 150 miles are built in that time the Minister may grant a year's extension for the completion of the line. The company must deposit 5 per cent. of estimated cost, which, with mineral leases, will be forfeited if the railway is not made according to agreement. The company also get power to construct tramways not exceeding 25 miles in length.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Is that in continuation of the tramlines marked on the schedule?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, in addition to those. The railway is to be made on the same gauge as the State railways, but the tramways may be 2 feet. No Asiatic or Polynesian labour is to be allowed to work on the line.

Mr. REID: That is only a bait.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The company are to get a strip of twenty-seven yards wide freehold for the line, but must provide a telegraph, and may charge one and a-half on Government railway rates during the time of construction. The line is to be free from payment of rates. The company must run two trains each way per week. The company are to get 5,000 acres under mineral lease for fifty years, free of all conditions excepting the payment of rent of £1 per year for each acre. For works which the company may consider it beneficial to construct, lands may be sold to the company. All such lands shall be Crown lands, and are not to exceed 10,000 acres; and all sites selected shall be subject to the approval of the Governor in Council. Similar provision is made for a grant not exceeding ten acres at the terminus of the railway at Port Norman for wharfage and storage accommodation. The Government have power to buy the lines at the expiration of fifty years at cost price.

Mr. BROWNE: No fear.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Now, as to the character. I have taken the trouble to ascertain from the Lands Department what the character of the country is. I understand the bulk of it is purely [7.30 p.m.] pastoral country. In this connection I will read a letter from Mr. Arthur Warde to the Under Secretary for Public Lands—

Brisbane,

22nd September, 1897.

SIR,—In reply to your memorandum of 15th instant, and to an interview I had with you and the Honourable the Minister for Lands, I have the honour to furnish you herewith a general report of the pastoral district of Burke having regard to the suitability of the land for grazing and agricultural purposes. This report is accompanied by two maps showing the land adapted for sheep farming and the position of artesian bores. As there is only a very limited area at present under cultivation and that in scattered places near the township, I have not illustrated the position on the maps.

I have, etc.,

ARTHUR WARDE.

The Under Secretary for Public Lands, Brisbane.

And this is the report that I would like hon. members to pay particular attention to—

Between the years 1860-1870 a considerable part of the Burke district was occupied as sheep runs by R. Towns and Company and others. The unprecedented floods which occurred during the year 1870 drowned all the flocks and washed away nearly all the improvements in the north and north-western portion of the district—that is to say, the low-lying country near the Gulf coast.

Those pastoralists who were at the time engaged in the business either forfeited their holdings, or converted them into cattle runs.

The demand for sheep country which set in about ten years later induced many more speculators to again stock this part of Queensland with sheep, and the venture a second time proved a failure to a certain extent owing to the scarcity of the natural water supply (bores were unknown at that period), grass seed, dingoes, etc. By a glance at the accompanying map tinted purple it is noticeable how few runs in the northern part of the Burke district are now stocked with sheep, thus demonstrating beyond doubt that the country is unsuitable for this branch of the pastoral industry, and that cattle are the stock which are at present grazed to advantage. Just now the only run north of the 19th parallel of latitude occupied by sheep in the Burke district (owing in a great measure to the above reasons) is Donors Hills, carrying 23,080 sheep. Of those runs immediately south of this parallel which were a few years ago under sheep—namely, Morestone, Granada, Clonnagh, Bunda Bunda, Landsborough Downs, Ponterania Downs, and a few others, only two—Morestone (20,403 sheep), and Clonnagh (49,168 sheep)—are still carrying sheep; the other runs mentioned, although improved to a fair extent, have evidently been considered unsafe or unprofitable to work unless as cattle runs.

With regard to the south and south-east portions of the district there is very little, if any, superior sheep country in Queensland. Owing to the suitability of the grasses, soil, and climate, the facilities for obtaining

water by means of artesian wells at a comparatively shallow depth, and proximity to market (the Hughenden to Townsville railway conveying station produce to the seaboard in a distance of 235 miles), sheep farming is now being conducted profitably in this part of the district. There is an increased demand for grazing farms in the vicinity of Hughenden, Richmond, and adjoining parts of the Burke. Almost the whole of the resumed portions of those runs dealt with under the Crown Lands Act of 1884 have been already selected, and are now depasturing sheep successfully.

As far as I am able to judge from a thirteen years' residence in this district, I am of the opinion that there is little chance of any extensive agricultural production to be anticipated on account of—1st, the uncertainty of the seasons, which brings either a flood or a drought—the former means that everything in the low-lying parts, such as crops and even tilled ground, would be washed away; 2nd, the small demand for farm produce—in a good season the natural grasses are so luxuriant that there is no sale or demand for hay or corn, and during a droughty period when there is a necessity for produce and fodder it can be imported from the South at a price which will not admit of any extensive system being adopted to raise crops by means of irrigation, even were such a system practicable, which is very doubtful.

There is at present just a limited area of cultivation around and near the various townships (and carried on by Chinamen only)—namely, Normanton, Cloncurry, Croydon, and Hughenden.

I think if this railway is constructed, it will not only develop the mining fields in this district but it will give great assistance to settlers in the same district, who are engaged in sheep and cattle raising. Mr. George Phillips estimates the cost of this line at £772,938, with equipment, and the tramways, as shown in the schedule to the Bill, at £260,000. The construction of this line will save the cost of the present mail from Cloncurry to Normanton (£500), and also the subsidy to steamers running to the Gulf, amounting to £6,000 per annum. The increased traffic created by the railway will attract steamers regularly to the Gulf without a subsidy. I think it is apparent to everyone that this line will develop the mines in this district, and that it will give employment to a large number of men. Mr. Jack, in his report in 1881, states—

The Argylla Mine is a wide belt of copper-bearing country running N.N.W. to S.S.E. The dominant feature of the belt is a wide reef of rather open and friable quartz, standing up as a crest on a hilltop for about three-eighths of a mile, and nearly 80 feet above the general level of the state country.

The western side of the quartz reef at its north end is stained with carbonate of copper, its numerous caverns being conspicuous from a long distance owing to their bright green colouring. Traced to the south, the whole is seen to be a belt of copper lodes, generally running parallel to the dominant quartz reef, but sometimes running out obliquely from it, and abutting against parallel veins of quartz. We saw a good deal of green carbonate of copper, often radiated and fibrous, and of the highest possible percentage. We could also knock out or pick up on the hillside, or in the gullies, heavy boulders of red oxide of copper and grey ore.

The Argylla property will take a large sum of money to explore. No company, without very considerable capital, should, in my opinion, attempt the task, but I believe the expenditure would be richly repaid. The green-painted caves in the quartz, I have no doubt at all, represent great bunches of ore which have been denuded.

In connection with these private syndicate railways, a great deal has been said about men who are said to come here to endeavour to exploit this country; but I would like a better definition of "exploiters." I suppose the original inhabitants of this country really look upon all of us as exploiters.

Mr. BROWNE: And not without some reason.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It seems to me that hon. members opposite look upon a man who has a little more enterprise than an ordinary individual as an exploiter and a robber, although he will find considerable employment for his fellow men.

Mr. KIDSTON: We think it is not desirable to allow anyone to do with us what we have done with the blacks.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Just so. Hon. members on the other side think it desirable to keep all mankind on a dead level, and, whenever anyone rises above the general herd, he at once becomes an object of scorn. I do not know why hon. members opposite should have such a dislike to men of enterprise, who are prepared to invest their capital in works of this description.

Mr. GIVENS: Nobody accused you of being able to understand.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think that, after all, mining in this country is such a very prosperous occupation. I was rather surprised on looking over the mining returns the other day to find that the calls in Gympie exceeded the dividends to a considerable extent.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is not customary. It only happened during that particular month.

Mr. GIVENS: It is not an unfavourable sign.

The PREMIER: If you were a shareholder you would not say so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Seeing that that is so in an old-established field like Gympie, I would like to know what may be expected in the case of an undeveloped field like Cloncurry. When the calls exceed the dividends it is apparent that labour gets all the profits out of the mines.

Mr. GIVENS: It is the wages-men on Gympie who pay most of the calls.

The PREMIER: You are quite mistaken.

Mr. JACKSON: Do not run the mining industry down, any way.

The PREMIER: I am not running it down; it is the hon. member for Cairns.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No one is attempting to run down the mining industry. The Government recognise its value, and are prepared to render it every assistance they can; and the only means by which the Government can assist it is by offering facilities of this description for its development. These mines are of no value whatever without means of communication.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: The only thing the Government can do for the mining industry is to get someone else to help it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not intend to dwell at any greater length upon this measure. The provisions of the Bill have been before hon. members for some considerable time, and they are thoroughly acquainted with them. It is exactly upon the same lines as the other Bills which have already been discussed. I have no doubt that the clause which will prove most contentious is clause 25, which gives power to lease lands to the company.

Mr. STEWART: Why do they want that power?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The clause provides—

The company may from time to time select, at a distance of not more than sixty-five miles from the main railway line, areas of Crown lands, open for lease under any Act relating to mining or to the leasing of Crown lands. But the total area that may be so selected shall not exceed five thousand acres.

In addition to the Crown lands taken, used, and occupied by the company for the railway, the company may select and shall be entitled to grants in fee-simple of sites along and contiguous to the route of the railway for subsidiary works, or any other works which the company may consider it beneficial to erect or construct: Provided that all lands so selected and granted shall be Crown lands, that the total area of such lands shall not exceed ten thousand acres, and that the sites selected by the company shall be subject to the approval of the Governor in Council. Subject to the

like approval, the company shall also be entitled to take, use, and occupy, and to have granted to it in fee-simple a suitable and sufficient site, not exceeding ten acres in area, at the terminus of the railway, at Port Norman, for wharfage and storage accommodation.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Ten acres might take in the whole wharfage on the river.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think it is at all likely to do that. Clause 30 empowers the Government to purchase the line from Port Norman to Normanton at any time after its construction at the cost of construction. I think the public interests are safeguarded in every possible way by the Bill. The railway will be absolutely under the control of the Commissioner for Railways, both in its construction and its management, and trains are to be run in accordance with the Commissioner's by-laws. I cannot see that any reasonable objection can be offered to the measure, and I hope sincerely that hon. members will see the wisdom of giving to the people of the Gulf country the facilities which they ask in this Bill, for I feel sure that, unless they get those facilities, instead of the district progressing, the possibility is that it will retrograde. I have very much pleasure in moving the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I do not know how it is, but when the little Callide Bill and the other little measures of this kind were introduced I was reminded of what we have all seen when we have been travelling along the coast in a steamer. I dare say hon. members have seen swimming along under the bows of the steamer a number of little fish. The sight looks perfectly harmless, and so it is, but suddenly behind them you see a great lump of a shark. We have seen just the same thing on this occasion. We have had the little bits of fish coming into this Chamber, and to-night we see the big shark in the shape of this Normanton-Cloncurry Railway Bill. The hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill was very brief in introducing it. He did not give us any information, except a little that he read. He stated one thing with which I thoroughly agree, and that was that this is a very important Bill. It is the most important Bill that has come before this House since Sir Thomas McIlwraith tried to get his land grant railway scheme through. Another thing in which I thoroughly agree with the hon. gentleman is, that this is a district which has been very long neglected, and I say, more shame to the men who have been so many years in the Government to have to stand up and admit it. We were told by the hon. gentlemen in the little bit of historical reminiscence that he indulged in, that it is thirty-three years since the copper was first discovered at Cloncurry. Ever since its discovery the people in the district have been clamouring for some help, and now the Government propose to help them by saying, "We are going to hand you over to a syndicate." Although the money has been voted for the construction of this line, the Government do nothing but take up a collection on behalf of the people in the district. The hon. gentleman referred to the aboriginal natives of this country. I do not wish to say anything disrespectful to the hon. gentleman, but his tone, when speaking of the want of money to build the line, put me in mind of an old aboriginal coming along and saying, "Please give it sixpence." If we cannot do anything else in this Chamber than cry every industry down, and say we have no money to help it, then the best thing we can do is to shut up shop and allow the syndicates to run the whole show. The next thing the hon. gentleman alluded to was the opinion of the country on this subject, and he gave my friend, the hon. member for Flinders, the best advertisement he has had in

this House for many a long day. The hon. gentleman quoted from a local newspaper, and Ministerial organ, which has been in antagonism to the hon. member for Flinders ever since he became a member of this Chamber, and even before he entered the House, and that paper actually gives the hon. member credit for being true to his principles. I can understand the hon. gentleman being surprised that it is possible for a man to enter this Chamber and remain in it for a few years and yet stick to the opinions he held before he was elected a member. The hon. gentleman who introduced this Bill intimated on one occasion that he would stand on his feet until he shed the last drop of his blood against electoral reform, and he was now a member of the Ministry who are introducing electoral reform. The hon. gentleman also denounced the Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill, and he is now a member of the Ministry who introduced that measure, and who desire to see its operations further extended. The hon. gentleman was formerly so opposed to immigration that he reckoned the country was a great deal better with 400,000 people in it than it would be with millions, and yet he is now a member of the Government which proposes to spend £50,000 in bringing out immigrants to the country. I can therefore understand the hon. gentleman being surprised that a gentleman like the hon. member for Flinders should stick to his principles. The hon. gentleman also quoted from the *Croydon News*, but to that I may refer later on. It is possible that that paper may have changed its opinions, and it has a perfect right to do so. It belongs to two private individuals, and if they like to change their opinions on this subject that has nothing to do with me. But I would point out that it is a very significant fact that with all their means of information it has taken them a very long while to pronounce in favour of this scheme. The hon. gentleman speaking of the indignation of hon. members on this side against exploiters coming to the country, used a very unhappy illustration, as he very often does, when he said he dared say that we might have been looked upon as exploiters of the country by the natives. I dare say they did look upon us in that light, but I hope that these exploiters who are now coming to the colony are not going to deal with the working men of this country as we have dealt with the aborigines. I do not think they will, for we are not exactly aborigines. As I have already said, I have all the time looked upon this Bill as the big shark of the lot. I knew that it was coming along, and a lot of members in this House knew that it was coming along, because we knew what was going on during the last three or four years, the amount of money that has been spent in all sorts of ways, the way these people have been acting in the old country and in this country, and the way the election has been worked in order to try to carry out the views of the persons concerned. We knew the way lobbying was going on in this Chamber during the last three years, so that we expected to see this Bill. I am very pleased that we have got all the correspondence in connection with this proposal, because that correspondence will be very useful, not only to members of this House, but to people all over the country, as it discloses a little of what has been going on in regard to the proposed construction of this railway. During previous debates on Bills of a similar character, some hon. members, against what they call their fixed principles, were induced to vote for those measures in the belief that they were only small mining Bills. The Secretary for Railways tried to make out that this Bill also is only a mining Bill, giving the people concerned the means of working their own mines. But that is

directly contradicted by the correspondence, and by the Bill itself. Surely the hon. gentleman must think that hon. members cannot read, when he tells us that this Bill is precisely on the same lines as the other private railway Bills. What does the title of the Bill say? It says that it is "A Bill to authorise the construction and maintenance of a line of railway from Port Norman, by way of Normanton, to Cloncurry, and for other purposes." In the case of the other Bills the title read, "and for other purposes subsidiary thereto." Now take the preamble, and let us see where this little mining company comes in. The preamble says—

Whereas the British Colonial Railways Corporation, Limited, a company duly incorporated in Great Britain under the Companies Act, and registered in Queensland under the British Companies Act of 1866—

It is not a mining company at all; it is a British Colonial Railways Corporation. Further on, the preamble states that they ask for certain privileges, so that they can generally transact the business of railway carriers, and then it proceeds—

And whereas the said company is also desirous of constructing, erecting, carrying on, utilising, and turning to account in connection with the said lines of railway and tramway certain mines, stores, warehouses, labourers' dwellings, freezing, smelting, crushing, and other works and wharves and wharfage accommodation.

A nice little thing for a small mining company! Let this Bill pass as it is now, and the whole of the Gulf country, every industry, pastoral, mining, and agricultural, will be absolutely at the mercy of that company. This is one of the biggest things that has ever been attempted in Australia. When speaking on one of the other Bills I made reference to the length of this railway, and my figures were contradicted. Just to show what this proposal means, I have been to the trouble to get a map for the information of hon. members who do not know the district, so that they may see what this little branch railway means. It is a trunk line right through the heart of the Western country, just as much a trunk line as the railway from Brisbane to Toowoomba, or the railway from Rockhampton to Longreach, or the railway from Townsville to Charters Towers. For the sake of convenience I have the figures recorded on the map, and from them it will be seen that the railway goes from Deepwater to Normanton, and from there 260 miles down to Cloncurry. From there it goes another 65 miles—one of those nice little branch lines—down to Chatsworth, which is immediately opposite Winton, and about 130 or 140 miles from that township. It will take the whole of the traffic right away

[8 p.m.] to Birdsville on the South Australian border and right up round the Gulf country, and will also drain traffic from the Northern and Central lines. It will be seen that there are two branches. One runs out about 60 miles and comes to within about 40 miles of the terminus of the Burketown-Lilydale line; then there is a length of 25 miles, and another of 30 miles, making 55 miles in the direction of Georgina; and besides that they have the right, without the sanction of this House, to build as many branch lines as they like in every direction; and they can bring it right down to Longreach. I ask the hon. members for Rockhampton, and I ask the Premier, who represents Townsville, and the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill, who is also in charge of the railways of this colony—I ask those hon. gentlemen whether they have considered the question in that light, and are prepared to go on with it? It has been contended that this is not a departure from the settled policy of this country, but I will show that it is. In the Northern division at the present time we have 670 miles

1900—3 L

of State lines—Mackay, Bowen, Townsville, Cairns, Cooktown, and Normanton-Croydon. Under this Bill and the Burketown-Lilydale Bill, with the 110 miles already granted to the Chillagoe Company, there will be 693 miles of private lines as against the 670 miles of State lines; and they will have the right to build hundreds of miles of tramways as well if the Bill passes. Now, I will take it as far as the Gulf district itself is concerned. If these lines are built—this Lilydale line and this Cloncurry line—that will mean in the Gulf country 555 miles of private lines, with the right of building hundreds of miles of branches, as against ninety-four miles of State railway. That is an overplus in favour of private lines of 461 miles; and we shall have 20 per cent. of State lines in the North, and 80 per cent. private lines. And then hon. gentlemen will tell you that is not departing from the settled policy of the country—that is, State railways.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Won't that do the district good?

MR. BROWNE: Most decidedly not. Let the hon. gentleman try it in his own district. Let him get that little line to Yeppoon built by a private syndicate.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A syndicate would not build it.

MR. BROWNE: In that terrible jeremiad the hon. gentleman gave us when he brought in the first of these Bills, he gave a list showing what we were losing on those railways, and how he could not make them pay. How is he going to make them pay now? In 1883, Sir Thomas McIlwraith introduced his transcontinental scheme, and went down over it. I was very pleased at that. I was in the Herberton district at the time, and, being a bit of a politician outside before I got into the House, I took a very active part in fighting against it. I say that this is a great deal worse and more deliberate attempt on the part of the Ministry to do injury to the country than that big scheme of Sir Thomas McIlwraith's.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSYTH: Nonsense!

MR. BROWNE: I may say that every statement I make here is verified by the different departments. I have a table here which I got from the Railway Department. Though these Bills are being rushed on one after another, I have enough energy to go and get some information in regard to them. This is a comparative statement of the length and cost of construction of the Central and Townsville railways from the 31st December, 1883, to the 30th June, 1900, and I got it to show what has been done since the time of Sir T. McIlwraith's transcontinental scheme was before the country. The Central line, the main line from Rockhampton westward, on the 31st December, 1883, was extended 252 miles, at a cost for construction of £1,648,328; the main line from Rockhampton on the 30th June, 1900, was out a distance of 428 miles, at a total cost for construction of £2,550,000. That means an increase of 176 miles in distance, and £901,672 in cost since 1883. The Townsville railway shows a great deal more difference. The main line from Townsville out westward, on the 31st December, 1883, was only eighty-two miles out—just to Charters Towers—and there had been spent on it then £393,803; the main line from Townsville westward on the 30th June, 1900, was 370 miles out, at a total cost of £1,690,650; that is an increase on that line of 288 miles in length, and an increased expenditure of £1,296,847. That means that on the two lines together there has been, since 1883, a total increase in mileage of 464 miles and an increase

in expenditure on construction of £2,198,519. Since December, 1883, we spent £2,198,500 in building 464 miles of railway to serve our Western settlers, and we are now asked to allow an absentee corporation to come in and drain the traffic of those two lines. I ask the residents of Townsville and Charters Towers and Rockhampton whether they think it is likely to improve the paying qualities of their lines to have a railway of this description coming right down through the colony in this manner. I say, therefore, most decidedly, that this is a worse proposal by far than that of Sir Thomas McIlwraith in 1883.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Then you would have no line at all from Normanton?

Mr. BROWNE: I would, and the hon. gentleman knows it.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You are arguing dead against it.

Mr. BROWNE: My argument tells against something else, and the hon. gentleman does not like it because of that fact.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It tells against your constituents.

Mr. BROWNE: Now, there is another matter which I will deal with at this stage, one of those small concessions which the hon. gentleman spoke about, the privileges granted in regard to wharves and wharfage accommodation. I say the monopoly of these wharves and the wharfage accommodation means a great deal more than has been explained up to the present time, and no one knows it better than the Premier and the hon. member for Carpentaria. Clause 25 grants in fee simple to the company an area of 10 acres for wharfage purposes and wharfage accommodation. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government very ingeniously pointed out that that line to deep water at Normanton could be taken over at any time, but he need not think that by statements of that kind he is going to gull the people of Croydon and the Etheridge. My hon. friend the member for Burke and myself know a little more about it than that, and there is a little point in connection with that matter which I may bring in later on, which shows how the Secretary for Railways, in his official capacity, has tried to help this company along. Given the wharves and wharfage accommodation which the company asks, then I would point out that they will have the whole of the pastoral and agricultural industry of the district at their mercy, to say nothing of having their hands on the whole of the business people of that part of the colony. Why, do we not know that for years past that which has been crushing the whole of the Gulf country has been the monopoly of Burns, Philp, and Co., and the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company, who have been draining the very life's blood out of the district? The Chief Secretary knows when he was Premier, and before that time, how for eighteen months or two years the people of that district were left practically without mail accommodation, and in spite of what was done by the hon. gentleman, by the Postmaster-General, and by members in this House, no remedy could be found, and the Government were perfectly helpless. The Australasian United Steam Navigation Company had got hold of the country, and the interests of the district were set at naught.

Mr. FORSYTH: How do you make that out?

Mr. BROWNE: The hon. gentleman himself said so.

Mr. FORSYTH: Explain the position.

Mr. BROWNE: I will explain the position. A dredge had been promised for years to dredge the Norman bar.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: "Gib it sixpence."

Mr. BROWNE: I will give the hon. gentleman sixpence if he wants it.

Mr. TURLEY: No bribery.

Mr. BROWNE: I am merely relating facts. The hon. member for Carpentaria knows that for years and years we tried to get a dredge, and if we had got it a large amount of lighterage which is now necessary, and which is in the hands of the two firms I have mentioned, would be dispensed with. The Chief Secretary knows that other companies besides the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company did not tender for the mail service on account of the expense entailed in taking up a lighterage plant, and they were not prepared to run the risk. Had the bar been dredged many other boats besides those of that company would have gone there and the country would not have been put in the position of having to pay a subsidy of £6,000 a year to the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company. Now, this year we have had a distinct promise that one of the two Lindon-Bates dredges would be sent up to dredge both of those bars.

The PREMIER: Not the two bars.

Mr. BROWNE: I can produce some wires in which the hon. gentleman refers to the Gulf ports. Well, the dredge, it appears, is to go there and dredge the bars, and then a monopoly of the harbour is to be handed over to this syndicate company.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The wharfage can be retained by the Government.

Mr. BROWNE: Ten acres are to be given to the company.

The PREMIER: There are hundreds of acres for wharfage purposes.

Mr. BROWNE: All this shows how little hon. gentlemen have read this Bill; how little the interests of the public have been studied, and how they have been made subservient to the interests of the company. To show how the company recognised the importance of wharfage accommodation, I have here some correspondence on the subject to read. It seems when this Bill was first drafted the same principle was to be applied as in the case of the deep water line. That was the way in which they were trying to gull the Croydon public—to make them think that they were going to get a line to deep water for nothing. In this official correspondence we find on page 12 the following letter, numbered 33:—

MR. HENRY J. WITHERS to THE COMMISSIONER FOR RAILWAYS.

Queensland Club,
Brisbane, 3rd August, 1899.

DEAR MR. GRAY:—In looking over this Bill as at present settled, I see that, in clause 30, the Minister has power to resume the wharfage and storage accommodation at or near the township of Karumba. This is of great consequence to the company, and will seriously interfere with the position in London. The company want direct through communication between their mines and steamers, and if power is given to block one end it will place the company in a very much worse position.

I presume that there exists ample space for wharfage accommodation on the river, so I think the company should be permitted to retain what is granted to them, at least for the same term as the whole railway.

I shall be glad if you will reconsider this, and if you cannot see your way to leave the right of resumption out altogether, then that it should come in under subsection 2 of clause 30, instead of the clause itself.

Yours very truly,
HENRY J. WITHERS.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: What a modest young man!

Mr. BROWNE: The memo. attached to that is as follows:—

Have deleted provision empowering the Government to resume wharf premises, &c.—R. J. GRAY, 17th August, 1899.

Letter No. 34 is as follows :—

THE SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR RAILWAYS
to HENRY J. WITHERS, ESQ.

Brisbane, 18th August, 1899.

SIR,—Referring to your letter of 3rd instant, I am
desired to inform you that the Commissioner has deleted
from the Bill the provision empowering the Government
to resume the wharf premises, etc.,

I am, etc.,

T. S. PRATTEN.

Evidently this syndicate knew the worth of the
wharfage and the wharfage accommodation.
They were shrewd business men, and their
desire, of course, was to get every inch they
possibly could. I do not blame them in the
slightest degree, but I do blame men like the
Secretary for Railways, who are charged with
looking after the interests of the country, and
who give them away in this manner. I may say
that the same provisions apply to the Burketown
Tramway Bill. Let them once get their grip on
that and then good-bye to the interests of the
people, and Croydon, and the Etheridge, the
largest population of the whole of the Gulf, for
that is practically their only outlet, and they
will be at the mercy of this company.

Mr. FORSYTH : They can have wharves along-
side.

Mr. BROWNE : How much room is there for
wharves alongside?

Mr. FORSYTH : Any quantity of room.

Mr. BROWNE : The hon. gentleman knows
all about it, and perhaps he can relate to the
House how it is that the people of Croydon have
been deluded—have had promises made to them
by the present Secretary for Railways, and those
promises deliberately broken. Some three years
since, shortly after the hon. gentleman became
Secretary for Railways, the people up there had
been so anxious to get a line run down to deep
water that the Croydon Municipal Council, the
Normanton Council, and, I think, the Carpen-
taria Divisional Board agreed to join in with
them—proposed to build this line on the guaran-
tee principle. They wrote to me, and I saw the
Secretary for Railways. He said, "Very well,
if they are prepared to do that"; and he gave
me the necessary papers and information to send
up to them. They were sent up; and after that, I
believe, the Normanton Council went to the
expense of sending a competent surveyor, Mr.
McDonnell, at present town clerk of Croydon, and
Mr. Stuart-Russell, to survey a route on the other
side of the river to Karumba. Then the hon. mem-
ber for Carpentaria, Mr. Sim, and myself waited
on the Secretary for Railways with the informa-
tion about this Karumba route and an estimate
of the cost, and the Minister trotted out a very
elaborate estimate and report by Mr. George
Phillips of a line to Port Norman to cost about
£100,000. Knowing the other estimate, and ex-
penditure like that astonished Mr. Sim and
myself, and we remonstrated. Then Mr. George
Phillips was brought in to be the judge of his
own work, and the hon. member for Carpen-
taria and myself both decidedly bucked at that—
to use a common expression—and I said I did not
believe the people of the Gulf country wanted to
have Mr. George Phillips running the show. The
Secretary for Railways then agreed that there
should be a competent officer of the department sent
up there to go over the rival routes, and send in
an estimate and a report showing which was the
best. He told us that the surveyor would be on
the line by the time we got back for the recess.
I was there a few months after, and as I saw no
sign of the surveyor I wired on the subject to
the hon. gentleman. He replied by wire to say
that the surveyor would be there very shortly,
but he was busy at that time. I came back to
Brisbane, and after I was here some time I
called on the hon. gentleman to see what was

being done, and I found that in spite of his
having made a definite promise to two members
of the House, and to the local bodies interested,
he took so little interest in it that he said he
thought it was hardly worth while doing because
he believed a syndicate was going to build the
line. I said, "What has a syndicate to do with
it? I ask you to redeem your promise as
Minister for Railways."

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS : I do not
remember that at all.

Mr. BROWNE : Of course the hon. gentleman
doesn't, but I can give him all the information.
After speaking on the matter for some time he
said that Mr. Longland, the chief surveyor in
charge of the Croydon-Georgetown line, had
nearly finished his work there and he would get
instructions sent to him to shift his camp to
Normanton and make a thorough run through
these two lines. I wired that to the Croydon
people and thought it was all right. It can all
be found recorded in the local papers with the
Minister's wires and my own. That went on for
some time, when all of a sudden the town clerk
of Croydon wired down to me to say that Mr.
Longland had been fetched away down South.
I saw the hon. gentleman again and was informed
that one of Mr. Longland's assistants, Mr.
Grant, would go over the lines. Mr. Grant
came down from there as I was going up
North this time, and I found that he had
run down over the Karumba line, and had never
looked at the other line at all, and had given no
report or anything of the sort. When I got here
again, after a good deal of trouble with the
department, I managed to get a look at a report
which Mr. Grant had given—a bare report of the
line, and nothing in the nature of the report the
hon. gentleman had promised we would get at all.
After putting the people of the district off for
about eighteen months, and after all the trouble
the local bodies went to, and the expense they
were at in getting surveys and having maps pre-
pared, and all the rest of it, the hon. gentleman
broke all his promises, and now he wants to
delude them that they are going to get the line
built by a syndicate. It is to be handed over to
them, and with it, as I say, the right to the navi-
gation of those waters by this proposal for giving
away the wharf frontages.

Mr. LEAHY : There is nothing there about
giving away the wharf frontage.

Mr. BROWNE : No, there is nothing there
about giving away the water, but if there was
any possibility of their draining every drop of
water out of that river I believe some of those
gentlemen would be ready to do it and hon.
gentlemen opposite would be prepared to applaud
them for doing it. The hon. gentleman has told
us that there was no concession given. I am not
going to deal lengthily with that, as other hon.
members will have something to say upon it.
As well as these water frontages these people are
to get 10,000 acres in fee-simple along different
parts of the line, to be given for purposes which
shall be deemed beneficial by the syndicate. I
wonder what purposes a railway corporation
limited would not consider beneficial if they
could get 10,000 acres of freehold for it? In
addition to that they are to get 5,000 acres
of mineral lands free of all conditions. I have
referred to this before; but both in this and
the other Bills—though these are all supposed
to be mineral leases—the syndicates are to
hold them as mineral freeholds, and the Bill
states that they are to have the right to all the
minerals, metals, and everything else in the
ground, so that they may monopolise all the gold
there as well. All round Cloncurry there are
little reefing fields, and this company is to have
the right to run out branch lines and select all
that golden country as they like. In addition to

that they have the right of charging 50 per cent. higher rates than the Government railways. Of course, hon. gentlemen opposite agree with that; but I may say, with regard to the figures the Secretary for Railways gave of the cost of working these different lines, I shall be prepared to go back over a series of years, and though the hon. gentleman is Secretary for Railways, I stake my word against this that I can prove that his figures are not correct. The year before last the present Secretary for Mines was Secretary for Railways, and he knows that then there were only seven lines in the colony that paid an equal rate of interest with the Croydon-Normanton line. It shows what these gentlemen really know when we come to the details of the business. We find that though the Premier was Secretary for Railways for a long time, and the present Secretary for Railways has been in office for so long, they quote for us the high price of coal at Normanton, when they should know, if they paid any attention to the department at all, that it is wood that is burnt on the Croydon line, and not coal at all.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Coal is so expensive there that they cannot afford to burn it.

The PREMIER: Do you say they never burned coal on the Croydon-Normanton line?

Mr. BROWNE: Very little. They did burn a little, and they called for tenders for it, and put in sidings to accommodate it.

Mr. LEAHY: It is against it if it will cost more.

Mr. BROWNE: If it costs more, then the hon. gentleman should accuse the [8.30 p.m.] Minister for Railways or the Commissioner for Railways of being incompetent. If it costs more to burn wood than coal, what sort of a Commissioner have we got? I say the Minister for Railways quoted the cost of coal at Normanton with a view to inducing people to think that coal is burned there, and the heavy cost of coal adds to the expense. I say it is nothing of the sort, because very little coal is used.

Mr. LEAHY: He gave the cost per mile.

Mr. BROWNE: He gave the cost of working per mile.

The PREMIER: You must admit that fuel is higher.

Mr. BROWNE: Fuel is dearer, and so is labour. Now, without dwelling much more on the concessions, which I will leave to others, there is one very important matter which I think the members of this House should take notice of in connection with this line, and I more especially call the attention of the Chief Secretary to it, as it is very likely that he is going to be a member of our first Federal Parliament. I was one of those who, throughout the federal campaign, went travelling round as an advocate of federation. Federation is now coming along, and we are going to join in with the other colonies. One of the great things which it is expected will be achieved will be the connection of our railway systems with one another, and the construction of a great transcontinental line right from Adelaide throughout these colonies. The construction of the line and the opening up of the Gulf ports to shipping will save something like 2,000 miles in the carriage of mails and passengers, and will cut down the time of travelling to the southern colonies by some days. Anyone who looks at the map will see how this great transcontinental line, this great federal line, will go right through this colony. It is supposed that we shall have the Central and Northern systems linked together, and they will form part of the great federal line going right into the Gulf country. Yet here we are giving away the whole of this trunk line, right on the

eve of federation, for fifty years to an absentee company, so that after we get federation, if the federation wants this line, it will have to hold it; and if they do not, it will be a great injustice to the Gulf. We are giving a private company the right to construct this line and the right to defy the federation for fifty years. I say this is not only doing a wrong to the people of the North but to the whole of the people of Australia; and any man who calls himself a federalist and who aspires to any position in the federation and yet connives at that, is showing a non-federal spirit, and is prepared to sacrifice anything for the sake of these syndicates. To show the Chief Secretary what were his opinions on that Croydon line, I will remind him that he has described it as one of the backbone lines of the colony. I have here an extract from the *Courier* of 18th November, 1897, with regard to a deputation which waited upon the hon. gentleman. It was introduced by Mr. Sim, M.L.A., and consisted of John Deane, M.L.C., Messrs. Browne, Newell, Glassey, Smyth, Kerr, Collins, McGahan, Armstrong, Hardacre, Castling, Stewart, and Kidston, M.M.L.A. The *Courier* reports that Mr. Sim said the line they desired to advocate was one from Normanton to Cloncurry, and he then stated the case, but I will not trouble the House with the whole of the report. Mr. Dickson said—

He had been over the country, and was certainly very much impressed by what he saw. He was Treasurer then, and a sum of money was placed on the Estimates for the construction of this railway line.

After saying the Government had no money, and referring to private enterprise, he continued—

He had always looked upon the Normanton-Cloncurry line as one of the backbone lines of the colony. He could hardly promise, however, to give precedence to the Normanton line over all others which had been brought before him.

He then promised the usual consideration and all the rest of it. After the hon. gentleman had spoken, the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, having noted that the hon. gentleman had alluded to something about private enterprise, at once got up and said that he was there to advocate the construction of the Normanton-Cloncurry Railway by the State and not by private enterprise. I stated the same thing, and even Mr. Sim stated that he was there to support a State railway. The only member of that deputation who said he was there to advocate either a private railway or anything else was the then hon. member for Albert, Mr. Collins; and if hon. gentlemen say that the country has endorsed private enterprise as applied to railway construction, then it is a singular fact that the only hon. member who expressed an opinion in favour of private enterprise lost his seat at the next election. I do not say that that had anything to do with it, but it is a bit of a coincidence. Now, to show the opinion of the Press on this question, the Hon. the Minister for Railways quoted one or two bits from papers. I think we can quote some very good bits from papers, and by Government organs, too, to the opposite effect. That deputation was on 18th November, 1897, and in the *Evening Observer* of Friday, 19th November, 1897, there was a long leading article dealing with it. I will read one or two extracts from it. It is headed "Gulf Railways," and, dealing especially with this railway, it says—

The deputations which waited upon the Minister for Railways yesterday made out good cases for the construction of lines to open up the Gulf country. Mr. Dickson felt, no doubt, that he could immortalise himself with a few millions to spend on promising railways.

Then the article goes on to refer rather roughly to the hon. gentleman, pointing out that he was Treasurer of the Ministry by whom the great

blunder at Cairns was perpetrated. I am not going to deal with that part. Returning again to the Gulf, it says—

These railways in the Gulf ought to stand well forward in any future plans considered by the Government. Mr. Dickson has said that they will receive due prominence. In this connection we think public opinion will be most emphatically behind construction by the State rather than that there should be any more thought of land-grant railways and private lines. The syndicate extension from Mareeba to Chillagoe may possibly be approved, if the State is to have so much to say in the details of working it; and Mr. Dickson was careful yesterday to emphasise the fact that only access was asked for by the company proposing to construct it. But as a principle we think the State ownership of all lines cannot be assailed with success, since it is the best thing for Queensland.

There is the opinion of the hon. gentleman himself that this is one of the backbone lines of the colony; and we have been told time after time by hon. gentlemen opposite that they do not approve of any trunk line or backbone line being built by private syndicates. I suppose this is a trunk line; the hon. gentleman himself says it is a backbone line. I do not know, but if the backbone of the Hon. the Minister for Railways were handed over to a private syndicate there would not be much of the hon. gentleman left.

MR. JENKINSON: The hon. gentleman would not miss it.

MR. BROWNE: I have just quoted this extract to show the opinion of one section of the Press. It was stated that I was against the building of this railway at all. I said when I was on that deputation that I was against any line being built by a private syndicate. Now, I see in the tables attached to the Treasurer's Statement this year that, at the present time, there is standing to the credit of the Normanton-Cloncurry line a sum of £426,034.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: A good many other railways have very large sums standing to their credit.

MR. BROWNE: What is the reason for that money standing to the credit of that line if it is not that it was intended that the Government should build this line?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The Croydon line was built out of it.

MR. BROWNE: The Croydon line was built out of money provided by a special vote of this House, and the hon. gentleman knows that very well. If hon. members will look at the correspondence they will see how philanthropic certain gentlemen are in these matters of private railways. The first thing that stares me in the face in this correspondence is a letter signed by Mr. Fredk. T. Brentnall, as follows:—

THE HONOURABLE F. T. BRENTNALL to THE HONOURABLE
THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS.
Legislative Council,
Brisbane, 9th April, 1897.

SIR,—Referring to the subject of my conversation with you on the 6th instant, I beg to say that a formal letter from the promoter of a company to build a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry. Mr. H. J. Withers, was presented by me to Hon. R. Philp on 4th December last. About 21st January I saw Mr. Philp, who, after submitting the proposal to the Commissioner for Railways, said he could not enter into any agreement with an individual. What Mr. Withers requires, according to letter just received, is, "Will the Government enter into a contract on the terms of the Act if I form the company?" Without some definite assurance that they will, no company can be formed. The company now proposed will be wealthy and strong in order to work the mineral lands at Cloncurry. It would be a powerful agency of development in the North.

I have, etc.,

FREDK. T. BRENTNALL.

This gentleman's name appears very often through this correspondence, and he seems to

have been acting as a sort of an agent in the matter. Then there is a letter, dated 15th March, 1898, from Mr. Henry J. Withers, on page 3 of this correspondence. I will not read the whole of it; but he gives the best proofs that this line should be built by the State. He points out—

If they obtain the necessary authority to construct the railway, it is the intention of the company to have these copper deposits thoroughly opened up, and worked on an extensive scale. It is proposed to convey the richer ores by the railway to deep water, and thence by steamer to the neighbourhood of the coal deposits on the east coast of the colony, taking coal and coke as return cargo both for steamers and trucks, which will enable the poorer ores to be smelted locally. By these means fuel will be delivered at the mines at such a moderate cost as to enable even low-grade ores to be profitably treated. The company propose to erect extensive smelting furnaces for treating the ores in both localities, and it is estimated that the consumption of coal will exceed 250,000 tons annually, thus increasing by one-third the present output of the colony.

Of the reputed richness of these copper deposits, much has been said, and if their value is within even measurable distance of what has been authoritatively stated of it, their development will undoubtedly make this colony the greatest copper-producing country of the world.

The Government Geologist, in a report on this field, says: "The Cloncurry, Leichhardt, and Dugald valleys abound in copper and other minerals, which are destined to make this district a crowded manufacturing country." At present it lies almost a waste, owing to the want of a railway to connect it with the coast.

It is estimated that when these mines are in full work, employment will be given, directly and indirectly, to at least 4,000 men, and in addition to the local benefit to arise from the settlement of a large population in the far West of the colony, and along the line of route, the enterprise will make settlement advance from the east at a far more rapid rate than at present is possible.

The company propose to introduce a large number of settlers from the United Kingdom, with the view of developing the land which the company proposes to obtain on lease from the Crown, and will generally assist the local productiveness of this rich district by providing facilities for freezing, storing, packing, and exporting frozen meat.

As is well known, the whole of this country is at the present time practically unsettled, and, in consequence of the difficulty in transport and expense in reaching the seaboard, settlement and production are practically at a standstill, to the manifest detriment of the colony as a whole.

The company propose expending a large amount of money in carrying out the works, which must necessarily increase the value of all Crown lands coming within the influence of the railway.

Some years ago, some of the persons interested in this proposal—who are wealthy and well known in the United Kingdom—opened the Great Australian Copper Mine at Cloncurry, and expended from £80,000 to £100,000 in connection therewith, in the firm anticipation that the Government would construct a railway to that important mineral district.

If all this is true, is it not the duty of the State to build this line? We want to do this work ourselves.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Yes, by borrowing.

MR. BROWNE: These schemes have been altered time after time. The first two of these schemes were declined by the then Minister. The only reason why these people are asking for these Bills is that they are getting sick of waiting, and they have to ask some private companies to come to their rescue. Then, in No. 19 of this correspondence, a lot of names are set out by Mr. Withers, and some of those gentlemen mentioned are very influential in the old country; but, unfortunately, most of these leading men are monopolists. There is one name that figures very prominently—Mr. Coats. I do not know whether that gentleman is the same Mr. Coats who figures in connection with the Chillagoe Company.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: They are quite distinct.

Mr. BROWNE: There is a gentleman of that name in New Zealand, who is causing a great deal of trouble about the Midland Railway there.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Some of those people are camping on the steps of Parliament House in Wellington.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: When they are not absentees.

Mr. BROWNE: That is another question. This man is an absentee so far as Queensland is concerned. But I am just pointing out that he is one of these people. In letter No. 19 Mr. Withers says—

I may mention that the Cloncurry Copper Company have spent about £90,000 in starting and working that mine, but were compelled to abandon it in consequence of the diversion of the railway to Croydon.

The object of the railway is to work the copper selections on the Leichhardt and Malbon Rivers, as well as the Cloncurry Copper Mine, the whole of which will form part of the assets of the railway company.

It is unnecessary for me to point out what the construction of this railway means for that part of the colony which is now, as regards population, almost uninhabited but which, by the advent of the railway, and the opening up of the mines, will make it one of the most populous, besides enabling the Government to lease, for pastoral purposes, millions of acres, from which not one sixpence of revenue is now obtained.

Where is the Secretary for Lands? He ought to be a great advocate for the State building this line if all these statements are true. There is one matter with which I have already dealt—that is, the nice little note from Mr. Withers getting the Commissioner for Railways to delete from the Bill the provision allowing them to have the wharves in perpetuity in fee-simple. Of course there are a lot of other matters in the correspondence that I might allude to, but I shall not refer to them now. But here is one of them—I should do it myself if I had a favourable Government to deal with—

MR. H. J. WITHERS TO THE CHIEF SECRETARY,
16 St. Helens Place,

London, E.C., 28th May, 1899.

MY DEAR SIR,—Permit me to congratulate you upon the strong support you have received throughout the colony at the recent elections, and I wish you a long and successful term of office.

Mr. McDONALD: That fetched the railway.

Mr. BROWNE: Mr. Withers knew that if that terrible Labour party had got into power his occupation would have been gone, so far as trying to get this railway through. In this letter he goes on to say—

I am returning to the colony, and hope to reach Brisbane about the 17th June.

I shall be glad if you can introduce the Cloncurry Bill early in the ensuing session.

The hon. gentleman has obeyed his instructions—

I have seen Mr. Coats and the various people interested in the undertaking. They are very anxious to be in a position to act in London before the end of the year. The Chillagoe people, after a good deal of trouble with various brokers, arranged for their debentures with Messrs. Coats, Son, and Company, who are really Mr. Coats's brokers, and who had previously agreed to bring out the Cloncurry scheme when legislative authority was obtained for the construction of the line. These gentlemen say that late in the year would be a most favourable time for dealing with a large concern like Cloncurry.

Trusting that you are well, with kind regards,

I am, etc.,

HENRY J. WITHERS.

They do not want to put it on the London market, but they are going to have it passed early in the session—which opened very late—so that they can deal with it in London late in the year; and if the repressive measures are adopted—the alteration of the Standing Orders, and that sort of thing—it is just possible that this gentleman's wishes and instructions will be carried out,

and they may be able to put it on the London market by the end of the year. I hope they will not, and if I can do anything to prevent it I certainly will. There are a few more extracts that the hon. member for Finders can use, and I have no doubt the Secretary for Railways will be delighted to hear them. But there is one here from the editor who wrote that lovely leading article which the hon. gentleman read, which is too good to miss quoting. It is telegram 42 on page 15 of the correspondence—

TELEGRAM FROM THE EDITOR OF THE "ADVOCATE" TO THE
HON. R. PHILP, M.L.A.

Cloncurry, 15th August, 1900.

McDonald's reply to wire from Labour party here asking him support railway or waive much as possible opposition reads: "As stated by me last election I would oppose construction Normanton-Cloncurry Railway by syndicate. I am still of that opinion and will use every effort to defeat same. Collect Townspeople very indignant and consider McDonald's policy is to keep his billet safe by serving Hughenden end of electorate which has majority votes. Indignation meeting probably be held also to agitate separation from Finders electorate and incorporation in Carpentaria as McDonald's obstinate refusal assist development this district clearly satisfies many his old most faithful supporters that he is determined to studiously neglect their interests."

R. H. PEARCE.

If I had known that a member of my party was going to get immortalised in official correspondence which is laid on the table of the House, and was going to get into *Hansard* in this way, I should certainly have sent one or two wires to the Normanton or Cloncurry people myself, so that I also should have appeared in this correspondence. Of course there is an answer from the Under Secretary to the Chief Secretary which appeared in the *Courier*, and there is the telegram from the chairman of the Progress Association and all the rest of it, but I have read quite sufficient and shall leave something for other hon. members to deal with. Now the facts that are shown on this map, the facts that are given by the Railway Department, and the evidence that these gentlemen have given us in these letters as to the wealth of the district show why they are so anxious for these Bills to be put to the front all the time, and why the Press is shrieking so much against the Labour party, or at least some portions of the Press—because I can produce some Government organs that are strongly opposed to the Government policy. The *Darling Downs Gazette*, one of the owners of which was the Government candidate for Toowoomba at the general election, has actually gone so far as to warn the leader of the Government that he is running counter to the wishes of the country, and is likely to do himself serious damage by trying to force this policy down the throats of the people of the colony. Other papers all over the country are speaking strongly against the policy of the Government. I will admit that a large majority of the people of Normanton and Cloncurry are in favour of the Bill, and I have no doubt the hon. member for Carpentaria will show that even Labour supporters are in favour of it. But what is the reason for that? The hon. member for Burke and I spoke to some of those people, and they told us "We have been here for a number of years, and have got our little bits of allotments; but we have been so crushed down by the monopoly of Burns, Philp, and the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company, that we are willing to support anything that will make a boom, and let us sell our allotments, and clear out, and let them have the whole place to themselves." Those people are desperate. They have been told time after time that no Government will build this railway. They have been told that on the platform; they have been told it in the Press, and they have been told it in this House, and so, in their desperation, they are willing to accept any-

thing. But, if the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government is prepared to say that because the majority of the people in a place want a certain thing they should get it, I suppose he will admit that there are not many people in Bowen who are opposed to the extension of the Bowen Railway, and, if that is a justification for building it, let him bring down the plans, and construct the railway straight off. If the hon. gentleman is going to take the

opinion of the people of a district [9 p.m.] on a matter of that sort, how will he act with regard to the report of the Royal Commission on certain railways submitted for their consideration? What will he do with regard to the line to St. George, seeing that the people of Yeulba are in favour of one route, and the people of Dalby are in favour of another? I say that if the country generally were polled to-morrow it would be seen that an overwhelming majority of the people of Queensland are against these proposals, and against this one in particular. I believe that 80 per cent. of the people would go strongly against the construction of this railway by a private syndicate, when they knew what the proposal really means. The Secretary for Railways referred to the Croydon Press, and stated that it indicated that the people in that locality had changed their opinion on this subject. I have been told that they have changed their opinions. Some persons have very industriously spun yarns to them, telling them that they are going to get this railway built for nothing, that this syndicate railway will give them cheap traffic and any amount of work; and I have been told that 80 per cent. of the people are now in favour of this proposal. I do not believe a word of it; and even if that were so that is no reason why I should change my opinion. Even if the whole of Croydon were against me, that would only show that I was not in touch with them on this question, and if they had not confidence in me I would not be fit to be their representative. I am prepared to go before them at any time, and express the opinions to which I have given utterance to-night, and then to accept their verdict on my action. When the apostles of private railways were passing round the electorate in my absence, and getting the then member for Carpentaria to go down to Croydon and hold a meeting there, which ended in a fiasco, I was told that I should keep quiet about these private railways, as they were the only thing that was likely to upset me. But when people tell me to avoid a thing that I am fighting for that is just the way to make me stick to it, and I told the people there, "You are changing your opinion on this matter; there are twelve months between now and the coming election; I shall be away doing my duty in Brisbane the biggest part of that time, and you will have plenty of opportunity to canvass the district while I am away, but I am coming back, and I will contest the next election, fighting as hard as ever against the construction of this railway by a private syndicate." When I went to Croydon in 1899 the same thing was said, and in the first speech I made there I declared my opposition to these private railways, and challenged them to fight the election on that ground. I said, "Understand, that in coming before you for election, I am coming as a straight-out opponent of private railways. I will assist to get a line built to Cloncurry, and to Georgetown, but I will not support either of those railways being built by private enterprise." And what was the result?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: There is no railway.

Mr. BROWNE: The result was a victory for me that I was as proud of as of any victory I have ever obtained. I was lying on a sick bed—the hon. member for Carpentaria was good

enough to come and see me at the time—and yet, notwithstanding all the influence there was against me, without me uttering a word, the people, knowing my principles, returned me by a majority of two to one. I should therefore be betraying my principles if I did not oppose these railways, more especially the one now before the House. When, on a former occasion, I stated that the Lawn Hill railway was the least harmful of any of the private railways introduced this session, some hon. member said, in an insinuating way, that I made that statement because that line was in the Gulf country. But it was for no such reason. I, as a resident of the Gulf country for many years, as a member of the mining community who knows what the people have had to struggle against, and not as one professing to advocate their wants, knowing nothing about them, say that it is my belief that if this particular railway from Normanton to Cloncurry is built by a private syndicate it will be one of the greatest curses ever known in that district. It will not only affect that part of the country, it will affect the people of Queensland, and from a federal point of view it will affect the whole of Australia, and for that reason, whatever may be the result, I am going to do my best to defeat this Bill, and I shall certainly vote against its second reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): The leader of the Opposition, as usual, has made a very interesting speech, and a very amusing speech. Of course he knows that I differ from him on many matters, especially on the construction of this railway from Normanton to Cloncurry. To go back to a little ancient history, I may remind hon. members that in the year 1884 my hon. friend, the Chief Secretary, passed a Loan Bill for £10,000,000, and in that Loan Bill was included a sum of £500,000 to build a line from Normanton to Cloncurry. That was sixteen years ago, and since then there has been no party sitting on these benches who have been able to ask the House to pass the plans and specifications for that railway.

Mr. GIVENS: Because the money was locked up in the Queensland National Bank.

The PREMIER: I remember that at one time, long before that money went to the Queensland National Bank, when I was sitting on the other side, the late Mr. Macrossan, I think, one of the members for Townsville, suggested that instead of going on with the Cloncurry railway a line should be built to Croydon, because at that time there were about 5,000 people at Croydon, and I do not think there were 500 at Cloncurry. The gentlemen then sitting on this side of the House, after a little opposition, agreed to bring in plans and specifications for the Croydon railway, and it was built. The then member for Carpentaria, Mr. Palmer, objected to it, because he thought the Cloncurry line was really more important.

Mr. McDONALD: Did he object to the Croydon line?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. McDONALD: Can you tell me where that is to be found in *Hansard*, because I have been looking for it and cannot find it?

The PREMIER: I think he objected to it. At all events he was always a strong advocate of the Cloncurry railway. At that time there was an idea that the white ants were so bad at Normanton that they would eat anything in the shape of wood, and that it was no use laying the line with wood sleepers, but that steel sleepers must be used. It was agreed to lay forty miles with steel sleepers, and the necessary quantity were imported for that distance on the Cloncurry line, but were afterwards used on the Croydon railway. At that time the Cloncurry Copper Company were trying to make their mines pay, and if

they had succeeded there would have been some probability of some Government going on with that railway; but I am sorry to say that they did not succeed—I suppose mostly owing to the want of railway facilities. Some will say because the mines were not so good as they expected. I think I have heard some hon. member say that if the mines had been anything like as good as they were expected to be, they might have been working to-day. However, that company failed in their operations, and I think the pre-ent owners of the freeholds—I think about 2,000 acres—I understand they are among the syndicate who want to build the railway. They have a certain amount of money invested there, and they are prepared to invest more, because they think with railway communication they will be able to make the lines pay. They have approached the Government several times to try and get the Government to make the line.

Mr. KIDSTON: Presumably they know something about it.

The PREMIER: They thought they did before when they invested money in it.

Mr. DAWSON: Did not the price of copper fall in the meantime?

The PREMIER: Copper is always falling and rising. It is a good price at present, and I hope it will continue good. The hon. member for Croydon blames the Government for not building the line. When I was in the House five years ago as Minister for Railways I brought down fourteen railways altogether, and among the number were four Northern railways. One of those four this House would not pass. The other three they did pass, and of those three lines only one succeeded in passing the other House.

Mr. MAXWELL: Then they talk about the Northern influence in the Cabinet.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That was five years ago.

The PREMIER: If a line like the line from Mareeba to Atherton, and a line from Croydon to Georgetown would not be passed, what possible chance was there of getting a line from Normanston to Cloncurry through—a line that would cost something like £750,000.

Mr. BROWNE: That is higher than the estimate of fourteen years ago.

The PREMIER: Steel rails are much higher now than they were then. But even supposing it would only cost £500,000, does the hon. member for Croydon, in the innocence of his heart, believe that line would get through both Houses?

Mr. BROWNE: You would not want to put it through all at once. You build every line of any length in sections.

The PREMIER: If we started building that line it would be of very little use until it got to the mineral country.

Mr. BROWNE: You would not want the plans of the whole of the line passed at once.

The PREMIER: No; but you would be committing the country to an expenditure of something like £500,000 or £600,000.

Mr. KIDSTON: The Central Railway only pays when it gets to the good country.

The PREMIER: That is a different thing altogether. Either the Government must build this line, or we must allow somebody else to build it for us. I say that we are not justified in allowing that great district to lie idle as it is now. It was discovered thirty-three years ago, and there was more settlement there twenty-five years ago than there is now; and without railway communication that country is likely to lie as it is for the next twenty-five years.

Mr. KIDSTON: Does not that show that the Government should build the line?

The PREMIER: The demands for railway communication in different parts of the colony

are so great that it is impossible for any Government to borrow all the money required to meet those demands.

Mr. DAWSON: What about reasonable demands?

The PREMIER: I suppose they all think their demands are reasonable. So far as I know the syndicate that want to build this line are in a position to build it. I understand that they are making £750,000 a year, and one year's income would build the line. I understand that they are the largest owners of the freeholds, and most people that have spent a certain amount are prepared to spend a little more to see if they can get their money back. They have some of the copper mines—they have not got all the copper mines—at Cloncurry, and the building of this line will probably cause the opening up of a number of other copper mines. Everyone admits that the country is waste at present. It is as big a white elephant to Queensland as the Northern Territory is to South Australia.

Mr. KIDSTON: That was true of our Western country thirty years ago.

The PREMIER: Perhaps it was, but at that time we had no railways built in the colony at all.

Mr. KIDSTON: The railways were built to prevent that country from remaining waste.

The PREMIER: I agree with the hon. member for Croydon that if the company are allowed to go beyond Cloncurry they will be competing with the Northern line, but I think 250 miles is the farthest they can go.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: They can go seventy or eighty miles beyond. Look at the map?

The PREMIER: I shall object to them going beyond Cloncurry.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Will you agree to an amendment to that effect?

The PREMIER: Yes. I will move one myself, providing that the line shall not go further south than Cloncurry. I think that if it goes further south it will come into competition with the Northern Railway.

Mr. GIVENS: Won't it be in competition with the Northern line even if it only goes to Cloncurry?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: If you extend the Northern line to Richmond, it will.

The PREMIER: I do not think the people of Cloncurry should be compelled to send their stuff over 500 miles of railway instead of 250 miles; and I think the Gulf trade should go to the Gulf ports. Now, as to these wharves at Normanston. The hon. member for Croydon might have been a little more candid. He knows very well that there is plenty of wharfage there, and a great deal more than there is in the Brisbane River. There are hundreds of acres there.

Mr. BROWNE: At Port Norman?

The PREMIER: I have been at Port Norman; and I think between Port Norman and Karumba you can get deep water all the way.

Mr. McDONALD: A big spring tide covers the whole country.

Mr. DAWSON: A good healthy sneeze blows all the water out of the harbour.

The PREMIER: I do not think the member for Charters Towers knows much about it. At all events, if there is likely to be a monopoly by the granting of ten acres for wharfage purposes, the company ought to be prepared to sell that wharfage when they sell the railway to the Government. Personally, I do not think that ten acres will exhaust all the wharfage accommodation; but to remove any doubt on that point they should be compelled to sell both their railway and their wharf too; and I have no doubt they will be able to get wharfage further down. I think something was said about a monopoly

in freezing works. Well, there are meat-works at Normanton now; and, in fact, anyone can go there and establish freezing works without the permission of the Government, and I have no doubt that others will start similar works. There was another utterance of the hon. gentleman's which I do not think he was justified in making. He talked about the monopoly of Burns, Philp, and Co. and the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company. As a matter of fact, the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company did not want a contract at all, but they were quite prepared to run steamers whenever freight offered. But the people of the district wanted a steamer to run there regularly, while there was not sufficient business doing to keep two lines of steamers going. At one time there were two lines of steamers running to Normanton—Howard Smith and Co. used to run there. At all events, the member for Croydon has no right to blame the Government for creating a monopoly which really he himself created by advocating so strongly the existing mail service.

Mr. BROWNE: He had to. The company beat the Government.

The PREMIER: The company did not want to go there regularly. They said they could do better by running a steamer to Normanton whenever sufficient inducement in the way of cargo offered; but the member for Croydon said, "No, we must have a regular mail service to the Gulf ports." They have got it, and now the hon. member has the audacity to say that that is a monopoly.

Mr. BROWNE: It is a monopoly because no one else could tender while they held the rights to the port. They had all the lighters there.

Mr. FORSYTH: Other people have lighters there.

The PREMIER: At Townsville there are any number of lighters, and the same state of affairs could no doubt be brought about at Normanton.

Mr. McDONALD: Everyone has to be registered under the B.P. Act there.

The PREMIER: All I can say is that I am very sorry I do not belong to Burns, Philp, and Co. now, and I know that their employees, when they leave them, are very glad to get back again to their old employment. The hon. gentleman talks about the monopoly of Burns, Philp, and Co., but a railway of this description will free the Gulf from any monopoly if it exists. Apparently there is not enough business there for more than one firm to make a living, and I understand that for some time past they have made a very poor living there. If there was more business, there would be more opposition.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Are you speaking in their interests?

The PREMIER: If I were speaking in their interests I would not urge this matter, but I believe by the construction of this line more money will be brought to the district, and certainly there will be more competition. There is no firm that I know of in Queensland that has any monopoly of trade. Anybody, as the hon. member knows quite well, can put up a little bit of a shop, and if there is sufficient business he can compete with any other firm. I think it is very unfair to say that one firm and one steamship company has a monopoly of the trade of Normanton at the present time. It is a very poor trade indeed that will only keep one firm and one steamship company going. If this line is constructed, I have no doubt that it will bring to the district a great many people, and that other steamship companies and other firms will obtain a footing.

Mr. LEAHY: They object to competition opposite.

The PREMIER: Apparently they do. The hon. member for Croydon also said that this was the biggest thing ever attempted in Australia. Well, I was in the House in 1891, though I was not a Minister, when a Bill was passed authorising the Government of the day to treat with syndicates to build railways all over Queensland, and give them grants of land at the same time.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is on the statute-book now.

The PREMIER: Yes, that is the law of the country to the present day. At that time, a member of the House—Mr. Hume Black—was sent home specially to induce people to come out here and build those railways.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No; to get him out of the way.

Mr. McDONALD: He was not sent home for the purpose you say.

The PREMIER: I was a member of the House at the time, and I understood that was his mission. He told me himself that he had provided himself with no end of maps, coloured in red, blue, and green, showing what land was available, and he had instructions to try and get satisfactory offers to build railways all over the colony. Instead of the 600 miles mentioned by the hon. member, he had authority to negotiate for the construction of over 1,000 miles of railway in North Queensland.

Mr. REID: The Labour party came along in 1893.

The PREMIER: It did not make any odds whether they came along or not. The fact remains that no one was found willing to build those lines.

Mr. McDONALD: Why?

The PREMIER: Because the people at home thought it was not worth their while.

Mr. FISHER: The Government have built one of them since.

The PREMIER: The Government have built two of them since. They have built the line from Hughenden to Winton, and from Charleville to Cunnamulla. The line from Hughenden to Winton pays, but I do not think that from Charleville to Cunnamulla does.

Mr. FISHER: If the Government can build those lines they can build others.

The PREMIER: When I have finished the hon. member for Gympie can speak. There is one thing I should like to mention here. The hon. member for Cairns is continually interjecting about the Gympie Gold Field, and on two occasions he has said that the bulk of the calls are paid by the working miners. Apparently he knows more about the field than the member for Gympie does. I believe that hon. member knows differently, and if he does he ought to get up in this House and say so. I know people are getting rather disgusted that the hon. member for Cairns should be continually talking about the Gympie field in that way.

Mr. GIVENS: Take Gympie for the last twenty years, and you will find that I am right.

The PREMIER: Twenty years ago the hon. member was not here, and knew nothing about Gympie.

Mr. FISHER: It is a well-conducted goldfield, anyhow.

Mr. DAWSON: I know it does not pay dividends.

The PREMIER: I know some gentlemen who are paying calls in connection with mining properties on that field, and they would be glad to hand their shares over to some of the working miners.

Mr. FISHER: Nearly every working miner pays calls.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition has said a great deal about the federal line. Well, I think if there is going to be a big federal line, it will not go to Normanton at all. If he

looks at the map he will find that the federal line, when it comes, will be from Hughenden out West to the Victoria River, where there is a splendid harbour already, with 30 feet of water. That will be the nearest port to England. The nearest port will be either the Victoria River or Port Darwin, and certainly not Normanton, which is two days' steam down the Gulf. I hope the member for Croydon does not think that he will ever make Normanton the last port of call for English mail steamers, because it will never be. I do not think I need reiterate all the arguments that have been used for and against this railway, but, certainly, in justice to the people living in that district, and in justice to the colony, it ought to be built.

Mr. BROWNE: By the Government.

The PREMIER: I do not think that any Government for some time to come would have the hardihood to table the plans of the Normanton-Cloncurry line. There will have to be more inducements than exist at present. The district will have to return another member to advocate it, because the present member will not do so, nor will the member for Enoggera, who has been there, advocate it. He thinks the line should go from Hughenden to Cloncurry.

Mr. REID: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He would compel the people of Cloncurry to send their goods 560 miles as against 250 miles to Normanton. I say that would be a great injustice.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Then the hon. gentleman does not agree with his henchman, the hon. member for Flinders.

Mr. REID: Each one is looking after his own interests.

The PREMIER: It is my duty to look after the interests of the whole colony, [9.30 p.m.] and I do not think the colony would be justified, at the present time, in borrowing money to build that line, nor do I see much hope of its doing it for some time to come.

Mr. KIDSTON: That is very much a matter of opinion.

The PREMIER: It might be, but I feel certain that the hon. member for Rockhampton would not advocate it, until he has had four or five more railways in his own district.

Mr. KIDSTON: I would be prepared to vote the money to-morrow.

The PREMIER: The hon. member would be prepared to vote for the Gladstone-Rockhampton extension; he would be prepared to vote for the Dartmouth extension, and for all the money we would be prepared to spend in the Central district. I want to see the whole of the colony getting some advantage from our railway construction. I want to see three or four more lines for Northern Queensland, for Central Queensland, and for Southern Queensland, if we had more money. But if we want to spend the whole of the loan money in Central Queensland, it will mean that no money at all will be spent in Northern Queensland. That is what it will mean. I admit that this line is different from the other lines.

Mr. BROWNE: The Secretary for Railways said it was not.

The PREMIER: The Burketown line does not, of course, enter into competition with any line we have at the present time. The hon. member for Croydon is prepared to let those people build a tramway to carry their own goods, but not to carry passengers, or the goods of other people. That is what we split on there. The Callide line does not enter into competition with our existing lines, nor does the Glassford Creek line.

Mr. KIDSTON: And is never likely to.

The PREMIER: The Mount Garnet line does not enter into competition either, but this Cloncurry line would, to a certain extent, enter into competition with our Government railway system.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why not extend the line out to Richmond?

The PREMIER: The line is very likely going to Richmond, and it should go south-west from there. But a line should go from Cloncurry to Normanton, and I think we should accept this offer. It is a good offer, and I do not think we shall get it repeated again.

Mr. REID: A good job for Queensland too.

The PREMIER: These people interested in the copper mines have been trying for a long time past to induce the Government to build the line, and now they say, "If the Government will not build it, we will build it ourselves."

Mr. GIVENS: It is not the copper mines people, but the Colonial Railway Company that is going to build the line.

The PREMIER: I understand that the people who own these mines are the people most interested in making this offer.

Mr. KIDSTON: It is a big "combine."

The PREMIER: Very likely, but it will be a splendid thing, I think, for this colony if we can get those people to put a million of money into this railway. They will spend more than £100,000 on the mines, and perhaps they may spend £70,000 on a meatworks. That does not count, however, for if they will not do that someone else will. I believe they will have to spend £1,000,000 in properly developing those mines. If they spend £2,000,000 in making the line and the mines pay it will be a splendid thing for North Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: We will have the people spending the money on the railways interested in making the mines pay, and that is the biggest point about these proposals. If the Government built the railway they could not go and take up copper mines and work them. It would not pay them to do it. But if these people put money into this railway, they will put more into the mines to make them pay.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And the mines would make a State railway pay.

The PREMIER: That is not our experience in this colony at the present time. We have already two railways to copper districts which do not pay. One to the Peak Downs copper district.

Mr. KERR: You know very well that that mine had closed when you built the line.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

The PREMIER: I say that the only inducement there was for building a line to Mount Perry was that there was a copper mine at Mount Perry.

Mr. RYLAND: It was to sell a copper mine.

The PREMIER: When I have finished the hon. member for Gympie, who is a splendid speaker, may get up and entertain the House. I say that was the only inducement to build that line. I know the Peak Downs mine was working very profitably a little over twenty years ago. I was at Broadsound then, and used to see the copper coming in; but I do not think anyone has worked the mine since the railway went there. If you look up the debates in this House you will see that that railway was built principally to revive the copper-mining industry.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: The price went down.

The PREMIER: Copper is worth now £74 or £75 a ton, and if those mines were good they would be working to-day. Anyone who takes an interest in mining will know that £7,000 or

£8,000 was spent in the last twelve months pumping the big mine dry, and yet they have given it up; and the reason is that it does not pay to work it. That might be the case with the Cloncurry Railway, the Mount Garnet, Callide Creek, or Glassford Creek railways, and I say that no Government would be justified in going into speculative lines like that. That is my contention. I would like to see any inducement for the Government to build the Cloncurry line, but I fail to see any at the present time. But I think it will pay the country, and the people in the country, if we hand it over to a syndicate to build a line, and give facilities to the people now living in the district, and likely to live in it, to get their produce to market, and try and make the country habitable, and much more prosperous than it is now. I am sorry to say that I do not think any one is prospering on Cloncurry at the present time. There are men in this town now who were living there for thirty-five years, and they have come down here, and I do not think they have a shilling in their pockets.

Mr. McDONALD: That had nothing to do with Cloncurry itself.

The PREMIER: If the Cloncurry railway was built they would all have an opportunity of making a living.

Mr. McDONALD: One you refer to was many miles from Cloncurry more south towards Hughenden.

The PREMIER: The gentleman I refer to lived at Cloncurry for many years.

Mr. McDONALD: I know who you are referring to.

The PREMIER: If this railway had been built those gentlemen would not be here to-day.

Mr. KIDSTON: It will undoubtedly help to make all that district pay.

The PREMIER: I am quite certain of it, and I cannot understand anyone really interested in the colony refusing to have this line built.

Mr. KIDSTON: We want to see it built.

The PREMIER: I have shown conclusively, I think, that there is not the slightest chance of the line being built by the Government at the present time, and yet none of these copper and silver shows can be made to pay without railway communication. The Government would not be justified in entering into such speculative lines of railway, and this is a very large sum to spend—between £500,000 and £750,000—to see whether those mines will pay. Then we know that the duration of copper lodes, especially in Queensland, has not been very lasting.

Mr. McDONALD: Don't decry the industry until it gets a start.

The PREMIER: I am not going to decry the industry, but I want to put the main facts before the Assembly.

Mr. JENKINSON: They have never had a thorough trial.

The PREMIER: They have never had a thorough trial, and they never can have a trial without railway communication. But are we justified in building that railway in order to give the mines a trial? I say we are not, and we are not justified in building a line only to prospect any part of the country. The country must show some development before the Government is justified in building a railway to it.

Mr. BELL: Besides there are pastoral districts that have better claims.

The PREMIER: There are other parts, as the hon. member says, that have better claims. There is the Western country—

Mr. DAWSON: Yeulba.

The PREMIER: Of course there is the St. George country, and the country west of Charleville to Thargomindah has a better claim to railway communication, as a pastoral country, than

the Cloncurry country. The country between Charleville and Thargomindah will carry sheep, but the country between Normanton and Cloncurry is not sheep country. There is one station there with a few sheep.

Mr. McDONALD: What about Clonagh?

The PREMIER: This line does not go through Clonagh. Within fifty or sixty miles of Cloncurry there is good sheep country, but between Normanton and Cloncurry, I do not think there is any good sheep country. Of course the hon. member for Gregory, who knows everything about this country, thinks this line is going further, but I shall oppose this line going beyond Cloncurry, otherwise it will come in competition with the Northern Railway. Now, personally, I have no interest in that part of the country at all. I have been there, and I know people there, and I would like to see it get a start, but it will never get a start without railway communication. I do not think Croydon would be working to-day if the railway had not gone there. It was very dead for a long time before then.

Mr. KERR: It had better times long before the railway went there.

The PREMIER: They were spending a lot of foreign money before the railway went there. That railway has been the means of making Croydon a permanent place. If the railway had not gone there it would have languished like the Hodgkinson. The Hodgkinson had a better show than Croydon, but no railway went there and it languished. Croydon would have been abandoned to a certain extent had not that line been built. Take the Etheridge—that was a flourishing place before Croydon was discovered, but it is not now.

Mr. DAWSON: Do you want a private railway there?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: If you cannot get a public one.

Mr. DAWSON: Why cannot you get a public one?

The PREMIER: We ought to build the line to Georgetown, and I hope we shall be able to submit plans for the construction of part of it. There are so many places that require railways that we are not justified in building lines of a speculative character. Then we can get this Cloncurry line built, and surely these districts are entitled to some consideration at the hands of this House. The people there naturally say, if you are not prepared to build this line, let someone else do it. I say we should not take up a dog-in-the-manger position, and say we cannot build this line ourselves, and we will not let anyone else do it. I do not share in the feelings of the hon. member for Croydon about a syndicate getting there and absorbing the whole of the country. Unless the country prospers it will never pay the syndicate. They have more interest in promoting its prosperity even than the Government have.

Mr. BROWNE: That is against the experience of those syndicates.

The PREMIER: We have only to take America for an instance. That is the most flourishing country in the world, and there are no Government railways there—they are all private railways. Then take Great Britain and Ireland. Are they not all private railways there? Are there any more flourishing countries than Great Britain and Ireland?

Mr. REID: Yes.

The PREMIER: Where?

Mr. REID: Queensland.

The PREMIER: Look at Canada. To get 700 or 800 miles of railway built they gave millions of acres of land, and they seem quite satisfied with their bargain. That is a most flourishing State. I was only reading the other day the Treasurer's Statement, and I would like

to be in his position. He has a surplus of 4,000,000 dollars in one year. There they have not built all the railways; they have let someone else run the risk.

Mr. BROWNE: They have good assets.

The PREMIER: They have wonderful assets—an enormous acreage of land; but there they thought it was too big a thing, and perhaps justly, for the Government to undertake the building of all the railways that were required. And in America, where the people are supposed to be the cutest people on the face of the earth, they invited private enterprise to build their railways for them. That has not retarded the progress of the country. There is no country which has been populated so quickly and no country which is so wealthy as America is.

Mr. KIDSTON: And no country where a free people has less political power.

The PREMIER: Is that the fault of the private railways? I do not think so. It is the fault of their elections system; it is the presidential election every four years that is the trouble. I want to see Queensland going ahead faster than we are doing at the present time. I think we can do a great deal better than we are doing. We want to see the country developed, and that can only be done by railway communication; and so far as travelling is concerned it does not make a bit of difference whether the railways are public or private. One thing is certain, that if this syndicate do not treat the people well, or if they in any way try to strangle industries in that district, their line will never pay. It will be much more to their interest than anyone else to give all facilities and make carriage as cheap as possible, if they want their line to return any interest at all. We know that in America the rate of freight is cheaper than in any other country in the world.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is owing to competition.

The PREMIER: And then I think the Northern Railway from Townsville will be a wholesome check on this Cloncurry line. In fact, I think we want to insist that this company shall have a minimum as well as a maximum rate, because they may undercut Government rates. It may be argued by the other side that it is a good thing to have competition, but why should not the people have the benefit of the capital they have invested? I think there is something in it. We have a large sum of money invested in our Northern Railway, and we should protect it. I can see only good in this proposal; I can see no injury to any one. At the present time there are scarcely any people up there worth speaking about.

Mr. REID: Everybody there will want to come down here.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: They won't want to if this line is built.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member had been living up there for twenty or thirty years he would want to come here, too.

Mr. REID: If I had been up there twenty or thirty years I might probably be in favour of this line.

The PREMIER: Even the member for the district would probably be in favour of this line if he had been up there all that time. However, I do not hope to convince him. I believe he will stick to his principles. I admire a man who sticks to his principles. I do not hope to convince hon. members on that side. They cannot accept this proposal because it is against the platform they have signed.

Mr. BROWNE: That applies to your own side, too.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. I think every member on this side is free to vote as he chooses.

Mr. DAWSON: You cannot name anybody on this side.

Mr. LEAHY: Who is free?

The PREMIER: Hon. members on this side want to see the country prosper. They want to see it go ahead. They want to make work even for miners; they want to make work for labourers. They want to make work for men engaged on the railway; and they want to see a permanent population settled there, if possible. And the only way to settle a permanent population there is by building this railway.

Mr. CURTIS (Rockhampton): I think a very strong case has been made out in favour of the construction of this railway, and more especially, after hearing the effective speech of the Premier, I intend to vote for the second reading of this Bill. Some years ago I expressed myself as being in favour of private enterprise in connection with the railways here, and subject to the reasonable amendments which may be found necessary being made, I shall, as I say, vote for the second reading. I am also guided to a great extent by what the Commissioner for Railways has said about the railway in his report. I do not look upon him as infallible, but I think his opinion is entitled to a large amount of consideration, seeing that he cannot possibly have any particular or direct interest in the matter. The Commissioner for Railways, in his letter dated 30th October, states—

That the only close settlement that can possibly take place is that which may result from the development of the mines at the Cloncurry end of the line; and if the anticipations of the promoters of the railway should be realised a large working population will be located there.

That is a distinct expression of opinion from the Commissioner for Railways. Later on, he says—

The only concessions sought by the company are those contained in the 25th clause, and, considering the length of line proposed to be built, I do not think their demands at all excessive.

It will be observed that certain spur tramlines are provided for, some of which are shown in the schedule. These, as a matter of course, will be absolutely necessary to feed the main line from the different mines the railway is intended to serve.

The rights of the Government, it will be seen, are carefully preserved in clauses 29 to 32, both inclusive, and the railway is to be constructed throughout of equal strength to the ordinary Government railways, and upon the same gauge.

Provision has been made for the purchase of the line from Normanton to Cloncurry at any time after the expiration of fifty years from date of completion, at its then value, which, however, shall not exceed the actual cost of construction, while the section between Normanton and Port Norman may be purchased at any time after construction by payment of its ascertained value, which shall not exceed the actual cost of building it.

As the Normanton-Cloncurry Railway has, to my knowledge, been projected by successive administrations during the last fifteen or sixteen years without any nearer prospect of its being built from public funds, I strongly recommend the Bill, which I have had prepared in conjunction with the Parliamentary Draftsman, to the favourable consideration of the Government and Parliament.

I am influenced to a very considerable extent by what the Commissioner for Railways has here stated. I understand that one of the reasons why the Labour party oppose the construction of these lines by private enterprise is that there have been abuses in this connection in America; and they think these abuses might crop up in this colony. But I will say that the benefits conferred by these private railways in America greatly outweigh any disadvantages that may have been suffered there. Enormous grants of land were given to the companies in America, and they were permitted to do as they liked with regard to rates. They were also permitted to discriminate between different places, different persons, and the different articles of produce. But here we are adopting safeguards that the United

States never adopted. We are restricting this company with regard to rates, and we reserve to ourselves the right to build a parallel line. We are only giving a lease for a number of years—we are not giving a grant in perpetuity. We shall not run any risk as was run in America, and we shall not experience the same troubles that were experienced there. Twenty years ago the Canadian Government offered a very great amount of land to try and induce private companies to construct their railways. We know of a number of wealthy people in the old country who are prepared to take the risk in the construction of these lines, which are to develop our mines. I have looked through the names of the gentlemen who are associated with the matter, and in addition to the name of Mr. Coats I find the names of many wealthy men. Some of these gentlemen could build this line themselves without any trouble. I think we would be acting unwisely if we put any obstacle in the way of this project. The Government are not likely to build this line, because they have no money for the work. So, if this line is not built by private enterprise, all the mineral resources in this district will remain dormant. I see that a petition has been signed by a number of people praying for the construction of this line.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Signed by how many?

MR. CURTIS: I don't know how many; but there are a large number of names attached to it, and amongst them I see the names of labourers, shearers, and station-managers. I presume that petition is a representative one. I contend that the wishes of the people in this district should be particularly considered. Many of the people in the district concerned are living under great disabilities. They have no access to any port, and I think they will welcome the construction of this line, whether by the Government or by private enterprise. Every consideration should

be given to the wishes of those
[10 p.m.] people, as they are the people who are primarily interested in the matter. I am satisfied from what I have read lately about the enormous rates they are charged for the transport of goods in that district—£15 and £16 a ton—

MR. FORSYTH: £18 a ton now.

MR. CURTIS: I am satisfied that these people would be prepared to pay five times the ordinary railway rates if they could only get the railway, so that too much should not be made of the fact that the Bill proposes to enable the company to charge 50 per cent. more than the present railway rates, which, after all, is a mere bagatelle in comparison with the enormous rates they are paying at the present time. The acceptance of these proposals means the development of these mines and the employment of several thousands of men, I believe, and the general progress and development of the district, and must, necessarily, be of great benefit to the colony at large. The refusal of these proposals, on the other hand, will simply mean that there will be no development, and the district will remain stagnating.

MR. HARDACRE: What about the traffic on the Central Railway?

MR. CURTIS: I heard what was said by the leader of the Opposition with regard to the danger of the projected tramlines coming so far south as to interfere with the trade on the Northern and Central railways. So far as the Central Railway is concerned, I attach no importance to that at all. It is possible that they might be brought far enough south to injure the traffic on the Northern Railway, but they certainly could do no harm to the Central line.

But the Premier has to-night given us a distinct pledge that he himself will bring forward an amendment so that the company will not be permitted to bring their line further south than Cloncurry, and that should prove satisfactory to hon. members. Supposing the Government were to build this line themselves, what about the development of the mines? They would be entirely at the mercy of the owners of the mines for traffic.

MR. DAWSON: No.

MR. CURTIS: They would, unless the Government were prepared to develop the mines themselves, and that would not be a legitimate undertaking for any Government. I am drawn irresistibly to the conclusion that we shall be acting wisely in agreeing to this Bill, with reasonable amendments, so that the line can be built.

MR. DAWSON: Do you think the mines are any good?

MR. CURTIS: There is every reason to suppose they are, but we all know there is a great deal of risk in mining, and certainly it would not be a legitimate undertaking for a Government to build the line and then leave it to the owners of the mines to make the traffic for the line. They might not do it, and in that case we should be left with another white elephant on our hands like the Mount Perry Railway. If private enterprise is not prepared to build this line, it will never be built—I feel convinced of that. Where is the money to come from? I am satisfied that the Government are not in the possession of the money at the present moment, and they are not likely to get it to build this and all the other lines that are required at the present time.

MR. DAWSON: Is their reputation so bad that they cannot borrow it?

MR. CURTIS: We are more heavily indebted per head of population than any other people on the face of the earth, and I do not wonder at the London financiers asking themselves whether it is desirable to lend any more money to the colony of Queensland at the present time. They do not take into consideration, I suppose, the vast resources of the colony. What they look at is the debt *per capita*, and they base their calculations upon that, and, until the population becomes much larger than it is, so as to bring down the amount of debt per head, we shall find ourselves unable to borrow money on the London market, or any other market, in the future as easily as we have done. Another point I wish to direct attention to is this: There is no doubt we derive an immense amount of indirect advantage from our railways. They have opened up the country to settlement and enterprise, and they have greatly enhanced the value of the public estate; but we have made a very large direct loss by reason of them. I am not quite sure about the amount, but I think the annual loss is something like £300,000, and, when moving the second reading of the Callide Railway Bill, the Secretary for Railways gave some figures to show that the total loss was a very large sum. Well, if other people are willing to risk their money in building these lines, we shall by that means reap all the direct benefit which at present accrues from the construction of railways in the development of the country and in the enhanced value of the public estate, without incurring the indirect loss on the railways. I think that is a very important matter.

MR. DAWSON: Yes, it is very important. It is delicious. What about our credit? "Ye were strangers, and we took you in."

MR. CURTIS: An article appeared in the *North American Review* of December last—"The

Highways of the People," by Hugh M. Lusk, and, as it is of comparatively recent date, I shall read a few short extracts from it—

As commerce is the essential condition of national wealth, so it may be said, with equal truth, that effective transportation is the essential condition of successful commerce. No amount of patient industry on the part of a people can avail to make the community wealthy, except under conditions that render commerce safe and easy. No amount of natural riches in a country has ever availed to make its commerce great, or its industries widely profitable to its inhabitants, without the assistance of some system of transportation generally available to its people. The history of the United States, compared with that of Russia or of China during the past century, serves to illustrate the extent to which this is true.

Then the writer speaks of the slow progress made in China and Russia, and goes on to say—

While in the United States the increase of commerce and the accumulation of wealth have exceeded anything of which the world has elsewhere had any experience. This has not been due to greater natural riches of soil or climate in the United States, because there is no evidence that, in either respect, this country has any advantage over China, or much, if any, over the greater part of inhabited Russia.

The secret of the startling contrast between these countries, in their development and in the increase of their wealth during the past century, is to be found in their respective facilities for transportation.

America has owed her phenomenal progress, and the unprecedented increase of her wealth as a country, to her system of railroad transportation. Without this the country could not have been occupied; her great inland centres of commerce and manufacture could not have been created; without it, in a word, the end of the century would have found her still a nation of the second rank, in population and in wealth.

That is valuable testimony to the great benefits that any country—and especially a country like this—will derive from effective means of transport, and, unless we allow private enterprise to come in and construct railways under reasonable conditions, the outlying districts of the colony and the country generally will languish to a very great extent. It is evident that our borrowing powers are very limited. I do not believe for one moment that they are exhausted, but they are certainly limited. We had evidence of that quite recently, and I say that should be a very strong reason why we should hold out reasonable inducements to private enterprise to come in and construct railways that are absolutely necessary. There can be no doubt as to the genuineness of the proposal; anybody who looks over the names of these people must be convinced about that. I do not think the persons will require to float a company in London in order to raise money for the construction of the railway; they are too well off; they have the necessary means among themselves. And what is the concession proposed to be granted to the company? It is not a very large one; we simply give them the right to put the line down. There is a proposal to give them a grant of 10,000 acres of land in fee-simple. What is 10,000 acres of land? Why, in the United States of America they gave away 100,000,000 acres of land for the construction of railways, and compared with that, 10,000 acres are a mere bagatelle. Then, for the lease of 5,000 acres they have to pay a rental of £1 per acre per annum. That will be £5,000. Again, with regard to the objection taken about the wharfage site, the Premier stated in the course of his speech that he thought we might insist upon the company agreeing to sell that at the end of the term as well as the railway itself. The Government further reserve to themselves the right to add to or extend the line, and they also reserve to themselves running powers over the railway. We have the assurance of the Premier that he himself would be favourable to certain limitations being placed on the further ex-

tensions of the line by the company from Cloncurry, so that they should not come into competition with existing Government railways. The railways in America became the absolute property of the companies, but there will be no absolute property in this as far as the company is concerned. It will be virtually in the nature of a lease. We practically say to these people, "You can spend your money on the construction of this line, and we will give you a lease of it for fifty years." We run no risk whatever; they take the risk of spending a vast sum of money on the construction of the railway. I consider that we stand on velvet in the matter, for they take all the risk of spending their money in building the railway and developing those mines. It is a splendid offer as far as we are concerned, and we should not hesitate one moment in accepting it. There is no concession in perpetuity given to the company, and when they build the line we are not bound to take it over unless we like. It seems to me that the colony is safeguarded in every way. I should like to repeat that we are safeguarding ourselves in every possible way, and I am perfectly certain that if the United States and Canada had done the same we should not have heard nearly so much as we have done about the abuses in connection with the management of the railways in those countries.

Mr. STEWART: They have just the very same safeguards.

Mr. CURTIS: I beg the hon. member's pardon. I looked up another article on this subject in the "Fortnightly Review," but as it is about twenty years old I did not make use of it. From that article, I find that the trouble there was that there was no restriction placed on the companies with regard to the rates they might charge, but that they could charge what they liked, and that they could discriminate between different towns and different seaports. They had the power to make or mar a community, and the State had no right to take over the line at any time. I can assure the hon. member for North Rockhampton that he is entirely wrong on that matter, for I have taken the trouble to look it up. The cause of the trouble was what I have mentioned; but we are safeguarding ourselves in that particular. If hon. members who are opposing this measure think we are not sufficiently safeguarded by the Bill, let them try to effect reasonable amendments when we go into committee.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What chance?

Mr. CURTIS: Why, the Premier has already stated that he is willing to assent to a very important amendment to remedy the danger pointed out by the leader of the Opposition. I know that we have to guard against a monopoly, and I say that we have safeguarded ourselves in that respect; but if we have not done so sufficiently we can, perhaps, go a little further. As far as I am concerned, I should be willing to support any amendment in that direction short of something which would be fatal to the Bill, but I do not want to wreck the Bill. I am perfectly certain that the people of the district in which it is proposed to build the railway will be willing to pay five times the rates charged on Government railways if they can only get the railway at the present time.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why should they pay more?

Mr. CURTIS: I do not think they should, but I do not think it would be a very dreadful thing if they had to pay 50 per cent. more than is charged on Government lines. I have given this matter some consideration, I have no direct or indirect interest in the matter, and I simply

want to see this great colony of Queensland progress. It is going on at a very slow rate at the present time, and I am perfectly certain that nothing but great good can result from permitting private enterprise to come in and help us develop this enormous colony. We certainly are unable to do it ourselves at the present time, for we have not the means to build the necessary railways unless we are prepared to add to the present enormous debt of the colony, and I do not think the taxpayers would like that. I contend that we are amply safeguarding ourselves against the fundamental difficulties which came into existence in connection with the land grant railways in America. On looking up the subject in the library, I found that there are many other countries that have private railways. There are private lines in Switzerland, and that is a democratic country which has been held up to us as a great example very frequently. They have given a concession of ninety-nine years, reserving the right to take the line over in forty-five years, and guaranteeing 5 per cent. interest on the capital outlay. In India the same thing has been done, in Assam, in Spain, and in other countries; and I do not think any of them have taken the precautions to safeguard themselves to the extent we are proposing to do. I am sure the people of this district will be glad to see this line constructed. The opening of this line will give employment—I think it is stated that in all probability it will give employment to 4,000 men.

Why deprive those 4,000 men of the means of securing profitable work? Would it not be a good thing to have those 4,000 men employed in the district—and, perhaps, a few thousand others besides? Very likely the construction of this line will lead to discoveries of other mineral wealth, which will be of great advantage to the district and to the colony generally.

Mr. DAWSON: That is a new kind of prospecting.

Mr. CURTIS: Another thing, the outlay in connection with the development of these mines will involve an amount of something like £2,000,000, and I think it will be a very good thing to have £2,000,000 spent by the company. I have no doubt that the construction of this line will be a good thing for the district, and that it is wanted by the people of the district, and I think that the wishes of the people in that part of the country should be the primary consideration.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): I desire to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an order for to-morrow.

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