

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 1900

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

2. 69,774 acres—about 1/8 square miles.
3. Twenty square miles.
4. Vacant land, available for opening, 167 square miles; reserved land, 12 square miles.

THE BLACKALL LINE.

Mr. KERR asked the Premier—

Does the Government intend going on with the Blackall line this session?

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

The House will be informed of the intentions of the Government with regard to railway construction in good time.

SOUTH AFRICAN TROPHIES.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*), in the absence of the hon. member for Clermont, asked the Premier—

1. Will he communicate with the Home authorities and ascertain if they are willing to recognise the spirit in which Queensland responded to the Empire's call, by supplying this colony with a share of the guns and ammunition captured from the Boers?

2. Does he not think that our Defence Department would welcome with enthusiasm the gift of half-a-dozen Vickers-Maxims or two or three thousand Mauser rifles?

3. Are we not entitled to a share of the spoil?

The PREMIER replied—

A letter has been received by the Government from His Excellency Sir Alfred Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa, under date 21st of April last, intimating that it is proposed to make a collection of arms, etc., taken during the present war, and to despatch such collection as trophies to the various colonies which have sent contingents to South Africa.

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table of the House, was ordered to be printed:—Report on the Marine Defence Force, 1899-1900.

RENT OF EAST HALDON RUN.

On the motion of Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*), it was resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of this House, copies of all papers and correspondence (including reports of officers of the Lands Department, opinions of legal adviser of the Lands Department) relating to the claim of the lessee of the East Haldon Run, in the Moreton district, for a refund of excess rent paid by him to the Crown.

BRISBANE HYDRAULIC COMPANY'S BILL.

LEAVE TO INTRODUCE.

Mr. COWLEY (*Herbert*), in moving—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill to facilitate the supply of motive power on the high pressure hydraulic system, for the use in and upon wharves, warehouses, buildings, and premises, and for extinguishing fires, and for other purposes, within the city of Brisbane and its suburbs—

said: I have not the slightest idea why the hon. member for Flinders called "Not formal" to this motion.

Mr. McDONALD: We want to know something about it.

Mr. COWLEY: So I will content myself with formally moving the motion. If hon. members will indicate in what direction they want information, I shall be pleased to give it.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): I called "Not formal" to this motion, because I want to know what is meant by this Bill. I don't know whether it is to benefit a private syndicate company or whether it is to be introduced on behalf of a municipality. If the hon. member has brought the motion forward on behalf of some municipality, I have no objection to it.

THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER, 1900.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I this day presented to the Lieutenant-Governor the Appropriation Bill No. 2, and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

QUESTIONS.

BIMERAH RESUMPTION.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

1. What is the area of Bimerah Resumption?
2. What is the area of country in that resumption purchased by the lessees of Bimerah?
3. What is the total area of the resumption at present selected?
4. What is the total area of the resumption available for selection?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*): In the absence of the Minister for Lands, I beg to give the following answers:—

1. Original area of Bimerah Resumption, 308 square miles.

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*): I understood the hon. gentleman by motion of his head that this Bill was in the interests of the Brisbane Municipal Council.

Mr. COWLEY: No.

Mr. HIGGS: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. The Brisbane City Council, I think, should have this power. It is one which should not be handed over to any private company. Our sources of revenue as a council are limited enough now, without surrendering every possible means of augmenting that income for city improvement purposes.

Mr. TURLEY: Was not this question before the Brisbane Municipal Council some time ago?

Mr. HIGGS: Yes, it was; but unfortunately the majority of the members of the Brisbane Municipal Council are as retrograde and reactionary as hon. members opposite. (Laughter.) They offered no objection to the company approaching Parliament. It is a most fossilised motion, and I for one object to the passage of the Bill at all.

Mr. JACKSON: This is not the stage to oppose it.

Mr. BOLES: Let us see the Bill.

Mr. MAXWELL: We don't want to see the Bill at all.

Mr. HIGGS: There is a strong yearning for complete knowledge of what is contained in the Bill, and I wished to give the hon. member for Flinders some information. I take it that those who are opposed to surrendering public rights and privileges to a monopoly will oppose the Bill at the proper stage.

Mr. COWLEY, in reply: For the information of the hon. member for Flinders and other hon. members, I may briefly state that this Bill is what it is indicated to be in the motion I have moved. The Bill has been before the municipal council of Brisbane. They have discussed and approved of the measure; certain amendments have been introduced at their particular request; and hon. members will see when the Bill is before them, that provision is made by which a moiety of the profits over and above a certain amount is to be handed over to the Brisbane Municipal Council. I have been given to understand that the Brisbane Municipal Council, as a council, entirely approve of the provisions of the Bill; they have subjected it to the most careful and rigid scrutiny; and amendments have been introduced at their request; therefore I trust hon. members will offer no opposition to its introduction.

Mr. KEOGH: Are you legislating for Brisbane only?

Mr. COWLEY: It is intended at present to confine operations to the city of Brisbane.

Question put and passed.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of Mr. COWLEY, the Bill was read a first time.

STATISTICS OF AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AND STATE FARMS.

Mr. COWLEY, in moving—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing—

1. The number of State farms and where situated.
2. The capital cost of each to date.
3. The annual expenditure on each to 30th June last.
4. The total revenue, if any, to date.
5. The capital cost of the Agricultural College to date.
6. The annual working expenses to 30th June last.
7. The annual revenue from students' fees to 30th June last.
8. The annual revenue, if any, from all other sources—

said: I don't know whether the hon. gentleman who called "Not formal" wants me to give my reasons for moving this motion.

Mr. McDONALD: After looking over this motion, I apologise to the hon. gentleman for calling "Not formal." I think it will be very valuable information.

The PREMIER: The Government have not the slightest objection to the return being placed on the table.

Mr. GROOM (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): I may suggest to the hon. gentleman that it will make the information more complete if he alters it as far as regards "The capital cost of the Agricultural College to date" so that we may get the capital cost of the land apart from the capital cost of the buildings.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*): I agree with the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, but I would go further than the hon. member suggests. As regards capital, I would have three headings—First, land; second, buildings; then stock.

Mr. GROOM: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I would also ask that there should be a column which would show the obsolete stock and obsolete capital in connection with the Agricultural College, because, strange as it may appear to the House and the country generally, there is an immense amount of agricultural machinery purchased at one time and another, which, according to the return which is asked for by the hon. member for Herbert, would appear as part of the capital cost of the institution, but which is practically useless. We should know that if this return is supplied. I thoroughly approve of the suggestion of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, and would ask the hon. member for Herbert to amend the motion in the direction I have indicated.

Mr. COWLEY: You move it; I cannot.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Very well. I move that paragraph 5 be amended by the addition of the following words:—"showing (a) land; (b) (1) buildings, (2) fencing; (c) implements; (d) stock; (e) obsolete implements."

Mr. GRIMES (*Oxley*): I think there will be a great difficulty in defining what are obsolete agricultural implements, and that that part of the amendment would be much clearer if it read, "implements which have not been used during the past eighteen months." I take it that if an implement has not been used for the past eighteen months it has been practically set aside as obsolete. If the return is asked for in the way proposed, I think we shall not get the information required.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The principal of the college ought to know what an obsolete implement is.

Mr. COWLEY: I have no objection whatever to the amendment in the form proposed by the hon. member for Lockyer. With him, I think the word "obsolete" is sufficient in itself to indicate what is required, and that when the Secretary for Agriculture, or the principal of the college, sees the motion he will know exactly what is desired. If the return is supplied in its amended form, we shall have the cost of the implements whether they are obsolete or in use. I think the wording can hardly be improved upon.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): I can hardly agree with the hon. member for Oxley with regard to the use of the word "obsolete." There are many instances where a farmer puts in a certain crop, and then does not put in the same crop again for twelve months. The machinery required for the cultivation of that crop may not be required for twelve months in such a case, but it would not be obsolete. I think it is better to use the word "obsolete" than to say machinery which has not been in use for a certain time.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, put and passed.

OLD AGE PENSIONS.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*), in moving—

1. That the present system of relief for the aged poor is capable of much improvement, inasmuch as many deserving aged poor cannot or will not avail themselves of the assistance afforded by asylums, and others only accept such help by stern compulsion.

2. That the Government should introduce legislation providing for a system of old age pensions, and thus by Act of Parliament make provision for the deserving aged poor passing their last years in the society of their friends and free from the restraints and monotony of asylum life.

3. That, pending the introduction of legislation, the present State invalid or old age allowance of 5s. per week should be increased to at least 7s. per week—

said : With the exception of the last paragraph, this motion is exactly similar to that which I introduced in the years 1898 and 1899. I dare say that most hon. members will agree that a thrice-told tale is apt to be wearisome, and on the same principle a

[4 p.m.] motion introduced for the third time is not likely to be pleasant to hon. members to hear discussed. Still, just as there are some tales that will bear repetition on account of their intrinsic merits, so I think it must be admitted that there are some questions, such as this old age pension question, that will bear listening to for a third time. The Premier called "Not formal" to this motion, otherwise I should have been glad to have dispensed with the making of a speech at all. As the Premier has called "Not formal" to the motion, I assume that he wishes me to show cause why the House should adopt this resolution. I know there are a great many young and innocent newspaper reporters who think that a member of Parliament, and particularly a member on the Opposition side of the House, must have an unquenchable desire to make speeches on every possible occasion.

Mr. TURLY : Hear, hear !

Mr. JACKSON : I am not prepared to endorse the interjection of the hon. member for South Brisbane, because my experience of members of Parliament in this House is that they do not take delight in making speeches, but that the majority of them would rather not get up and talk in this House. My experience is that the average member of Parliament only gets up to make a speech out of a sense of duty, either to the country, to his constituency, to his party, or out of a sense of duty to himself. I should have thought the Premier would have been inclined to let this motion go, and I will give a few reasons why I think he might have allowed it to go as formal. We all know that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has become very democratic of late. Having adopted the first plank of the Labour party's programme—one adult one vote—I should have thought he would have no hesitation in adopting the subsidiary plank of old age pensions. Having swallowed the camel of one adult one vote, I should not have thought that he would strain at the gnat of old age pensions. When we consider the position which this question occupies at the present time in Australasia, and, I might almost say, throughout the world, we might have expected that the Premier would have allowed this motion to go. I wish first to draw the attention of hon. members to what has taken place New Zealand. I have here the last report of the Registrar of Old Age Pensions in that colony. When I introduced this motion last year I quoted from the first report of the Registrar of Old Age Pensions in New Zealand to show that the measure there had been a success. I find that after another twelve months' experience the report of the New Zealand registrar practically emphasises what he said in his first report. I do not intend to occupy the time of the House by quoting

extensively from this last report, but there are two or three lines which I will read in order to corroborate what has been stated as to its being entirely in favour of the system which New Zealand has adopted. He says—

In my first report I was able to state that the Act had been smoothly and effectively administered from its inception. To this, after a year's additional experience, I may add that the usefulness of the measure is now generally recognised, and that the anticipated difficulties raised by adverse critics are not apparent in its practical working. As a consequence of its success, there is very little matter for comment.

It may be interesting to the House to hear what he says in a paragraph a little further down in the report—

While in some instances the pension has been misapplied, the number of beneficiaries reported as so offending is relatively small. Testimony to the good character of old age pensions generally is borne by the fact that out of 6,178 claims for the second year's pension certificate dealt with up to the 31st March, 1900, only thirteen were rejected on the ground that the conditions set forth in the subsections of section 8 of the Act relating to character had not been fulfilled.

I think that is very striking testimony indeed. An ounce of fact, it is said, is worth a ton of theory, and this matter has now really got beyond theorising upon. I take it that no hon. member will now venture to argue that this old age pension question is a "fad." The mere fact that those eminent statesmen who met to form the Federal Constitution for Australia inserted a provision in that Constitution for old age pensions under which the Federal Parliament might take action, shows that the question of old age pensions is no longer up in the clouds, but is well within the region of practical politics. My contention that the question is well within the region of practical politics is further borne out if we look at what has taken place in the other colonies. A Bill was introduced last year into the Victorian Parliament ; it failed to go through on account of some financial objections, but that Bill is to be reintroduced—if it has not already been reintroduced—into the Victorian Parliament this year. The Victorian Government sent Messrs. Best and Trenwith over to New Zealand some time ago to report upon the experience in that colony as to the effect of the establishment of a system of old age pensions, and the report of those gentlemen was most satisfactory. Then if we come to New South Wales we find that the Premier of that colony on the 17th of this month obtained leave in committee to introduce into the New South Wales Parliament a Bill very much on the same lines as the New Zealand Act. I may say that the short debate that took place indicated that there was no opposition whatever to that Bill being introduced into the Parliament of the mother colony. Of course I know it was a formal motion, but the little debate that took place showed conclusively that every member who spoke upon the motion welcomed the Bill into the New South Wales Parliament. I do not intend to go into the details of it, but I just mention that in one important respect the New South Wales Bill differs from the New Zealand Act, in that it provides that applications for old age pensions need not be made in open court, as they have to be under the New Zealand Act. Coming to Queensland, I may refresh the memories of hon. members as to what has taken place here. I have already stated that this is the third time I have introduced this motion to this House. In 1898 there was no opportunity given to get a division upon the motion, but last year we had several divisions upon it. First of all, an amendment was moved by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Cribb, to the effect that the Government should obtain information with a view of submitting it to the Federal Parliament. That

amendment was defeated, the voting being 25 to 22. After that the hon. member for Wootthakata, Mr. Newell, moved a further amendment in favour of the appointment of a select committee to collect evidence on the subject. This side was unable to defeat that amendment, which was carried by one vote, the voting being 26 to 25. Singular to state, after that amendment in the form of a rider to the original question had been carried, when the question as so amended was put the very members who voted for the amendment voted against the main question, which was knocked out by 29 to 26 votes.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They practically killed their own amendment.

Mr. JACKSON: Exactly. I do not know whether there was any mistake in the minds of hon. members who voted on that occasion. I should say there was, as I could never understand hon. members voting for an amendment coming from their own side of the House, and then voting against it when it was finally put. If hon. members will look at the first part of my resolution they will see that there is nothing contentious in it. That goes without saying. It has been admitted by the Government that the first part of the motion is not contentious. With regard to the second part I fail to see why the Government should object to it—it is the main part of the resolution—because there is nothing specified in it when the Government should introduce legislation. The Government practically have a free hand. I could understand the Government opposing the motion if I attempted in any way to say what amount the person should be paid, or the particular time the Bill should be introduced, or the age the pension should apply to, and so forth. Hon. members will see that as to details it is quite an open matter. The third part, as I have stated, was not embodied in my original notice of motion; but since then I have added that paragraph, in accordance with the rules of the House, by giving notice to the clerk. I think it is a very proper addition to the resolution. I do not think anyone will contend that the sum of 5s. a week—whether you call it an old age allowance or an allowance in lieu of Dunwich—is a sufficient amount to keep any adult, either male or female, and it is in consequence of that feeling that I decided to add that rider to the resolution. And here I would remind the House that living has gone up very considerably during the last few years, so that 5s. now will not buy as much as it would a few years ago. I do not know whether the Home Secretary will contend that any adult could possibly live on 5s. a week, even to provide only the bare necessities of life. I would also point out that the effect of carrying the third part of the resolution—increasing the allowance from 5s. to 7s. a week—will not affect the finances of the colony very much. Some time ago I asked the Home Secretary some questions in connection with the administration of this Government allowance, and, according to the figures given then, it appears that during the first six months of the present year there were 705 annuitants, if you like to call them by that name, receiving £3,692. That would give an amount, for twelve months, at 5s. per week, of £7,384. If we decide to increase the amount, as I propose, it would come to about £10,337; so that it would be only an increase of about £3,000 if we take those figures. Of course I am not prepared to say how those numbers may increase. I am only going by the figures given by the Home Secretary. I notice there was a very large increase for the first six months of this year over the years 1899 and 1898. Possibly the Home Secretary may be able to explain by and by, if he does me the honour of speaking on his question, how the figures were so very much

larger than those of last year. Whilst I am on this particular question—the third part of my resolution—I wish to draw attention to one of the answers the Home Secretary gave me—the transfer of property to the Crown by old people to whom this allowance is made. I admit that we have not very much information in the answers given by the Home Secretary, and I do not like to pre-judge the case; but speaking on the information we have, I certainly think it is a most objectionable principle that the Government should insist on old people transferring their small bits of property to the Crown before the Government make them that 5s. a week allowance. In New Zealand £50 worth of property is allowed as a matter of course under their Old Age Pensions Act. After that amount £1 is taken off for every £15 of accumulated property. Of course I do not wish to press the point until I hear more about it, but I think the Government, in insisting on a hard condition like that—it appears to me to be a hard condition—has adopted what seems to me to be a very objectionable principle. In my previous speeches on this question, I have dealt generally with principles, and not with details, and I intend to adopt the same course this afternoon. I do not mind, if any hon. member likes to interject, giving information upon any point which I may not have made clear, but I think the proper course to adopt is to deal more with principles than with details. John Morley, in his little book on “Compromise,” says—

It is felt by many wise men that the chief business of the political thinker is to interest himself in generalisations of such a sort as leads with tolerable straightness to practical improvements of a far-reaching and durable kind.

The principle laid down by Morley is the principle a private member ought to adopt in introducing a question of this sort to Parliament. One of the principal objections that may be taken to this proposal of old age pensions is that it is a socialistic principle. Well, as Sir William Harcourt said some years ago, “we are all socialistic now.” Even the Secretary for Railways is now as much a socialist as any of us; he expressed himself the other day in favour of the nationalisation of our coalmines. When a socialistic principle is now put forward it does not usually send a cold shudder down the backbone of members of Parliament, as it might have done some years ago, nor does it affect society in the same way that it might have done some years ago. We find even individualistic writers nowadays admitting that there is a great deal to be learned from the teachings of socialism. I may read here a quotation from W. S. Lilly’s “First Principles in Politics,” where he says—

The real value of socialism lies in this, that it is the inevitable and indispensable protest of the working classes, and their aspiration after a better order of things, and a function of the State is to extract from the innumerable popular and philanthropic utterances constituting socialistic literature the underlying ideas, and to translate them into scientific conceptions of right.

What is the underlying principle in connection with this question of old age pensions? It is simply this—to give the deserving aged poor the privilege of saying whether their last few years shall be spent under the restrictions of asylum life or spent in the society of their friends and relations. That is the principle. I am not quite sure whether this principle, after all, tends to stimulate socialism or to stimulate individualism. It is well known that Bismarck introduced his system of old age pensions in Germany to act as an antidote to the socialistic tendencies of the German working man, and there is a great deal to be said from the point of view that old age pensions will make the mass of

the people more satisfied with the individualistic, competitive system than they are at the present time. I am inclined myself to take that view of the question. Another objection that may be urged by hon. members is that the poor should themselves provide for their old age pensions, either by voluntary contributions, or that the State should make such contributions compulsory. Well, there is one very formidable objection to any such proposal, and that is that such a scheme could not come into operation for another generation at least. That seems a very fatal objection indeed, but we have evidence taken by select committees and royal commissions to show that it is practically impossible for the very poor to lay on one side even such a small amount as would be necessary to provide a small pension. Then, look at the expensive system of bookkeeping that would be involved by such a system. Hon. members have only to consider for a moment, and they will see that the simplest and most straightforward plan is to pay the amount out of the consolidated revenue, seeing that everybody will pay through taxation to provide for these old age pensions. New Zealand, in my opinion, has adopted the proper course, as will be seen by the fact that in New South Wales and Victoria they have followed on the New Zealand lines. Theoretically, I admit, it seems feasible enough that the average working man would be able to contribute the small amount required, but I am not quite sure whether that would apply to the average woman. As Dr. Johnson said—

Human experience, which is constantly correcting theory, is the greatest test of truth.

And we find, as a matter of fact, in human experience that the masses of the people do not provide themselves with old age pensions. Whether they can do it or not is quite another question, but we find that they do not. Personally, I am inclined to think that they cannot do it. Assuming that there is no dispute as to the principle of old age pensions, I would like to consider briefly four objections that may be urged by the Government against the adoption of this resolution:—Firstly, they may say that there is no time to introduce legislation; secondly, they may urge the financial difficulty; thirdly, they may say that the Federal Government will deal with the question; and fourthly, they may say that the Government old age pension of 5s. a week covers the ground. I know that the Premier, very much like myself, is not fond of making long speeches, and, in order to save the hon. gentleman the trouble of dealing with those questions, I shall deal with them straight away. I can assure the hon. gentleman that there is nothing in such objections, if they should be in his mind. First of all, we will take the objection that there is no time to deal with this matter by legislation. I admit that at the present time the Government appear to have their hands pretty full with regard to private railways. But this question is not one that would be very contentious. I am not the leader of this party, and I am not in a position to say what action they would take if the Government brought in a Bill, but I believe there would be no opposition to it if it were framed on the lines of the Acts that have been passed in the other colonies. Time could very easily be found if the Government were in earnest in introducing a Bill of this sort. And here—if I may be permitted a moment or two just to make a remark—I think that the Premier is rather a bad strategist. I know, if I were in the hon. gentleman's position, instead of keeping private railways in the front all the time, I should certainly bring in either the Electoral Reform Bill or an Old Age Pensions Bill, and dovetail them together.

1900—3 r

Mr. STEPHENSON: There is a lot of the wisdom of the serpent about you.

Mr. JACKSON: I thank the hon. member if that is meant as a compliment. I do not know whether he meant it as a compliment, but I shall take it as such.

Mr. DAWSON: What! Do you mean to say that you tempted Eve?

Mr. JACKSON: With regard to the financial difficulty, surely a large colony like Queensland can do what a small colony like New Zealand has done. Surely, if New Zealand can find £200,000 for old age pensions, Queensland can imitate that colony. It does not say much for this great colony if we are going to admit that New Zealand can do things of this sort, on account of its wealth, that Queensland cannot do. We are continually holding Queensland up as being the foremost and the richest colony in the Australasian group.

Mr. ANNEAR: Has not New Zealand a much larger population than Queensland?

Mr. JACKSON: I admit at once that New Zealand has a much larger population. I think she has a population of about 743,000 as against Queensland's 500,000. Still this is not altogether a question of population. We have an immense territory, and receive a large amount of revenue from Crown lands, while New Zealand, on the other hand, has to purchase a great deal of its lands from the Maoris.

Mr. ANNEAR: And from private companies as well.

Mr. JACKSON: Well, I take it that the same thing applies to the estates which have been repurchased in Queensland under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, so that the two colonies are on a par in that respect. I think there is a good deal of misunderstanding as to the effect that spending a large sum of money by way of old age pensions has upon the economic position of the community. Sir George Turner, when introducing his Bill last year in Victoria said—

The pensioner will necessarily have to expend it in obtaining the necessities of life, and by that means a large amount of it will find its way back into the Treasury.

Then we must remember that if we adopt a system of old age pensions the charitable institutions of the colony will be relieved to a very considerable extent as well. Coming back to the economic aspect of the question. If, for instance, £80,000 is taken out of the Treasury to provide for old age pensions, that money is spent in the community, so that from a national point of view the expenditure is nothing like so heavy as some hon. members might imagine. Then let me point out that the Treasurer's Financial Statement was very optimistic. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman will urge this financial difficulty and say that we have no funds; but anticipating that he may do so, I would refer him to his Financial Statement, where he points out that the colony is, after all, in a very fair position, in spite of the drought, and in spite of the additional taxation that will be incurred by federating with the other colonies. Speaking from memory, I fancy that the hon. gentleman forecasted a surplus of £40,000 or £50,000 during the present year.

The PREMIER: Not so much as that—I anticipated a surplus of £22,000.

Mr. JACKSON: I am very glad the hon. gentleman has corrected me, as I was speaking from memory. Even so, £22,000 would certainly not provide for a system of old age [4.30 p.m.] pensions for Queensland, if it were passed on similar lines to those in New Zealand. I would point out, however, that even supposing the Treasurer will not have a sufficiently large surplus to provide for an old age

pension system, I believe that the people of this colony, and particularly the working class, would not object, if necessary, to slightly increased taxation, if the object of it were to provide for a system of old age pensions. That is my firm belief, judging from my own knowledge of the opinions of the working class. Now, with regard to the third objection, that the Federal Government will probably deal with this question, I take it that that may be the most important objection urged by the Government as a reason why this resolution should not be carried. Now, it looks very strange that New South Wales and Victoria, the two larger colonies, should be introducing legislation to deal with old age pensions if the Governments of those colonies seriously believed that the Federal Government would take up this matter. The Federal Government, as I pointed out last year, will have to deal with a good deal before they could possibly deal with this question of old age pensions; and on that I think—and I want to ask the attention of hon. members particularly to this—it is very questionable whether old age pensions should be taken up by the Federal Government rather than by the State Governments. It is very debatable, and I think the argument will be that it is a question for the State Governments rather than the Federal Governments, because this is implied; if it is argued that the Federal Government should take up this question it seems to me that it follows necessarily that the whole of the question of the relief of the poor should be turned over to the Federal Government. Now, hon. members will not argue that. They will not argue that the benevolent asylums and charitable institutions should be turned over to the Federal Government; and here I will admit that when we get a system of old age pensions some benevolent asylums, I take it, will still be necessary; but it is not argued that the Federal Government should take over these benevolent institutions. But I will tell the House what I think the Federal Government may do in connection with old age pensions, and that is this: The Federal Government may very well deal with those aged people who are not able to qualify in their respective States. That, I believe, will be the proper function for the Federal Government to take up; that is to say, supposing each colony has an Old Age Pension Act, and one of the conditions is that the applicant should have resided, say, for twenty-five years in the colony. That seems to be the time that is usually adopted. It is quite evident that a considerable number of applicants—I will not say a considerable number, but at any rate a number of applicants—throughout the colonies might be unable to qualify in the particular State where they might have had to reside. For instance, one might live ten years in New South Wales and fifteen years in Queensland, and if the qualification were twenty-five years both in New South Wales and Queensland, it is quite evident that that man would be disqualified. Now, here is where the Federal Government could very properly come in. The Federal Government could introduce legislation to provide for those individuals who could not qualify themselves in the different States. If all the States had Old Age Pension Acts in operation, then the term could be very much reduced. Instead of making the qualification twenty-five years, each State could then easily adopt ten years as a qualification—that is to say, ten years of life in Australia, leaving out of the question the people coming from outside of Australia. Then, again, even if the Federal Government did not take action, I think a system of clearances could be adopted from one colony to another. If the Federal Government comes

in at all, I think it will be found in practice that the proper solution of this difficulty will be for the Federal Government to introduce legislation to provide for those aged poor, who are not able to qualify under the Act in their particular State. Now, I have one more objection to deal with, and that is the fourth one. I stated that it was possible that the Government might urge the objection to carrying this resolution, that we have already practically a system of old age allowances in Queensland, that is the 5s. allowance in lieu of Dunwich. Now it is possible that there may be one solitary advantage in the fact that the Government administering this on their own account.

Mr. HIGGS: It is subject to gross abuses.

Mr. JACKSON: The hon. member for Fortitude Valley says that it is open to gross abuses. That is possible. I am not stating that it is abused in any way. My experience of the Home Secretary's administering of this generally is, that the applications are always favourably considered. In fact, I do not think, I have had a single refusal in connection with any of the cases I have submitted. Sometimes there is a certain amount of delay, which I suppose is inevitable in a large colony like this, where reports have to be obtained from police magistrates or from the police in the outlying districts, but at the same time I think this is a question which ought to be laid down in an Act of Parliament. I understood that the Home Secretary has found the work too much for him. I think we all admit that the Home Secretary is a hard-working man, and I am sure he would not turn over an item of this sort to someone else if he were able to deal with it himself. I understand that the hon. gentleman has turned it over to Dr. Hare to deal with. I do not know whether that is correct or not. I believe I saw it in a newspaper some time ago. Now, I said there might be one solitary advantage in the privacy that the administration this old age allowance system has at present under the Government, but still the question of publicity is not necessarily attached to the old age pension system. As I pointed out, when I commenced my speech, in New South Wales the Bill that the Premier of that colony has introduced provides for the hearing of all applications privately. I am not quite sure of that because I have not seen the Bill, but I think that the applications have not to be heard in open court as they have in New Zealand. Now Goldwin Smith, in a book which he wrote some time ago, said—

There is a notion that public relief pauperises. The sentiment is to be respected, but that which really pauperises is relief unwisely given, as private charity is too apt to be.

Now, I want just to give one instance that came under my notice not long ago, to show that the system of administering these allowances by the Home Secretary is one under which some injustices might take place. I had gone, some months ago, to visit a town in the Southern part of the colony. When I got there, a letter was placed in my hand from a woman, who wrote to say that her father, who was an old Northerner, was lying very ill. Previously to this, the old man had lived in my own electorate. He had heard that I was coming to the town and asked his daughter to write to me, because he would like to see me for the sake of old times. I went to see the old man, and found him lying seriously ill with cancer. I forget his age, but I know it was over seventy. On leaving I spoke to his daughter privately. I could see from their surroundings that they were not very well off, and I told her that the Government made an old age allowance to certain persons, and I said,

"If you like I will write, or get the member for your district to write, and ask the Government to make your father an allowance of 5s. a week." The woman said, "I will see my husband and take a little time to think it over and write to you about it." I never got a letter from her, but two or three months afterwards I had occasion to visit the same town again and I heard that the old man was dead. I went to see his daughter and son-in-law, and in the course of conversation I said, "I never heard anything from you about the old age allowance." She said, "Well, when we came to think of it, seeing there was no certainty about getting the money, and that my father might think we wanted to get rid of him, we decided to struggle on without making the application." There is a case in point, and I could if I liked quote others where, if an Old Age Pension Act were in force, there would be no diffidence whatever about applying for the assistance; but under present circumstances there is that diffidence. I think I have now pretty well exhausted my subject. I have dealt with the objections that I think might be raised by the Government to the best of my ability. I may not have done it very well; but I have done my best to answer the objections that may be urged. I could have produced, of course, a great many more arguments in support of an Old Age Pension Act; but I did not wish to travel over old ground. During the two previous years in which I have dealt with this question, I have done so from various standpoints. I have dealt with the feature that it would be a discouragement to thrift. I showed on previous occasions that the present system of relief through the asylums was not at all a credit to our civilisation. I have not dealt with those features of the subject this afternoon; but have tried to look at the question from a new point of view. I am rather sorry that there is any occasion at all to introduce a motion of this sort; but I am afraid there will always be needed some system of old age pensions. The poorhouses and benevolent asylums, I think, we can shortly dispense with to a very large extent, although for chronic cases and where old people have no friends at all they will in all probability still be required. There may be a civilisation somewhere ahead in the future when even old age pensions will not be required; but, in my opinion, some system of old age pensions will be required for a very long time to come. It seems to me that as long as some people are born more gifted than others, as long as some are stronger than others, as long as human nature and temperament are what they are, as long as some people are born thrifty and others the reverse, as long as the unemployed problem and the industrial competition system exist, so long will there be a need for an old age pension system. I commend the motion to the favourable attention of hon. members, and I hope the Government will see their way to let it be carried on the voices. I am sure it will be a credit to the Premier if he accepts the motion without any opposition. I cannot conceive that any reasons can be urged against it, and seeing what is being done in the other colonies I think he ought to get into line with them. If he does so, he will hand his name down to posterity as the benefactor of the aged poor.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member who, I think, now for the third time has moved this motion, or one analogous to it, has wisely refrained from going over much of the ground which he traversed on former occasions, because it may be taken for granted that to a certain extent hon. members and the country are familiar with what has transpired in this

Chamber in previous sessions, and probably their attention has been directed by means of former discussions to other sources of information with regard to this very interesting question. It is not only an interesting question, but a very important question. We are feeling even in Queensland, where we have a system of relieving indigent persons, whether old or young, that it is beginning to press somewhat severely upon the resources of the Treasury. Of course I use that expression in a comparative sense, because I do not pretend for a moment to suggest that the amount which we are now expending in the way of relief is anything approaching what the colony could bear if necessity arose. I would like to deal first of all with the matter the hon. member referred to in connection with the answers I gave to him on a recent occasion referring to statistics on this subject, so far as they relate to Queensland. It will be observed that in 1897 there were 116 persons, who received a total of £1,017. In 1898 the number had increased to 144, and the amount to £1,255; and in 1899, the matter having been discussed in this Chamber, and a certain amount of publicity having been given to the system in vogue, the figures rose to 427 persons, receiving £3,628. For the first six months of this year the number has increased again from 427 to 705, and the expenditure for this six months was £3,692, or in excess of the expenditure for the whole of 1899. The hon. member asks: How do I account for that? Well, I account for it in this way: because the knowledge that these allowances, in lieu of going to Dunwich, are obtainable, is spreading. That is the only explanation I can give. I don't pretend, for one moment, to say that anything like the full number of people who would be entitled to receive assistance on the present lines, from this particular fund, are now in receipt of that assistance. Therefore I predict that next year, even at 5s. per week, the amount to be expended in this way will be considerably in excess of £12,000.

Mr. HIGGS: Then you adopt the old age pension system, while you speak against it.

The HOME SECRETARY: I don't know what the hon. member means. He is assuming two things, both of which are incorrect.

Mr. STEPHENSON: That is what he very frequently does.

The HOME SECRETARY: I ventured to predict last year that the amount to be expended this year would not be far short of £8,000 or £9,000, and I am inclined to think that, with the experience we have had—an increase of something like 80 per cent. for the first six months of this year over the numbers for the whole of 1899—from 427 to 705—and considering that the advance may increase in the same ratio for the coming six months of this year—I don't think my estimate last year will fall far short of the actual figures. And taking the percentage of increase in numbers as indicative of what we may expect in the near future, I think I am not far out when I estimate that the expenditure next year will not fall far short of £12,000.

Mr. JACKSON: That is a small amount compared with New Zealand.

The HOME SECRETARY: I admit that. will come to that directly. I may mention that, in my answer to the hon. member's question, I drew a distinction between the name which he gave to these allowances and that which is given to it—and very properly given to it under existing circumstances—departmentally. It is very necessary that that distinction should be observed, because the system which we have adopted here differs very much from the New

Zealand system. Our system is not an old age pension system, because persons who have not attained the age of sixty-five are admitted to the benefits of our system here; and I think very properly so. I think sixty-five is the New Zealand age limit, and it must be recognised that there are very many persons who have not attained that age, who are far more deserving of assistance and support from the State than large numbers who have already attained that age. Take the case of a widow with a large family of children, which she has reared, and is still endeavouring to rear, and who is not more than forty-five, fifty, or fifty-five years of age—let us say forty-five. Now, is she not as deserving of assistance in her financial straits and extremity as a man—perhaps a bachelor—who has attained the age of sixty-five, but is still hale and hearty? Still, under the New Zealand old age pension scheme she would get no assistance from the State. Under that scheme there are hard-and-fast lines, but I say there is an elasticity in the system we have adopted in this colony, which, with proper discrimination, has many virtues which the New Zealand scheme has not, or which any scheme of a hard-and-fast character cannot possibly have. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Higgs, appears to be on the warpath, and by his interjection this afternoon he was good enough to insinuate when the hon. member for Kennedy was speaking, that there are grave abuses in the administration here.

Mr. HIGGS: You know I did not say that. I said the system was liable to grave abuses.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member did not say outright that there were abuses; but by his interjection he suggested that there were abuses. Where was the necessity for him to make that interjection if he did not mean to suggest that there were abuses? If now he says he did not intend to convey that impression, I accept his denial. The very fact that it has been necessary to get that denial is sufficient justification for me to refer to the hon. member's remarks.

Mr. HIGGS: We want to establish a proper system of old age pensions.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member is now shirking the question.

Mr. HIGGS: No, I am not.

The HOME SECRETARY: I think the hon. member's interjection was suggestive that something of this nature was passing in his mind at the time. I do not think it is necessary for me to defend my administration of these funds. There is no hon. member, or anybody in the colony, who can say that I have not dealt with everybody who has come before me in connection with this matter in a just manner. I explained before that it cast a great deal of

[5 p.m.] extra work on myself, having regard to the fact that discrimination had to be exercised. I thought that, so far as it was possible, it was desirable that this discrimination should be exercised by somebody directly answerable to Parliament. The hon. member for Kennedy mentioned the fact that he had heard that the administration of this matter had been handed over to Dr. Hare, but, as a matter of fact, that is not correct. I very much desire to do so.

Mr. JACKSON: I saw it stated in the Press.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is so much stated in the Press that is absolutely false and misleading, as the hon. member knows very well.

Mr. JACKSON: Did not the hon. gentleman himself see it in the Press?

The HOME SECRETARY: I don't think so. I don't study the Press very much.

Mr. HIGGS: Poor Press! Always in trouble!

The HOME SECRETARY: I don't remember seeing it. I know I mentioned last year that I hoped to be able to relieve myself of this work to a very large extent, but whatever transfers might take place in the duties—and I do hope to be able to hand them over to Dr. Hare in some shape or form, as Inspector of Charitable Institutions—I should not for a moment lose Ministerial control over these funds; and any decision of his will certainly be liable to appeal to the Minister. As regards mere matters of detail, where there could be no question as to the deserving nature of an applicant or otherwise, I think a great deal of the Minister's time might be saved by handing it over to Dr. Hare, or possibly a board consisting of himself and somebody else. I have referred to one difference between our scheme and the hard-and-fast scheme in New Zealand. I will now refer to another, and that is this: Providing that a person can show that he or she is deserving, is in penurious circumstances—and possibly the word "deserving" covers that—not only deserving as regards good character, sobriety, and so on—it is not necessary that they should always have been deserving in that respect—but, at all events, so long as they are able to show that they are in straitened circumstances—that they are fit subjects for Dunwich—that the allowance will not be wasted, that they have friends who to a certain extent will be able to assist them outside Dunwich—then the allowance is made—no matter also what time they have resided in Queensland. Now, in New Zealand, if my memory serves me rightly, the time limit for residence before one can become entitled to the old age pension is twenty-five years. If I had my records here before me I could point to scores of instances—probably it would almost amount to hundreds of instances—where most deserving people are in receipt of the 5s. outside allowance in lieu of going to Dunwich, who would not be eligible for similar treatment in New Zealand, for the simple reason that they have not resided in the colony twenty-five years.

Mr. JACKSON: In New Zealand the people who are not qualified by age for pensions go into the benevolent asylums.

The HOME SECRETARY: I quite understand that. I want to point out that there is a differentiation between certain people who are supposed to be eligible for State assistance in the nature of old age pensions in New Zealand, where those who cannot comply with that hard-and-fast, that arbitrary rule—I may say, in many instances, unjust rule—have still to render themselves liable to the same discredit—if one may use so strong an expression—which is supposed to attach to admission to a benevolent asylum. Where you have an old age pension scheme you must necessarily have it on hard-and-fast lines, and in that respect it is probably impossible to improve upon the scheme adopted in New Zealand, and will probably be adopted elsewhere; but with our system we have the advantage of being able to reach most deserving people who would be excluded under such a rule, and yet are very eligible persons for receipt of assistance from the State. I have been greatly struck with the different way in which proposed recipients regard the question of this 5s. a week in lieu of going to Dunwich, and it has been extremely interesting to note the class of persons who take the different views of the matter. In some instances you will find that there is, as there was in the case the hon. member for Kennedy himself quoted, a distinct disinclination to come upon the State. There is an independence of sentiment which I think does credit to the people who entertain it. They have no desire, unless they are actually forced into the position, to take this allowance from the State in

lieu of going to Dunwich. On the other hand, I am constantly in receipt of letters—some of them rather amusing—from men who put forward their claims, or what they regard as their claims. They have been resident for such a period in the colony—it may be twenty, or twenty-five, or thirty years—and they claim the allowance as a matter of right. Sometimes on inquiry I find that these men are tolerably well off, are earning very good wages, are in perfectly good health, and likely to be so for many years. Of course, in those cases under our present system we need not render assistance, but those are the men who under the system in force in New Zealand would come in for a share of the State's bounty—if you like to call it bounty—while many an unfortunate widow would be neglected.

MR. JACKSON: I deny that they would come in, if they had any considerable amount of money.

THE HOME SECRETARY: I do not mean men in affluent circumstances, but men able to maintain themselves respectably and decently, and just as well able to do so, perhaps, as they were fifteen or twenty years ago, but still have attained the age at which they would be entitled to come on the State for an old age pension under such a scheme as that in force in New Zealand.

MR. JACKSON: I think there is a very small proportion over the age of sixty-five years able to earn their own living.

THE HOME SECRETARY: I don't agree with that. As far as I am able to judge by the recorded information which comes before me after investigation, I should say that there is a very large proportion of persons over the age of sixty-five years able to maintain themselves—even up to seventy and seventy-five years of age. I constantly come across reports of men who are earning good wages at that age, and I am surprised to find there is a very prevalent idea that in Queensland, if not in the whole of Australia, longevity and a certain robustness in advanced years does not prevail. I find that, although we have a great number of men who suffer from rheumatism, which is very common, still there are a large number of men who are hale and strong even at sixty-five years of age. The hon. member for Kennedy holds that the transfer of any property to the country by a proposed recipient is not justifiable.

MR. JACKSON: I should like to know the details first.

THE HOME SECRETARY: As I said in my answers to the hon. member when he interrogated me on the subject, each case is dealt with on its merits. A parent, either a male or female, may ask for this allowance, and on investigation it may be found that there are a number of children, some of them having families of their own, and others who are bachelors or spinsters earning fairly good wages when they like to work, but who are very often drunkards, from whom the police report it is impossible to get anything towards the support and maintenance of their parents. I am referring now only to those who are drunkards. On the other hand, there are children who are steady and industrious, who have perhaps a little home of their own which is being paid for to a building society, and who have large families to rear. In a case of that sort, where a son has a large family which he is endeavouring to rear, I invariably take this view: That unless he is in fairly affluent circumstances, he ought not to be called upon to take from his own growing family in order to support an aged parent. It is very difficult, of course, to draw the line. In some cases it is reported to me that a son has property of considerable value, and where that is so, I say the son ought to do something for his father.

MR. DIBLEY: You cannot make him do it.

THE HOME SECRETARY: If the father goes to Dunwich, we can; that is the point. If a son will not do the duty which he ought to perform towards his father, who has reared him, and who, perhaps with great self-denial, has given him an education and a trade, and that son allows his father to go to Dunwich he can be called upon by process of law—and very rightly so—to contribute towards the support of his father. But when you come to deal with drunkards and ne'er-do-wells, you have a different state of things. It is in cases where you cannot get anything out of the children, either because they have too much to do in rearing their own families—the fecundity of those people who apply for relief is remarkable—that you find that they cannot support their parents, or that there are unmarried children who are dissolute or drunkards or not always in work. Suppose in such a case a man has a property worth £100, is the State going to support that man for the remainder of his life, perhaps for ten or fifteen years, and allow those dissolute drunkards from whom the State cannot get anything, but who ought to assist to maintain their parents, to quietly step into the shoes of the old man when he is dead? I say that in cases of that sort it is right to insist on the transfer of the property to the State.

MR. JACKSON: I think your action would be right in cases of that sort.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Those are invariably the cases in which that occurs, and I say that in such cases it is necessary that the property should be transferred in order to do justice to the community. Then take the case of a man who has no children at all, but has distant relatives—nieces or nephews—in another colony, or perhaps in the old country. The man will do nothing with his property; he simply lives upon it. Of course it is always a mere residence that is concerned in these cases. Is it not a fair thing to ask that the community which is going to maintain that man for the remainder of his years should benefit by the value of his property when he shuffles off, rather than the benefit should go to distant relatives in another community who take no interest in him? Those are the reasons why I insist on the transfer of property. An additional reason is that an implied undertaking is given by the Government, when that transfer is made, that the old people shall reside on their property for the remainder of their lives. If the transfer were not insisted upon, the property might be frittered away.

MR. JACKSON: I thought the transfer was to increase the allowance.

THE HOME SECRETARY: No. It would make no appreciable difference in the allowance.

MR. JACKSON: It might make 1s. a week difference.

THE HOME SECRETARY: That would be £2 12s. a year.

MR. JACKSON: Would not £100 worth of property bring in 1s. a week if invested in an annuity payable at the age of sixty-five years?

THE HOME SECRETARY: Yes, it might, but does not the hon. member see that if we sold the property the man could not live on it? We do not sell the property, but allow him to live on it, which saves him rent. I find that in a number of cases people are paying somewhat large rents—6s. and 8s. a week—but of course there are reasons for that. The explanation generally is that they have some young relatives, possibly their own children, living with them, and earning very small wages, just enough to maintain themselves, and in consequence of that they pay a higher rent than they would otherwise do. Where a man owns property and transfers it to the State he saves that rent, and the Government are practically increasing the allowance he

receives by the amount of the rent which he would otherwise have to pay. The hon. member would surely not have the Crown to get that property valued, take a transfer of it, and then give the man an increased allowance. That would not be fair to the community.

Mr. HIGGS : Under what Act do you take that property ?

The HOME SECRETARY : Under the Act of the individual himself.

Mr. HIGGS : The Government, then, are becoming land jobbers.

The HOME SECRETARY : If the hon. member chooses to put it that way, they are.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE : Land nationalists.

The HOME SECRETARY : I would be the last man to deprive any old man or old woman of their property if I thought that was doing them the slightest injustice, but I can assure hon. members that as a rule it is really a kindness to those people, and at the same time it secures the rights of the community as against distant relatives in other parts of the world, or against dissolute children who will not assist their parents, but would like to step into their shoes in regard to the property which those parents may leave behind them. We now come to the question of amount, the fourth matter referred to by the hon. gentleman, and which is also referred to in the concluding paragraph of his resolution. I am bound to say that, at present, I cannot see my way to advise the Government to grant an increased amount. The 5s. a week has been arrived at as the amount which is equivalent to the cost to the State if the person were an inmate of Dunwich, or of any other benevolent asylum that might be started.

Mr. GLASSEY : What is the exact cost per head ?

The HOME SECRETARY : As nearly as possible, about 5s. a week.

Mr. GLASSEY : That is irrespective of the value of property and everything else, because that is always a consideration.

The HOME SECRETARY : Yes, I think so. I point this out, and it is admitted by the hon. member for Kennedy that it so in New Zealand, that no matter what scheme is adopted—whether it be the scheme in force here at present, or that in vogue in New Zealand—you will always have your benevolent asylums. There will never be an end to them, because there are certain persons to whom it is impossible to entrust money for their care and keep.

Mr. JACKSON : Only a small proportion.

The HOME SECRETARY : Well, at present they are a very large proportion here. We have only 700 people in receipt of this outside relief, and we have over 1,000 in Dunwich alone, irrespective of the large number of persons who are being otherwise cared for in other institutions throughout the colony.

Mr. JACKSON : If you increased the amount to 7s., you would get rid of a lot of those now in Dunwich—that is my opinion.

The HOME SECRETARY : I do not admit that at all ; but there would immediately be a demand, and necessarily so, from those in Dunwich for increased comforts, because the people there would properly say, "Why should we be kept here at a cost of only 5s. a week, when other people are living in luxury outside, at a cost to the State of 7s. per week?"

Mr. JENKINSON : There is not much luxury in 1s. a day.

The HOME SECRETARY : Well, they are very comfortably kept and fed at Dunwich.

Mr. JENKINSON : You misunderstand me. I talked of those "living in luxury," as you called it, outside.

Mr. HIGGS : Where is Macdonald-Paterson, the hon. member for Brisbane North ?

The HOME SECRETARY : I am only stating the argument which would be used by those in Dunwich, and they would look to be better off, and get better food and accommodation. The question is : What test are we going to apply in order to fix the amount ? I say that so long as people can be maintained in Dunwich as they are—and some of them get better and more wholesome food, and more of it a good deal than they were in the habit of receiving when working for themselves outside as younger men and women—I say that I think the cost to the State should be taken as a proper guide to the amount which should be expended upon those who are eligible for Dunwich, but who, owing to different circumstances, and having relatives and friends outside, are able to avoid the necessity for going into that institution. That is why I think it would not be an advantageous thing to depart from a standard which has been, so to speak, automatically fixed upon. I do not think anyone will say that the fare in Dunwich is not what it ought to be.

Mr. DIBLEY : Well, the sugar is very bad.

The HOME SECRETARY : Take it all round, a large majority of the people there are really better off as regards food, and probably also as regards clothing, than they were before they went there.

Mr. GLASSEY : At any rate they get fed regularly, are kept clean, and all that sort of thing.

The HOME SECRETARY : For those reasons I do not think it desirable to make a departure at the present time, so far as regards the amount. I might say that I have lately had reports from Dr. Hare as to the desirability of establishing a second benevolent asylum in the Northern portion of the colony, and I may tell the hon. member for Kennedy that Ravenswood has been very favourably reported upon as a site for such an institution. Dr. Hare thinks an ideal site could be found there.

Mr. JACKSON : That won't satisfy me.

The HOME SECRETARY : I merely say it has been mentioned as an excellent place. I did not expect that it would satisfy the hon. member. I think I have given an excellent and sufficient reason why it is not desirable to increase the amount, and it must be remembered that Dunwich is always open to these people if they cannot with other assistance they get manage to live on the 5s. a week. I do not pretend to say for a moment that a man can live on 5s. a week as I should like to see him live. He might continue the barest possible existence on 5s. a week if he lived in a tent and had no rent to pay, but Dunwich would still be open to people so placed. The 5s. is sufficient for those who have friends who live with them, or who can earn a little for themselves, and a very large number of those in receipt of that relief do earn a little money, perhaps as much as another 5s. in the week.

Mr. JACKSON : Do you think New Zealand is too generous to its poor, in giving them 7s. a week ?

The HOME SECRETARY : I do not say that, but they work upon a different principle. I have pointed out before that if we adopted the scheme the hon. member advocates, and made the amount 7s. a week, under that scheme, we would save 50 per cent. of the amount we are spending under our system, and probably a majority of those debarred by the conditions would be more necessitous than those receiving relief in New Zealand. When I say we would save money, I mean in the present form of expenditure, but we would really have to spend more, and I venture further to say that there would not be the same number of deserving

persons who would receive relief. In proportion those who are in receipt of our allowance are more in need of it and more deserving than those in receipt of relief in New Zealand.

Mr. JACKSON: We are only spending £7,000 a year, while they are spending £200,000.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am speaking comparatively of the numbers in both colonies. There is always a difficulty—and New Zealand

experience corroborates it—in deciding whether applicants for old age pensions are deserving or not.

[5.30 p.m.] In this colony, those who are not deserving we can send to Dunwich; but in New Zealand they have to decide whether an applicant is entitled to a pension as a matter of right, or should be relegated to a benevolent asylum. That is a very invidious question for any man or body of men to decide, but it has to be decided in New Zealand, and there is a great deal of heart-burning in consequence, I know. I quite agree with the hon. member in this—that if we are to have any scheme of old age pensions—if we are to continue our present system—it must necessarily come out of the consolidated revenue. It would be quite impossible to do it out of local rates. Difficulties enough are met with in old countries where the population is settled to a very much greater degree than here; but here, with our shifting population, it would be an absolute impossibility to deal with such questions as this locally. A man moves about to wherever he can get work, and a very large percentage of the ordinary workmen would in the course of five years have been within as many as fifty different local authorities; and it would be absurd, under those circumstances, to say that the rates of the particular local authority where a man happened to be when he made application for his pension should necessarily be charged with it. It would be an accentuation of the difficulties which the hon. member has rightly indicated as likely to exist after federation in dealing with this as an inter-State question. As the hon. member pointed out, it is desirable that this should be a State and not a federal matter. Indeed I have never been able to understand why it was introduced into the Commonwealth Act. It has always seemed to me that it was unnecessarily taken over, but it probably may be accounted for by the fact that a certain number of persons are constantly shifting from one colony to another and would be left out under any State scheme. The hon. member alluded to the fact that in New Zealand they are spending a great deal more in this direction than we are. I do not know what the amount is for this year, but I understand it will be very nearly £200,000. I ventured to predict that last year, and I think the hon. member laughed at it.

Mr. JACKSON: I do not remember doing so.

The HOME SECRETARY: At all events he questioned the accuracy of my prophecy.

Mr. JACKSON: A good many Maories have come in, who were not anticipated; and even so, they are well satisfied to pay the money.

The HOME SECRETARY: But a good many people are dissatisfied because they do not get it, and think they ought to get it. I want to point this out, and the hon. member will correct me if I am wrong—I am speaking from memory—that in New Zealand they only endow their hospitals £1 for £1. I believe Queensland is the only colony which gives £2 to £1.

Mr. JACKSON: How does that affect the question?

The HOME SECRETARY: I think it affects the question very materially, because if we are to take New Zealand as the model colony, which the hon. member asks us to do, in charitable matters generally, the £40,000 a year which we should save by taking it from the hospitals and

giving it towards the old age pension fund, would scarcely find favour with a large majority of the people of this colony.

Mr. JACKSON: What difference will it make whether people put their hands in their pockets to endow the hospitals or pay the money into the consolidated revenue?

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. member were to ask the people which they would prefer—old age pensions and £1 for £1 for hospitals, or no old age pensions and £2 for £1 for hospitals—I think they would say they would rather have £2 for £1 for hospitals and our present system of outside allowance.

Mr. JACKSON: It is all the same. The money has to come out of the pockets of the people.

The HOME SECRETARY: We know that. I am merely pointing out to the hon. member that we come very much nearer to the wants of those old people even with the small amount we pay, including, of course, the extra endowment we give to our hospitals, which, I think, is a very desirable thing.

Mr. JACKSON: We spend £160,000 on charities, while New South Wales spends £500,000.

The HOME SECRETARY: Look at the difference in the population. New South Wales has three times our population.

Mr. JACKSON: They spend the same proportionate amount that we do, and yet they are bringing in a Bill based on the New Zealand lines.

The HOME SECRETARY: Perhaps we shall see a diminution of their charitable allowances in other directions. I am talking about New Zealand, the colony which has adopted this old age pension scheme, and is making a practical experiment with it—an experiment which is running into a good deal more money than was anticipated at the start. I do not claim to myself any particular knowledge, but I know what human nature is, and how squeezable are Ministers and Parliaments; and I ventured to say last year that it would not fall far short of £200,000 in New Zealand. With regard to publicity, I agree with the hon. member. If a person is deserving of this relief, I do not see why there should be any necessity for parading the fact. There is one more matter I should like to refer to—the matter to which the hon. member alluded in connection with the delays which are supposed to occur with regard to the administration of the fund in this colony. Those delays occur through the inquiries that have to be made before we can arrive at a decision as to whether the money should be granted or not. Those inquiries sometimes occupy many weeks, running perhaps, in some cases, to a couple of months. Inquiries have sometimes to be made in the other colonies as well as in distant parts of this colony. Sometimes individual hardships may occur in the case of very deserving people, through being kept out of the money so long; but the system now adopted is that, whenever an application comes before me, and there does not appear to be any doubt as to the merits of the case, I immediately minute that the allowance is to commence forthwith for a limited period of one, two, or three months, according to the length of time that the inquiries are likely to take, and the inquiries are made in the meantime. That is a matter which I may fairly mention in answer to the suggestion of the hon. member that in some cases delay occurs. As far as possible, that cause of complaint has been removed. I have little more to say on the subject, but for the reasons I have given, and the prospect we have before us of having a fund equal to perhaps £12,000 this year, and, it may be, equal to £15,000 or £20,000 in a year or two, which will be more far-reaching,

and do more all-round justice to the needy population than is the case in New Zealand, I think we ought to hesitate before we change our existing methods for any hard-and-fast old age pension system.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): It is quite evident from the debate that has taken place on this motion fortunately brought forward year after year by the hon. member for Kennedy, that the sympathies of hon. members are altering considerably as the matter is receiving further attention. It is fortunate that the experiment which has been tried in New Zealand, instead of being a temporary expedient, is likely to become a permanent benefit to the community and perhaps to civilisation all over the world. While I believe that protracted discussion of the motion can do no great good, and that it is not necessary to convince the majority of hon. members that such a resolution as this is a proper one to carry at this period in our history, I would suggest, as the Home Secretary has only objected to one paragraph in the series of resolutions, that if that particular paragraph were withdrawn the House would be prepared to accept the resolution and allow it to go to a division. There are a lot of people in the country who previously objected to old age pensions who are now just as anxious that some such scheme as has been tried in New Zealand should be introduced in this colony. I am at one with those hon. members who, while they admit that this is a matter which has been relegated to the Federal Parliament—and rightly so—at the same time believe that the initiation of the matter must rest with the State Parliaments, and provision is made in the Constitution for its being dealt with by those bodies. It is desirable that the local Parliaments should not wait until the Federal Parliament has had an opportunity of dealing with it but that those most in advance, as we claim to be, should take the lead in the matter. The hon. member for Mackay seems to smile at that.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Why shouldn't I?

Mr. FISHER: Well, that is an indication that under the present Government we are not advanced.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You always claim to be advanced. That is part of the business. You do it from necessity.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman will admit that there is necessity for some improvement in dealing with our old and unfortunate citizens.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Whatever you do you call it advanced.

Mr. FISHER: I am perfectly indifferent whether the hon. gentleman calls it an advance or not. He can call it a backward movement if he likes, if he will vote for it. Does the hon. gentleman think it would be a backward movement to introduce old age pensions?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: We have got them now, you see. You forget that while you have been talking the Government have been acting.

Mr. FISHER: My recollection of the matter is this: That, after the early discussions raised on the subject by the hon. member for Kennedy, the Government endeavoured to adopt an intermediate system, and, after a very strenuous debate in committee, the then Home Secretary, Sir Horace Tozer, promised that he would make an out-door allowance. That was the initiation of the present system. But does the hon. gentleman argue that, because this tentative scheme has been tried, it is to be the final issue of this question? Certainly not. From our point of view, the final issue must be the granting of a specific amount by way of pension to the aged poor in our midst. Of course those who follow us may be able to devise a more perfect scheme

still, such as is provided for in the Commonwealth Act, where provision is made for invalid as well as old age pensions; so that those distinguished individuals who drew up that Constitution looked forward to a broader a wider scheme than is proposed by the resolution now before us. Of course it is desirable that the matter should not be discussed at length, and I simply rose to express my gratification at hearing the different tone this afternoon to that when the question has been discussed on previous occasions.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am sure my tone has not changed since last session.

Mr. FISHER: I think the hon. gentleman unconsciously spoke in a more sympathetic manner this afternoon.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. FISHER: It is many years since I heard the question first discussed, and I remember how, on that occasion, it was received with jeering laughter and ridicule.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not by me.

Mr. FISHER: By some hon. members who are now present. They see it much better now.

The HOME SECRETARY: Whom do you refer to? Why don't you specify?

Mr. FISHER: I do not wish to provoke an acrimonious debate. What I would suggest is, that, as the Home Secretary has expressed himself against the principle of only one of the three resolutions—

The HOME SECRETARY: I wound up by expressing my disapproval of the resolution.

Mr. FISHER: It was so mild an expression that I am certainly in doubt as to whether the hon. gentleman is against the resolution or not. Certainly the bulk of his arguments were all in favour of it. They all indicated that sooner or later this question would be dealt with, and the only conclusion I could draw from his arguments was that he was doing his best under present circumstances. I shall say no more, because I think it is desirable that an expression of opinion should be given on the matter rather than that it should be debated, because I believe the great majority of members have made up their minds on the question.

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

Question put and passed.

Mr. JACKSON: I beg to move that the resumption of the debate be made an Order of the Day for the 23rd November.

Mr. McDONALD: I would like to ask the hon. member whether that day is going to be free or not, because I think it is a very important motion, and the hon. member certainly ought to try to get a division upon it. I was under the impression that a number of hon. members on the other side wanted to speak, and I suppose that is the idea of the adjournment?

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*): I think it is a great pity that we have not heard the hon. member for Mackay on this matter.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: If I had spoken for five minutes, you would then have said I was talking it out.

Mr. HIGGS: I hope that we shall have a very full discussion of this motion, and that hon. members on the other side will express their opinions, and not leave it to us to do all the talking. I am sure that the matter is of far more importance than the subject of the Hon. the Minister for Railways, and he is going to get a special day of his own. I think that we ought to have a special day for this. I would suggest that the hon. member for Kennedy should arrange with the Premier for a special day for the discussion of this motion.

Question put and passed.

MR. J. M. CROSS'S REPORTS TO THE
AGENT-GENERAL.

RESUMPTION OF THE DEBATE.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): When this motion was before the House last week the Chief Secretary was speaking on the matter, but he is not now present. I must confess that I think it would be a waste of money to have these reports printed and distributed to members of this House.

Mr. STEWART: Are they so bad as that?

The PREMIER: It is not that they are so bad, but they have already appeared in the papers in different parts of the country. They are extracts which are taken out by Mr. Cross, and handed by him to the Chief Secretary, who transmits them to the Agent-General, Sir Horace Tozer.

Mr. FISHER: With Cross's comments on them.

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

Mr. LESINA: With the Chief Secretary's comments on them, too.

The PREMIER: I have only seen one copy of them myself. Personally I do not object to copies being put on the table of the House for members to see for themselves. I understand Mr. Cross devotes a great deal of time to these reports.

Mr. REID: He has nothing else to do.

Mr. FISHER: And adds comments on the Labour party.

The PREMIER: Have you seen them?

Mr. FISHER: No, I did not say so.

The PREMIER: How do you know, then, that there are comments on the Labour party?

Mr. FISHER: You produce them, and I will tell you.

The PREMIER: He puts in a great deal of time in—

Mr. REID: In abusing the Labour party under a *nom-de-plume*.

The PREMIER: Sir Horace Tozer is a very busy man, and he has not time to wade through the papers of the colony, and it is a great advantage to him to have these reports to refer to. I know that if the hon. member for Gympie were the Agent-General in London, he would want something of the sort, though he might not engage Mr. Cross to do it.

Mr. LESINA: Oh, admit at once that it is a soft billet created specially for him.

The PREMIER: I think it is rather bad taste, especially for his opponent, the present member for Clermont, to raise the question—very bad taste indeed.

Mr. REID: That's too soft.

Mr. LESINA: You would not find a soft job for me if I were chucked out.

The PREMIER: I was thinking of commissioning the hon. member for Clermont to go to South Africa to bring back some of the trophies, that he was so interested in. Since the war commenced, the concern that he has taken in connection with the four contingents that have gone from here has certainly been deserving of every praise, and really he ought to have recompense in some way or other.

Mr. McDONALD: Why don't you do it?

Mr. LESINA: Put it on the Supplementary Estimates.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member for Clermont is willing to offer his services, without pay, I would not mind defraying the cost of his passage. (Laughter.)

Mr. McDONALD: Is that a bribe?

The PREMIER: I believe the country would make money out of the arrangement. The amount of money we now pay through the printing office—the extra amount we pay for printing whenever he addresses this House—would more

than recompense us for what it would cost to pay for his trip to South Africa. And I think I could name a few of his friends who might very well go with him. I am sure the House would be delighted if they would.

Mr. McDONALD: I suppose you would like the whole lot of us to go?

The PREMIER: No; there are some we could not do without. (Laughter.)

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

PORT NORMAN, NORMANTON, AND
CLONCURRY RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the debate on the second reading of this Bill—

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): In introducing this legislation the Minister asked why any mining member should object to it? Well, I think if there are any members of this House who should have a special and great objection to the Bill it should be the mining members. In the first place, the mining concessions granted by this Bill are not subject to the Mining Act of 1898. That is a great objection from the miners' point of view. The 1898 Act gives a great many advantages. It gives the advantage of inspection of mines, and seeing that they are in proper condition, and that the ventilation is pure. It also provides penalties in connection with accidents, and imposes a certain amount of labour conditions. Now, I consider that the omission of these things are grave defects in this Bill. I know that the lives of men connected with mining are badly enough protected as the law stands now, but I can say, from personal experience, that the state of affairs will be much worse under a measure of this sort. Then, again, there is the matter of residences. If there is one thing more than another which miners and mining members are jealous about it is in connection with mining homesteads and mining residence areas. Under the present law a miner can always take up a piece of ground and erect on it a suitable dwelling for himself.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Not if a syndicate have the surface rights.

Mr. RYLAND: That is what I am pointing out. This company will be exempt from the provisions of the Mining Act of 1898, consequently the miners will not have the same privileges which they now enjoy. Any hon. member who has been on Charters Towers or Gympie must have seen for himself the nice little homes that the miners have erected for themselves. They are their own, and the men are the tenants of the Crown. They take up a residence area of a quarter of an acre, and as long as they pay 5s. a year they cannot be dispossessed unless the land is required for mining purposes, and then they get the full value of the improvements awarded to them by the warden. That is all to be done away with under this Bill, and the company will hold the land in fee-simple. According to the Bill they are to be permitted to erect dwellings for the workmen; and these men, instead of living, as it were, under their own vines and figtrees, will simply become the tenants of the syndicate, with the result that they will have to pay very high rents indeed for the most miserable accommodation. I have seen, in this colony, in connection with other occupations, instances in which the employees were compelled to live in such tenements at very high rents indeed. If they did not they would not long keep their employment. It was not one of the conditions that they should. It was not a written condition, or even a

verbally expressed condition, but it was an understood condition, and anyone revolting against it, and providing his own dwelling, has had to look for work elsewhere.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Where was this?

Mr. RYLAND: I could give a good many instances.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Where?

Mr. RYLAND: I will give one—the Mungar sawmill.

Mr. STEPHENSON: That is not a mining town.

Mr. RYLAND: My contention is that under this Bill miners will be brought to the same low condition as people are in other parts of the colony, and that all their privileges in this respect will be wiped away. Then, again, it is the intention of the company to own warehouses and stores. The miners will be compelled to deal at those stores, and of course pay prices which will pay the syndicate. There will be no cutting of prices to get trade. There will be no cheap sales once or twice a month, but the employees will have to deal with the syndicate. It simply means the reintroduction of the truck system. This syndicate will have possession of all this country, and instead of working it themselves, their object will be to let out this land on tribute. They will get a very good royalty in that way. Taking it right through, this is a great menace to the working miners of the colony. Then this syndicate have this concession: that they can select 5,000 acres of mineral lands, and the only restriction is that this 5,000 acres must not extend further than sixty-five miles from the main railway. That condition will not be very stringent in its operation. Again, they are going to have a lease for fifty years, which is altogether different from our present law under which mining leases are only for twenty-one years. Again, there are no labour conditions in this company's lease. In fact, this company will not come under the mining law at all. They are to be subject to no royalty or any other charge, other than the rent proposed by the Bill. Other mining companies are subjected to royalties, the dividend and other taxes; yet this syndicate is to be free from all these, also this company is to get 10,000 acres of land in fee-simple, wherever they wish all along their line. There is no doubt this company will take up the best sites along their line, and, wherever a township is likely to spring up, they will take possession of it. So that there will not be much left for working men. Then this company is going to be granted ten acres for wharriage accommodation—that area will belong to this syndicate. Then they are to be allowed to charge 50 per cent. extra on their lines, for fares and freights, than on the Government lines—that is 50 per cent. more than is charged on the Government lines now; not on what the Government may charge in fifteen or twenty years' time. We know that as population increases it will be quite possible for the Government to charge lower fares on their lines; but there is no provision in this Bill for this syndicate to make any such reduction. Another concession is that this company will be exempt from the Valuation and Rating Act. In fact, this syndicate will not be subject to any taxation. If we turn to the old country, we find that an immense amount of taxation is derived from railways by the various local authorities there; but here we are going to give all these advantages of this private railway, and the local authorities concerned are going to derive no revenue from them at all. I don't see why this company should not be subject to the local authorities' rates. The local authorities in this district will have to build roads and bridges, and give this company other accommodation; and yet they are to be exempt from

taxation. The Minister for Railways in introducing the Bill told us that he wondered at the friends of the working man objecting to this Bill. He made out that the Government and this syndicate were the working man's friends, in that they would give them employment—that this syndicate was coming here to find the unemployed work. I don't think that will turn out to be the case. We find that Mr. Withers, whose name stands very prominent in connection with this matter, says that this company proposes to introduce a large number of settlers from the United Kingdom into these districts—that that is one of their objects. They are going to indent a lot of men to make this part of the country profitable to the company; to bring labour down to paying conditions. As we know, the objection in the old country to the Australian colonies is that wages are too high here, and therefore capital cannot be profitably invested here. According to the correspondence, the intention of this company is to bring out a large number of settlers to work at whatever wages and on whatever conditions this company chooses. Is that a desirable state of things? I think it would be better to let the coming of these people be ruled by what hon. members opposite sometimes preach but do not practise—that is, the law of supply and demand. They preach about finding work for the unemployed, but they are in favour of bringing out a large number of men to do the work for them. They are advocating an upside-down sort of legislation, which is not desirable. If the Government, instead of doing that, turned the business paper upside down I think the business of the House would go on much quicker. If, instead of bringing in syndicate railways, they bring in some State railways—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RYLAND: It would be better for the working men if the Government built these railways, instead of waiting for outside syndicates to come in and find work for the unemployed under these conditions. This company may not begin operations for four or five years, and during that time what is to become of the poor unemployed? If the Government were to build some of the State lines that are required they could find work for the unemployed inside of five months. The question arises: Why is this syndicate railway to be rushed through the House?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RYLAND: I find in the correspondence on this line, in a letter to the Chief Secretary, Mr. Withers says, "I shall be glad if you can introduce the Cloncurry Bill early in the ensuing session." I suppose that explains something of what we have been trying to find out as regards the introduction of these Bills first this session. We find that the business of this House and the country has to submit to the instructions received from this company, and consequently these Bills have to be brought in first, and all the other legislation has to be neglected. And this explains why we hear so much from the other side about wasting time when we stand up to criticise these Bills.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYLAND: We were told last night that if the people of this district did not get this railway they would get no railway at all—that it was a question of either a syndicate railway or none. I cannot understand that. By what I have read and heard of the resources of the district I think it would be a good district for a State railway, and I would like to see it carried out by the State, because if it would pay a syndicate to build the line I am satisfied it would pay the State. This House cannot make all the railways asked for by a clamouring public or by

syndicates or by persons interested. They must have some way of gauging the railways that would certainly pay and those that would not; but I think in a case like this, where there perhaps would not be unanimity as to the capability of the district to support a railway, I think it would be a good thing to adopt the suggestion made by the hon. member for Rockhampton. When a company like this has large interests in mineral or other lands in a district—where they have a joint interest with the Government, as it were, they should be prepared to pool their interest with the Government and say that if the Government would stand half the expense of building the railway they would stand the other half of the expense. And the Government in a case like that should be prepared, when the line paid anything over 2 per cent., to hand that over to the company, and continue to hand over to the company anything over 2 per cent. until the company received back their share of the expense of constructing the line. But they should not allow the control of the line to fall into the hands of the syndicate. And in refunding this money to the syndicate I think the Government should allow them 3 or 3½ per cent. interest. In that way both the people and the company would have the advantage of the railway, and the company would have only half the risk they would have otherwise. I think that would be a fair way to meet special cases like this. I am satisfied that the public credit, as regards borrowing money to build suitable lines, is inexhaustible, and within six or eight months—as soon as the war fever goes down a bit—we could get any amount of money at 3½ per cent., which is a good deal less than is being paid for the money that built most of our lines. We know that the £10,000,000 loan cost £4 2s. 6d. per cent., and our last loan, which was supposed to be a partial failure, was got at about £3 12s. per cent. I am not going to say that this district or any other district should have no railway at all. I am in favour of an alternative scheme, by which the country would be opened up, and I think the scheme mentioned by the hon. member for Rockhampton is a suitable one to meet such a case as the one now under consideration. We know the way this district will be treated if it falls into the hands of a private railway company. The company will not allow legitimate investment; the people will be under the domination of railway lords and will not be able to call their souls their own, but will have to submit to the powers that be. The history of private railways all over the civilised world proves that. Even in England and Ireland the people are crying out for the Government to buy out the railways at any cost.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Not at all. Perfectly illusory.

Mr. RYLAND: I say the ruling sentiment in England and Ireland is that the State should take over the railways.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is no such demand.

Mr. RYLAND: Here we are asked to go in the opposite direction. It has been the settled policy of the country that our railways should be built by the State, but the hon. member for Bulloo told us last night that if we want to progress we must go in for these private railways. I say that if we do that we should be progressing backwards. If we depart from the policy of the State ownership of railways we should be going backwards and not progressing. I should not be surprised to find that the next thing the Government will do will

[7:30 p.m.] be to advocate that it is for the best interests of the country, and of all concerned, that we should sell the State rail-

ways, and spend the money on immigrants or something else. I should not be surprised to hear them saying that the Government are not competent to administer the railways of the colony, and that the only thing to be done to save the credit of the country and the credit of the Ministry is to sell the railways by auction. That would only be in keeping with the arguments hon. members opposite have advanced in connection with this Bill. We know what a splendid country the North of Queensland is; ever since I have been in the colony I have heard that Queensland has to look for the best part of her riches in the Northern portion of the colony. And now we find that it is proposed to hand over that part of the country to foreign syndicates to exploit at the expense of the working men of the colony. Hon. members dispute my assertion that in other countries they are not going in this direction with regard to the construction and ownership of railways. Well, what are the facts? The Government of Prussia are becoming the owners of State railways. Very recently they purchased about 12,000 miles of railway at an expense of over £420,000,000. That is a big sum, but they consider that they have assets equal to it in their State railways. I do not hold with those people who say, "Look at our public debt per head!" That is no criterion of the condition of a country. The question is: What are our assets per head? Those other countries which have a less public debt per head than we have have not got the assets we possess. Look at our railways, our land, and our public buildings, and put those as assets against our liabilities. It is not what a man owes, but what he has to meet his debts, that determines his position. When you make up accounts and balance assets and liabilities, that shows the real condition of a country, as it does the real condition of a man's private affairs. We have also been told in this debate to look at the prosperity of America and Canada, and we have been asked what would America be if she had not private railways? What would America be if she had been equal to the occasion and built her own railways? That is the question. I think she would be a far greater America to-day if she had State railways than she is with private railways. This argument reminds me of two men who were heard at one time talking about their boys. They had two grown-up young men, and one was saying what a great boy his was, that he was 6 feet high and only nineteen years of age, when the other said, "Yes; but look what he would be if he had three meals a day?" America may be a very great country with private railways, but what would she be if she had State railways? What would she be if she had her rights and got her three feeds a day? What would America be if she were not starved by private railway syndicates?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Private enterprise has made America.

Mr. RYLAND: Last night one hon. member said that the Northern part of Queensland had more than its share of State railways according to its population. Look at the mileage of railways we have here in proportion to population compared with the mileage in Great Britain. We are part of the British Empire, and we are one people one destiny as far as that goes. In Great Britain the population for every mile of railway is 1,888, while in Australia there are only 339 persons for every mile of railway. But because we have such a large amount of railways in proportion to our population as compared with Great Britain, that does not say that we should not build any more railways. It is the sparsity of population that makes the great disproportion in our case, and there are not so many people in the North of Queensland as

there are in the South. It is where the population is dense that the passenger traffic is the best means of making a revenue from our railways. It has been said that in Great Britain the fares and freights on private railways are less than those which prevail here. Why should they not be less? It is the density of population that enables them to charge lower rates, and if the State ran the railways in Great Britain I am quite satisfied they would run them at one-half the rates now charged by private companies. The men working on those private syndicate railways are not as well paid and have not the same privileges as men working on railways under State control. What are the porters and other employees on the railways in the old country? It is the most debasing position that any working man can be placed in. They carry one's portmanteau—they do the work, and then they have to beg. Is that a proper position for any man to be placed in?

Mr. STEWART: You can get nothing done.

Mr. RYLAND: As the hon. member says, you can get nothing done, and sometimes you have to pay twice over. I remember that at one time, in London, a porter came up and told you where the 'bus was, and another carried your portmanteau, and both had to be paid. That is the condition of men on railways constructed and managed by private enterprise. The owners of those railways can charge high rates, and differential rates, and you have also to pay the employees; you are asked not to forget the porter. That is not the case in connection with State railways.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is far more so.

Mr. RYLAND: I have never been approached on a State railway for anything in the way of a tip.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: You have not travelled very far.

Mr. RYLAND: I have never been approached for a tip anywhere in any of the Australian States.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If you travelled on the State railways on the continent of Europe you would see it.

Mr. RYLAND: If a man is carrying a few parcels on a private railway it costs him as much to carry the parcels as for himself. As regards the conditions of employment on private railways, the Chillagoe Company are looking for a competent stationmaster at Chillagoe, and are offering £130 a year, and they have sent notices to that effect all round the Railway Department. Well, at Redlynch, a little side station on the Government railway in the same district, not nearly as large as Chillagoe, for there is only one public-house and no traffic there, the stationmaster, according to the Blue-book gets £174 a year. The stationmaster at Kuranda gets £182 a year, and the stationmaster at Mareeba gets £208. That shows the difference between the condition of employees under the State and their condition under private syndicates. But, for this £130 a year, this syndicate must have not only a competent man, but a single man. So that they not only cut down wages, but they go right into the very social life of the individual. He is entirely at their mercy; and for that reason alone hon. members are justified in going against private syndicate railways. I may be told, as other hon. members have been told, that we are only wasting time in pointing out this—

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYLAND: And that all this has been said before. It has been said twice over before, but we must remember that all the hon. members opposite have not been always in the Chamber. There may be some here now

who were not here before, and it is only fair that they should have an opportunity of hearing these arguments put forward. Further than that I believe in repetition. I believe in keeping hammering at it until you get a hearing, and get people to appreciate and adopt what you are saying. I believe that if we only keep talking long enough we can persuade the Government to our way of thinking as regards these railways. As an example in point, what do we find? Hon. members on the other side have raised the cry that we are "wasting time," and have repeated it; the newspapers have taken it up and repeated that we are wasting time, and I was really asked in the street the other day if we were wasting time. The people outside have begun really to believe it. By the sheer force of the repetition of the same old argument and the same old cry, the people really begin to believe it. No, I say we are not wasting time. No, I say we are lightning legislators, as regards the way this kind of business is carried on in this House. The leader of the Labour party on the subject of waste of time showed the other day that for the last twelve years the debate on the Address in Reply took an average of—

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the question before the House.

Mr. RYLAND: On the question of private railways I pointed out before the effect of similar legislation to this in other places, and referred to the effect they have on the business morality of a nation generally. I pointed out that the corruption in America in connection with private railways has been something appalling. It is most undesirable that anything of that kind should be introduced into this colony. Perhaps hon. members opposite do not think it possible that such a thing could come about here, but the same causes will work out the same effects. In connection with the matter I quoted from that estimable work of Mr. Stead's, "If Christ came to Chicago," and it is a book which every member of this House should have and read. He shows the effects of these large syndicates upon the business morality of the people, showing that these companies influence the judges on the bench, the members of the legislature, and the aldermen of the council of Chicago. I make this short quotation showing how it is done—

If it is a small matter a trifle will suffice. It is a very different matter, however, when the question is one involving a railway or a new gas ordinance. Then much more elaborate machinery is employed. . . . The first desideratum is a safe man. . . . This gentleman is usually outside the council, but he commands the confidence of both parties in the transaction.

That reminds me of something quoted the other night by the hon. member for Rockhampton, in connection with a letter to some person outside this House, referring to a certain consideration, if he did certain things to assist this legislation. When the hon. member, Mr. Kidston, made the statement that he saw the letter, the Premier said if he would produce it he would abandon the Bill. That again reminds me that like causes produce like effects. They do not confine it to the members of the legislature. The first desideratum is a safe man, and this man is generally got outside the House or the Council, as the case may be. Mr. Stead goes on to say that this man is the go-between, that all transactions go through him, and that all money is paid into his hands. They are also very careful, as Mr. Stead points out, that there is to be no correspondence. It is considered that writing letters in connection with such matters is not a safe thing to do; they are apt to turn up at inopportune times. They are considered not safe, and the go-between does his business by

word of mouth. We have not had that experience yet, but we may have it very soon, I am afraid, if this legislation is carried on. Mr. Stead also says that this thing is known to be going on. He says every newspaper man in Chicago will tell you that a system of hoodlery is going on all the time, but they cannot put their finger on it. And even if they did, what would be the use. There are sixty-eight members of the Chicago Council, and it is supposed there are not more than ten honest men among them. They say that in any case they could only send two or three men to gaol, and the thing would go on just the same.

Mr. FISHER: Who will send them to gaol?

Mr. RYLAND: I suppose if they were brought before the judges, and the judges were not got at, as they are said to be in America, they might get a sentence and then be let off under the First Offenders Act. But it is not very likely they would be brought to justice at all. Consequently people say, "What is the good of interfering? We cannot get justice, and all our exertions go for nothing." But it sometimes happens that the hoodler gets hoodled, and Mr. Stead gives an instance of this. A great railway corporation required a certain franchise, which was vetoed by the mayor, and a two-thirds majority was needed to carry it over the mayor's veto. Only one man was wanted to make up the requisite majority. One man who had fiercely opposed the measure all along, was speaking in opposition to it at the meeting. It was an excellent speech, a far better speech than I could make under any circumstances. While he was denouncing the proposal most vigorously someone came behind him and put an envelope into his hands, and on the corner of the envelope was written "1,000 dollars." He continued his discourse. He said the principle in general was a bad one, but there were peculiarities in that case which demanded consideration. "I am opposed," he said, "to the principle of these railways and to this franchise being granted, but there are exceptional circumstances here which I think deserve our consideration, and I, for one, although I have opposed it all along, am quite prepared, under the circumstances, to vote for this franchise." He did so. He put the envelope unopened into his pocket, went home, and gave it to his wife, saying, "I have done a very good day's work; here is a thousand-dollar bill for you." The wife opened the envelope, and lo and behold! it was only a bill for 100 dollars. That man, no doubt, felt very bad when the discovery was made. A hoodler may go on a long time, but occasionally he gets hoodled by men who are cleverer hoodlers than himself. I trust no such system will be allowed to obtain a footing in this country. Hitherto we have stood on a high pedestal of honesty, and we should remain there. We should shun the very appearance of evil, but I fear that if we introduce this system here its influences may have the same effect in Queensland and in Australia as they are having in America at the present time. The spirit may be very willing in those matters, but the flesh is very weak. Our public men, as a rule, have held a very high position with regard to corruption or anything like that, and I should like them to continue so; but I am afraid that if legislation like this now before the House is allowed to go on it will bring about the most disastrous effects. The other day we had some startling disclosures in connection with a certain mining prospectus, which go to show us that "coming events cast their dark shadows before." The newspapers said, with regard to that prospectus, that discrepancies had crept in. It is certain that a great many things had crept out of it. In one case, what should have appeared as '12 actually appeared as 12 per cent.

The SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. RYLAND: Those things are looming in the distance. The names of some of our best public men are getting connected with them. Some of our leading men have already been the unfortunate victims of those syndicates that are laying their plans in this country. When we see men like the Hon. Mr. Brentnall and the Hon. Mr. Archibald, whose names are on this particular prospectus, becoming the unfortunate victims of those syndicates, what are we to expect?

What can we expect from the average man in the street when the reputations of [8 p.m.] men of standing and experience in the community are temporarily under a shadow through these syndicates? The House should consider this question gravely, and not advance any further with this legislation. We find in the papers that were laid on the table last night another great revelation. We find that our public servants have been approached. Mr. Rands has been approached, with a view to getting him to report on certain mining properties; and, if what is reported about the city is true, we should wait till these reports are laid before hon. members, when we would be in a better position to decide the matter. We take a grave responsibility on our shoulders if we allow these syndicates to come into the colony, as they propose to do, and we shall find ourselves in the same position as America. We read in the Press to-day that a certain Mr. Duffy offers Mr. Rands a consideration, which he tells him is equivalent to £2,000 or £3,000, if he will make a certain report on a certain mining property in connection with these railways. We also find the same Mr. Duffy is said to have given Mr. Dunstan some straight talk on the question of how to conduct his business; how to write his reports in connection with certain properties; and he also said that if the report was what he would like it to be he could make his own terms. He said, "Just you make the report to order on this mining property, and then it is a question of what you like best."

Mr. DUNSFORD: In other words, "What is your price?"

Mr. RYLAND: Yes, "What is your price?" That is a sad state of affairs, and it bodes ill for the future fair fame of Queensland. Another gentleman also writes to Mr. Rands, and says, "If you say that a certain mining property is the grandest and—"

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not know what the hon. member is quoting from, but it does not appear to me to have any bearing upon the question before the House.

Mr. RYLAND: I was trying to point out the evil effect these syndicate railways will have upon the moral tone of the community. There are names which appear in connection with the correspondence about the Bill which is now before the House which also appear in connection with the prospectus of the North Chillagoe Company. The name of Mr. F. T. Brentnall occurs twelve times in this correspondence, and I would like to know if this is the same Mr. Brentnall who has been one of the unfortunate victims of the North Chillagoe Company. If so, is it not likely that he may also be victimised by this Cloncurry Railway syndicate?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RYLAND: Other names also appear in this correspondence—Mr. Featherstonhaugh and Mr. Archibald—and I, for one, do not like to see men of such standing victimised. We should do our best to prevent this Bill going through. The Premier stated the other night that if it could be proved that anything like what the hon. member

for Rockhampton spoke of had happened in connection with this Bill, he would at once withdraw it. Well, I hope the hon. gentleman will act up to the spirit of his promise. I have a duty to perform to the House and to the country, and I raise my voice against this legislation, because I can see that such legislation is bound to lead to bad results. I put up the red light of warning to prevent the country rushing to destruction. I remember the circumstances in connection with the Kelly gang. On one occasion a train full of passengers was rushing along, and one individual, who had heard that the rails had been pulled up and that there was danger ahead, and that there was likely to be a great smash, rushed out and put up a red light. The train was stopped, and the lives of all the passengers were saved. We, on this side of the House, raise the red light with regard to these railways. We see the danger ahead, and in order to protect the lives and happiness of the citizens of Queensland, we raise the red light. Our sole wish is to prevent anyone becoming a victim to this legislation. It is the most undesirable legislation that could be brought in. Especially if all the concessions are granted that are asked for, it will have a most dire effect upon the mining industry. No longer will the miner be the free man that he has been in the past in Australia, but he will become the slave of the syndicates. Why is it, I ask, that the mining community should be singled out to be subjected to this treatment, and all other industries allowed to go free? Is it that up to the present the miner has been too independent for the advance of capitalistic civilisation? Now, looking at the representatives, not only in this House, but in the Houses of legislation in Australia, what do we find? We find that every mining centre has been represented by democratic representatives, with the exception, as far as I can make out, of Mount Morgan, and that simply because Mount Morgan is under, as it were, a large syndicate. Is there any underground engineering going on to bring all the goldfields, the mineral districts, and the mineral portions of Queensland under the same conditions? Is the independent miner to be crushed out, and is this democracy going to be wiped out, and brought into a state similar to that which exists in Mount Morgan at the present time? I say it looks very much like it. I say that the independence and the privileges that the miner has enjoyed are supposed to be too much, and are they to be taken from him, and the mineral lands to be handed over, not in pieces, but in block, to syndicates. I hope that this House will never pass this railway Bill.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*): I do not think that the charge of wasting the time of the House can be levelled at me, but I intend to make the few remarks that I have to make this evening on this question as brief as possible. I would like to say this at the outset: That earlier in one of these debates I heard the leader of the Opposition say, in answer to a question whether Parliament had degenerated, that he had been told very often that Parliament had become degenerated. Now, I have been in this House for the same period as he has been, and I may say that in the earlier part of my experience we used to find that the principle of a measure was discussed at the second reading, and the details were left severely alone, or if we attempted to deal with them we were very quickly pulled up. Has this been carried out in this debate? Hon. members on both sides have been discussing the freights which might be established under this system.

Mr. HIGGS: That is the principle of the Bill.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: It is not the principle of the Bill. I take it that the principle is the

question of building or allowing to be built in Queensland railways by private enterprise. That is the principle.

Mr. HIGGS: That is nonsense.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: If it is the hon. member's idea of common sense, I do not think it is a very high standard. I say that in my opinion that is the principle, and that is the principle that we should affirm or negative on the second reading, and then pass the details in committee. I do not blame hon. members on either side of the House for having been forced into the difficult position in which they are. I do not blame them for being placed in the position of having to deal with these several suggestions, in the way they have been dealt with in this Chamber; but I blame the Government, and more particularly the Minister, for the way in which this legislation has been brought down. I think that the legislation in regard to the building of these private railways should have been incorporated in a general principle; that the several suggestions for building these private railways should have been brought down as separate suggestions connected with the one main principle. If that had been done, we would have accepted or rejected the principle of building of private railways in Queensland, but we are not in that position. We have either got to accept one and reject another. I may say with regard to the bringing down of the principle of the construction of railways by private effort that to get a measure or law, which would embody that principle, you would have to constitute an authority outside this House, who would have to discuss each proposition before they were brought down here for discussion. Probably objection might be taken to that, but the same objection was taken to the separation of the affairs of Parliament hundreds of years ago, when the question of removing from the Parliament the right of passing sentences upon murderers or anybody else arose. The principle is a good one and a sound one, and had you that competent authority outside the House to deal with each of these suggestions, and bring their conclusions to the House, we would have had something to work upon. We could have either accepted or rejected it.

Mr. HIGGS: What clause are you discussing now?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I am discussing the principle of bringing down this legislation in the way it has been. I take this position here: that the principle has never been attacked by hon. members, either on one side of the House or the other, during the whole of this debate. There has been the detail of this proposal to build this railway from Normanton to Cloncurry—the whole of the detail has been discussed, but the principle of the Bill has never been. And although objection is taken to it, the opposition that has been raised here has been taken from the building of similar railways, or a similar system of railway construction in other countries, notably in America. Now, the principle of private railway construction in America has never been discussed in this House. All the objections that arise under the American system have been discussed.

Mr. KIDSTON: Surely this is a Daniel come to judgment!

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I say the objections that have been raised by hon. members have been objections raised to the principle which operated in America; but after all, when you come to examine them, these very objections spring from a system which is entirely different from the proposition as introduced here. What is the history of private railway construction in America? You find that a large number of the States gave several concessions—concessions

which came into competition with one another—in the country over which they had jurisdiction. These very concessions came into contact with one another at different periods; and you find that later on each of these concessionaires, or corporations, amalgamated or formed trusts, in which the whole of a large system, or several systems, were incorporated. In one instance, I know thirteen or fourteen systems were incorporated as one. They became so strong that they were able to force the legislation of the States in whichever direction they wished. And, when all is said and done, the basis of the argument is that what moved for the success of the system in America will move for its successful working here; and if you have not human honesty in America, are you likely to have more human honesty in Queensland?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Certainly.

MR. ARMSTRONG: The experience we have, I think, is that you are not likely to get more in one than another.

MR. DAWSON: You are judging from Ministerial experience.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I am judging from my knowledge of the opposite side. I say if you have individual responsibility by a board such as I have mentioned, you then get closer to actual honesty. The closer you get to responsibility, the closer you get to honesty, and it is more difficult to get corporate honesty than to get individual honesty. Coming now to this project, I can see no reason why it should not be accepted. Most of the objection raised by hon. members opposite has been because the syndicate would possess so much power, and that leads me up to what their real objection is. I take it that the real objection of hon. members opposite to private railways is that in the very near future you will find that these privately worked systems of railway will afford us such an object lesson of economy that the Government will be bound to follow in their track.

MR. DAWSON: Sack all the railway servants.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I do not say that, but I point out that hon. members' knowledge of the railway service of this country is that every farmer's or tradesman's son who can get employment on the railways gets it on account of the high wages paid.

MR. W. HAMILTON: Are they too high?

MR. ARMSTRONG: I am not prepared to say that they are; but the fact remains that not one vacancy remains open for a day, and that there are twenty or thirty to fill it.

MR. HIGGS: What does that prove?

MR. ARMSTRONG: If it proves anything it proves that the rate of wages outside is lower than the rate paid in the railway service. However, I do not wish to be drawn away from my subject. What I have pointed to is the trouble in front of hon. members opposite. They see that there is a possibility of these private railways being worked more economically than the State railways, and that there is a strong probability of the country turning round and saying, "You will have to work our railways on a more economical basis than you have been doing."

MR. KIDSTON: Work the employees for less wages?

MR. DAWSON: You mean to say that the employees will have to be sweated.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I do not know what the hon. gentleman means by referring to sweating in that connection. If there is nothing in that contention, then I hold there can be no possible harm whatever in allowing a trial of the system of privately owned railways in this colony. I know the country through which this line will

pass, probably as well as any member in this House, with the exceptions of the hon. members for Carpentaria and Flinders. I have been over it, carrying my swag, and have had leisure to study its various features. There are any number of men in the South who do not understand this country, and they think that a concession is being given in a valuable portion of Queensland which is capable of close settlement immediately. I maintain that certainly during the term the company will hold the railway—that is, fifty years—there is not the slightest possibility of the country being wanted for closer settlement.

MR. KIDSTON: The same was said of the Darling Downs thirty years ago.

MR. ARMSTRONG: There is a vast difference between the Darling Downs and this country. The one has a regular rainfall; the other has not. Wherever you get a regular rainfall there you are sure of being able to settle an agrarian population, but where you have no regular rainfall you have no chance of settling an agrarian population.

MR. KIDSTON: The prophets of thirty years ago did not speak in that way.

MR. ARMSTRONG: No, they did not say so, because in those days the country was not known and the population was extremely sparse. But there were some men, notably men like the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, who always believed in the future of that portion of Queensland, and pinned their faith to it. How many men in this House are there who will assert that the Gulf country is likely to be wanted at an early date for close settlement?

MR. HARDACRE: How do you know what improvements in agriculture will take place during the next thirty years?

MR. ARMSTRONG: I know that whatever improvements take place there is a huge area of land there which under no possible circumstances can be closely settled for the next fifty, sixty, or even 100 years.

MR. BROWNE: It has been said that it will be the most thickly populated portion of Australia.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes, with a mining population no doubt, but so far as any other form of settlement is concerned, there is no hope of the country being required for many years to come.

MR. STEWART: Is it ordinary pastoral country?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Except the Donor's Hill part of the route, I question whether there is a piece of sheep country on the whole route. On portions of it sheep have been taken. Indeed, I myself, in 1881 and 1882, took over 12,000 ewes and lambs beyond Donor's Hill, but they had afterwards to be removed. Because sheep have once been on country, you cannot therefore call that sheep country. It is not at all likely that you will get people to settle permanently on the country unless they have railway communication. And that brings me to the question as to whether the Crown can afford to build the railway. That really is the most important question, and was gone into thoroughly last night by the hon. member for Bulloo. The Southern portion of Queensland is at the present time taxed to a great extent for the purpose of building railways in the North. (Opposition laughter.)

MR. KIDSTON: The whole of the Northern railways give a better return than the whole of the Southern railways.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Where there is a thickly settled population it is hardly to be expected that they, by taxation, will find the money to pay interest on all the lines wanted for the North of Queensland.

MR. DAWSON: Our lines pay the best now.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: But the hon. member knows quite well that if a line is built by the Government from Normanton to [8:30 p.m.] Cloncurry, or from Croydon to Georgetown, there is no possibility in the near future of its paying interest on the cost of construction. Hon. members must know that the trunk lines in the South have paid well.

Mr. REID: Which ones?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The trunk lines in the South have paid well; but it has been the branch lines which have decreased the revenue in the South.

Mr. W. THORN: Not the lot.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Speaking generally, that is so.

Mr. STEWART: Only a couple of lines in the South pay.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Apart from that, we look upon railways as a necessity, and it must be admitted, and I think it is admitted, that the Government are not able to borrow sufficient money to carry on the whole railway construction that is required in Queensland. Numberless lines have been promised in fairly populated districts, and hon. members must admit that if we can find the money we should build the lines which will do the greatest good to the greatest number; but that argument cannot be applied to the Normanton-Cloncurry district.

Mr. DAWSON: Why?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Because there are greater demands for railway construction in more thickly-populated parts of the colony.

Mr. BROWNE: That is the trouble. The Southern people foist syndicates on the North, in order that they may get the lines down here built by the State.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: There is one other argument that supports me in my contention that a trial of this kind should be made. At any rate, it is said that if it will pay this company to construct this line, it will pay the Government to build it, and therefore the Crown should build it. But I hold that this line is to be built for speculative purposes, and therefore I think all hon. members will admit that it is wrong to ask the Government to build it. A company may undertake the construction of this line, because they think the railway will help to make the mines pay. But I am convinced that if any good results, in the way of increasing settlement in the South, directly or indirectly, by the building of this line, it will come whether it is built by a syndicate or by the Government. Hon. members have attacked this principle of private railway construction, and have pointed out that this private syndicate would charge rates of freightage that would be prohibitive as far as settlers there are concerned. But is it likely that any private corporation would cut their own throats by doing such a thing. I think such a contention is absurd. That may be an argument that may influence the man on the corner, but there is no real strength in it.

Mr. KIDSTON: Are you referring to any particular clause in the Bill?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I am not. I am speaking in reply to the contention of hon. members opposite. There can be no possible harm in asking this House to fix a maximum rate which may be charged by these corporations. You safeguard the whole of the principle of the proposal by doing that. I can conceive no possible harm or danger that can arise to settlers if you make that provision. I think that principle will commend itself to the House and to this portion of Queensland. We have been told that it is not accepted by the people of the North; but my own experience is that the people of the North will welcome this as much as the

people in the South. I have no diffidence in saying that I will vote for the second reading of this measure, which embodies the principle I have supported on other Bills. I do not agree with a great many of the clauses in the Bill, but they are capable of amendment in committee. And when the Bill comes into committee I shall vote for any amendments that I think desirable. I shall give my vote for the second reading of this measure on the main principle.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*): The hon. member who has just sat down may have no doubt about my position on this measure. I say at once that I am opposed to the principle of railway construction by private enterprise. There is no doubt as to the attitude of hon. members on this side of the House on that point. I was rather amused at the hon. member in his remarks in supporting the construction of railways by private enterprise. He made out that the State was a benevolent employer, and he said that no vacancy on State railways was allowed to exist longer than a day or two. I suppose he would be better pleased if the State was a hard employer; if it had some difficulty in getting men; if the State paid less wages, and if the cost of carrying on our railways was reduced by adopting the familiar method of sweating State employees. Now, I don't think that is desirable at all. It would be much better for the State to build all these railways and treat their employees and customers well. Why should we abandon the principle which has produced most excellent results in Queensland? I think this is the most extraordinary of all private syndicate proposals that have been brought before the House this session. It is no other than a proposal to hand over one of the principal highways of the colony to a syndicate. I am one of those old-fashioned people who believe that the highways in our community should be under the control of the community. I believe also that under no circumstances that I can conceive of is it possible for railway construction by private enterprise to be better than railway construction by the State. That is my belief, and all the available evidence goes to prove that contention. Great Britain has been pointed out to us as a splendid example of what private enterprise in railway building has done. I can only say that for a number of years an agitation has been growing up there in favour of the State resuming the railways and placing them under its own control; and I also know that a number of these railway companies have been compelled to incur very large expense in fighting each other, as to which company shall be permitted to build certain roads, and as to whether certain other roads should be built at all. I know that huge sums of money have been spent in that way; I know also that between the royalties that had to be paid to the mineowners and the heavy freights charged by the railway companies, in some cases material could be bought more cheaply on the continent of Europe than in Great Britain itself. I remember specially one instance where, for the municipal buildings in Glasgow, iron was bought in Belgium at a lower rate than it could be supplied in Glasgow itself, in the very centre of the iron and coal district. This incident caused a great deal of discussion, and the whole question was gone into thoroughly, and the cause was proved to be the high royalties demanded by the landowners and the high freights demanded by the railway companies. And the same thing held good all over Great Britain. The United States have also been pointed out as another example of the benefits of private enterprise in railway building. No doubt the United States have been developed very rapidly. That is apparent to everyone, but I think it is very questionable whether, if the railways had

been built by the United States themselves and had been under their control, that that community would not have progressed at a much more rapid rate. I think it is very questionable also whether the people of the United States would not have been better off to-day if the railways there had been built by the State. It is well known—and hon. members opposite ought to know it very well—that there is hardly a solvent farmer in the whole of the United States of America—that the great proportion of them are mortgaged to one or other of the railway companies. The whole thing has been discussed at such great length and the minutiae of all the questions have been gone into so fully and completely that I don't think there can remain the slightest doubt in the mind of any impartial individual as to whether railway construction by the State is not better than railway construction by private enterprise; and that being the case, it appears to me to be a most extraordinary step which the Government proposes to take. Some hon. members opposite admit that State control is better than private enterprise; some, however, curious to say, hold a different opinion. One hon. gentleman who spoke last evening glorified private enterprise. He said that private enterprise had made the world what it is to-day. I have not the slightest intention of saying anything in opposition to private enterprise, but I would like hon. members to think of this: The spade has done excellent work in agriculture, the plough has done excellent work, the scythe has done excellent work, the reaping-hook has done excellent work, the horse and the ass have been beasts of burden for centuries. But when steam was invented the horse had to go, and the ass was very rarely put in harness. The spade has been abandoned, and the single-furrow plough has in a great measure given place to the double, treble, and four-furrow plough; and on the harvest fields, instead of the reaping-hook and the scythe, we find machines which do the work much more rapidly and effectively, and cheaper, than under the old system; and because the scythe and the spade and the reaping-hook did their work, and the horse and the ass—if I may bring that intelligent animal into this discussion—is that any reason why, after steam was invented, we should say, "Oh, no! Let us go on as we have been doing. We have been alright. Why make a change?" That was just the very argument used in opposition to Mr. Stephenson when he introduced the steam-engine. One very wise individual put a question to Mr. Stephenson which he thought was a poser. He said, "Now, your steam-engine may be alright; but what will happen if a cow gets on the line?" Mr. Stephenson very promptly said, "It would be a very bad thing for the cow." That is just the position of hon. members opposite. They tell us that private enterprise has done so much for the world that we should not abandon it. But I say we have found something better than private enterprise. We have found that public enterprise is much better, much more effective, much more conducive to the welfare and happiness of any community than private enterprise. Therefore, we propose to abandon the old thing—not because it is bad, but because we have found something that is much more effective and much more conducive to the happiness of the human family. One hon. gentleman who spoke here last evening, with that modesty which is characteristic of him, compared himself to a light. All I can say is that his light is only a spluttering tallow dip. I suppose the hon. gentleman imagined that his little slush lamp was the sun; but, if he thinks that, I can assure him that other members do not hold such a high opinion of his illuminating qualities.

Mr. DAWSON: That is because they don't know.

Mr. STEWART: They don't know, and I don't believe they will ever learn. That gentleman was specially loud and forcible in his advocacy of private enterprise. I don't see that private enterprise has been such a success in many directions. We find that the very industry which that gentleman so ably and effectively represents in this Chamber has been buttressed and supported by the State ever since its inception, but it has not been able to walk alone.

Mr. BELL: To whom are you alluding?

Mr. STEWART: I am alluding to the hon. member for Bulloo. I say that the industry which that hon. gentleman so effectively represents has had to lean upon the State ever since its inception, and it is leaning more heavily to-day on the State than it has ever leaned before at any period of its existence. All the while the virtues of private enterprise are in the mouths of those individuals, just as certainly all the while they are leaning all they know against the State post.

Mr. DAWSON: Begging cap in hand.

Mr. STEWART: Well, they do not beg so much.

Mr. LESINA: They demand.

Mr. STEWART: They demand, and their demands are conceded. That hon. member last evening, with that ingenuousness which is characteristic of him, told us with a great flourish of trumpets what New South Wales is doing in the matter of building railways by private enterprise. He said, "Here is the oldest colony in the group, a colony which is six times more thickly populated than Queensland, a colony which has got to be ruled by the Labour party, and it is going in for the construction of railways by private enterprise." Now, I have gone into this question. What are the railways the hon. member alluded to? They are little coal sidings; one is one mile in length, another is twenty miles long, and a third is six and a-half miles long. But there is one very important matter in connection with these little sidings that the hon. member either forgot to tell us, or did not think it wise to tell us, and that is that in one case the Government reserve to themselves the power to resume it at any moment, and that in the other two cases the period is fixed at two years.

Mr. HARDACRE: And there are no concessions.

Mr. STEWART: There are no concessions whatever, no mineral rights, no abandoning of labour conditions, no making the mineowners independent by setting them above the law, or anything of that kind. I am not sure that I would object very strongly to private syndicates building railways in Queensland upon conditions similar to those which exist in New South Wales. Another hon. member, the member for Carpentaria, told us last evening that in Victoria the Government have agreed to permit a syndicate to build 100 miles of private railway, at a cost of £300,000, to a place called Mount Deddick. Whatever the Government of that colony have done privately, they have not yet had the courage to face Parliament with that proposal. I observe that a statement is made about this railway in the *Mining Standard* of July. Now it is September, and though I have looked over the Bills introduced into the Victorian Parliament, I do not find that any proposal in connection with that railway has been submitted by the Government. No proposal has been submitted, and I suppose it is extremely doubtful whether any proposal ever will be submitted. The same hon. member told us about the remarkably favourable conditions which the Canadian Government were giving to a particular syndicate. I have gone into that

matter, and I find that the conditions are good; in fact, so good as to prove, to my satisfaction at any rate, that the corrupt influence which syndicates always bring into any community has been strongly at work in Canada. That is the only explanation I can give of the very excellent conditions which this syndicate has been able to wring out of the Canadian Government. What are the conditions? The syndicate are to build 920 miles of railway at a cost of between £2,000 and £3,000 per mile. Say the cost will be £2,500 per mile. That means that £2,300,000 is the amount required to build this line. Now, in what way do the Government propose to assist the syndicate? In the first place they give the syndicate 2,500,000 acres of land, and the syndicate has already sold between 30,000 and 40,000 acres of that land at from 3 to 4 dollars per acre. Suppose we value the entire area at 1 dollar per acre, then we find that the Government of Canada are making the syndicate a present in land to the value of £500,000. At 2 dollars per acre the value would be £1,000,000, and at 3 dollars per acre the value would be £1,500,000. But I have taken the lowest possible estimate. And that is not all that the Canadian Government are giving to the syndicate. They are giving them, in hard cash, £523,360. In all, the Dominion Government assist the syndicate to the tune of £1,023,360. Is that a bargain which any sane community would endorse? The entire line is to cost £2,300,000, and the Canadian Government propose to subsidise the company to the tune of pretty well one-half the total cost of construction. At the end, the railway is to be the property of the syndicate, and cannot be resumed till after the expiration of half a century. That is the most extraordinary bargain or contract I have ever read of, and the very fact that it was possible to obtain such terms from the Dominion Government proves to me that the influence of these syndicates is so strong, so corrupt, that once they obtain a footing in a community it is almost impossible to resist them. That is the only conclusion I can come to. The hon. member did not advise that Queensland should give this particular syndicate the same terms as the Canadian syndicate has got. He was not quite foolish enough for that; he knew perfectly well, I suppose, that the people of Queensland have not quite lost all their senses as yet. But he advanced this as an argument why we should go in the same direction. I say that instead of following in Canada's wake, as the hon. member invited us to do, and as hon. members opposite unanimously invite us to do, we should rather benefit by the shocking example which the Dominion Government have shown us. With regard to Victoria I find that there are only two or three private lines in that colony, and they also are built to coalmines, and there is a provision in each Act to the effect that an annual payment for twenty years from the date of the opening of the line of such sum as may be required to make up the full working expenses and interest at the rate of 5 per cent. on the cost of construction shall be guaranteed by every company. The lines are really not private lines; they are lines to coalmines; in fact, they are guarantee lines. That is the principle on which they are constructed, and any coalmining company requiring a siding or tramway into its mines has to guarantee working expenses for twenty years, and the interest at the rate of 5 per cent. on the cost of construction. Those are the terms on which private companies are dealt with in Victoria.

[9 p.m.] The hon. gentleman who spoke last night did not tell us of the difficulties which the Governments of the other Australasian States which have dabbled in private railway building have had to contend

with. They did not tell us, for instance, about the Midland Railway in Western Australia, which has been a perfect thorn in the side of the Government of that colony ever since it was begun. This company engaged to build a railway 277 miles long on the land-grant system. They were to get 12,000 acres for each mile of line. Their nominal capital was £1,200,000 on paper. They borrowed £736,000 at 6 per cent. to keep going, and afterwards they borrowed another £500,000 at 4 per cent., and that loan the Western Australian Government had to guarantee. As a matter of fact this company had no money of its own, but merely borrowed sufficient to keep it going, first on the security of the State land grants, and then on the security of the State guarantee. And yet people have the effrontery to describe this as a case of private enterprise. It was an example of private enterprise such as I referred to a few minutes ago—that private enterprise that leans, with consistent persistence, on the State all the time. Then, again, we have the private railways in Tasmania—the Great Western Company and the Emu Bay Company. Both of these have been a trouble to the Tasmanian Government; and also the Great Midland and West Coast Railway. Then, again, we have the case of one private railway in New South Wales, which I think ought to make hon. members of this Chamber pause before they do anything rash in the way of permitting syndicates to build railway lines to mining districts. We have this Silverton tramway, which pays an annual dividend of somewhere about £80,000—the best paying railway almost in the world. I had the curiosity to look up, in the New South Wales *Hansard*, the debate when that Bill was going through the Assembly of New South Wales, and I find, curious to say, that only one raised his voice against it, and that was a Mr. Sheppard. That hon. gentleman said that the Government were simply giving away the resources of that country, and that that railway in time to come would be the best paying railway in New South Wales. That, as a matter of fact, is what it has turned out to be. It is not for me to say whether this particular line which we are discussing this evening will in future be one of the best paying lines in Queensland, but I believe that it will be a paying line and that it will pay handsomely. Believing that to be the case, I am all the more opposed to its construction being handed over to any private syndicate. We find also that, while Western Australia and Tasmania have had their troubles in connection with private railways, New Zealand has also been in a mess with them on more than one occasion. The troubles which New Zealand has had with two or three syndicates, which they have in a foolish mood permitted to start over there, are perfectly well known. Having all these examples before us, I think it will be exceedingly unwise on the part of Queensland if she follows in the same direction. So far as the particular line now before us is concerned, the question appears to me to be this: Will it pay the Government to build this line? The district through which it is proposed to build this railway is, so far as I can gather, an average pastoral district. It may not be superior country, but, so far as any authorities that I have been able to get at go, it is fairly good country. If that is the case, I do not see the slightest reason for anticipating that a railway through it would not pay. All our pastoral railways pay. In fact, but for our pastoral industry some of our principal lines would not pay at all. That being the case, the presumption is that this railway would pay. The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, stated last evening that there were somewhere about 1,000,000 head of stock upon

the country which would be drained by this line. Hon. gentlemen opposite scoffed at the very idea of it and said there was not anything like that number of stock of any kind there. If any hon. member cares to examine the Railway Commissioner's report and to look at the figures there, he will find that what the hon. member for Rockhampton stated was correct. I want to know whether we can rely on the Railway Commissioner's report. It appears to me that when it suits hon. members of the Government, the Commissioner and his reports are everything that is good and fair, but when it does not suit them the opposite is the case. They appear to me to be able to get out of any difficulty, no matter how great it may be. If the facts do not suit the conclusions at which they arrive, then altering the facts, distorting them, or substituting others for them does not seem to trouble them very much. If the facts do not suit the conclusions they are anxious to arrive at, then so much the worse for the facts. That, it appears to me, is the position of hon. gentlemen opposite. Either that country carries this quantity of stock in ordinary seasons or it does not. If it does not, then it should not appear to do so in the Railway Commissioner's map. What we want to know is the truth about the matter. Does the country carry the stock or not? If it does, then I say in all probability if the railway is built there it will carry more stock than it does at present, or in ordinary seasons. The syndicate itself, in one communication to the Government, mentions 1,000,000—the very number—as the stock existing in the district, and gives as a reason why the railway should be built that facilities should be afforded to the owners of that stock. If that number of stock exists there, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that a railway would at least pay working expenses and interest on construction; and that being the case, I do not see that there is the slightest need for the country to be handed over to a syndicate. But we have something here more than a purely pastoral district. We have a very rich mining area, which will also be drained by this railway if it is built. We have a conjunction of two forces, so to speak. We have two strings to our bow up there in place of the one which is the case in almost every other pastoral district. In the Longreach district—that is the Central Railway—there is nothing to depend upon but the pastoral industry. On the Southern and Western line the same thing is true. On the Northern line we have the pastoral industry and the mining industry combined, with the result that that railway pays better than any other in the colony, with the exception of another mining railway—the Mount Morgan—which tops the list. If, as I have said, we have here the pastoral industry and the mining industry in conjunction, is the probability not strong that this railway from Normanton to Cloncurry, instead of being a dead weight on the State, would bring in a splendid revenue? I do not know whether that is the case or not. I am not advising any person. I am simply asking the question, and I maintain that until we have the fullest information before us as to the mineral resources of Cloncurry, as to the nature of the country along the line which will be drained by the proposed railway, we would not be warranted in going on. I say, under no circumstances ought we to permit a private company to come in and take control of one of the great highways of the colony, as this particular route undoubtedly is. Any hon. member looking at the map of Queensland can see what the power of this syndicate will be if this concession is granted to it. The pastoral industry will be under its heel; the mining industry will be under its heel; and all the other

industries which will be carried on in conjunction with those two primary occupations will also be under its control. In fact, the syndicate will be lord and master of that entire district, which has been stated by some hon. members to be one-sixth of the colony. Is that a condition of affairs that it is desirable to bring about? Are we entitled to hand over the civil, political, social, and industrial rights of the people who may live in that particular portion of the country so that it may be developed a little sooner than it otherwise would? I do not think so. I do not think we should be warranted in doing anything of the kind. It is a step entirely in the wrong direction, a step which the people of Queensland will bitterly regret has ever been taken. And not only will this syndicate have full control of the land communication, but it will also be in a position to command the sea. It is going to have wharves at the seaport. It is going to have a fleet of ships as far as I can understand; and I believe the mines, the freezing works, the pastoral industry, and every conceivable industry which will be started in that district, it must be apparent what a position of advantage this syndicate will undoubtedly have. The people who live there will be merely serfs. They will not be free men at all. They will have votes probably, but if they do not vote for the candidate of the syndicate they will have to get; they will have to shake the dust of their feet off against that portion of the colony and go somewhere else.

Mr. McDONALD: That is exactly what the Government want.

Mr. STEWART: I have not the slightest doubt that is what the Government want. I believe the Government would be only too glad to see the entire colony of Queensland in a similar condition. Hon. members opposite may think I am saying something just now which I do not believe. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure hon. members, that I am in deadly earnest.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You are always in deadly earnest; we'll take that for granted.

Mr. STEWART: So far as I can see that would please hon. members opposite better than anything I can think of; but it would not please me, and it would not please the people themselves who would be subject to such a condition of things. I am certain they would look round, and try whether it was not possible to discover some remedy. But why should we expose the people who will some day live in that district to a risk such as this? Why not avoid rushing into this evil? Why not keep going on as we have been doing, building our railways by the State, and developing the country slowly, perhaps, but surely? I think that is a much better way of going ahead than rushing into a system which may probably produce a mushroom growth—a growth like that of Jonah's gourd—which may flourish for a night, but will inevitably disappear in the morning. I think it would be much better if we went on a slow and sure method instead of forcing the pace in this fashion. I am of opinion that it would pay the colony to build this railway. It might not return a very high dividend; but I believe it would pay working expenses and interest on cost of construction. That being the case, the question now arises, can the colony get the money? Hon. gentlemen opposite say no; they say our credit is exhausted.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: They have never said anything of the sort.

Mr. STEWART: They could not get money on the English market—that is what they said. And now they want to wriggle out of it when

they see how untenable is the position they have taken up. I have no doubt they do desire to go back on what they have said.

Mr. BROWNE: Everyone of them makes a different statement.

Mr. STEWART: As the hon. member says, everyone of them makes a different statement, so that everyone of them can get up and deny that anything of the kind was said; but we know perfectly well what arguments were advanced by hon. members. They told us the very first thing that the Government could not get the money. What did the hon. member for Carpentaria say last night? He said distinctly that the Government would not build the railway—it was not a question of a State railway as against the private railway, but a question of a private line or nothing at all; and hon. member after hon. member on the other side rose up and fiddled to the same tune. They told us our credit was exhausted. Now, of course, they begin to realise what they have been doing in their anxiety to promote the interests of the syndicators. They realise that they have run down the credit of the colony; they have proclaimed their own poverty to the entire world, and, when a man begins to go about in ragged clothes, and wearing boots with his toes peeping out, people generally come to the conclusion that he is not particularly well off. Now, we need not be surprised if people outside of Queensland, and outside of Australia, take us at our own valuation, and come to the conclusion that we are rather poverty-stricken. We can quite understand that hon. members opposite desire to get out of that difficulty. They desire to say that they never gave utterance to opinions of that kind, but that does not alter the fact for a single moment. Now, can we get the money on the London market? I think we can. We may not be able to get it at exactly such rates as ruled a short time ago, but still I think the money is available. Indeed I believe that if an effort were made the money could be raised within the four corners of Australia. In fact, I am not sure that we need go outside Queensland to raise it.

Mr. LESINA: They do not want money to build railways. They want to have syndicates.

Mr. STEWART: The whole thing is a conspiracy to hand over the rich resources of Northern Queensland to syndicates—to enable them to make a profit. The thing is altogether too good for the State to get hold of. Those titbits are not for the public—they are for the syndicator. That is the position taken up by hon. members opposite, and I regret very much that they should carry on, or seek to carry on, the business of the country in such a fashion. The hon. member for Bulloo was not satisfied last night with sneering at Labour members in this Chamber, but he also sneered at the Labour men in the Cloncurry district. He said, "Where are all their fine professions? Whenever these Labour men up in the Cloncurry district have got an allotment to sell, they are just as big boodlers as we on this side are." He said that they were ready at any moment to abandon their principles whenever those principles conflicted with their pockets. Now, that is a most ungenerous statement for the hon. member to make. The people of Cloncurry have time and again declared that they want a railway, and we all admit that they need a railway, but they say, "We want a State railway." Having been refused a State railway, of course a number of them have said that they will be content with a private railway, and the hon. member says that having come to that point they have abandoned their principles. I do not see that they have. Suppose a man is given his choice of three

things—whether he will have bread and meat, whether he will have bread and no meat, or neither bread nor meat. He will naturally say, "Well, if I can get bread and meat, I will have it; but if I cannot get bread and meat I would rather have bread than no bread." Well, that is just the position that the people of Cloncurry find themselves in. They cannot get a railway built by the State, as they desire, as the Government will not build it for reasons which have been made very clear, and therefore they have, perforce, to be content with a railway constructed by a private syndicate. I do not know whether it is worth while troubling the House with the utterances of certain hon. members upon this particular subject a number of years ago, but I think it will be interesting to hear what some of them had to say.

Mr. KERR: Don't dig up *Hansard*.

Mr. STEPHENSON: We will forgive you if you don't read it.

Mr. STEWART: On page 897 of *Hansard* for 1882, vol. xxxviii., the hon. member for Brisbane North, Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, made a very decided declaration upon the subject of the State-ownership of railways. Speaking on the Warrego Railway Bill, he said—

The present was undoubtedly the most serious question that had come before Parliament during the last few years, and, regarding it as such, it was his duty to say in the first instance that he held that the railway policy of the Australian colonies should be State railways, and State railways only.

It will be interesting to know whether the hon. member is still of that opinion. I hope he will tell us before this debate closes. I find the hon. member also read a number of extracts from authorities upon American railways. I do not intend to give them all, but I shall read one nice little titbit which will give hon. members an idea of what may happen in Queensland if these syndicates are permitted to have their way—

The following, from the *Graphic*, illustrated the working of the new principle on the Pacific coast:—

"Instead of having rates for freight, they want to make special contracts according to a man's profits. For instance, a man in Arizona has a mine and gets out a quantity of ore, but has no facilities for fluxing and smelting it, and must send it to San Francisco. He says to the railroad:—

" 'I want to send my ore up to San Francisco. What will you charge me a ton?'

" 'How much does it assay?'

" 'That is none of your business.'

" 'Yes it is. We want to know how much it assays in order to know what to charge you.'

" 'Thirty dollars a ton.'

" 'Well, we shall charge you 10 dollars a ton, and that will leave you 20 dollars.'

" 'Another man has a mine, and he puts the question:—

" 'What will you take my ore to San Francisco for?'

" 'How much does it assay?'

" 'That is none of your business.'

" 'He, too, must tell, and he says:—

" 'Well, it yields 300 dollars a ton.'

" 'Then we will charge you 100 dollars a ton to take the ore to San Francisco. That leaves you two-thirds.'

The man has no alternative, and pays the money to sell his ore, but he becomes a discouraged miner. Thus the railroad company is forcing the question as to what are the restrictions on a common carrier, and whether the mere carrier can be despotic with the people, arbitrary in its rates, and virtually an owner in every interest on the line.

Of course I know hon. members opposite will say that this company is precluded by [9 30 p.m.] the Bill now before us from charging such rates as those; but I say that no matter what you put into an Act of Parliament the company can evade it, and drive the proverbial coach and six through it. If it does not get those rates in one way, it will inevitably get them in some other way. It will be the easiest thing in the world to evade any law that

this House may pass in connection with the matter. Now, I will just read what the present Attorney-General said on the same subject—

Why, he asked, should they use the lands of the colony as a means for the aggrandisement of English capitalists? It had been said from the other side that the members of the Opposition were always ready to look with disfavour upon anything in which speculation was mentioned. He did not think that was the case.

So it would appear that there was a party even then in the House inoculated with the same ideas as the party now here hold—

What the Opposition objected to was that persons should speculate with other people's money. They had no right to speculate with land that did not belong to them but to the people of this colony, and it was not a kind of speculation that that House should attempt to encourage. The Minister for Works then went on to deny the possibility of corruption existing in connection with the syndicate, and ridiculed the references to the Erie Railroad Company which had been made by the leader of the Opposition. Were hon. members to doubt the facts related in books and periodicals by men of undoubted credibility, as to the corruption practised in America? They were assured that the Government of the United States was groaning under a combination of syndicates, and could not relieve itself because these syndicates were able to get at the legislature.

MR. LESINA: Exactly what we have been saying.

MR. STEWART: Now, I believe the Government of Queensland is under the syndicates, but it is not groaning. It has not come to the groaning stage; that will come afterwards.

MR. REID: It will squeak yet.

MR. STEWART: And then Mr. Rutledge, the present Attorney-General, said—

There was no reason, therefore, to suppose that such corruption as was practised in America could not be practised in Queensland; the Legislatures in the Australian colonies were probably as fallible as those in the United States. The hon. gentleman said that there could be no parallel between the corruption practised by the Erie Railroad Company and what might be practised by an Australian syndicate, because in the former case there had been no land granted, but only certain railway privileges. But he would ask, if a company which had only the command of a railway, was able and had inducements to employ corruption to secure its own dishonest aims, how much greater would be the ability and inducement on the part of a syndicate which had both railway and land.

Now, if we substitute mines for lands in the present instance, the quotation will exactly fit the Bill we are now discussing.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Not at all.

MR. STEWART: I just say this in passing: that if the hon. members on this side of the House were to speak as strongly about corruption as Mr. Rutledge did upon that occasion, they would be met with a storm of interjections from hon. members opposite.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKSON: Times have changed.

MR. STEWART: Here is one quotation which Mr. Rutledge read to the House—

For years the railroad managers have had great influence with their money in Congress and in some of the State Legislatures, and the present year they became so bold as to endeavour to dictate to the republican party their next candidate for the Presidency, and nearly succeeded in securing the nomination of a man clearly committed in their interests. Consolidation is going on rapidly, and if the United States expects to maintain her rights without a "power behind her throne," as Mr. Simon Sterne observes in a recent article on the subject, "without danger of at all times having that power stronger than the Government which they have established, they must see to it that the power which has grown up within the past generation in the railway officers, if not broken, be at least carefully watched, jealously circumscribed, constantly guarded, and made subservient to and instrumental in advancing the interests of the public."

With the assistance of the Government, they have made the nation one of the foremost on the globe, and let us hope that the avarice of a few railroad kings will not forget from whence they derived their present

power. Should they do this, they will soon find their mistake, but not until it is too late, and a check has been placed upon them by the Government.

Now this was written very many years ago; but the syndicates in the States are as powerful to-day as ever they were. That gives us some idea of the task we have before us, if we permit this sort of thing to get a footing. Now I will just read a quotation or two. Mr. Buckland, who was a member of the Assembly then, quoted from a letter which had been written to the *Brisbane Courier* by Mr. George Morris Simpson, who also, I believe, at one time had been a member of this Assembly, and this is what Mr. Simpson wrote about syndicates—

That the Pacific States of America are now dominated over and held in subjection by a "huge railway monopoly," directed by a very few men (who are enormously rich) for their own ends, can scarcely be denied by anyone. These men owe their wealth wholly to the railways. That, in a general way, the interests of these men lead them to serve the public moderately well can be taken for granted. However, I hope in no part of Australia shall we ever see such control exercised by any body of men as the directors of the Central and Union Pacific exercise in the Western States of America. Unless one or two small and unimportant narrow-gauge lines which are graciously permitted to exist, they own all the Western railways; they will not allow any other companies to get a footing. They soon crush any attempt at competition, and compel competing companies to sell out to them upon their own terms. Not only so with railways, but the same system it adopted towards river steamship companies; in fact, no carrying company of any importance can exist in face of means adopted to crush them by these enormously wealthy corporations. I admit that wherever railways are wanted great energy seems to be displayed in making them. Objections to the system, however, are many, but are capable of prevention when taken in time. These companies adopt most oppressive means to crush customers. It is useless to say that the charters of various companies compel them to carry for all alike. The companies are too strong for any charter or law. They refuse to pay their just taxes to the States through which they run, and the law is either not strong enough or too corrupt to make them. They refuse to carry for any who dare quarrel with them, and thus hold the power (often freely exercised) of ruin over anyone requiring to use the railway as a means of conducting business. Personal enemies of directors are dealt with in a most summary manner. In fact, all persons in any way dependent upon railways are held in absolute subjection. For instance, one man with a very large public granary, full of wheat owned by his customers, quite upon the line, was left with the wheat to be eaten by weevil and rot, although the railway law gives no one a preference. Month after month he could see thousands of bushels daily pass, but somehow trucks never could be provided or other means found to move his wheat. Another man was possessed of a coalmine doing a large business, not only with the railway company, but also the general public. Someone in power envied him the mine, and a price was offered and refused; next night a strong gang of men pulled up the two miles of siding, and the owner was ruined. The mine will have to be sold, and will be purchased by directors for a mere trifle, and soon after the railway line put in order. These are instances out of hundreds, and point out the dangers to be avoided.

One shrewd business man told me that either these companies would ultimately possess and rule the whole country, or else the General States Government would be compelled to step in and, with a strong hand, crush the companies.

Mr. Buckland then went on to read another extract—

From it we clip the following, as it refers in a most pointed manner to a subject which is at present attracting so much attention in Queensland:—"Canada has committed a cardinal error in abandoning State control of its railroad system. The Anglo-American Syndicate which has contracted to build the Canada Pacific Railroad, by virtue of its special privileges and enormous land grant, will be as completely master of the Dominion Government ten years hence as if the Cabinet at Ottawa, and all provincial executives, were nominated and paid by it. This is inevitable. The inception of the scheme was not without imputation of corruption, and its progress and completion will certainly not be marked with greater virtue. Australia is as yet free from this overshadowing evil. It should at all hazards and under all

circumstances preserve its independence from corporate influences. To-day the United States is governed, in its fiscal policy, by associated capital in corporate form. To-morrow (if not to-day) Canada will be governed by an irresponsible, oppressive, and exacting corporation. Australia should not tolerate the advances of this corporate monster, which, not content with swallowing the public lands, will corrupt its legislatures and swallow the earnings of the whole people."

Now, I ask whether the exceptionally favourable terms which the Canadian Government has given to the syndicate I referred to a little while ago are not explained by the quotations I have just read. What the writer of these quotations foreshadowed many years ago has exactly come to pass, and the Canadian Government, it appears to me, is entirely under the dominance of this syndicate, which is able to command its own terms. I will not trouble hon. members by reading any further extracts, though I could go on until midnight.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: We quite believe that.

Mr. STEWART: I could go on until the early hours of the morning wasting the time of the syndicate, for that is exactly what we are doing. We are not wasting the time of the Government; we are not wasting the time of hon. members opposite, or on this side either. We are simply wasting the time of the syndicate. For every hour we can prolong this discussion we are deferring the happy time when the syndicate will be able to go home and launch its little bubble upon the London market.

Mr. KIDSTON: You are keeping the syndicate in the lobby.

Mr. STEWART: I was not aware that the syndicate was in the lobby. I do not desire to monopolise the time. I am not a monopolist. I do not desire to monopolise all the talk. I know there are other hon. members who desire to say something on the subject, but before sitting down I would just like to say this: It appears to me that instead of having statesmen at the head of affairs at the present moment we only have a band of stockbrokers. Hon. gentlemen never seem to be able to divest themselves of the atmosphere of the stock exchange; and as I said on one occasion recently, the hon. gentleman who is the principal officer of State seems to think that a meeting of stock exchange men is the proper place for him to divulge the public policy. Well, I say that a community which is governed by the stock exchange, a community whose rulers get their inspiration from the members of the stock exchange, is in a very bad way indeed. I do not think it is possible to derive inspiration from a more polluted source. Stock exchange people are not the promoters of real industry. They are simply the people who gamble with the lives and means of our citizens; and that being the case, I am very sorry to see the responsible administrators of this community so much in their hands. I would like to say, in conclusion, that I hope the Government will abandon this measure. If they do they will have done one of the best acts of their existence. If this measure passes, as surely as we are discussing it here this evening, thousands of men, not only in the Gulf country, but all over Queensland, and possibly all over Australia, will curse the day that ever such a measure as this was placed on the statute-book of Queensland.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It is very easy to prophesy. The hon. member who professes to read the future says that if we pass this measure thousands of people will curse the day it was passed. It is just possible that thousands of people will curse the day the hon. member ever came into the House, and that they will curse the day that this railway was stopped by the manoeuvres of hon. members opposite, and in consequence of the stagnant opinions which they seem to hold. I am not sure that I would take

up the time of the House on this occasion, if it were not for the discovery I have made of the indefatigable industry of hon. members opposite. It seems to me that during a large portion of the year they have very little to do.

Mr. HIGGS: It's a wonder we are not taken up under the Vagrancy Act.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: If the Vagrancy Act were strictly enforced, probably the hon. member who interjects might not be here. (Laughter.) The hon. member for Rockhampton North has shown how much value he attaches to the opinions and speeches of hon. members on this side of the House. Besides listening very attentively to his own orations, he dives into the past. He has gone as far back as sixteen years. No doubt he has read the whole of *Hansard* attentively from then up to the present, and perhaps he has read *Hansard* as attentively from the inception of Parliament here. Under those circumstances, it is gratifying to know that he pays some attention to the speeches of hon. members on this side of the House. He evidently regards them as pearls from the ocean, and they are brought up here and cast at an inoffensive administration. He is not satisfied with quoting the opinions of hon. members, but he also gives us quotations read by hon. members on this side sixteen or eighteen years ago. If an hon. member was pleased to express an opinion about the price of corn eighteen years ago, and that opinion differed from the opinion of the hon. member in that respect, the hon. member who has just spoken would say that that must be grossly inconsistent. But hon. members must know that times and circumstances differ as the years go by. There is a time to borrow and a time to pay. Assuming that these words which the hon. member has quoted from the by-gone past were infallible, even then it does not follow that they would apply to another set of circumstances that might arise. I think the value of these quotations have been greatly over-rated by the hon. members opposite. Assuming that circumstances do not alter, that time stood still, does the hon. member think that we must necessarily be governed by the opinions of Mr. Buckland or the Attorney-General in years past. Can we not judge for ourselves? Are we to be always slavishly bound by these old authorities. If not, what does the hon. member seek to gain by giving long quotations from ancient *Hansard*? We have had several extracts fired at us—one from a sermon of Dr. Talmage. We have had also an extract from Mr. Stead's work "If Christ Came to Chicago," and possibly some hon. members may yet quote a great many poems out of the hymn-book. How are these desultory readings going to affect our views on the railway policy which is now before the House? With regard to this Cloncurry Railway proposal we have this to remember, and it is very undesirable to put it on one side. I should attach a great deal more importance to what hon. members opposite say if I did not know that the leader of the Opposition, when attacking what he admitted to be one of the least objectionable of these railways, said he would have nothing to do with it; that under no circumstances will he accept any of these private railways. They have pointed out all the evils which follow on land-grant lines in another portion of the world. But it does not seem to me that the quotations of hon. members opposite are apt with regard to the question of private railways *versus* State railways in the United States. I see not the slightest indication of retrogression or of serfdom or of any great evils in America or in Canada through private railways there. On the contrary, both these countries are most progressive; they are two of

the most prosperous and flourishing countries in the world. That fact is of very much more importance than the statements made by hon. members opposite, who on every possible occasion try to discredit it. The hon. member has been branding hon. members on this side of the House as scoundrels—and stockbrokers. I do not take any particular exception to being called stockbrokers, seeing that hon. members on the opposite side have previously called us very much worse—hands of bandits and robbers—for they are in the habit of using very warm terms. We sometimes hear one man in the street calling another with whom he disagrees a blank, blank. Hon. members opposite do not go to that extreme, and I am glad to find that instead of being called swindlers and robbers, we are now only designated by the comparatively respectable title of stockbrokers. I don't take it that showing an interest in railway construction is necessarily an indication of depravity of character.

MR. BROWNE: It all depends what sort of interest is taken—whether it is paid up or contributed.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I don't know that that affects this railway; but if the hon. member can show that his interjection has any bearing on the matter before the House I shall be pleased to reply to it. I venture to say that the hon. member for Croydon in his business transactions on Croydon has had some shares that are not paid up. I have never held any shares unless I bought them and paid for them. The hon. member for Rockhampton has drawn a magnificent picture of a rich country crowded with people, a river crowded with shipping, a railway crammed with traffic—and all owned by these oppressive syndicates. Yet in another portion he said that, in spite

of all this, it was a wretched [10 p.m.] thing, and a mere bubble. I wonder if speakers mean half what they say. At one time they point out the thing will fail; at one time the syndicators will run the country; and five minutes afterwards they show by what they say, that after all, under the rule of the syndicate, the Cloncurry will be the most profitable and progressive and wealthy portion of the colony. I ask the hon. gentleman who last spoke, to try and reconcile, at any rate, some portion of his speech with some other portion. The position taken up generally by hon. members on the other side, and who oppose the Government permitting anybody to construct the railway except the State—the position generally—not altogether—is that the railway will be highly profitable. If I am not mistaken, the hon. member for Flinders—who certainly ought to know something of the matter, since he represents an electorate in that part of the colony—said it would not pay, and that there was nothing to justify the construction of such a railway. However, we will take it that the majority possibly for party purposes say it would be highly profitable, and because it would be so profitable they object to it being handed over to a syndicate, and contend that the Government should make it. I wonder where the people of Cloncurry are going to be satisfied with the *bona fides* of hon. members when they make those statements. I am not aware myself, but I think it is a fair inference, taking into consideration what has been said by the Government and by hon. members on both sides, that the railway to Cloncurry won't be constructed by the State. It is no less than sixteen years ago that the name of that railway came up in connection with certain railway proposals, and for those sixteen years it has remained unmade. What reason have we to believe that this railway is going to take precedence of all other railways? It is attributed to the hon. member for Carpen-

taria that he said the Government could not afford to build this line. I did not hear him say the Government could not afford to build any particular line.

MR. REID: He said it was either a syndicate railway or no railway at all.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: If the hon. member for Carpentaria said that, I have no hesitation in endorsing his opinion entirely.

MR. REID: Are you speaking on behalf of the Government?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I do not speak on behalf of the Government in this particular matter. The House will know the Government policy when it is announced by the Government.

MR. REID: We are waiting for it.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Hon. members might have got the Government policy long ago if they had permitted business to go through.

MR. BROWNE: Have they ever had one?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I am at present endeavouring strenuously to confine myself to the subject before the House, and not follow the bad example set by hon. members who have spoken before me. But I am tempted to diverge from that path by interjections; I endorse, at any rate, the opinion given to the House by the hon. member for Carpentaria—that the question is whether the railway should be constructed or whether it should remain unconstructed. Hon. members opposite are continually denouncing syndicates, and I should like to know how they can possibly reconcile the demand that the Government should make this particular railway, and in the interest of a mining syndicate, because the matter would not have come up at all if it had not been for some mines the freehold of which is held by private persons. In spite of the denunciations we hear of joint stock enterprise, which hon. members opposite are not satisfied to call by any ordinary name, but must call it by some name with which wrong is associated, they want the State to build this line. The mines which this railway is intended to develop are held by persons who, because they band together to develop the resources of the country by means of capital, are spoken of by members opposite as men of no character and no reputation, who should be treated as criminals. I think one definition of the view hon. members opposite take of syndicates generally may be described thus: It is a joint stock company in which none of the Labour party possesses any interest. If it is a joint stock company in which they do possess an interest, they instantly call it co-operative enterprise worked for the good of the people. But, if it happens to be an ordinary joint stock company like the joint stock enterprises which have been for many years necessary adjuncts in the development of the wealth of this or any other country, they proceed to call it vile names. I take it that hon. members opposite use that language principally because they imagine they have no particular interest in this joint stock company which they denounce. Do hon. members deny that capital is necessary to open up the wealth of this country?

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: No, no!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I am glad to find that they have gone back from their original doctrine—that capital is crime, and property is theft.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: Oh, oh!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: And when they charge other hon. members, on the strength of *Hansard*, with having changed their opinions, I am glad to find they will admit that an alteration of opinion is not in all cases a sign of want of intelligence. They have got as far now as to admit that capital is a useful agent; that labour and capital combined can do much—that neither labour nor capital can do anything unless

they are united. If then any capital at all is justifiable a combination of capital is also justifiable. In order to carry out the gigantic works of the present day, it is necessary that the savings of the community should be aggregated. It is impossible to carry out a gigantic scheme which may take £1,000,000 or a very large sum of money unless there is some ability to gather in the small savings of the community, and make one large amount, and yet the moment the savings of a community assume the shape of a company they won't even use the word company, but brand it as a syndicate. Don't we know that the hon. member for Charters Towers represents a community which is worked by companies.

MR. DAWSON: Hear, hear!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is to say, by people who have a very considerable amount of capital, and who therefore may be termed syndicates.

MR. DAWSON: And intelligence—or else I would not have been here.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Do we not know that the members of this community, and of other communities, are at bottom practically dependent upon that aggregation of capital and of the aggregation of capital with labour? And yet hon. members opposite calmly sit down and point their fingers at the aggregation of men with capital and say, "Oh, they are syndicates." They remind me of children who sometimes don't like some person, and who give as a reason that he is a "piggy-wiggy squeaker." Hon. members practically use the term "piggy-wiggy squeaker" in connection with joint stock enterprise; and if the object of their enterprise is profit they at once stigmatise them as exploiters and persons who deserve badly of the community. That has been patent throughout this debate. I shall just give a little quotation with regard to what profit is.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: Oh, don't!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: If hon. members opposite are to read sermons to this side of the House, I hope they will not object to my reading a quotation on the score that it is something in the guise of a lecture. If we are to be sermonised and preached to by hon. members on that side, I think they should permit me to introduce something which may, perhaps, be of benefit to them in correcting their very erroneous impressions. If they believe that joint stock companies are injurious to the community when such companies propose to build a railway—if they believe that joint stock companies are injurious to the community, not because of any change in the nature of joint stock companies, and not because they are not useful to enterprise, but because hon. members choose to call them syndicates, then they require to have pointed out to them what is "profit." They may call such companies "syndicates" when they are appealing to the most ignorant and most vulgar. But I say there is no justification for speaking of that which is necessary to develop the country—not in the ordinary sense of the term, but in a term which carries with it a sinister signification—that is, "piggy-wiggy squeakers," or syndicates.

MR. HIGGS: Are the working classes vulgar, then?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I will not say who is vulgar. I do not draw the preposterous distinction that the hon. white-waistcoated member does in this matter. I always was a member of the working classes, and I have not said, and I have never dreamt of saying—like the hon. member did at one time—that because he is a clerk, or a newspaper editor, he ceases to belong to the working classes. I do not draw that distinction between the manual labourer and the man who works with his head. In one sense

I have always worked throughout my life; and, unless I live to the age of Methusaleh—which I hope will not be the case—I shall always work. There is no particular credit in working as far as that goes, because, as a rule, most of us work because we cannot get something without working. Ordinary work for reward is work which a man does not, as a rule, undertake voluntarily; he does it because he has to work for something. Although we are told that work was imposed upon Adam as a curse, in my humble opinion it is a blessing.

MR. HIGGS: A man cannot ask a civil question without—

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The hon. member very seldom does ask a civil question.

MR. DAWSON: When he does he does not get a civil reply.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It will not hurt him very much. We have been so long in the House that we do not expect to get very civil replies from hon. members, and do not feel annoyed when we do not get them. The hon. member for Charters Towers is now attempting to do "the polite," probably because he at one time occupied the very dignified position of Premier, and viewed matters from a dignified standpoint from that high pedestal. I am dealing with profit. I do not know whether I am making any loss, or whether the hon. member is making any profit. But I desire to deal with matters which to my mind are of cardinal importance. There is nothing more injurious to a community than to have members responsible for the legislation of that community who are so wrong-headed as to believe that to make a profit you must necessarily do something wrong. You can hardly censure men for endeavouring to make a profit. We know perfectly well that the farmer depends on profit, and that it is by the grace of God that he gets a profit. If he has one grain of wheat he puts that into the earth, and expects that it will increase a hundredfold, which is 10,000 per cent. profit. If a man grows sugar-cane he puts three stalks into the ground, and expects a stool from that cane with eight or ten joints. If the hon. member goes out with a cartridge to shoot a wallaby or a bird—

MR. DAWSON: And he misses it.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The hon. member does not go there to miss it; he goes out to kill the bird, because the meal which it will afford is worth more than the one cartridge. If he goes out to catch fish he does not go with a whale to catch a sprat; he goes with a sprat, and catches a whale, I suppose.

MR. DAWSON: A little bit mixed this time.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Never mind, as long as I am making a profit. I hope that hon. members are making a profit by discovering that it is necessary to attend to what is shown by man's most primary occupations. The first element to inspire production is profit. As a well-known writer has said—

Profit hires the land and agrees to pay the rent; profit fences it, drains it, manures it, plants and cultivates it, markets its products. Profit picks up the destitute pauper from the highway and converts him from a hungry appetite ready for crime itself unless he can be fed, into a labourer co-operating in producing commodities for which there is some demand.

The expectation of making a profit is a perfectly legitimate one. It is the mainspring of all industry. If we can get people here who will give us what we are not likely to get at present; if they can improve our communication or improve our means of distribution, in that way they are indirectly helping to increase production and assist the community to make a profit.

MR. KINSTON: What has all that got to do with the business in hand?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I am not here to enable the hon. member for Rockhampton to

discover relations. That I expect the hon. member, as the representative of an important district, to be able to discover for himself.

MR. DAWSON: He cannot see what is not there.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I do not know, really, why the hon. member for Charters Towers, who is so exceedingly anxious that I should be polite to him, should spend the most of his time in this House making exceedingly rude observations—observations that are not in the least bit witty or funny, but just exceedingly rude—the “You’re another!” sort of thing that you hear at the corner of Albert street.

MR. REID: Why Albert street?

MR. HIGGS: Do you speak from experience?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: An attempt has been made to deal with this and other Bills by the production of some kind of authorities. That is to say—that if in some other part of the world a certain course of conduct has been pursued, it is assumed that in some way it is evidence of its rationality. I quite admit that. Hon. members say that in some parts of Australia there are objections to private railways in most circumstances; but that is all they have arrived at, because it has been established by irrefutable evidence that in Australia itself, and in New Zealand, there are a certain number of private railways. There has been no attempt on this side in this debate to declare that private railways should in all cases supersede State railways. On the contrary, there has been an admission that, where the circumstances permit it, it is desirable that the State should construct its own railways. But that, after all, is conditional; it is conditional upon the amount of wealth the State happens to possess.

MR. DAWSON: And the prospects.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: And largely upon the prospects of the particular district. I do not desire at all to argue upon the question at large of State or private railways, but I must say that hon. members have failed to show after all by their own argument from general consent, that State railways have on the whole an advantage over private railways, because if you take the world at large, by far the largest railrage in the world happens to be owned by joint stock enterprise.

MR. DAWSON: Which system do you favour?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I have already said what I favour. I presume the hon. member desires me to lose the thread of my remarks. If the hon. member had paid attention it would not have been necessary for him to put a question of that kind. I say that hon. members have failed to prove that the consensus of opinion in the world is in favour of State rather than of private railways. It is quite true that in some one or two instances the State has bought up private railways. Germany, I understand, is a case in point, but we can easily understand that in Germany, which is a military monarchy essentially—

MR. KIDSTON: It is a big producing one at the same time.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It is a big producing one at the same time, but we can easily understand that with France on one side and Russia on the other it is of paramount importance—

MR. KIDSTON: And industrial development has been very much promoted by the State buying the railways.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That may be right or it might be wrong. The hon. member for Rockhampton is no more infallible than the hon. member for Mackay, and I am not going to be in the least contented with his solitary assertion unsupported by a particle of proof. I am not saying that one class of railways is to be preferred to the other as a general thing. It is possible that no general rule may be made on

the subject, but I do say that hon. members opposite, by the authorities they brought, have entirely failed to substantiate what they wished us to believe, that the majority of Governments or of peoples in the world preferred the State to the private system of railways. As a matter of fact the United States has in itself more than half the railway systems of the world. I was going to say, when interrupted by the hon. member for Charters Towers, that although you can show that in some countries the railways have been bought by the State, in other countries the reverse is the case. In Argentina, a country in the neighbourhood of Paraguay—

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh! Hear, hear!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Hon. members at once feel a friendly interest. In Argentina it is not that the State has bought the private railways, but the State railways have been sold to private people. In Newfoundland I believe they have adopted the same course, and so on. The fact remains, nevertheless, that if it is a question of counting heads and submitting to the vote of the majority, the great majority of the people, not of Queensland but of the planet, if we may judge from their actions, prefer the joint stock system to the management by the State, and the cost, and the risk.

MR. DAWSON: Do you agree with that? “Silence gives consent.”

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I am not compelled to answer every idle question that anybody can put in this House. I have heard it said in the House itself that “a fool can ask a question that a wise man cannot answer.” I do not wish to apply that to anybody in particular, but it is one of the replies which may be made. The hon. member for Charters Towers seems to be keeping up this gatling fire of interjections of an unpleasant character mostly, with the intention, I presume, to distract my attention. One of the arguments why this railway should be made by the State is that it would pay, and therefore the State should make it. It is but conjecture, but my own impression is that it would pay. Still, there have been other people in this House who have thought on many occasions that railways would pay, have carried them through the House, with the approbation of hon. members on the score that they would and must pay; evidence has been brought to show that they would pay, and after all they have not paid. The Clermont and Mount Perry lines have been referred to previously in this connection, and the evidence on the whole is that it is not a wise thing to use the ratepayers’ money to build railways which have to depend for their profit, in the main, on minerals. It is quite possible, as has been said, that when the Clermont line was finished the Peak Downs mines gave out, and the line did not pay because there was no mine, but the point is that when the consideration of that line was before this House the mine was considered to be an exceedingly good mine.

MR. DAWSON: What about the coalmines?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I really must protest against the disingenuousness of the hon. member for Charters Towers. The hon. gentleman sits there making queries to elicit no information whatever, but in my humble opinion for no other purpose—

MR. DAWSON: Than to put you on the straight line.

THE SPEAKER: Order, order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: For no other purpose than to run me off when I have got upon an argument that even he, with all [10:30 p.m.] his ingenuity, would find it rather difficult to controvert or twist. The hon. member is a kind of lapwing member; whenever you come too near his nest he breaks

his arm or does something to distract attention. The hon. member's object is to try and make me break the thread of my argument, and his interjections are not really useful interjections; not that I mind them, but they may be embarrassing to those who are willing to listen to me. I am speaking now of the proposition which has been made by an hon. member who spoke before me—that railways to mines had been tried, and that after the lines were constructed the mines failed, with the consequence that the railways did not pay interest on working expenses. It has been said, for instance, that as soon as the line to Clermont was made the mines gave out. But the question is not what was the position of the mines when the railway was constructed, but what was the position of the mines when the railway was proposed and agreed to by the House. And at that time the mines were believed to be in a flourishing condition, and it was anticipated that they would provide traffic for the railway; yet, in a very short space of time, those mines gave out entirely. That shows how dangerous it is for this House to use the taxpayers' money for the purpose of making railways into purely mineral districts. The Bundaberg to Mount Perry line was also instanced as a case in point, and it was said that unless Sir Thomas McLlwraith had had an interest in the district it would not have been made. Even assuming that he had an interest in the district, that was no reason why the line should not have been made. Sir Thomas McLlwraith was a shrewd man, and a good man of business, and it is a certain fact that when that railway was proposed Mount Perry was an exceedingly flourishing mining township, and one from which immense things were expected.

MR. REID: It is dead now.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is so. We have it on evidence which has not been controverted, that the people of Cloncurry at any rate desire this particular railway. They are in the position of starving men who would rather have half a loaf than no bread; but hon. members opposite are not willing that we should give them even the half-loaf. It has been said that the question at issue is not that this railway should be built, but who should build it, and on that the hon. member, Mr. Kidston, founded a great part of his argument. I venture to say that that is not a true representation at all. The question is whether the railway shall be built at all. The question of the State making it may be put on one side. There is no doubt the State contemplated making it sixteen years ago, but what reason have we to believe that it would be picked out first now from all the other railways that are demanded? There are other lines which have a greater justification than the line to Cloncurry—the home of syndicates, as hon. members opposite say. There are railways which have been recommended by the Commissioner, such as the railway to connect the Southern line with the Central line, which should take precedence of such a railway as the Cloncurry railway.

MR. REID: No.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: If the hon. member meets his constituents he shall have to say yes, and he will say yes. They will not approve of his making a railway to a mining district in preference to railways in the South, which have been recommended by the Commissioner. With regard to the ability of the State to find the money, it is just as if somebody came to me and asked me to subscribe £5 to a certain charity, and I said I could not afford it. I might have the £5 in my possession, but I might have to subscribe to a great number of other charities, and it would be actually true if

I said I could not find the money for that particular charitable object—not because I had not the money, but because I had a great many other claims on my charity. So it is with the colony of Queensland—

MR. REID: You did not plead the poverty of Queensland when you wanted the Mirani-Cattle Creek Railway.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I am not pleading the poverty of Queensland. I wish the hon. member would get something to clarify his intellect. There is no more intelligent man on that side of the House when he chooses to be intelligent. On the other hand, when he chooses not to be intelligent I will not say anything with regard to the state he is then led to occupy. I was referring to the statement that had been made that the Government could not afford to build this particular railway, and, was giving as an illustration my own case if asked to subscribe a large sum to one particular charity when I had twenty other charities to subscribe to. I could subscribe the £5, but it would not be wise to do it. Nor, would it be wise for Queensland to expend £25,000,000 on railways whatever its position may be—and it is in a very good position, I believe, thanks, perhaps, to the wisdom of the present Administration—but it already owes some £30,000,000. In fact, it would be absurd to say that we should make, within a few years, such lines as the line to the Tweed, the extension of the Western Railway, the various railways in the West, the Etheridge Railway, the railway to Cloncurry, and all those other lines which have been laid before the House. But it does not follow, because a person's means are not absolutely unlimited that he is therefore a pauper. Someone says the Government are not likely to be in a position to make twenty-five lines within the next four or five years, does that prevent it from being able to make one? We are able to make one, but not all, and the country would not approve of a railway being made at its expense to open mines held by a few private persons, when the result would be the denial of a railway to some more settled part of the colony. We have not got £20,000,000 or £30,000,000 to spare, and it is not a good time to go to the London money market at a time when there are "khaki" loans.

MR. REID: How can the syndicates get money?

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The syndicates have their own money, and do not need to borrow. If Queensland were like the Empire of Germany, and had £200,000,000 in gold in the bank, we would not need to borrow either. I have heard hon. members opposite denounce borrowing. I have heard the leader of the Labour party say that he would never have a loan again—that borrowing was criminal, and entirely contrary to the whole stock-in-trade and ethics of the Labour party. Have not hon. members opposite said repeatedly that they will not bind this colony to the syndicates in London, of whom they could speak no good word? How is it that the syndicate in London has become the idol of the Labour party, whom they bow down before and worship, while a harmless syndicate at Cloncurry is to be led out to the slaughter? Where will they get these £20,000,000 from? Borrow them! From whom? From the absentee—from the syndicate, who has become the idol of the Labour party! Go and smash your idols! The question is whether we shall call in these joint stock companies to assist in opening up certain parts of the colony. Although the colony is in as good a position as any other colony, it would not be wise for the State to make half the railways that

are wanted, but there is no reason, because it is not wise to increase to an unreasonable extent our liabilities, which are now somewhere about £31,000,000, why we should not call in private enterprise to assist us. It is not prudent to go on with our borrowing career, and be charged in ten years' time with being the £20,000,000 loan Government, as we hear hon. members opposite abusing Sir S. W. Griffith over his £10,000,000 loan.

Mr. REID: That was the present Chief Secretary.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I do not know whether hon. members want to continue that policy on a larger scale, seeing that it is a policy which they have denounced. While many railways are required in comparatively settled districts, for reasons which I need not recapitulate, but which commend themselves to our Commissioner for Railways, there are other railways in other portions of the colony which it is just as well for us to allow private enterprise to make. There is no objection to private enterprise building houses; there is no word about private enterprise in connection with squat-tages, in co-operative farms, or in mines. There is hardly a mine in the colony that is not worked by a company or a syndicate. That is to say, syndicates are at present time one of the principal factors in production in the colony, and upon production all depends. Yet, we say, with regard to these railways—which are chiefly appurtenances of mines—that we will not allow syndicates to come and assist us. We should be very glad to allow them to build railways which we cannot build for ourselves. What is the good of painting pictures about the population at Cloncurry and at Glassford Creek, and all these other places, when hon. members will not allow those essentials, without which there can be no population, to come into existence at all? We must have a railway or we will have no coalmines at Callide, and we must have a railway or we will have no population to speak of at Cloncurry. Hon. members talk about the population, and the wealth, and the development which will take place, while at the same time they forbid that to be done without which no population can establish itself permanently at Cloncurry, at Georgetown, and many other fields, where we know there are great potentialities of wealth. I do not know whether hon. members opposite want to stop the colony becoming more populous, but when the only means are adopted that are available at the present time—that is, of calling in co-operative enterprise—upon which the prosperity of America, of France, of Germany, and of every civilised country in the world has mainly depended, hon. members opposite object. That principle has been adopted by the most progressive races, it has been tested by experience, and has not been found wanting. We have it in all departments of industry and commerce. We have co-operation, and co-operative capital—

Mr. REID: We have it in our State lines now.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: We say that where we are unable to develop districts, private enterprise should be allowed to step in. When we cannot meet the demands which are made upon us by the people in more settled districts, which have a great deal better claim than these syndicators on the Cloncurry—that the hon. member is so anxious to benefit—I say that when we cannot meet the claims of those in comparatively settled districts to carry out railways which have been approved of by those who are best able to judge—

Mr. REID: The money has been voted for the Cloncurry line.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: We cannot possibly expect to make railways in the settled portions of the colony, and in addition to that find funds for a great many other railways which would no doubt be of great benefit to the colony, which would increase it in population, and which would increase it vastly in wealth, although we are desirous of seeing this colony go ahead.

Mr. REID: So are we on this side.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Hon. members say they are, but yet they refuse to use those means which have proved successful.

Mr. REID: That is State lines built by State money.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: When the hon. member gets the people at Callide Creek or at Cloncurry to believe that they are going to get State lines, because hon. members opposite are in favour of State railways, they might as well tell them that they are in favour of a State line to the moon. They will never be deluded by that.

Mr. REID: We don't believe in syndicates building the lines, anyway.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have called "Order" repeatedly, and the hon. member for Enoggera has persistently refused to obey. I trust he will not continue in his refusal.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I will curtail my remarks, as I do not wish to irritate the hon. member for Enoggera, but I think that the proposal to allow private railways to be built to open up country, in the absence of any reasonable prospect of getting those railways in any other way, is a perfectly reasonable one. I fail to see any alternative. The statement of hon. members that they are in favour of State railways will not help to make the railways. The hon. member for Enoggera has told us that the money was voted for this railway some sixteen years ago, but does he expect the people of Cloncurry to believe that, because he says that the line ought to be constructed, it will be constructed? The mere fact that he says that it ought to be constructed will not assist its construction in any way. And those persons who look upon the matter without prejudice—without being bound by some party platform which prevents them ever supporting a railway of this description—will know perfectly well that the alternatives are either to let private companies build some of these lines, or to allow the country to remain locked up—in which case the hon. members will be guilty of what they so much dislike, when they accuse men of dummying country. They are actually dummying this country—this great colony. How do we justify taking this colony from the aborigines?

Mr. REID: By force.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Because we say that we put it to much better use—that is the only justification we give. But this colony is a portion of the world. There are many portions of the world which are crowded with millions. In Japan there are 2,500 to the square mile; and are we to keep this huge portion of this colony actually without population? It is not fair to the world; it is not fair to humanity. And I say that if we can get that country opened up, if we can get that wealth extracted, then it becomes a portion of the property of mankind, which it is our bounden duty to make the most of. Whether we take the State system as a criterion, or whether we take the practical interests of the people as an ideal, in both cases, if these persons will assist us in opening up this country, that is at present of no value, and is not

likely to be of value, it will become valuable to the whole of the colony and beneficial to the whole of the world.

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*): I wish to offer a protest against the action of the Premier in endeavouring to force this measure through the House to-night. No doubt midnight is the most fitting time to put through a proposal of this kind. When most people are in bed would appear to be the time that the Government choose to shove this measure through the Assembly. I wish to utter a protest. The very courteous and highly respectable hon. member who has just sat down has given us an hour's deliverance—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I did not give you Talmage's sermons, anyway.

Mr. HIGGS: A performance which he was entitled to give us, and I do not find fault with him on that account. I only find fault with the Premier for pushing this very important measure, or endeavouring to push this very important proposal through the House this evening. There are many members in the Assembly, on both sides, who wish to address themselves to this very distinct departure from the State railway policy, and I think it is a very great pity that the Premier is not giving those hon. members an opportunity to do so, without continuing until the small hours of the morning, when possibly the reporters may not be taking notes. Now, I feel very strongly about this proposal, and I would like my protest to be recorded in *Hansard*. There have been hints that at 11 o'clock or 12 o'clock the *Hansard* reporters take no notes. I do not know whether it is the object of the Premier, in carrying on the discussion to this hour, to prevent the recording of speeches of those who are opposed to the measure. Now, the hon. and highly respectable and courteous member who has just sat down applied an epithet to me which I wish to refer to. He implied that I was a vagabond. He said that the majority of the members on this side of the House have nothing to do during half of the year—a statement which was an insult. Because members on this side of the House are not interested in syndicates, and do not happen to occupy positions in mortgage companies, and so forth, it does not follow that they are idlers during the greater portion of the year, and when I suggested to the hon. gentleman that it was a wonder that he did not take us up under the Vagrant Act for having no occupation, the hon. gentleman implied that I was a vagabond, and if that law was in operation I would not be here, which I think was distinctly unparliamentary. But as I am quite willing to give and take the hard knocks that come from the other side of the House, I did not take exception to it. I do not feel that I should, because I have just the same feeling regarding the hon. gentleman. I would prefer to be a member on this side of the House. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the House of the Labour party than I would dwell in the tents of Ministerial ungodliness. I have no Seaforth Estate to sell to the Government. If I had I might be engaged during half the year in running round and influencing the Government to make me an offer. If I had a Seaforth Estate it would not be necessary for me to work at all for a few years—if I could sell at the same price that this gentleman did. If I had a Seaforth Estate which was valued at £6,000, and I got £22,000 or £24,000 for it from the Government, I could afford to take a holiday during the greater portion of the year. Now the hon. member took up a very exalted attitude. He said that our arguments and opinions would have no effect except upon the most ignorant and vulgar of the community. Now, who are the most ignorant

of the community? I am sure the hon gentleman did not refer to the well-dressed people. He did not refer to the people who lived in high places and occupied the chief seats in the synagogue. Undoubtedly he referred to the working classes. Who are the most ignorant and vulgar in the community? I am sure the hon. gentleman did not refer to the shareholders and members of the syndicate, the ex-provisional directors of the North Chillagoe Company. No, the hon. gentleman undoubtedly meant the working classes, and it must be very gratifying indeed to those who, like himself, are anxious to sever their connection with the class to which they once belonged, to hear the hon. gentleman speak in such lofty tones.

At 11 p.m.,

Mr. GRIMES took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. HIGGS: The hon. gentleman speaks about our oppressive liberality in putting forward the views of other people. Well, we are compelled to quote the opinions of other people because if we make any suggestion that a departure from the settled policy of the country in railway construction will mean the creation of a number of temptations among our legislators, our judges, and other influential people, we are twitted with revelling in the making of charges which we cannot substantiate, and it is necessary for us to appeal to those in high places for authority. Hon. gentlemen opposite do not consider the personal convenience or comfort of members on this side, and they will, therefore, excuse me if I do not consider their convenience. I will, therefore, have to inflict upon them a quotation which the hon. member for Rockhampton North in his liberality abstained from giving to the House. It is a quotation from the speech of the present Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Samuel Griffith.

At two minutes past 11 o'clock,

Mr. BOWMAN called attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. HIGGS: The following is the speech to which I allude, and it will be found on pages 855 and 856 of *Hansard* for 1882, vol. xxxviii.—

I know the hon. gentleman is of a speculative spirit, but I don't regard that kind of speculation as advantageous to the country. It may be that I am wrong; perhaps I am too slow in my ways of thinking, but, having regard to what has taken place in other countries where this spirit of "exploitation"—which is a French word, but has been so much used as to have become almost part of our own language, and I may as well use it—exists—it is, in fact, opening the country to the most enterprising persons to come in and lay their hands upon the natural wealth of the colony for their own advantage, with practically little corresponding advantage to the country. There have been and are, a number of exploiters. Some have preyed upon the South American Republic, and some upon the Republic of the United States. There is no use denying it—instances of that kind are so numerous; and I do not desire to see this country understood to be a field for adventurous spirits of that character. I should much prefer that they should stop where they are. Then how do we find the system of having great railway corporations works in the United States? Of course we know that a corporation has no conscience; that somehow or other corporations do things which individuals would be ashamed of doing. The hon. gentleman has told us that he does not think there has been any corruption under the present system, although there might have been in view of the large interests at stake—that is to say, that the interests were so large that they might have raised a temptation to corruption, which nevertheless has not taken place. Perhaps that may be; and whether there is a difference in the nature of men when associated together as companies or directors of companies, and when they are acting as individuals, the fact is plain that whenever an aggregation of individuals takes place and a corporation is formed having a quasi-public position, we do find corruption. The railway corporations in the United States are notoriously corrupt; and many

thinking people, writing on the present position of affairs in the United States, consider the most serious evil now threatening that country is the enormous and increasing influence of these corporations. There can be no doubt of it. I saw, the other day, a statement—I forget the authority at this moment—to the effect that one of the great railway companies in the United States—the Erie Company, I think—had spent in one year £200,000 in bribery.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Bribing judges and lawyers.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Bribing judges and members of Parliament.

The PREMIER: That was an English company.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I don't know where the men were born, but I know that some of the most notorious adventurers in the United States are directors of it. Where they were born I am sure I don't know; perhaps they came from Scotland.

The PREMIER: That was not a land-grant railway.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I am aware of that. I am now pointing out that these great railway corporations do, somehow or other, feel themselves justified, whether their consciences have become altered or not, in doing very singular things. I will give another illustration which is familiar. I am not now addressing myself to this particular scheme at all, but to the general principle of allowing the country to be understood to be a field for every individual who likes to come to it and make a railway in consideration of getting a land grant. What about the Pacific Railway scandal? That company had got a concession from the Canadian Government, whilst there was a danger that it would not be carried through. There was a general election, and the company, being anxious to secure their concession, contributed £20,000 towards the electioneering expenses of the party in power. At that time that was thought to be a very immoral and improper thing, and the Government did not venture to face a division on a motion moved upon it. What has been done may be done again. Suppose that in this country a company of gentlemen as respectable as those of the Grand Trunk Railway Company—and there were some very respectable people in that company who would scorn to do dishonourable things in private life—received a valuable concession from the Government, and suppose a general election were to take place to determine whether a scheme of this kind should be carried out—suppose it was a particularly good thing for the speculators, and suppose they were no more moral as a corporation than the directors of the Grand Trunk Railway—the expenditure of a very much smaller sum than that might possibly succeed in obtaining a majority. Those things are notorious, and we ought to pause a good while before we deliberately incur those dangers. It is deliberately incurring a new danger, which in the United States has threatened the very existence of the Constitution. We have done very well here without it, and I hope we shall continue to do so. Another thing in connection with those great railway companies having control of the public highways is that they are always wanting something. I will take the case of a railway that has to be finished in two years. Suppose they want two more years, pressure will be brought to bear, and what is called in the United States, “lobbying,” will be introduced and acclimatised here. Attempts have already been made to introduce that system into this country.

The statement just made by the hon. gentleman is entirely founded on his own imagination. Once, when in Opposition, I received a deputation in the lobby of the House—a deputation conveying the resolutions of a public meeting. But that is not “lobbying,” as the hon. gentleman knows perfectly well. The hon. gentleman knows what lobbying means, and so do other people.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Don't you remember that “rough-and-tumble” with an hon. member in the passage?

So it would appear that in those times the lobbies were the scenes of great conflicts, which we never have now.

Mr. JENKINSON: What has this to do with this Cloncurry Bill?

Mr. HIGGS: I think I am entitled to be heard in silence, and I hope the hon. member will mind his own business. He made a statement the other night to this effect—that this garbled report was made out of the colony. He seemed very anxious about certain people, and I think he might spend his time in trying to rehabilitate the reputations of those persons.

Mr. JENKINSON: They are quite able to do that themselves.

Mr. HIGGS: Well, the hon. member need not pose in the position of a special interrupter. I am supposed to be heard in silence. Mr. Griffith then said—

Another evil found to exist is that they obtain such a monopoly that they can practically impose their own terms. I will show afterwards how magnificently that is arranged for in this proposal—how they get a monopoly of the entire Warrego district.

This was a discussion on the Warrego Railway Bill. Mr. Griffith went on to say—

When a company of that kind has a monopoly in the United States, and they cannot come to terms with a man who wishes to use their railway—suppose he is a large grain farmer, and they wished to get some of his land which he refused to sell—it happens that they never have any trucks ready at the station from which he wants to despatch his crop. The company is bound to carry for everybody, but it always happens there are never any trucks at that station. That is systematically practised in the United States, and men with perhaps 1,000 tons of grain have to wait month after month, unable to get it away, simply because they will not submit to the dictation of the company. An hon. member on the other side laughs, but I can assure him, on the testimony of public writers, that such things are done. That is one of the dangers of placing the great highways under the control of companies.

Now that is a very strong speech made by Mr. Griffith years ago, in support of our contention against any departure from the State policy of railway construction. Mr. Griffith showed that the system of private railways in the United States had led to corruption; and that the influence of these companies was exercised to the detriment of the public, inasmuch as there was positive bribery of judges and members of Parliament. Now these are strong arguments why we should not adopt this policy of the present Government. There is not one single virtue about the railway proposals of the Government that are at present before the House. Hon. members talk about private enterprise; but there is no private enterprise about this proposal. Private enterprise is a term that should be associated with fair play, bonnie play, and that every man should have a chance. But this proposal gives no man a chance to construct this railway, except this private monopoly company, consisting of certain persons, some of whom are relatives of some hon. members in this House and other persons in high places. Supposing the majority of the people in Queen street wanted the opportunity of building this railway, would they get it? Not at all; because, as we all know, this Government has taken this syndicate company under its sheltering wing, to the exclusion of all other people. It is a private monopoly. There is no fair play; “no fair field and no favour” to anyone except a few people. So that we repudiate the term “private enterprise” when applied to a proposal of this kind. There is no private enterprise about it at all. If there is, the Government should have advertised these concessions in the public Press in this way:—“Important sale by auction!”—with big head lines—“1st April, 1900. Queensland Government. Short of funds! Short of funds! Cannot borrow! Cannot borrow! Valuable concessions to be sold! Enormous sacrifice! Messrs. R. Philp and J. R. Dickson, trustees for the people of Queensland, will on the 1st April, 1900, sell enormous concessions: The right to build a railway 260 miles, or thereabouts, in length; the right to build an unlimited number of twenty-five-mile branches; the right to a free grant 260 miles long and 120 links wide; the right to the Crown lands over which the tramways or branch lines will run; the right to select areas of the Crown lands sixty-five miles distant from the trunk line; areas to a total of 5,000 acres at a rental of £1 per annum; the right to

construct any works which the company may consider it desirable to construct; the right to free grants of land for labourers' dwellings; the right to free grants of land for smelting and other works; the right to free grants of land for wharves and wharfage accommodation; the right to charge 50 per cent. more than the State railways for a period of fifty years; the right to construct and erect telegraphs and telephones, and to charge fees for thus becoming acquainted with the private affairs of other people; the right, also, to ignore the provisions of the Mining Act of 1898." I was very pleased to hear the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Ryland, refer to-night to the Mining Act. This company is to be permitted to do away with

the provision in the Mining Act

[11:30 p.m.] which compels all other companies

to have manholes and spaces for places of refuge, and they impudently request that not a single provision of the Mining Act of 1898 shall apply to them. They have the brazen effrontery to try to bind future Parliaments by stating that the syndicate leases shall not be subject to any of the provisions of the Mining Act of 1898, or any amending Act in substitution for that Act. They are very anxious to get this Railway Bill through the House, and go about the lobbies, and sit here anxiously waiting for the Assembly to pass the measure, and I regret to say that some hon. members opposite appear anxious to assist them. I venture to say that those hon. members will live to regret the day that they supported such a proposal as that now before the House. If the true friends of the people in the British House of Commons could have foreseen what has taken place during the past seventy years in the old country they would never have granted the privileges which the railway companies have possessed for so many years, and which they have used with such disastrous effect upon the people of Great Britain. The first Iron Railway Act was passed by the British House of Commons in 1801, that is about a hundred years ago. At that time horsepower was the only power used, and both horses and vehicles were supplied by the persons owning the tramway. It was not till 1823 that application was successfully made to Parliament for permission to use steam engines, and even then monopolies did not exist, because every man was his own train driver. Any kind of vehicle, carriage, or motive power could be used on a tramway in those times, but the companies saw what great opportunities they possessed, and they began to provide the rolling-stock. Very soon after 1830 it was recognised how great was the power of monopoly possessed by each railway, and constant efforts have been made since that time to remedy the grievances under which farmers, agricultural labourers, and the people generally have suffered, but without effect. Absolutely fruitless have been the endeavours of Parliament and the Press to control the companies. The legislators in the British House of Commons would have stood aghast if a railway Bill had been presented to them containing provisions such as are to be found in this Norman-ton-Cloncurry Railway Bill. Such comprehensive powers were never dreamt of by railway companies seventy years ago. At that time they were mere providers of an iron railroad, over which anybody was permitted to haul or carry. Then they became sole carriers, collectors, and delivery agents, and they are now a national danger—a menace to the public welfare—cormorants, vultures, vampires with an inordinate appetite; the sort of people who should be kept out of Australia at all hazards. The competition which existed in the early days, when the companies provided the railroads, and the people who wished to have goods carried along the

railroads supplied their own railroads, to a great extent protected the public from extortion. But the company having taken up all the means of haulage and the position of general carriers have destroyed competition on the line. The people even then clung to the opinion that competition between the existing lines would protect the public from extortionate rates for the carriage of goods and passengers, but how hopeless was their belief in competition is shown by the fact that the railway companies possess a power to impose taxes more exacting and more effective than any ever enjoyed by a crowned monarch of England. The legislature has made several well-disposed attempts to regulate the rates charged by the railway companies. Commissioners have been appointed who may be appealed to at any time to consider the rates charged. The companies may charge a maximum rate, but if they happen to be charging a rate, say, 50 per cent. below that maximum, they may not suddenly raise it to the maximum unless they can show that the proposed alteration is reasonable. But this admirable provision is a dead letter in practice because the cost of challenging the unreasonableness of a rate in the face of the elaborate machinery for expert evidence at the disposal of the associated companies is something from which even merchant princes shrink. Can it be believed that the legal expenses of these companies total £5,000,000 a year, or that since their advent in the old country their legal and parliamentary expenses have totalled the enormous sum of £93,000,000. I ask hon. gentlemen who propose to depart from the State railway policy of this country, to say where that money came from. It never came from the pockets of the companies, for it was never in them, but it has come out of the charges made upon the public. How seldom do we hear of any legal expenses in connection with our State railways. That is because there is a disposition on the part of the State to treat the public fairly. The associated railway companies are able to defy the public, the courts, and Parliament, and if they ever get a footing here they will defy the Commissioner, the Secretary for Railways, the Parliament, and the judges of the colony. The competition which was expected does not exist, because an association of managers fix the rates. We are told that if this company oppresses us we can build a State railway to compete with their line. On this subject of competition John Stuart Mill says that where the performance of a necessary service comes to be a practical monopoly, though perfect freedom for competition is allowed, none really takes place, and the charge made for a service that cannot be dispensed with is quite as much compulsory taxation as if it was imposed by law. But what are the prospects of our building a new line? Mill points out that there is perfect freedom for competition, but it is a competition which never takes place. We know it is very seldom indeed there is competition in the case of a gas company, although a gas company can charge whatever it chooses. We shall not build a competing line, but we shall buy out the company. but at what cost? Perhaps millions would be necessary to buy out this corporation if it ever gets a footing in the Northern part of Queensland. Farmers, miners, all classes of agriculturists and pastoralists, will be subject to the will of the directors of the company. They must either use the line or leave the country, and if they use the line they will have to pay the price the company charges. The corporation which proposes to come here is of the same type as the railway corporations in the old country, and they come here knowing all the tricks of the trade, and knowing the immense power they have to

tax the people of the Northern part of Queensland. The hon. member then, to show how inimical was the working of private railway companies in Great Britain to the agricultural and other industries, quoted from the late Mr. Biddulph Martin, president of the Royal Statistical Society, and from a paper read by Mr. Balfour Brown, Q.C., at the London Chamber of Commerce in 1897. The Bill made no provision enabling the Commissioner for Railways to fix the [12 p.m.] rates of carriage on the line, and no doubt Royal Commissions would have to be appointed in the future to attempt to get the rates reduced, but their efforts would prove as fruitless as similar efforts had proved in Great Britain. In the mother country the railway companies were largely responsible for the depression which prevailed in many industries, on account of their carrying foreign goods at much lower rates than they charged upon British goods, and chambers of commerce in England had expressed the opinion that the only remedy was State ownership of the railways. There was no guarantee that the rates on the Cloncurry line would not give a similar preference to foreign produce.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER said: I think the hon. member is tediously repeating [12.30 a.m.] himself, and I must warn him that I shall have to call upon him to resume his seat if he continues to do so.

Mr. HIGGS pointed out that the American railway companies oppressed the industries in the United States by their charges, contrasting the treatment extended by private railway companies with the assistance given by the Queensland railways to the pastoral industry. The hon. member then proceeded to argue in favour of the State ownership of railways.

The inauguration of a system of [1 a.m.] private railways meant economic waste, as each company would require its separate staff of officials and employees, and the burden would have to be borne by the public. If they did allow the private construction of railways, the time would come when the Government would have to purchase those lines at great loss to the country. On behalf of his constituency, he protested against the passage of the Bill.

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

AYES, 29.

Messrs. Philp, Rutledge, Dickson, Foxton, O'Connell, Dalrymple, Murray, Bell, Cowley, Callan, Story, Stephens, Forsyth, Bridges, Mackintosh, Stephenson, Stodart, Plunkett, Tooth, Hanran, Newell, Campbell, Kent, Leahy, Petrie, Bartholomew, J. Hamilton, Boles, and Keogh.

NOES, 20.

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

PAIRS.

Ayes.—Messrs. Moore, Armstrong, Forrest, Smith, G. Thorn, and T. B. Cribb.

Noes.—Messrs. Jenkinson, Jackson, Groom, Fogarty, Glassey, and Givens.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that this House do now adjourn. The Government business this evening will be Supply.

Mr. BROWNE: I would like to ask the hon. gentleman when we are likely to have the federal legislation? I would also remind him that the Railway Commissioner's Bill and the Public Service Bill must be passed within the next fortnight.

The PREMIER: Notice for the introduction of the Federal Bill will be given at the next sitting of the House. The Railway Commissioner's Bill will be gone on with at an early date; but the Public Service Bill is not yet ready.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at half-past 1 o'clock.