

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 1900

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER, 1900.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL No 2.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor assenting, in the name of Her Majesty, to this Bill.

FEDERAL ELECTIONS BILL.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*), in the absence of the Chief Secretary, moved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirability of introducing a Bill to provide for the election for the State of Queensland of members of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, and to determine the divisions of the State of Queensland for which members of the House of Representatives of the said Parliament shall be chosen, and for other purposes.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): I called "Not formal" to this motion, not with the idea of delaying business, but for the purpose of calling the hon. gentleman's attention to what seems to be a very curious omission in the

motion—that is, that there is no provision in it for the division of Queensland into electorates for the election of members of the Senate.

Mr. JACKSON: A pure oversight on the part of the Government.

Mr. KIDSTON: Before saying very much, I would like to know whether it was an oversight on the part of the Government? We were told a year ago that the then Premier had succeeded in securing a very valuable amendment of the Federal Constitution in so far as it affected Queensland. Particularly it was held out as a bait to the people of the Centre and the North, who knew quite well that if the members of the Senate were elected by Queensland as one electorate, they would have no voice, or at least no effective voice, in choosing this Senate, and that in the Federal Senate they would be entirely unrepresented. The then Premier, Mr. Dickson, succeeded in getting an amendment introduced which would enable the Government to divide Queensland into three or more divisions for the purpose of electing federal senators. Now, had the Government at that time any intention of carrying out that amendment? If they had, what is the necessity for altering their minds on the matter so as to make the whole of Queensland one electorate for the Federal Parliament? When Mr. Dickson introduced the Federal Enabling Bill into this House at the beginning of last year he took very great credit to himself for the amendment he had obtained in clause 7 of the Commonwealth Bill. He was speaking about one or two amendments he claimed credit for getting the Premiers of the southern colonies to agree to insert in the Federal Constitution, and was claiming that they would be of great advantage to Queensland, and he said—

The first amendment was in the 7th clause of the Bill the following paragraph being inserted: "But until the Parliament of the Commonwealth otherwise provides, the Parliament of the State of Queensland, if that State be an original State, may make laws dividing the State into divisions, and determining the number of senators to be chosen for each division, and in the absence of such provision the State shall be one electorate."

He went on to say—

I think hon. members will agree with me that that is a concession to Queensland, which, considering the great extent of our territory, and the various interests in this colony, will be a considerable improvement to the Bill. It is much better than that the whole of the senators should be elected by the preponderating electoral power of one portion of the colony.

At that time a number of advocates of federation pointed out what an advantage it would be to Queensland if it was divided in the way proposed, because the Centre and the North would have power to choose their own representatives. I cannot speak personally of the North, but it is unmistakable that in Central Queensland very many people were induced to vote for the Federal Bill on account of that provision, and now the Government propose to back down upon that and submit a motion to this House which, if it is carried, will prevent the House from altering the Bill to give effect to the amendment which was obtained by the then Premier.

Mr. FISHER: It may or may not.

Mr. KIDSTON: I quite understand that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Surely this is not the time to discuss this?

Mr. KIDSTON: I think it is the time, for this reason: I want to give the Government to understand that I am opposed, root and branch, to the passage of the Bill on this basis.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: When it is considered you can do that.

Mr. KIDSTON: If the Premier will intimate even by a nod of his head that when this motion comes on in committee to-morrow, he is quite willing that the House should amend it in the

respect I mention, I am willing to say no more about it now, but if the Government are going to use their power to put a Bill of this character through the House, then I think it is my duty at the first mention of the Bill to give the Government to understand that I will oppose it at every stage, by every conceivable means, whether the Bill becomes law or not. I would rather see the whole of Queensland unrepresented in the Federal Parliament than sit silent and allow such a Bill to go without protest. It is a deliberate attempt to disfranchise the people of the North and Centre, so far as the Federal Senate is concerned. There are members on both sides who are interested in this matter. My hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Browne, is a Northern man, and feels just as strongly as I do upon this matter, but he refrains from moving in it, because he does not wish to give an appearance of party feeling to the Bill.

The PREMIER: It is not a party measure.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear! It is not a party question.

Mr. KIDSTON: It has nothing at all to do with party. I appeal to the Premier. He is a Northern man. We have heard a great deal about the Northern influence in the Cabinet. There are one Central and three Northern members in a Cabinet of eight, and yet they bring down a Bill of this description—that they ought to be ashamed to stand before their constituents and advocate. It will disfranchise their constituents. I hope that no Northern or Central member—I do not know what Southern members may do, although I believe we can successfully appeal to their sense of fairness—but I do sincerely trust that no Northern or Central man who has any respect for those who sent him here will permit the initiatory stages of this Bill to be proceeded with without protest. I will tell hon. gentlemen why I object to the matter now. As I understand this motion, it is asking the House to do a certain thing—to divide Queensland.

Mr. COWLEY: Oh, no!

Mr. KIDSTON: To determine the division of the State of Queensland for the purpose of electing the members of the House of Representatives; and, as I understand things, if this motion is passed, it will be impossible for us to amend the Bill in the direction I have pointed out.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Bill is "for other purposes."

Mr. KIDSTON: Oh, yes, we know what that means. If the Premier is willing to have the thing fairly discussed by the House let him agree to the amendment of this motion in committee, and add the words, after the word "member" on the 5th line, "and the Senate," and that will settle the matter. If the majority of Southern members insist upon keeping the whole of these senatorial representatives to themselves we cannot help it, and the Government cannot help it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Who is introducing this Bill?

Mr. KIDSTON: I am astonished at the appalling ignorance of the Home Secretary. Here is a member of the Government, and he does not know that the Government are introducing the Bill. Do the members of the Government not hold caucus meetings? I trust the Premier will, at least, be so far reasonable as to accede to the amendment I have suggested.

The PREMIER: With the permission of the House, I may say that this is not in any sense a party question at all; and if it is the wish of the majority of this House that there should be three or six constituencies for the electors of senators, I shall not oppose it. We can discuss that to-morrow.

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Mr. BROWNE: Are you willing that it should be discussed to-morrow?

The PREMIER: Yes; you can compel us to discuss it to-morrow.

Mr. FISHER: Will you favour it?

The PREMIER: I shall not oppose it.

Question put and passed.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

NORTH CHILLAGOE MINES PROSPECTUS.

The SPEAKER: I have received from the hon. member for Croydon a notification, in writing, of his intention to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of calling attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely—

The alteration by some person or persons of the report of the Assistant Government Geologist on the North Chillagoe Mines, and the attempts made by some person or persons to induce the Government geologists to exceed their duty.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion supported?

Not less than five members having risen in their places in support of the motion,

Mr. BROWNE said: In moving the adjournment of the House this afternoon, I need not apologise to hon. members on either side of the House for rising to call attention to this most important matter. Every hon. member knows that there has been a great deal of talk and a great deal of feeling manifested, not only in Queensland, but all through the Australian colonies, about the way in which this report has been manipulated. When I mentioned some days ago that there were a lot of rumours about this matter, one hon. member interjected that we ought to "have it out," but I said we were not then in possession of all the information to enable us to go into it fully. And I am now taking the first opportunity of dealing with this matter since the whole of the correspondence has been laid on the table of the House. I think hon. members on both sides who have read the correspondence will admit that we should always be ready, first of all, to assist in protecting the public of the colony and of the world against anything of this kind; and, secondly, in protecting the Government officials, so as to ensure that the Government departments shall be kept clean from slurs and scandals of this character. Since the matter was first alluded to, there has been a great deal of correspondence of one sort and another, and gentlemen have stated that the directors have had nothing to do with the matter. One gentleman, Mr. P. Duffy, has come into great prominence in this matter. I will only deal briefly with the correspondence, as I have no wish to delay the business of the House. I will first of all refer to a letter on page 4 of the correspondence, from Mr. P. Duffy, for the Admiral Sampson Chillagoe Company, to the Hon. Mr. Philp, dated 30th August, 1899. It states—

DEAR SIR,—I should have called on you, but time prevented it. *Re* the report to be prepared for the Admiral Sampson Chillagoe Company, I am instructed to ask you to spare neither time nor expense in giving this report, for everything depends on it. Mr. Dunstan, who has just returned with me from Chillagoe, has plans, sketches, etc., by which he can prepare a report, which will do the mines justice, and enable us to float at once. Kindly instruct that the sketches he has and maps of leases be included in the report. Our company will pay all expenses, and, as Mr. Dunstan has gone to the trouble of making sketches and carefully preparing plans, let them be included; they are most valuable properties, and a luke-warm report will only damage their prospect. Mr. Dunstan is a valuable man, and an interview with him would enable you to judge as to their worth. Our company will be grateful to you for the most exhaustive report this gentleman can give.

Some of these gentlemen seem to think that they can run the Government of this country. That very letter, and another letter further on relating to exemptions, show a most cast-iron cheek to the hon. gentleman. Mr. Marshall Moore, in a telegram to the Hon. R. J. Philp, dated Sydney, 1st September, says—

I understand from Mr. Duffy who accompanied Mr. Dunstan in his work at Chillagoe for Admiral Sampson Company that Mr. Dunstan has expressed his very favourable opinion of the properties he examined. Kindly instruct Mr. Dunstan to prepare a voluminous report with accompanying maps plans and sketches so that it can be placed as a complete report and not to require any further report to place in the hands of the brokers.

I am very pleased that the hon. gentleman, as Minister for Mines, at once said he would do nothing of the kind. He said—

Inform Mr. Moore that the Minister never interferes in any way with the geologists' reports, and declines to give him any instruction whatever.—R. P., 1-9-99.

I now wish to direct attention to a very lengthy communication on page 7 of the correspondence, which, I think, more than anything else, reflects on the character of the directors of this company. It is dated, "Banker street, Sydney, 25th November, 1899;" but I am not going to read the whole of it. There they submit a number of questions, which are practically insults to the Government officials, because they are really asked to give falsified reports. Mr. Duffy seems to have been made the scapegoat, but that letter is not written by him, but is addressed by Mr. W. Marshall Moore, the legal manager of the company, to the Hon. the Minister for Mines, Brisbane—

SIR,—I have the honour, on behalf of my directors, to thank you for Mr. Dunstan's Government geologist report on our Chillagoe mineral properties. We greatly appreciate your kindness and the work done by Mr. Dunstan. However, there are one or two particulars more of a practical business nature which my directors hardly like to ask you to direct or permit Mr. Dunstan to give, but which (if you will) are of great material importance to us to have in a concise form for our prospectus, which we are issuing at once to form our properties into a large limited company to develop and work mines. Attached hereto are the questions, and which it is evident from Mr. Dunstan's report, he can answer from the very full and careful examinations he made.

I may add that if there is any further charge for this we will gladly pay it, and after all the months we have waited for the report, and all the expenses we have incurred, and the great benefit to Queensland it will be to have all these mines developed, we hope that you will permit this supplementary report to be forwarded to us as quickly as possible. May I suggest that if Mr. Dunstan is in the country, that this letter be forwarded to him endorsed with your approval.

The legal manager of that company asked the Minister for Mines to allow the Government Geologist to do that! Below that letter is the enclosure—

Re Mr. Dunstan's report, November, 1899, on the Admiral Sampson Chillagoe Company Mines.

Take the third question, which reads—

Re gold, Tartana.—The wonderful show of gold mentioned by Mr. Dunstan is very encouraging. Could he supplement this by an opinion as to what should be the extent of gold, and that gold in combination with copper makes the mines very much more valuable than if there was little or no gold? Some English capitalists tell us that they do not care so much for mines which have copper without gold, but with gold they are eager for them.

Then, again—

5. Cannot Tartana be briefly described as being to all appearances a second Mount Lyell, with [4 p.m.] its combinations of gold and silver, with large bodies of high and low grade copper ore?

6. Mr. Dunstan speaks of certain immense "impregnations," formations, not "lodes." Will he state for the information of the ignorant public that the largest and wealthiest mines in the world are "impregnations," not "lodes"?

Those gentlemen have been deluded into that idea. Will they rank among the ignorant public Mr. Marshall Moore is referring to?

7. Can Mr. Dunstan say with any degree of confidence that the properties warrant the construction of railways and smelters, and the appointment of the very best mines manager procurable, such manager having before him one of the grandest and most promising undertakings in that line to be found in Australia?

Those are the questions submitted by the legal manager of the company, as he says, on behalf of the directors, and he wants to know whether the Secretary for Mines will allow Mr. Dunstan to give that information, so that it may be put into a prospectus. I am not going to deal with the whole of the questions.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: What was the reply?

Mr. BROWNE: I am just going to give the reply in full, because I think it is only fair to everyone concerned that it should be made public. Here is the reply of the Government Geologist—

MEMO. FROM THE GOVERNMENT GEOLOGIST TO THE HONOURABLE THE MINISTER FOR MINES.

7th December, 1899.

Memo. for the Honourable the Minister for Mines re Letter, dated 29th November, from W. Marshall Moore, Manager of the Admiral Sampson Chillagoe Company.

Mr. Moore attaches to his letter a number of questions and requests that Mr. Dunstan may supplement his report by replying to them, with a view of including his replies in a prospectus for floating the properties into a large limited company.

I have carefully considered these questions, and I am decidedly of opinion that they are such that no member of a Government geological survey staff should be expected to answer.

They ask for opinions as to quantities of ore for certain values likely to be obtained; of the probable cost of certain development work; and questions 5, 6, 7 actually dictate statements which they wish Mr. Dunstan to put his name to for the purpose of "puffing" the property.

I have been carefully through Mr. Dunstan's report, and I consider he has given all the facts concerning the properties, as far as they could be obtained at the time of his visit, in a very clear and fair manner, and also the conclusions he arrives at go quite as far as is consistent with the evidence before him.

I return Mr. Moore's letter herewith.

WILLIAM H. RANDS, Government Geologist.

On that memo. there is this minute by the Secretary for Mines—

Inform Mr. Moore that Mr. Dunstan cannot be asked to answer the questions submitted.—R. P., 12-12-99.

Members on both sides of the House may hold different opinions on this subject, but it is not altogether a party question. It is a question that members on both sides of the House are concerned in, and for my part—after taking a great deal of trouble in going through these reports and getting all the information I possibly can—I do not think that the Government Geologist, or anyone in the Mines Department, would be any party to deceiving the public in the way proposed.

The HOME SECRETARY: What are you going to do?

Mr. BROWNE: If the hon. gentleman will sit quiet I will endeavour to tell him. What I want is for this House to endeavour to take some action by which we may find out who is really at fault, who are the victims, and who are endeavouring to victimise the public. I am sure that hon. members on both sides were astonished when they saw this attempt to bribe the Government Geologist, for it is a deliberate attempt to bribe that officer. On page 10 hon. members will find a letter from Mr. P. Duffy, to the Government Geologist, asking him to use his influence to get Mr. Dunstan to alter his report in the manner suggested. That was

written on the 30th of August, 1899. Then, on the 12th February, 1900, Mr. Duffy wrote to Mr. Rands, as follows:—

Brisbane, 12th February, 1900.

DEAR SIR,—I do not think I should have mentioned that vote our company made the other day, for I presume they intended to keep that until the company was floated. But my advice is not to refuse it. It will be worth between two and three thousand to you, and it is simply a present.

I do not think I will be able to see you till I return to Brisbane; but if in the meantime you can see anything you can do to assist us, say in regard to those reasonable questions our secretary asked you about, you will, I have no doubt.

I will see you on my return.

Yours truly,

P. DUFFY.

P.S.—You might have another look at those questions. Some are very reasonable.

Those questions he might have thought reasonable, and that the light of £2,000 or £3,000 would make them look reasonable to a man who was hard up and wanted money very badly. Further on we have a very interesting communication from Mr. Duffy to Mr. Dunstan, where he says—

3rd November.

DEAR DUNSTAN,—Your very welcome letter to hand. I am more than satisfied with your exertion.

Now, straight talk. Will you accept any suitable, pleasant, agreeable position in the new company? What would you like best; tell me. Also the salary you would like.

I, with two others, have a block support of 42,000 votes in the new company; what you say to me is in complete confidence; I talk too plain sometimes; you think so?

I intend to have you compensated for your exertion. If this thing floats as it should, you have an opportunity. I expect to see the report next week.

C. Featherstonchaugh and McEvoy, men with influence throughout the colonies, have the matter in hand. Write me before the end of the month.

Everything confidential. I hope you are well.

Yours truly,

P. DUFFY.

With regard to that letter, I think hon. members should notice that two gentlemen, Mr. Featherstonehaugh and Mr. McEvoy, are mentioned as though they were cognisant of what Mr. Duffy was doing. I am not prepared to say whether they were cognisant of his actions or not. Then we have a letter further on, where Mr. Duffy writes to Mr. Dunstan, after offering him the management of the company—

The reason I would like an estimate of the quantity of stone above the level of the plane in Tartana, is that it would help flotation.

The brokers say it would help along wonderfully, and if we must further develop, what will it cost to do sufficient to prove the show?

Dear Dunstan, if you will do this it will help us along wonderfully.

How very affectionate he is in offering Mr. Dunstan a nice, agreeable, easy billet, and asking him to name his own salary. Further on he reports that the thing is going on like a house on fire, and he says to Mr. Dunstan—

You did not tell me if you were prepared to manage Tartana, or will I propose we offer you a certain salary to manage; it would be better, of course. But then I should know if you are prepared to do so, and what salary you would require. You must bear in mind I can barrack, and I tell you I have a lot of confidence in you. If I had not, I would not be anxious, for I have a very large interest, fully one-eighth.

Then there is the very last letter from Mr. Duffy, and again he brings in the names of prominent men, one of them being a gentleman whose name came before the House in the discussion on the Chillagoe Railway Bill in 1897—namely, Mr. Moffat, of Irvinebank. I think hon. members on both sides of the House who know anything about Mr. Moffat, however much they might denounce the Chillagoe Railway Bill,

never said one word reflecting on him as an individual, or attacking his honour in any way at all, yet we have his name brought in here.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is nothing discreditable to him here as far as I can see.

Mr. BROWNE: I am leaving everyone to draw his own inference; and if hon. members are willing to let Mr. Moffat, Mr. Featherstonehaugh, Mr. Archibald, and Mr. Brentnall rest under the stigma of being associated with Mr. Duffy it is not my fault, because I am bringing it before the House to give them all an opportunity of clearing themselves and sheeting the blame home to the guilty parties. He points out in this letter—

You remember Munro telling us how Moffat sent men to seize it, thinking he was away in Melbourne. Now he tells the Hon. Brentnall that it is next to worthless, and Hon. Archibald is making inquiries of Rands as to whom most confidence could be placed in, Moffat or Dunstan. This is the richest piece of news I have had for a long time. Things are going along well in the south, and it is a pity such as Moffat should damp it here. Cannot you do something to show these men its value; they are my *forte* in Brisbane if worked well; let them drop it and it will become very sick. Say a word of encouragement and the thing is a success. If you will tell them what you told me in a letter, that 150,000 yards of ore can be had at once for the smelting, it will knock Moffat's predictions into ashes in a moment.

Re John Moffat.—First he tried to get half interest; second he tried to get Munro to include in the C. R. and M. Group; this failing, he tried to seize it. He then, with a full meeting of C. R. and M. board of directors, agreed with brokers in Melbourne and Sydney that they would float the group into a company of £100,000 shares if we would agree to give them entire management. We refused; they then wrote us intimating their willingness to build a railway and smelt the ores; that we could not do. Now they want to force us to work with them. Hence this, his last attack.

Do speak out to Hon. Archibald and Brentnall; speak of its possibilities, also its gold and silver as compared to Lyell yield, &c., &c.

That is all the correspondence I am going to refer to at present, and I think there is sufficient in that to bear out my contention that we want to know who is at the bottom of this—who is pulling the strings all the time. What I contend is that it is the duty of the Government—the Premier, more especially, being Secretary for Mines, as safeguarding the rights of the public and the mining interests of this colony, also in regard to keeping his department above suspicion—to see that a full and complete inquiry is held in order to sheet the thing home if possible to the guilty parties. As it happens, there is something like an analogous case at the present time in Victoria—a case not so bad, but something on all-fours. Hon. gentlemen may have seen in the papers an account of the Glenfine salting case at Ballarat. In the *Australian Mining Standard* of 20th September, page 314, there is a full account of this case. It was the case of a claim at Ballarat, in which stone was taken out and sent to the School of Mines at Ballarat to be assayed. On the road somebody got at the stone, salted it—put some gold into it—and when the assays came out the result far exceeded anything expected by the mine manager or the legal manager. That night the scrip went up enormously. The manager of the claim and the legal manager were so satisfied something was crooked about the matter that they sent 10 tons of stone to different places for treatment, and instead of getting 1 oz. 6 dwt., as at the assay, it only went 2 dwt. or 3 dwt. Then, of course, scrip went down far below its real value, and there was great excitement. The directors at once took action. They offered £100 as a reward for sheeting it home to the guilty parties, and the Stock Exchange did the same. We have in this paper a long account of a deputation to the Minister,

one of the deputation being Mr. R. F. Bryant, the chairman of directors of the claim. In this matter there were no Government officials involved. It was an outside thing, simply affecting the claim shareholders and the general public. I am not going to give the arguments they adduced, but I will call attention to the steps immediately taken by the Minister for Mines.

The Hon. A. R. Outtrim said as far as he was individually concerned, he would do his best to meet the wishes of the interviewers. The practice of mine salting was fairly prevalent in the early days, but it was nearly always confined to private and co-operative parties. Such iniquitous practices deserved to be put down with a strong hand. He was sure that the various stock exchanges of Victoria, which were capably and honestly managed, would give every assistance in bringing the culprit to justice. However, as the inquiry asked for was a matter for the Premier to decide, it would be best to call on him.

Subsequently Mr. Outtrim laid the matter before the Premier, who promised to take immediate action, and appoint either a police magistrate or a county court judge to preside over an inquiry to be held at Ballarat. The deputation expressed their satisfaction at the reply of the Premier and withdrew.

The result of that was that two days afterwards men were arrested for that very offence. Hon. members may say that, unfortunately, if we probe this to the bottom, there is what I consider—and I think the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government would coincide in—what I consider to be a defect in our company law, because there is no way of making a criminal offence of a thing of this sort. At the same time I contend that it is the duty of the Government to take steps at once to have a full inquiry into this matter. To show that I am not alone in this I may say that here is the following edition of the *Australian Mining Standard*, the leading mining journal of Australia. This is 27th September, on page 348; and we have here a leading article headed, "Two Mining Scandals;" and at the commencement this is the way the editor deals with it—

Those who inveigh against mining morality as a non-existent quality have two dainty morsels to roll over their tongues in the recently exposed Glenfinc and North Chillagoe mines scandals. The matters involved are of totally different type, for while the one brings its perpetrators within the grasp of the criminal law the other is merely an example in the gentle art of prospectus manufacturing. If the facts as to the deletions from, and alterations in, Mr. Dunstan's report had alone to be regarded there would not be the slightest difficulty in deciding which of the two cases wore the worst complexion. The ostensible purpose is in each the same—namely, to obtain an inflated report, under which to get at the pockets of unwary investors; but while in one case the operators ventured upon a personal risk, which may yet carry a heavy penalty, in the other the idea suggested is that of sniping from behind a sangan, with the full knowledge that it involves no personal danger whatever.

Only a few days ago there was an expression about sniping from behind somewhere in a letter I received from a gentleman belonging to one of these companies. Here is the *Australian Mining Standard*, saying that gentlemen who indulge in the practice of prospectus manufacturing are guilty of that very offence. I am not going to read the whole of this article; but after pointing out that to issue a fraudulent prospectus, signed by influential names, is a far worse offence than that of two, possibly ignorant, men salting a trial crushing, and while those men would risk imprisonment the others would not—

Mr. FITZGERALD: What about conspiracy to defraud?

Mr. BROWNE: They conclude the article as follows:—

Commenting upon the subject in the House, Mr. Philp, Premier and Minister for Mines, said the Mines Department had repeatedly been asked to give reports for private companies, but he had always set his face

against the practice. In future, however, any report furnished to anyone would be published by the Mines Department at the same time. In Victoria the Stock Exchanges and the Government took still more decisive action to sift the salting scandal thoroughly, so that, by the detection and punishment of the culprits, the mining industry should be protected.

And I think it is not asking too much that the Government of this colony, and especially as the Premier is also Minister for Mines, should take very strong steps in the same direction. To show the attention this matter has attracted, not in Queensland only, but in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and elsewhere, you can hardly pick up a paper in which there is not some reference to "The Chillagoe Mines Scandal," as it is called. There is another article here on page 350, three-quarters of a column in length, and further on in the same paper there are two pages devoted to "A Queensland Mining Scandal—North Chillagoe Mines," where there is published part of the correspondence and the prospectus, without any comment other than that of the heading. I shall not take up the time of the House longer. I may say at once that I have been asked to express my opinion upon this matter, but at the present time one is scarcely able to express an opinion, and that is the reason I am asking for a full investigation; at the same time with respect to the directors of the company, and after all the letters sent by two, who appear to be very much hurt about it, though I will not say they are implicated in this matter at all, I do say that they did not exercise that care which men should exercise who know that a lot of people may follow in their lead in a matter of this kind. The "ignorant public" are alluded to even in this correspondence. There are plenty who might be induced to invest in a thing like this when they saw names like those of the Hon. Mr. Archibald, and the Hon. Mr. Brentnall, and the others as directors. Hon. members know that there are thousands of people in the world who put their bit of money into mining specs, knowing little about the business, but having a pound or two to spare, they like to get a chance to get a little money back for it, and when they see the names of known men, who have a knowledge of mining matters, attached to a prospectus they say, "If they are prepared to go into this thing I am prepared to go into it too." I say, then, that the persons who put their names to that prospectus as provisional directors were guilty of gross carelessness in signing it without being thoroughly conversant with what was taking place. I need not further refer to the matter, but I think a sufficient case has been made out for the Premier, as Minister for Mines, to make a searching investigation into this affair. Though we may not be able to punish the guilty individuals, we may at least be able to give a chance to those who are not guilty to clear their character from the stigma cast upon it from their connection with these transactions.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COWLEY (*Herbert*): Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. I would not interrupt the hon. member while he was speaking, because the subject is one of great importance, and the hon. member in discussing it was limited to time. I therefore thought it better to ask your ruling after the hon. member for Croydon had spoken, and before any other hon. member commenced to speak. My point of order is: Is the hon. member in order in moving the adjournment of the House after public business has been entered upon? A motion has been made and disposed of, and I would ask you, for our guidance in the future, whether, under the circumstances, the hon. member is in order in the course which he has taken? Because,

if he is, any hon. member may move the adjournment of the House after an Order of the Day has been dealt with, or in fact at any hour of the sitting, and so take hon. members and the Government by surprise. As hon. members are aware, if these notices are confined to a certain hour—before public business is entered upon—hon. members will be in their places and prepared to discuss the question.

Mr. BROWNE: I consulted both the Speaker and the Premier on the matter before moving the motion.

Mr. COWLEY: My objection is simply that the hon. member should have moved his motion before public business had been entered upon. I do not wish to take any point or to stop the discussion. My desire is that we shall have a definite ruling so that hon. members may be confined to a certain hour for moving the adjournment, that other members on either side may not be taken by surprise. Hon. members may remember that before the existence of our present Standing Order on the matter, motions for the adjournment might be made in the House at any time. That was found to be very inconvenient in practice, and therefore Standing Orders were brought in to lay down a definite practice, making a certain time only available for these motions. If hon. members will look at page 240 of "May" they will find that—

A motion for the adjournment of the House, for the purpose of raising a debate, may only be made when all the questions to members upon the notice-paper have been disposed of, and before the commencement of public business.

And in page 243, they will see this—

Commencement of public business.—Public business commences when the Speaker has called the member in charge of the first motion appointed to be taken at the commencement of public business, or which stands first upon the notice-paper, or upon the Clerk, to read an Order of the Day. Consequently, after the Speaker's call no motion can be made for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 17.

Mr. McDONALD: Does that refer to formal motions?

Mr. COWLEY: No, to any motions. This was not a formal motion in this case.

Mr. McDONALD: I know that. I was thinking of your practice in the past.

Mr. COWLEY: This motion was called "Not formal," and in discussing it the actual business of the House was entered upon. All I ask is that we shall have our practice defined. If the adjournment of the House can be moved after the first notice has been dealt with, it follows that it may be moved after the second or third, or at any hour of the sitting. I would, therefore, ask your ruling, Sir, as to whether the motion is in order.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has referred to the practice of Parliament, and in that respect he is quite right. We have a Standing Order dealing with the subject ourselves—Standing Order No. 130. We have under that established a practice—and a very good practice, too—that motions for the adjournment of the House should be made before public business is entered upon. That practice I propose to follow in the future. The fact that it was not followed to-day is due entirely to my own anticipation that the discussion on the first motion upon the paper, standing in the name of the Chief Secretary, would only occupy a moment or two. The hon. member is quite in order in raising the point. I may say, for the information of the House, that in future I shall take motions for the adjournment of the House before any contested motion has been formally entered upon. I think that is a convenient time to deal with them, and the right practice to follow.

The PREMIER: I may mention that the leader of the Opposition consulted me as to his intention to move the adjournment to discuss this matter. So far as I can see, judging by the letters that have been printed, there is no doubt that there has been an attempt to get at the geologists of the Mines Department, both by Mr. Duffy and by Mr. Moore.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That is plain for anyone to see; but I am very glad, for the honour of the Queensland Mines Department, that that attempt failed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I think nothing stands out more clearly than that the Mining Department only gave to the North Chillagoe Company the facilities they give to all companies. They showed them no favour of any kind. They [4.30 p.m.] gave them the facilities which would be given by the Mines Department to any companies wishing to get the services of a Government Geologist—that is, the geologist's report had to be paid for; but certainly this is the first time I have ever heard of any company trying to tamper with a Government Geologist.

Mr. STEWART: And you would not have heard of this if the report had not been falsified.

The PREMIER: No, I suppose not. I think the honour is due to Mr. Rands of finding out the false report published in the papers, and of informing me, and in turn of informing the country of the character of this prospectus.

Mr. McDONALD: The *Telegraph* did it.

The PREMIER: The *Telegraph* only got the information from the Mines Department.

Mr. TURLEY: Why did not the *Courier* expose it?

Mr. REID: That is the boodlers' paper.

Mr. LEAHY: Did the *Telegraph* get the information from the Mines Department?

The PREMIER: Certainly. No one else had the information to give.

Mr. DAWSON: The *Courier* suppressed the information.

The PREMIER: No, I do not think so. I understand that the *Courier* published a letter from Messrs. Archibald and Brentnall on the same morning that the *Telegraph* published the whole prospectus. I am certain that the *Courier* or the *Telegraph* have no wish to do anything to injure the colony, or in any way to falsify mining reports.

Mr. REID: It is doubtful about the *Courier*.

The PREMIER: In connection with this case the department sent all the correspondence up to the Crown Law Offices for their opinion. I certainly think the best way of finding out all about this scandal would be through the law courts. Whether we can get there or not I do not know; but, failing our getting there, I shall certainly have an inquiry held, for the sake of our own geologists.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That will give them an opportunity of giving further evidence.

Mr. BROWNE: What form of inquiry?

The PREMIER: That is hard to say, but an inquiry which will elicit all the information that we can possibly elicit. Of course if you can get into the criminal court, then you can compel anyone to give evidence; but in an inquiry held by the Government we cannot compel anyone to give evidence. I am very glad to say that I do not think that this scandal—this falsifying of the geologist's report was done in Queensland.

Mr. TURLEY: Is it said to have been?

The PREMIER: I do not think so. I think it must have been done in the other colonies.

Mr. LESINA: Are not they smart enough here for that sort of thing?

The PREMIER: They may be, but so far as I can gather there is nobody in this colony who has altered it. I do not think that Messrs. Brentnall and Archibald have had anything to do with the alteration of the report at all.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: They were certainly careless. Before allowing their names to be put to the prospectus, they ought to have satisfied themselves that it was right.

Mr. McDONALD: They are equally guilty.

The PREMIER: I admit that, but still they are not criminally guilty.

Mr. McDONALD: I think they are.

The PREMIER: There are very few men who go into things of this sort—very few directors, who go into all these matters to see that everything is correct. They take the reports or the opinions of other persons. People who are asked to go on directorates ask other men who they can rely upon, if the thing is all right and if they say it is they give their names.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They should be made responsible.

The PREMIER: I suppose they are responsible. If anybody has lost money by this prospectus, they would certainly be liable, and I understand that they have taken steps to refund any money put into the company in Queensland, and I suppose they are doing the same thing in New South Wales. I only wish to add that up to the present time the Mines Department of Queensland has had an exceedingly clean name.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: No one has been able to point the finger of scorn at the Department of Mines in Queensland up to the present time, and I hope that it will long continue to keep that reputation; and for the sake of the Mines Department, it is my intention to probe this matter as deeply as I possibly can.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The proper place, and the more effectual way of probing it, certainly would be through the law courts, if we can get there, but I think there may be some trouble in getting there. Failing that, I shall certainly have an inquiry made, and if possible have the charge sheeted home to the man who altered this report. So far as I can see both Messrs. Dunstan and Rands—

Mr. LESINA: Cannot you rake up some old George IV. Act, as you did with the shearers?

The PREMIER: I think the fact of Mr. Dunstan's report being altered is sufficient proof that Mr. Dunstan had not been bribed. I am not going into the whole of these letters. I can only say that no stone will be left unturned on my part to get at the perpetrator of this job—for it is a job. Unfortunately, in connection with mining prospectuses, there is more of this kind of thing than in regard to any industry I know of. I know I have had some experience myself in that respect. I remember a mine in which I was interested in Croydon—but I will not repeat it here. They stole gold and the plates and the machinery, and the only way to prevent them stealing the boiler was to sell it. We all remember the great Taranganba swindle perpetrated near Rockhampton—one of the greatest swindles ever perpetrated in Queensland. That was exposed by Mr. Jack. The thing had been on the market for some time, and many shares had been sold, and at big prices too. I was not a member of the Government at the time, but I think Mr. Jack was asked by some of the unfortunate shareholders to report on it, and he exposed the whole thing. So far, the Mines Department of Queensland has certainly never lent itself to any swindle of any kind, and I hope that it never will. Quite the reverse, it has exposed many of these things. I certainly think

it would be a good thing if we had reports on a number of these mines which sometimes are attempted to be foisted on the people of the colony.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That is why I always consent to a Government geologist reporting on a mine. I certainly think his report is a safeguard—a means of preventing the public putting their money unwittingly into a bad thing. I can promise the leader of the Opposition that it will not be my fault if this thing is not probed to the very bottom.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*): I think the Government of Queensland can always take credit to itself for having discountenanced any attempt whatever on the part of anybody to play tricks with the Mines Department of the colony, or permit persons to publish statements relating to mining matters which may be used disadvantageously. I remember many years ago the Government of which I was a member had a great deal of odium cast upon them for sending a cable to Great Britain cautioning the public to be careful not to believe all they were told in prospectuses in regard to many so-called mines.

Mr. DAWSON: "Wild-cats."

Mr. GLASSEY: Sir Samuel Griffith got very severely handled for sending that cablegram.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He did in some quarters, but not from the colony as a whole. Some persons felt that he ought to have specified the mines, and thought that genuine mines were injured in their prospects, but it would be unfair to expect the Government to single out mines, or to take the responsibility of advising the British public as to what were genuine mines and what were not. The Government did its duty in cautioning the people not to believe everything they read, or heard, or were told with regard to mines in Queensland which it was sought to float. I only mention that to show that it has been consistent with the policy of the Mining Department of this colony to prevent persons outside the colony from being swindled by adventurers. In this case the department seems to have acted on the same principle. It was not incumbent upon the Premier to say plainly, "I believe you are attempting a swindle by making the suggestion about officers of the Government making reports of a certain kind," but in a most dignified manner he at once declined to permit the Government officers to have anything to do with the requests which had been made. It is obvious, and it requires no elaborate argument on the part of any hon. member to prove, that a gross swindle has been attempted by some persons in connection with this North Chillagoe Mine. It is quite impossible to say who are and who are not implicated in the affair. One thing is perfectly certain, and that is that Mr. Duffy, whoever he is—I never heard of the gentleman before—was very active and very energetic in his endeavours to bribe officers of the Government, and induce them by promises of what he considered were substantial rewards to assist the company in getting the mine floated. But I think myself that the member for Croydon, the leader of the Opposition, is in error in stating that in the event of anything being proved with regard to this prospectus, the criminal law does not apply. We know that criminal law does apply where you find a man who actually "salts" a mine, as was mentioned by the hon. member when referring to Victoria. The hon. member seemed to think that it was impossible to convict any wrong-doer who brought forward a fraudulent report of this kind, and that

he could not be made amenable to the criminal law. That is not so. The law of conspiracy always meets cases of this kind. Of course, in conspiracy cases there must be at least two persons, but it does not matter, in order to convict, whether the fraud comes off or not. It is sufficient to prove that the agreement to fraudulently deceive was made between the parties.

Mr. DAWSON: That is the main thing to prove.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In a matter of this sort the question is who are the conspirators if there are any. I need not take up time in stating what must be clear to all hon. members, that the courts of this colony have no jurisdiction over persons who are in New South Wales. When our Criminal Code comes into operation, we may find a different state of things. There are provisions there for getting at persons in the other colonies who have been guilty of fraudulent attempts in this colony, as soon as they put their foot across the border; but at the present time we have no jurisdiction over wrong-doers who are resident in one or other of the colonies. So that, however guilty these persons in Sydney may be, the courts in this colony are unable to deal with them. I think it is perfectly clear that, amongst those who had to do with the manipulation of this report in Sydney, Mr. Duffy and the mining manager cannot clear themselves of being very deeply in the swim. It does not appear who the directors are, but, unless they can clear themselves, it would appear that Mr. Duffy was acting under their instructions.

Mr. DAWSON: He seems to have been at the game before.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I cannot imagine and do not believe, at present, that the directors here, who were called upon to act as provisional directors, were cognisant of the fraud that had been committed in "editing," to call it by a mild name, Mr. Dunstan's report.

Mr. DAWSON: Editing?

Mr. HIGGS: "Editing" is a good name.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That may mean a great deal. "Editing" with an object in view. They did not put in anything that was not there. It may be called "editing" if they left things out.

Mr. FISHER: They put in things too.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If they did, that was a fraudulent tampering with the report for the purpose of deceiving the public. There can be no question about that. It is nauseating to read of the transaction, and it must meet with the disapprobation of every honest man throughout the length and breadth of the colony. My friend, the Premier, tells me that the papers have been sent up to the Department of Justice, and he may be perfectly sure—

Mr. DAWSON: The persons concerned should be sent to the courts of justice.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And he may be perfectly sure that as far as I can investigate it the matter shall be investigated, and I do not think I have a reputation for timidity in giving an opinion on a subject of this sort when it is my duty to give it. If I can discover that there are grounds for proceeding against anyone within the jurisdiction of our courts, proceedings will be taken. The only other alternative is for an inquiry to be made of such a nature as will reveal to the other colonies the names of the persons in New South Wales who have been parties to this abominable fraud, and indicating what may be sufficient ground for connecting any person in Queensland with it. I cannot at present believe that any person in Queensland has been connected with it. There are some things that one cannot touch without danger.

Mr. LESINA: Syndicates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I refer to mining speculations. Many men have touched them to their regret, and to their great financial injury.

Mr. LESINA: There are some here who are the responsible boomers.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We are not now dealing with that question. I hope we will deal with the whole matter in a proper and dignified way. One swallow does not make a summer.

Mr. LESINA: One kangaroo makes a spring.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There must have been a set of rogues in Sydney concocting a fraud of this sort, and every man who was a party to it must be deficient in the commonest principles of honesty.

Mr. BROWN: That is so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: But the fact that we find persons willing to indulge in frauds of this description does not justify us in denouncing all mining companies as frauds. Because there is dishonesty in some syndicates, I do not see that all syndicates should be looked upon as dishonourable. That would be as unreasonable as saying that because, in connection with some mining properties, improper methods have been resorted to in order to tempt the public, we should leave the mineral treasures of Queensland where nature placed them originally, and make no effort by the aid of companies to develop the mineral resources of the colony. We should deal with these matters in a reasonable manner, and not use this as a peg to hang that argument upon—that because we find a certain handful of men acting in this way, that therefore all syndicates in Australia, and all over the world, are composed of rogues and dishonourable men, with whom we should have nothing to do.

Mr. TURLEY: Some of the names of the gentlemen mentioned in this correspondence occur in other correspondence.

Mr. LESINA: Last year some of them were connected with the Talgai mining swindle.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: These are matters I know nothing about. So far as I am concerned, and as far as the law will enable me, it will be put in motion against any wrong-doer—if there is *prima facie* evidence to support a charge it will be put into operation; but failing that, the next best thing would be to hold a searching inquiry into the whole matter.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): I think it is a matter for congratulation that the Premier has taken one side of this question and the Attorney-General another. The Premier argued that the magnitude of the charge counted in of attempting to bribe the officers of the Mines Department; while the Attorney-General thought the most important point was that the so-called prospectus had been altered, and he said he would endeavour to bring the guilty parties to justice. The view of the matter that the Premier has taken is a proper one. To my mind the alteration of the report of Mr. Dunstan, the Assistant Government Geologist, is comparatively nothing compared with the gross attempt to bribe the senior and junior officers of the Geological Department. I think every credit is due to the Premier for his straightforward statement he has made here to-day. It will do much to clear the matter up. But at the same time I don't go the whole length that the Attorney-General has gone in saying that the Premier is entirely blameless in the matter. The Attorney-General stated that the Premier notified in the correspondence that he would not permit his officers to deal with any suggestion coming from these people; but he subsequently differentiated in that matter when he allowed a compromising document to be sent to one of his officers. In the

first instance, the Minister for Mines showed an excellent example—when he refused the request made in the telegram dated Sydney, 1st September, 1899, as follows:—

I understand from Mr. Duffy who accompanied Mr. Dunstan in his work at Chillagoe for Admiral Sampson Company that Mr. Dunstan has expressed his very favourable opinion of the properties he examined. Kindly instruct Mr. Dunstan to prepare a voluminous report with accompanying maps plans and sketches so that it can be placed as a complete report and not require any further report to place in the hands of the brokers.

WM. MARSHALL MOORE, Banker street.

The Premier noted—

Inform Mr. Moore that the Minister never interferes in any way with the geological reports, and declines to give him any instructions, whatever.—R.P., 1-9-99.

That is very good. But later on the Premier noted at the bottom of the letter on page 7 of the correspondence, which has already been quoted by the leader of the Opposition—

Mr. Rands.—R.P., 28-11-99.

I contend that the hon. gentleman committed an entire error of judgment in sending a question of that character to the first geological officer. Mr. Rands, in dealing with the matter, rightly replied that this was not a question that an officer of the department could deal with. I regret that the Minister did not deal with this letter as he dealt with the communication dated the 1st September, 1899. On the 25th November, 1899, the Minister allowed this communication to go to one of his officers.

The PREMIER: I did not.

Mr. FISHER: Yes, you did.

The PREMIER: I suggested that Mr. Rands should visit the country.

Mr. FISHER: The correspondence was sent to Mr. Rands, and I think the hon. gentleman committed an error of judgment when he submitted it to that officer. I think the hon. gentleman will agree with me that it would have been better if it had been returned direct from the Minister with a reference to his previous decision, then these people would have construed that as a direct refusal to continue the negotiations. Persons of this character should not get the slightest encouragement, because they are almost irrepressible in matters of this kind. The Attorney-General stated that everyone connected with the matter was free from blame; but I am sorry to say that I cannot agree with the hon. gentleman in that. Here is a deliberate attempt to bribe Mr. Rands and Mr. Dunstan. Mr. Dunstan, unfortunately, is a young officer, and he has apparently come under the influence of Mr. Duffy. He has been guilty of what we may term semi-confidential correspondence with these people, who had coolly and openly offered him bribes. The hon. gentleman says there is no fault to be found with any of the officers in the matter; but I think Mr. Dunstan is entirely at fault. I don't suggest for one moment that he received any monetary remuneration through this correspondence; but I strongly urge that such actions must be condemned, and condemned in no uncertain language. This sort of thing, if continued, must end in the grossest possible mischief in the public departments. Would any head of a department permit his

Under Secretary to receive offers of
[5 p.m.] this kind, and at the same time consider that his department would be carried on safely and honestly? I think not. And the same thing may be said about the geological officers. It must be said here, and said once for all, that correspondence of that character must not be entertained by any officer for one moment. With regard to Mr. Rands, he comes out of the affair as well as any man who has been in it comes out of it. On page 11 will

be found the letter received by Mr. Rands from Mr. Duffy. It is dated the 12th of February, 1900. That letter is a most compromising one, and on it there is this explanatory note—

Brisbane, 26th September, 1900.

In explanation of the enclosed letter from Mr. P. Duffy, dated 12th February, I have the honour to inform you that the conversation referred to in that letter took place in my office. Mr. Duffy was anxious that I should request Mr. Dunstan to add to his report replies to the questions which were submitted to the Mines Department by the secretary of the company. It was then he informed me that the directors had voted me certain shares in the company.

WILLIAM H. RANDS, Government Geologist.

P.S.—I did not reply to the letter.—W. H. R.

Let any hon. member examine the difference between the date of the letter and the date of the explanation. What did Mr. Rands do with that letter between those dates? It was his bounden duty when he received a letter of that kind to submit it to the Minister, or to at once reply to the party who sent it demanding its withdrawal and an apology. Those are the only alternatives which were open to him. I feel a reluctance in saying it, but I say that Mr. Rands committed a gross error of judgment in retaining that letter, and not at once submitting it to his official head, and I would respectfully suggest that such action should not be continued in future, as it cannot have any but bad results. There is one other matter I should like to refer to, and that is the telegram from P. Duffy to B. Dunstan, dated "Rockhampton, 14th September, 1900," as follows:—

Will arrive Sunday Julia Percy. Want interview your house important Sunday evening accusation altering report incorrect only your suggestion.

Mr. P. Duffy is apparently a person who is not to be relied on at all; he seems to be a person who would corrupt every officer he came into contact with, if he could do so, for the benefit of his company. But that is an eminently compromising telegram against one of our officers, and the matter should not be allowed to remain there. Any hon. member who reads this correspondence must be more impressed with the absence of certain correspondence than with what is placed before the House. Where are the replies to those compromising letters? Why were they not copied? Every effort must be made by our officers to find their replies to these communications. There is no get out of it, for they involve a question of honour between those officers and the State. I entirely agree with my leader that they are both honourable men, but that is not enough—these letters should be in existence.

Mr. KERR: Mr. Duffy may produce them.

Mr. FISHER: Well, I say they should be produced, and laid before this House, so that our officers who are concerned in this matter may be fully exonerated.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There was a serious error of judgment in not laying those letters at once before the Under Secretary, so that the department might know what kind of men they were dealing with.

Mr. FISHER: That is quite true. The initial error was there. This company was very kindly received by the Minister, but I do not blame him for that, because it is his duty to receive everyone with courtesy, and to treat every proposal on its merits. But this company have traded on the kind treatment they received, and have gradually encroached and encroached, until from making suggestions they came to offering bribes and suggesting that if they were accepted they would accomplish their end. What was the end they wished to accomplish? The end they had in view was to destroy the character of one of our officers, if they could, in order that they might fleece the

public and make money. With all due respect to those members who are connected with this company, I say the correspondence proves that the company would have bought our officers, and the Premier, too, if they could, in order to make money. One thing has struck me as very peculiar, and that is that Mr. Rands and Mr. Dunstan did not see that all the time they were holding these letters compromising them by offering them shares or money, the company had them in their hands, and that if the matter did not come out now they were in a position in which they might be squeezed by the company at any time by their declaring that they would expose them, and produce copies of the letters showing that they had been offered money. Did that fact never occur to those officers? Why, it is as patent as day, and that is the reason I speak so strongly about the gross error of judgment those officers committed in retaining those letters. I am not going to take up any more time in discussing the matter. I think the hon. member who has brought the matter forward is to be congratulated on the way in which it has been received by the Premier. The fullest investigation of the whole circumstances should take place, particularly on behalf of the geological officers concerned. They are the persons who are going to benefit by a thorough investigation, and I would suggest that the inquiry should be a public one, so that it may be a warning, not only to those particular officers, but also to the whole of the officers in the service, that they must on no account whatever have any dealings with people who will even suggest that they will receive any monetary advantage by altering a report for the benefit of a company.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*): I quite agree with most of the remarks made by the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Fisher, who has put his finger on some of the weak spots in the correspondence which the leader of the Labour party omitted—though I don't say he did so designedly. The Premier has promised an inquiry; but I understand from the Attorney-General that the matter is before the Department of Justice and that legal proceedings are intended to be taken if a case can be made; but I did not understand that an inquiry would be held failing a case being made.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. JACKSON: I am glad of that. That is the right position to take up. The Premier and the leader of the Labour Opposition seem to think that the Geological Survey Department come out of this with clean hands, and I am inclined to think that may be the case, but still it is proper that still further light should be thrown on the matter. There is no doubt there have been indiscretions committed by Mr. Rands and also by Mr. Dunstan. We had some little information from the Attorney-General by way of interjection that Mr. Rands should have brought the letter in which he was offered certain shares by Mr. Duffy before his Under Secretary. We had not that information before, and I intended to ask the Secretary for Mines whether when Mr. Rands got that letter dated the 12th February he submitted it to the head of his department.

Mr. LEAHY: In the face of the promised inquiry, don't you think it is better not to discuss it?

Mr. JACKSON: Probably there is a good deal in the hon. gentleman's contention, and, seeing that there is to be an inquiry, it might be just as well not to discuss the matter now; but I would just like to say, now I am on my feet, that there seem to be two morals that might be drawn from this. One is, that the question ought to be seriously considered whether the Government should permit their experts in the Geological Survey Department to continue making

reports of mines for private individuals. The Secretary for Mines justified that action of the Mines Department in the interests of the public, but it now appears that the interests of the public are not very safe from this kind of inspection. The other point is this: It might be very desirable that no officer of the Mines Department should be allowed to hold shares in any mine at all.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. JACKSON: Wardens, I believe, are debarred under the Mining Act from holding shares in mines.

Mr. FISHER: And inspectors.

Mr. JACKSON: I am of opinion that the same regulation should apply to the officers in the Mines Department.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And to the Minister for Mines.

Mr. JACKSON: That is a bigger question. Probably in the interests of the Minister for Mines himself it might be desirable, but, if he were precluded, it might be said that members of Parliament should also be precluded from dealing in mining shares. I will not pursue the subject further now, but will fall in with the suggestion made by the hon. member for Bulloo, seeing that an inquiry is to be held.

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*): I do not propose to fall in with the suggestion that the matter should not be discussed at this stage. I propose to say a few words about the correspondence. In the first place, I think the correspondence was not presented to the House in the proper form. It is all mixed up, and that does not conduce to giving a clear idea of the matter. The correspondence is not in chronological order. We find a letter of the 26th May not appearing in its place, and a letter dated the 27th October, 1898—1899 no doubt it is intended for—appears after November. Touching the practice of allowing the officers of the Geological Survey Department to report on mines for private individuals, I think that practice is likely to prove most mischievous. I don't think there is much to commend it at all, and there are certainly many objections to the system. One objection is that an officer receiving a salary from the Government enters into competition with professionals outside. Mr. Hesketh, the Government Electrician, was prevented from entering into competition with electricians outside the department, and I think the same rule should apply to officers in the Geological Survey Department. There appears to be no regulations whatever to guide the officers of the Geological Department in making their reports, and I think some regulations are necessary. What value are some of the statements, both in the reports of Mr. Dunstan and also those of Mr. Rands? I find that Mr. Rands has reported on the Glassford Creek Copper Mines, and in that report he states, with regard to No. 5 south shaft, that a picked sample of ore, not collected by himself, was assayed at Mount Morgan and yielded: Copper, 29·93 per cent.; and gold, 17 dwt. 23 gr. per ton. Can Mr. Rands certify to the genuineness of that picked sample? Was he present when it was assayed at Mount Morgan? And if the matter did not come under his own personal observation, why include it in the Government report on the mine? In the same report, with regard to Kelly's shaft, at the 40 feet—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman appears to have forgotten the terms of the motion. He must not go beyond the one subject.

Mr. HIGGS: I have no desire to trespass, Mr. Speaker, but the hon. member for Kennedy raised the point as to the practice of allowing the officers of the Geological Department to report at all, and I thought this was a matter that

might legitimately come within the scope of the discussion. The suggestion that we should not discuss the matter on account of the promised inquiry is not one which I think should carry any weight, because the inquiry that it is proposed should take place into this matter is of a very nebulous form so far as we know. Will it be an inquiry conducted by members on both sides of the House, or will it be merely an inquiry conducted by some officials or by the Public Service Board, the proceedings of which will be conducted in a secret manner, the Government being the sole judges as to whether it would be wise or not to make the result of the inquiry known to the public? The Attorney-General has adopted the tone of certain very good people in discussing these alterations of the report of a Government official, and he has described it as editing. I notice that other persons have referred to the alterations as "stupid and unnecessary." Mr. Duffy described the alterations as "stupid" and "unnecessary," and that is certainly very rich as coming from Mr. Duffy. Someone else described them as "unfortunate errors." I have taken the trouble to collate the omissions which have been made from the original report, and I find there are no less than twenty-eight of them. Tartana Lease, No. 1,217:—The first omission is that of the words "and not as a lode formation." No. 2—The words "copper, $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.," are altered to read "copper, 7 per cent." No. 3—"Copper, 12 per cent.," is made to read "copper, 12 per cent." No. 4—The following words are left out:—

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

No. 5—The words "with no gold in either case" left out. No. 6—The words "but poor in gold" left out. No. 7—The following words left out:—

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

Nos. 8, 9, and 10—The word "picked" left out. No. 11—The following words are left out:—

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

No. 12—The words "it is said" are left out. Tartana North Lease, No. 1,218:—No. 13—The following words are left out:—

But as there is no body of stone, these returns may be taken for just what they are worth.

Tartana South Lease, No. 1,219:—No. 14—After the report on this mine is inserted—in the place of the table of assay returns prepared by Mr. Dunstan—a table of assay returns prepared by Mr. Alexander Orr, F.G.S., an analyst of Sydney. This latter table shows much higher returns than those included in Mr. Dunstan's table, and is falsely represented to be a part of Mr. Dunstan's report. Madras Lease, 1,224. No. 15—The following words were left out:—

But there is no evidence to show if they push out or come together again.

No. 16—The following words left out:—

But I cannot state whether these are average returns or returns from picked samples.

President McKinlay Lease, No. 1,221:—No. 17—The words "but I do not know if it were taken as an average sample or not" left out. No. 18—The word "picked" left out. No. 19—The words "but these, undoubtedly, must have been the richest that could be found" are left out. No. 20—The words "a recent" left out. No.

21—The words "The deposit may be only a small pocket of ore, and very probably is so, but," are left out. No. 22—The words "evidently picked" left out. Admiral Sampson Lease, No. 1,175:—No. 23—The words "but it is only an impregnation" left out. No. 24—the words "but in some places it is about 1 foot thick" left out. No. 25—The words "but the proofs of a continuation of the ore are not favourable" left out. No. 26—The word "picked" left out. No. 27—The words "and so determine the advisability or otherwise of abandoning the mine" left out. Then from the "conclusion" of the report, No. 28, these words are left out:—

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

I cannot understand why the Premier did not take action before. He has promised us an inquiry now, but why did he not take action at an earlier stage? Is it that there are too many prominent persons mixed up in this matter? It is rumoured that this report of the North Chillagoe, No Liability, was printed nine months ago. According to the correspondence, a copy of the original report was handed to Mr. Jessep, when he was in Brisbane on the 4th November, 1899. Surely Mr. Jessep read the original report and noticed the alterations? The hon. gentleman has endeavoured to take credit for the Mines Department in this matter, and indirectly he seems to think the Government are entitled to credit. I should like to call the hon. gentleman's attention to the *Telegraph* of the 20th September, 1900—

The North Chillagoe Mine. Last night the Premier, the Hon. R. Philp, stated that the Government had exposed the transaction.

He knows very well that it was the *Telegraph* that let daylight into the business.

The Hon. R. Philp would have been more correct in saying that he tried to save some of his political friends and to get them out of the transaction.

Which he succeeded in doing.

Is it not true that he sent for them and advised them to do the rat business in connection with what was thought to be a sinking ship—which they were not slow in doing?

The PREMIER: That is not true.

Mr. HIGGS: That appeared a fortnight ago; why did not the hon. gentleman correct it?

The PREMIER: I cannot correct all the misstatements in the Press.

Mr. HIGGS: I have been told that Mr. Brentnall saw Mr. Dunstan's original report nine months ago.

The PREMIER: Where did you hear that?

Mr. HIGGS: I have been informed of it. Surely Mr. Brentnall, when he was inviting the public to take shares in the North Chillagoe, No Liability, read that report when it was shown to him, and could compare it with the report as appearing in the prospectus. Surely after some recollection he should have noticed that there was a false and fraudulent table of analyses inserted in the prospectus which did not appear in Mr. Dunstan's report? Now the hon. gentleman claims that the Mines Department deserves credit. I am willing to give Mr. Rands considerable credit. In fact, I think it very likely that when Mr. Rands got copies of this prospectus on the 28th August last, he took steps very shortly afterwards to bring the matter under the notice of the Secretary for Mines. How is it we hear nothing from the Secretary for Mines until Mr. Brentnall's letter appears in the Press on the 14th September?

The PREMIER: I only knew of it two nights before.

Mr. HIGGS: Then how is it that Mr. Rands, knowing the characters he was dealing with, did not inform the Under Secretary or the Minister

for Mines before? If he did inform the Under Secretary, how is it the Under Secretary did not say something about it before? There have been doubts cast upon the probability of bringing these men to justice. Mr. Duffy has admitted that he attempted to bribe a public official, and the Attorney-General knows that it is nonsense to say that these men cannot be brought to justice.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Where does he live? We cannot run all over Australia to find a man who has offended against our laws in Queensland.

Mr. McDONALD: It has been done before.

Mr. LESINA: You would if he stole a pair of boots.

Mr. HIGGS: But Mr. Duffy was living in Queensland when he made these attempts. He wrote those letters to an official of the Mines Department of Queensland while he was living in Brisbane. I notice that there is an attempt

[5:30 p.m.] to shove the whole of the responsibility upon Mr. Duffy. Mr. Duffy is to be made the scapegoat, as a certain late lamented important official was made the scapegoat of certain discrepancies amounting to millions of pounds in connection with a big institution in this city. Everything is put on to Mr. Duffy, and evidently, because Mr. Duffy might declare to certain prominent men that if he goes down they go down with him, Mr. Duffy is not to be taken action against; but some kind of inquiry is to be held in some attic of a Government department—an attic into which the Press are not to be permitted to enter—some hole-and-corner inquiry, which will probably satisfy the Minister, but will certainly not satisfy the public.

The PREMIER: Who said an inquiry of that kind was to be held?

Mr. HIGGS: The hon. gentleman did not indicate to the House what was to be the composition of the inquiry committee, and we can only imagine that it will be similar to similar cases in which the Government have stated that an inquiry will be made into something. Why, the inquiries which were made into a certain institution some time ago had to be dragged from the Government, and members of the Government who object to this kind of criticism must remember that one of their prominent followers the other night said that he was satisfied that, so far as the interest of the country was concerned, this North Chillagoe matter was as dead as mutton. Now, I find that this Admiral Sampson Company, which apparently is guilty, or some of its members are guilty, of garbling the report of a Government official, are evading the Companies Act. The Companies Act demands that a company shall file a list of its shareholders with the registrar.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Are you not satisfied with the Premier's promise of an inquiry—or what on earth is all this about?

Mr. HIGGS: I have no doubt that if I were praising the Government, or were to take my seat on the cross-benches over there, I would be received with open arms.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Oh, no, and laughter.

Mr. HIGGS: And any expressions that fell from my lips would be regarded as pearls of wisdom.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Not much.

Mr. HIGGS: The best guarantee for the public of Queensland that I am doing my duty is when they see the objections of the hon. gentlemen opposite to what I am uttering. Now, this Admiral Sampson Company I find is registered in a fashion at the Registry Office. The memo. of registration states:—Name of company, the Admiral Sampson Chillagoe Company, No

Liability; place of intended operations, Chillagoe, Herberton district, in the colony of Queensland; where registered office, Sydney, New South Wales; value of company's intended property, including plant and machinery, £203; and the amount of money to the credit of the company or any person on behalf of the company, £240.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: And the liability which the company is intended to assume or undertake is £203 above mentioned, the present cost of the property intended to be purchased.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: Now, I am only giving information as to the correct position of this company, some members of which, or some officials of which, have garbled the report of a Government official, have tried to bribe a Government official, and have even tried to get at the Premier, because they sent him a letter stating that it would not do for the company to receive only a lukewarm report. Why did not the Premier answer that letter? Why did he refer that letter to a subordinate? Why did not he at once, when he received a letter of that kind, deal with it? That letter was addressed to the hon. gentleman, and he sent it to a subordinate to report upon. I think that the hon. gentleman was very anxious—

Mr. COWLEY: Did the minute say that it was referred by the Minister to a subordinate?

Mr. HIGGS: No; there is no minute on it, but the letter was addressed to Hon. R. Philp, and I do not know that a subordinate would be guilty of suppressing a letter so addressed.

The SPEAKER: I have to remind the hon. member that he has reached the time limit.

Mr. COWLEY (*Herbert*): I should not have risen if it had not been for the insinuation that the hon. member has made with regard to what the Premier said. The hon. member said that the inquiry which the Premier promised would be held in an attic—a hole-and-corner inquiry. Now, the hon. member has no right to make insinuations of that kind.

Mr. HIGGS: I said it would be in keeping with the action of the Government in previous inquiries that they have held.

Mr. COWLEY: The hon. member has not the slightest right to make an insinuation of that description. The Premier has stated that, in his opinion, the proper place to settle this question is in the law courts, and I believe hon. members opposite are in accordance with the Premier on that question. He has further said that there might be difficulties in the way, and, if those difficulties were found to be insurmountable, then he is determined to probe the question to the bottom.

Mr. McDONALD: We had that before in the Queensland National Bank, and we know what it is.

Mr. COWLEY: Well, the hon. gentleman was not Premier of the colony then.

Mr. McDONALD: But he was a member of the Government.

Mr. COWLEY: When the Hon. the Premier makes a statement that he is determined to get to the bottom of this question, either through the law courts or by a departmental inquiry, I would ask hon. members to be satisfied with that statement. How any hon. member in the face of that can rush in as the hon. member has done, and accuse him of desiring to hold a hole-and-corner inquiry, or an inquiry in an attic, passes my comprehension. I quite agree with what fell from the lips of the leader of the Opposition, and also from the lips of the member for Gympie, Mr. Fisher, that there is abundant evidence here that a most searching inquiry is necessary. I think every member of

this House, or any member who has the reputation of Queensland at heart, and the reputation of the public men of Queensland, either in Parliament or men who are employed departmentally, can endorse the statement of the Premier, when he says that this matter will be probed to the very bottom. I think hon. members might allow the matter to remain at that, being assured that the Premier will do his duty, both as a member of this House, and as a representative of the community.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): A good deal of surprise has been expressed this afternoon, in discussing this matter, that such a thing should have taken place in the administration of a public department in Queensland, and references have been made, in a feeling kind of way, to our good fame and the injury to our credit that may be done by the publication in newspapers of matter reflecting on the administration of our public departments, or the member of the Government at the head of that particular department. Now, it seems to me, that it is not matter for surprise at all that attempts should be made to influence the honesty of members of the geological staff, or the officers engaged in any public department when they are engaged to do things for a certain specified remuneration, which they are not expected to do in the ordinary course of their duty. It is not at all surprising to me, that already attempts have been made to undermine the honesty of our public officials. I predicted only a few weeks ago, when the first of these syndicate railway Bills was introduced to this House, that after the introduction of that kind of legislation, there would be a boom in dishonesty, and we have it now. We have it realised already in our various public departments; we have attempts being made to subvert the honesty of our public officials. We have faked prospectuses circulated for the deliberate purpose of swindling the public. We have prominent public men attaching their names to faked prospectuses, without even glancing at the prospectuses to see whether they are correct or not. I say that this is a matter we ought to be properly on our guard against, but it is not a matter for the slightest surprise. Sir Samuel Griffith, in discussing a measure in this House some years ago, pointed out, in connection with very much the same kind of proposal to that which has come from the Government in the matter of railway construction, that the introduction of such legislation would be immediately followed by dishonesty rampant throughout the public departments, and, furthermore, by the detestable system of lobbying which takes place in the American legislatures. Here we have got it. Here is the good name of Queensland mining enterprise being dragged in the mire. The leading mining journals here and in other parts of the world will be found to contain scare-heading accounts of the deliberate intention to defraud the public of their hard-earned money by inducing them to invest in bogus enterprises, of this discussion in this Chamber, and later on of the inquiry which the hon. gentleman has promised shall be held into this particular matter. These reports will go in, and the public who put money into mining enterprises will naturally come to the conclusion that there is something wrong in the state of Queensland if this kind of thing takes place, and takes place periodically. Now, it has been said, in defence of Messrs. Brentnall and Archibald, that the report which was prepared by the Assistant Government Geologist, Mr. Dunstan, was edited in the prospectus of the North Chillagoe Company. It is said that this is an edited report which these gentlemen did not give that special attention to which they ought; consequently they allowed

their names to appear on the prospectus which has gone very likely to the other end of the world, and certainly all over Australia, and that they can hardly be held responsible. Now, I should be inclined to place a little credence on that statement, but that I have a distinct recollection last session, when the Mining Estimates were going through, of a discussion which took place on the Big Hill Mining Company of Talgai, and amongst the names which appeared on the prospectus of that company—another faked prospectus—was the name of this same Mr. Archibald. This gentleman has a wide reputation as a geologist in Queensland, he has had wide and varied experience, he has his good name and fame to maintain, and consequently one would think he would make some sort of diligent inquiry before he allowed his name to be attached to an affair of this sort, which is liable to deceive a large body of the investing public. Why did he not read the prospectus? Was his experience, and judgment, and good fame nothing to him? Did he not know that other persons in Queensland and elsewhere have faked prospectuses before to-day? Did he not know that these things were of monthly occurrence? So that it appears to me that if he allowed his name to go on to this prospectus without any examination into the merits of the concern, he was not only false to his personal reputation, but his action was apt to induce a great many other persons to fall into the pit. However, an inquiry is to be made, and I trust the fullest justice will be done. It is necessary in the interests of the public, and the House, and the gentlemen connected with our Geological Department that a flood of light should be shed on this matter so that we can understand what influences are at work, and whether those influences have gone any further than the Geological Department. I am inclined to think that there is a danger of these influences being brought to bear and of them finding a resting place even in this Chamber. Already there are rumours spoken on the street corners, and at the clubs, and in the omnibuses that these influences are beginning to permeate this Chamber, and that is an additional reason I should have for bringing this matter forward again on the second reading of the Glassford Creek Tramway Bill. The introduction of these schemes, I maintain, has a tendency to introduce into the politics of this country the carpet bagger, the lobbyist, and the briber, the corruptionist, who does his best when concessions are being thrown about by a weak Government to bring pressure to bear for the benefit of his particular little concern in which he is interested. I think we should do our utmost to insist upon such dangerous elements being kept out of our political life, reminded as we are by the experience of other countries of what we may expect when such influences are introduced into our political life.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*): It is evident that the hon. member who has just spoken has come to the conclusion that syndicalism is synonymous with sin. I rose chiefly to say that I certainly think the Premier is to be congratulated upon the stand he has taken in this matter, and I think the Department of Mines is to be congratulated also. Let us look at the facts. Here we have a strong syndicate offering substantial bribes to members of the geological staff—bribes to the value, it is said, of £2,000 or £3,000, in addition to the management of a certain mine, which would be worth probably another £1,000 a year. These temptations have been resisted. The persons concerned may have wavered, but let us look at things as they are. Although one, perhaps, of the men to whom this temptation was offered

may have wavered, he afterwards resisted. We have the statement of the Minister that a full inquiry will be made into all the particulars of the case. I am pleased to hear it, and I am prepared to place all reliance on the head of the department and those under him. I believe the whole matter will be probed to the bottom. I do not agree with those who say it is not the function of the Government to interfere in any way with private enterprise and to inquire into the genuineness or otherwise of mines which may be floated. I think it is one of the highest duties of the Government to prevent "wild cat" schemes from being floated on the market, and I believe that interference in that direction would do great good. In the past this has been looked upon as solely the duty of private enterprise. We have had mining experts coming round and making reports, and upon those reports solely gigantic mining ventures have been floated. We have had various definitions of the mining expert. I have even heard it said that the mining expert is a liar. Now, the Government mining experts are the real experts—the men who understand their business—and I think it would be much better for the public to be guided by their reports than the reports of men who are interested in the flotation of companies. Certainly the Government geologists are more likely to know their business than the private mining expert who is more susceptible and more likely to have his price than the man in receipt of a good salary. I again say that I think we should shake hands with ourselves that these attempts at corruption have been resisted by members of the Mining Department of Queensland. At any rate I am one of those who believe in giving credit where credit is due, and taking humanity as we find it, those men are to be commended for being able to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." I don't intend to dwell on this any longer; but I do trust that the Government will take a lesson from this; that whilst they are going to guard the community against "wild-cat" schemes, they will see to it that every effort will be made to ascertain the correctness of the report, because we know that a syndicate armed with a report under the Government seal, are almost bound to receive a tidy sum when they place their properties on the market of the world. Therefore the responsibility of the Government is greater because of that fact. I am sure the Government will exercise due precautions in this matter, and I hope that it will be proved—and as I think it has been proved—that the Mines Department has successfully resisted this temptation.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*): As we have had a promise from the Premier that an inquiry will be held into the matter, I trust it will be full and exhaustive. Both the Premier and the Attorney-General have admitted here to-day that there has been practically a public swindle in connection with this prospectus, and I think that, not only for the honour of the Mines Department but the colony, it is necessary that all classes of the community should have every confidence in the men who are to be appointed to hold this exhaustive inquiry, because there is no doubt that men "who poison the founts of justice" have big influences at their command. Whilst I think the Premier has taken up a proper position in acceding to the very reasonable request of the leader of the Opposition that this inquiry will be held, I trust that it will be such an exhaustive inquiry that no one will have any need to complain about its labours. While the Premier was speaking the question cropped up as to whom credit was due for exposing this matter in the first instance. I think that the *Telegraph* newspaper deserves all the credit. We

know that the *Courier*, the following morning, gave Mr. Dunstan's report in full; but the *Telegraph*, by the form of their report and the interpolations, showed the gravity of the whole case. That paper deserves very great credit for their exposition of this swindle.

Mr. DAWSON: The *Courier* suppressed it.

Mr. McDONNELL: After what has taken place here to-day, I am satisfied that there are very good reasons for the position hon. members on this side have seen fit to take up on this matter, and on the matter of syndicate railway construction, because both questions are inextricably interwoven one with the other. We shall have to be very careful in dealing with these matters. This case has been very accidentally exposed, and we can see that these men who want railway concessions, and who are prepared to float companies, are prepared to go to any desperate ends in order to attain their object. I am satisfied that this motion will have the desired effect, and we have this to fall back on: That if this inquiry is not satisfactory, we shall have the right to submit the matter again to the House. I am satisfied with the promise given, and I trust that the men who will hold this inquiry will be men whom all classes of the community will have every confidence in.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): Seeing that so many of our public men are mixed up in it, I think a great deal of credit is due to the leader of the Opposition for moving this motion for adjournment. Seeing the serious omissions and commissions in connection with the official report as published in this prospectus, which may influence unthinking and even thinking people to invest their money in these syndicates, it should be an example to public men to be more careful in putting their names to these prospectuses. Although these men were probably not cognizant of the contents of this prospectus, still they were guilty of criminal negligence for omitting to know its contents. It would not do for anyone in a court of justice to say that he did not know the law with regard to any crime. The courts of justice demand that every man should know the law, and, in many cases, men are treated just as harshly when they do not know the law as when they do. I maintain that the directors of these companies should be fully persuaded that everything in any document they sign is correct before they sign it. They should not be like the boy who said he did not know the gun was loaded; it was his business to know whether it was loaded or not. The same thing applies to the signing of this prospectus. It appears to me that none of the directors of this company know anything about these discrepancies in the prospectus. We find Thomas Jessep and P. Duffy denying any knowledge of any alterations in the official report, and Mr. Jessep is the chairman of the company, and Mr. Duffy is an active agent of the company in Sydney. Then we have Mr. Brentnall and Mr. Archibald here also denying that they knew anything of these alterations. Then, who is responsible for them? The Brisbane and the Sydney directorate say they know nothing of the matter. Well, the matter must be sheeted home to someone. Someone must know something about it. I don't see how the chairman of this company could put his name to the company's prospectus—and Mr. Duffy also—without knowing its contents.

Mr. BROWNE, in reply: If no one else desires to speak, I should like to say [7 p.m.] a few words in reply. I had no intention to obstruct business in bringing this matter forward in the way I have done. I am perfectly prepared to accept the assurance of the Premier and Attorney-General that they are doing their best to sift this

matter to the bottom. If the Premier does not fulfil his promise—and I am not going to say that I doubt his word for one moment—then we shall have further opportunities later on in the session to bring the matter before the House, and I feel perfectly confident that members on both sides of the House will assist in probing it to the bottom.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*): I have no intention of detaining the House at any length upon this question after the assurance which has been given by the Premier; but I cannot let the matter pass without saying that it appears to me extremely discreditable that this barefaced and impudent attempt to debauch our public officials has only been discovered by accident. If the company had not gone so far as to garble and falsify the report of Mr. Dunstan, we should never have heard that they had practically voted Mr. Rands shares to the value of £2,000 or £3,000, or that they had offered Mr. Dunstan a position as manager of one of the mines. I do not wish to insinuate that either Mr. Rands or Mr. Dunstan was influenced in the slightest degree by the company, but I do wish to insist upon this: that both of them should have informed the Under Secretary for Mines of the attempt that had been made to get at them. Neither of those gentlemen, so far as I can discover from the correspondence, gave the Under Secretary or the Minister the slightest hint that the company had made any attempt to influence them in the way of giving a report. I think that was very wrong. They may have looked at it in this way—that they were honest, and that although the company had tried to assail their integrity, they had no intention of giving way. They may, perhaps, have treated the offers with contempt. But those gentlemen have a duty to the public, and that is to let the public know the kind of men who are running this particular company; they ought to have given the country due warning of the kind of men who were trying to float this company. But were it not for the fact that the company went too far in their anxiety to overreach the public—to get at the public, to fleece the public—we should never have heard a single word about the affair. How do we know that this sort of thing does not permeate every branch of the public service? It appears to me that it ought to be made compulsory on the part of any public officer, no matter in what department he may be employed, to at once report any matter of this character to his official head. Mr. Dunstan appears, quite contrary to the rules of the department I suppose, to have been carrying on a private correspondence with Mr. Duffy. I think that was altogether wrong on the part of Mr. Dunstan. It was his duty to report on these mines to the head of his department. The head of the department passed that report on to the mining company. In this matter Mr. Dunstan was merely the servant of the country, and any communication he had on the subject should have been with his official head, and not with the agent of the company. I gather from the correspondence that Mr. Duffy had been with Mr. Dunstan during that gentleman's examination of the properties. I do not know whether it is proper to assume it, but I do not gather from the correspondence that Mr. Duffy is a particularly scrupulous individual. If he had courage and assurance enough to put an offer like this in writing, I am almost driven to the conclusion that he had made a similar offer by word of mouth, but of course we have no evidence on that point. But the fact is the correspondence throws a shadow of suspicion over the whole concern. How are we to know that even Mr. Dunstan's report has not been coloured to a certain extent by

promises on the part of Mr. Duffy? We do not know anything about it. If the company did not falsify that report, what would Mr. Rands have done? Would he have taken his £2,000 or £3,000 worth of shares if the company had been floated successfully? Nobody can tell. We do not know anything about it. The company voted those shares to him. He was verbally informed of that vote by Mr. Duffy, and then he was written to by Mr. Duffy on the subject. Would Mr. Rands have expected those shares, and would he put them in his pocket if the company had been successfully floated, and this matter had not come out? Probably Mr. Dunstan would have accepted a position on a mine. We do not know anything about it. In fact a great many things are left to conjecture, and the whole affair is in a most unsatisfactory condition. I am extremely glad that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has recognised this, and that he is willing, as he says, to probe the thing to the bottom. I hope it will be probed to the bottom. There is another matter to which I wish to allude, and that is that we have two gentlemen in Queensland who were directors in this company. Did those two gentlemen know of the offer which had been made to Mr. Rands? Mr. Duffy, writing to Mr. Rands on the 12th of February last, said—

I do not think I should have mentioned that vote our company made the other day, for I presume they intended to keep that until the company was floated.

Messrs. Archibald and Brentnall were not only members of the company, but directors of the company, and the question very naturally arises: Did those gentlemen know this or not? I think it should be made clear to the public of Queensland whether they were cognisant or not of what the company were doing. Mr. Duffy, in his letter of the 30th August, 1899, says—

Just a line in respect to the report you are preparing for our company. Spare no expense whatever, and give us something which will be sufficient to place before the public in the way of maps, plans, and a thorough geological description of the mines visited. Our company is paying all expenses, and as Mr. Philp promised such a report to our company, I know you will see to it. Spare no time nor expense.

Did the hon. gentleman promise such a report to the company? Were there communications between the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government and Mr. Duffy, or some person on Mr. Duffy's behalf, that we have not in this correspondence? That is another matter the public may well ponder upon.

Mr. REID: There is a lot wants to come out.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, there is a great deal left out. Now, there is a letter which the Premier wrote—to Mr. Jessep, I presume—on the 26th May, 1899.

The PREMIER: I wrote no letter to anyone.

Mr. STEWART: We have this in the correspondence—a letter from the legal manager to the Minister for Mines, dated from the Fruit Exchange, Sydney, 7th June, 1899—

I have the honour to thank you for your great courtesy to our Mr. T. Jessep, M.L.A., chairman of our company, who has returned to Sydney and laid before our directors your letter (26th May) with reference to the arrangements of your Government Geologist to proceed to Chillagoe to report on the extent and value of our mineral properties.

The PREMIER: There may have been a letter from the department, but not from me.

Mr. STEWART: But we have not got the letter no matter who it is from. This correspondence appears to me to have been got up in a way deliberately calculated to bamboozle members of this House. The letters are higgledy-piggledy, and do not come in any kind of consecutive order. I don't know whether it has been done with the deliberate intention of confusing members or not—I would rather hope

not—but in any case we have had to search backwards and forwards through the correspondence to get at the connection. I don't think that is desirable. It should have been given to us straight out as it took place. The whole thing leaves a bad taste in the mouth. It gives the public an idea that there is something worse even than this behind, and I hope the hon. gentleman's inquiry won't be a sham but a reality, and that we shall have our Mines Department placed, as it ought to be, above suspicion.

Question—That the House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—Additional regulations under the Defence Acts.

GLASSFORD CREEK TRAMWAY BILL. SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*): This Bill seeks to authorise Robert Herbertson, of Glassford Creek, and Vincent Mackay Dowling, of Rockhampton, to construct and maintain a line of tramway from Glassford Creek to Miriam Vale, connecting with the North Coast railway, and for other purposes subsidiary thereto. In introducing this Bill, I may mention that I have had the pleasure and advantage of visiting this locality quite recently. Within the last few years a very large and valuable copper deposit has been discovered at Glassford Creek, situated about 35 miles from Miriam Vale. The owners of that property are local men, not foreigners, and they seek the means to utilise it. The discovery is on the slopes of Dawes Range in rough and mountainous country, and they ask the right to construct a tramway into this place to enable them to work the deposit there. There is not much likelihood of any extension of this line beyond Glassford Creek, because the features of the country would prevent that; and the character of the country from Miriam Vale to the copper deposit is of very indifferent description. On the Boyne River, about half-way to Glassford Creek, there is a considerable extent of first-class agricultural land which I think has all been selected. It must be evident to hon. members that without this tramline these properties cannot be developed, but will remain in the same condition as they have been in for ages past; and I think hon. members will agree that a tramline to the mines is as necessary as any other part of the equipment and mining gear. To my mind it is quite as necessary as the drills, the blasting powder, or anything else required to work the mine. The property is held by these men on long leases, and no Government would be warranted in asking this House to agree to construct a line to develop those properties. With some slight exceptions this Bill is the same as those which have preceded it. All the rights and privileges of the Commissioner are preserved. The company will have no monopoly, and if at any time the interests of the country require that the Government should build a line alongside this line, across it, or in any other direction, there is nothing in this Bill to prevent them doing so. The company are getting no privilege which this House may not fairly be asked to give them. They are, in fact, getting no privilege at all but the right to construct the line with their own money, and I would not have the effrontery as the Secretary for Railways to ask the Government to construct it. This principle is being adopted in the other colonies, and in other countries, where they are only too anxious to give such concessions—if concessions they can be called—to any enterprising company prepared

to take up such properties as these, and work them in their own interests, and necessarily at the same time in the interests of the public. After all, the community generally must receive the greatest benefit from these operations, because I do not apprehend that the profits from working these deposits will be very great. The working of copper mines is uncertain. Sometimes they cut out when they are not expected to. That has been the experience in Queensland and in South Australia. We have had copper mines in Queensland and in South Australia that were at one time employing large numbers of men, and now they are practically deserted.

Mr. McDONALD: Why?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Simply because they are worked out. The Peak Downs Mine is worked out.

Mr. McDONALD: Are the Burra Burra, Moonta, and Wallaroo mines worked out?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Burra Burra Mine is a thing of the past. From all I can learn it also is worked out.

Mr. HARDACRE: There is an immense deposit at Peak Downs yet.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I say this enterprise is of a purely speculative character, and the Government would not be warranted in asking this House and the country to construct such a line as this.

Mr. REID: You told us that about every one of them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did, but they are all lines of a similar character, lines leading to mineral deposits. What will be the value to us of these deposits if we insist upon such stringent regulations as will prevent people attempting to open them up? These properties will be of no value whatever to the country or to their owners unless they have these lines of communication to enable them to be worked. They simply ask the right to build this line, and they will do it at their own expense. The public purse will not be drawn upon to the extent of 1s. for it. I cannot see how there can possibly be any objection to it. The owners of coal mines have the right to construct a railway to the pit's mouth, and whether it be half-a-mile, 6 miles, or 20 miles long, the principle is exactly the same. Although we have had long discussions upon each of these measures they are practically all of the same character. In the neighbouring colony we find that when such a proposal as this is brought up, instead of discussing it night after night the matter is submitted to the House and passed on the voices, and without its being submitted to a division at all.

Mr. BROWNE: After it has been before a select committee.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If hon. members are desirous of getting on with the business of the country, and providing those engaged in its industries with the facilities necessary to carry them on, I see no reason why, after the discussion we have had on these other Bills, the second reading of this Bill should not be passed before 9 o'clock. I am not going to speak at length upon this Bill, because there is no necessity to do so. The principle embodied in the Bill has already been fully discussed, and this Bill differs from the others only in that it may be considered more liberal in the interests of the country. In the previous Bills the companies have asked the right to charge rates 50 per cent. higher than those charged by the Commissioner, while in this Bill the rate is reduced to 25 per cent. more than the rate charged by the Commissioner. The Bill says that the company shall be entitled to a lease for 2,560 acres for fifty years, but I

have an amendment to propose upon the Bill to reduce that area to 416 acres, the area the company hold at the present time. The Government under this Bill, as under the others, has a right to purchase the line at the end of fifty years. The construction of the line is to be under the supervision of the Commissioner, and before it can be opened, to ensure the safety of the public, they must have the Commissioner's certificate that the line is properly constructed and the rolling-stock in good order. The company under the Bill have to carry for the public, but Mr. Dowling, one of the owners of the property, told me that they had no desire to carry for the public, and would prefer that the Bill should be passed putting the railway entirely under their control, and not permitting them to carry for the public at all. Under the provisions of the Bill they are compelled to carry for the public, and I think on very liberal terms. If there is later any agricultural settlement or any other kind of settlement in that district, the line will be found a great boon to the settlers, as the only means of communication available there at the present time are bullock and horse teams, and passenger traffic carried on by coach service. I feel assured, from the indications which I have

seen myself, that there are enormous [7:30 p.m.] mineral deposits in this district—deposits, which I may say, are not confined to one property, because within a radius of a few miles there are many other properties which appear to me to be equally rich in copper ore.

Mr. DAWSON: Only copper?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Well, there is some gold, 4 or 5 dwt., I think the assays proved. There is another property adjoining called the Many Peaks, and I believe that that property will be as valuable as the Glassford Creek property itself. So that it is very likely that a very large industrial population will be settled there within a very few years if this privilege is granted to these people. I feel sure that if these facilities are given a very large industrial population will be settled in that district within a few years. Taking all these things into consideration, I see no reason why hon. members should not agree to this proposal straight away. One thing I might draw attention to is this: I anticipate all the mining interests of the world will be considerably advanced and promoted and extended. I anticipate not only in South Africa, but in other large mineral countries, there will be a period of peace and prosperity; and with regard to the price of copper, it will come down very much. I feel sure that unless Queensland—which I believe has such large mineral deposits, especially copper—is prepared to encourage people to embark in enterprises of this kind, and give them every possible facility to enable them to carry them out, they will probably be beaten by the cheaper products of other countries—other countries where such industries are carried on, and where the Governments of those countries are only too anxious to give such concessions as are asked for in this Bill. That is the position. I anticipate that the price of copper will be very much lower in the near future—very considerably indeed—and if it is to be produced here at all, it can only be produced where all the necessary facilities are afforded to enable those engaged in mining to compete with the mineral resources of other countries. I think that must be apparent to everyone. I can only hope that hon. members will see it in the light in which I place it before them, and that they will see the folly of discussing this question at any great length, because, as I have already said, the principle of this Bill has been discussed for the last six weeks in this

House, and it is impossible to add any fresh matter to it, and without further comment I move the second reading of this Bill.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): It seems quite natural for me to follow the hon. gentleman. I do not know whether you, Sir, or any other member, can look back and probably with great delight to the time when you went to the circus, for about the third or fourth time—not the first time. The first time we felt a certain inexplicable delight—we did not know what was going to happen, but after going there two or three times there was always something wanting for you. I used to admire the horses, the wild beasts, and everything that came along, but all the time I was sitting there I was looking for something that always made me feel happy, and that was an individual with baggy pants, with spots all over him, and a red nose, who used to come bounding in and say, "Here I am again!" (Laughter.) Now, with all deference to the hon. gentleman, I can almost imagine the hon. gentleman with these same baggy trousers, with a tall, peculiar hat on the top of his head, and this red tip on his nose, bounding into this Chamber with a syndicate railway Bill under his arm, and saying, "Here I am again!" And then, of course, the hon. gentleman says this has been moved so many times that we know always what to anticipate. The hon. gentleman has told us that this Bill is exactly the same as all the other Bills we have had before us; and I have not the slightest doubt that when the Premier speaks we shall have him pointing out that this Bill differs from all the other Bills before the House. And then we shall have the hon. member for Bulloo—I have not the slightest doubt bulging out with all the information that he is going to give to this House—pointing out how brimful he is of intelligence and how little the members on this side of the House possess. Then, after a lot of desultory talk, and just as the hon. gentleman thinks we are going to a division, we shall have his colleague, the hon. member for Mackay, getting up and giving us the natural history of that newly-discovered animal called "piggy-wiggy-squeaker." There are one or two things I wish to refer to. I am not going to admit that this Bill is the same as the others, because it differs in several respects—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Your objections will be the same, however.

Mr. BROWNE: There is one matter which has been harped a great deal upon by the hon. gentleman who introduced the Bill, and that he has worked upon on every occasion that he has introduced a Bill of this kind. He says that the places where these railways are to be built are purely speculative, and we should allow someone else to do a little gambling in them, because we are not game to do it ourselves. And then, again, we are told all the time that this is to benefit someone. Seven or eight weeks ago, when the first Bill came before the House, the hon. gentleman was pleading strongly for some unfortunate working miners who were waiting perishing for a certain railway, and for the Bill to pass this House. Now, those poor unfortunate miners are forgotten; and that Bill is left aside with all the other Bills. The hon. gentleman now brings forward an argument, which may be very sound, that in the near future there will be a drop in the price of copper. I think every man in this House is prepared to accept that. No one expects that copper will remain at the present price. It may be many years before it goes so low as it was years back, but still there is going to be a fall in

the price of copper. The hon. gentleman says that Queensland should get her share while copper is high, but how is that going to be done by giving that company the right to build a line 33 miles long in three years? Does the hon. gentleman think that the price of copper is going to keep up for three years for the purpose of enabling this company to take advantage of it? If this company were going to give work to the unemployed of this colony, or if it were going to get at the copper at once, why are not there more stringent conditions introduced to make those people build a railway at once and rush it through as quick as possible; but there is nothing of that sort. They are allowed all this time to do it in. Now, another argument used by the hon. gentleman to-night, and that has been brought forward on several occasions, was about the lines in the other colonies. The hon. member for Bulloo, the other night, came down here—and I do not think there was much need for him to swell himself out with pride as he did on that occasion—and he was astonished at how we were all mistaken about certain Bills in the Southern colony. The hon. gentleman has told us the same thing—that in all the other colonies they have precisely the same legislation. These gentlemen do not attempt to prove it. The hon. member for Bulloo referred to a couple of Bills when he last spoke, but he refused to let anyone see them. He gave a very glib account of what they contained, and tried to persuade members that they were similar to these Bills. The Secretary for Railways again, to-night, has repeated that in the other colonies they are doing exactly the same as we are. Now, what are the facts? I believe in facts, and not bald assertions, as the hon. member for Bulloo says. In New South Wales a certain number of small private railways have been legislated for, but if, as hon. gentlemen on the other side assert, they are on all-fours with these railways which the Government introduce, how is it that they did not vote with the hon. member for Flinders when he raised his point of order about these Bills being private Bills. Every one of the railway Bills referred to as having been passed in New South Wales were introduced as private Bills, each and every one was referred to a select committee, and they are now incorporated amongst the private statutes of New South Wales. Perhaps hon. members do not know that when they talk so glibly. I will take the very last Bill that has been before the New South Wales Parliament—the Stamford Railway Bill. Now, as a matter of fact, the Stamford Railway Bill was the one referred to as being constructed by gentlemen from Queensland. The second reading and committee stages of that Bill were carried on 26th June last, not 22nd June as stated, and the Bill was assented to on 25th July. It was introduced by a private member, Mr. Gillies, the member for West Maitland, and went through the ordeal of a select committee twelve months ago. In that Bill there is not a single concession of any kind whatever. More than that, on all the coal raised by the company on Government land they pay a royalty of 6d. per ton to the Government. The freights are specially provided for, and they must not be more than those charged by the Commissioner for Railways on the State lines. The Government can purchase the line at any time by giving written notice—one day's notice if they like—and it is provided distinctly that the cost is not to exceed the cost of construction. The promoters are Messrs. Cliff, Trenchard, and Adams. Then if the line is not completed within two years the whole thing is forfeited, and if it stops running for any period the whole thing is for-

feited again. Now, is that on all-fours with this line? I may point out that in the Bill in question provision is made that the very strip of land on which the line runs has to be paid for under lease at the rate of £10 per annum, and if the Government resume the railway they also resume the land. I will quote a few words uttered by Mr. O'Sullivan, the Secretary for Works, on the second reading of that Bill. He said—

Personally if it lay with me alone, I am opposed to giving any private person or company the right to construct a railway, because I am one of those who believe that all works of that character should be in the hands of the State. But this appears to be only following the practice that has grown up in Newcastle and other districts of working railways as part of the machinery of the mine. There are many railways that have been granted in that district, and the mine-owners are seeking the full benefit of them.

Mr. COOK: Really a long colliery siding!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Yes. That being so, the great principle to which I have alluded hardly comes in.

I may say with regard to this line, that the original length was 6½ miles, and the only objection with regard to it was that there was some litigation with regard to portion of the land over which it would pass. Immediately that was brought out as an objection the route was altered by the men in charge, and that line is only 5 miles long. The line runs from the colliery to the Northern line, and gives the company the same facilities that other companies have. I ask the hon. gentleman, therefore, how he can get up and say that that line is on all-fours with this? If this line is similar to that little 5 miles of railway, then it should have been brought in as a private railway.

Mr. HARDACRE: That is one of Leahy's facts.

Mr. BROWNE: Another New South Wales line has been referred to in this House—the Great Cobar Copper Mining Company's railway. That was passed on 20th November, 1899. It is about 2 miles in length. The whole of the land on which it runs belongs to the company, and it is really a small siding from the mine. The Government can buy the line in two years, the price to be fixed under the Public Lands Resumption Act. Not the slightest concession is given, and any land required by the company outside of their own land is to be paid for at the rate of £10 a year. Then, again, we have the Capertree tramway in New South Wales. That Bill was passed on the 29th December, 1899. When it was alluded to some hon. member interjected, "Is it built?" and the scornful reply came from the hon. member for Bulloo, "How could it be built when it was only passed in December last?" The fact is that that line was actually passed in 1896.

Mr. McDONALD: That is one of the Bulloo facts.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, one of the Bulloo facts. The company was bound to time, they had not fulfilled their contract, and the Bill had to be reintroduced, and passed last year. The length of that line is 21 miles, but it is only to be a tramway. The gauge can be anything over 2 feet, and not over 4 feet 8 inches. The land for its construction is leased at the rate of £10 a year, and it is resumed when the Government resume the railway. The Government can purchase the line at any time after two years, and are precluded from giving more than the actual cost of construction. The company has to put down a deposit of £2,000, which is forfeited if the line is not started within six months, and if it is not completed within two years the whole thing is forfeited. The fares and freights are also fixed by the Act, and no concession of any kind is given.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The fares and freights are fixed in this case,

Mr. BROWNE: They are not fixed, and the hon. gentleman knows it. The Bill simply says that not more than a certain amount is to be charged. I have taken the trouble to find out what private railways have been constructed in New South Wales since 1893. There is the Rosehill Railway from Parramatta. Hon. members who enjoy a little bit of horse-racing know what the Rosehill siding is. That was built on the Government gauge. The Act provides that goods and merchandise must be carried at the same rate as on the Government lines. The Government can buy the line in two years; no concession whatever is granted; and if the line is idle for nine months it becomes absolutely forfeited. Then we have the Scottish-Australian Mining Company's railway, passed on 13th June, 1893. That is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, and connects with the Northern Railway. The rates are fixed by the Commissioners, the Government can purchase it in two years, and, if not completed and worked within two years, it becomes absolutely forfeited to the Government. Then, again, we have the Menindie to Broken Hill tramway, which is rather a larger work of 50 or 60 miles in extent. How can the hon. gentleman say that that Bill is on a par with these syndicate Bills he is introducing? What are the conditions in this New South Wales Bill? The gauge is to be the same as on the Government lines, and before that company could take any steps they have to publish a notice of their intention to build this tramway, with all particulars, in the New South Wales *Government Gazette*, and in not less than two papers circulating in Sydney, Menindie, and Broken Hill; the rates were fixed by the Government; all lands were leased; all minerals were reserved; if they did not start in six months, everything was to be forfeited to the Government.

Mr. GLASSEY: What was the deposit in that case?

Mr. BROWNE: £5,000. And again, if they stopped working at any time, without any reasonable cause, the line and all their privileges would be forfeited to the Government. In that Bill, there is a very nice provision, which I commend to hon. members on this side of the House—a provision which I should like to see inserted in all these private syndicate Bills which are being introduced by the Minister. If the line stops working, without any reasonable cause to the satisfaction of the Commissioner, it will be liable to forfeiture to the Government, and there is a proviso providing that a strike shall not be counted as a reasonable cause for stopping work if the company refuses to submit the dispute to arbitration.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: And yet the hon. gentleman says this Bill is on a par with the Bills he has introduced! Hon. members must recognise the difference. Every one of these Bills in New South Wales, and the other colonies, were introduced as private measures by private members, and they had to go through the ordeal of a select committee, as in the British Parliament. Again, not one of these companies got any concessions—the whole box-and-dice of them. I defy the hon. gentleman to disprove my statement: That the mileage of one of his proposed railways is more than the mileage of these lines in all the Australian colonies at the present time. But the other colonies are getting out of the "Slough of Despond" that we are running into. It seems to me that the Government have not taken much notice of this correspondence. Pages 2, 3, and 4 are taken up with correspondence from the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce and the Calliope Progress Association. Looking at that correspondence, the people of Gladstone certainly do not want this line as it is brought

in now. On the 7th December, 1899, the hon. secretary, Mr. W. J. Manning, of the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce, wrote to the Minister for Railways as follows:—

SIR,—I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that at the last meeting of the above chamber a resolution was unanimously passed that your department should be asked to make a trial survey of a railway line from Gladstone to the Glassford Creek Mineral Field.

The route recommended for your favourable consideration joins the proposed Gladstone-Rockhampton line about three (3) miles from Gladstone, and traverses the Boyne Valley *via* Calliope, Marblestone, Milton, and the Littlemore Settlement. It taps the Eastern Boyne and Norton Goldfields, where important developments are now going on, and traverses much first-class agricultural and richly timbered (pine) scrubs, which is suitable for close settlement. The Lands Department has reserved much of the country for this purpose. Twelve miles from Glassford the route passes within a mile of a promising copper property owned by the Many Peaks Syndicate, where an extensive lode is opened, but which cannot be efficiently worked until railway connection is established.

Glassford Creek is a rising mining centre where immense bodies of ore exist of a highly payable nature. The syndicate in possession of the lode has had a trial survey made from Miriam Vale to the field, but my Chamber is of opinion that the best interests of the public would be served by the adoption of the Boyne River route.

The Chamber is in possession of a large amount of information which will be available for you if orders are given for the trial survey now asked. It conclusively proves the necessity for the line and the advantage it will be to the country as well as Glassford Creek.

Trusting this will receive your early and favourable consideration.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A survey was made in that direction.

Mr. BROWNE: That is the opinion of the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce, and that opinion was reiterated by the Progress Association of Calliope. And they give other reasons. They say—

That Glassford Creek is very rich in mineral deposits, which have been extensively developed, and that it gives abundant promise of becoming a permanent mining centre.

That it would tap a number of rich goldmining districts on the Calliope and Boyne Rivers, which, in the near future, are likely to become large industrial centres.

That there are large areas of extremely rich land in the Boyne Valley, the development of which, by the construction of the line, would receive a strong impetus. That this line would pass through, and be convenient to, large areas of country from which extensive supplies of valuable timber could be procured.

That a branch line from the proposed line could be extended so as to open up and develop the very large coal measures of the Calliope.

That agricultural centres in immediate vicinity to the line would be materially benefited thereby, and, in short, the general resources of the whole district would be benefited by the construction of the line here advocated.

That the cost of construction would be considerably less per mile than by the Miriam Vale route, as there are few, if any, engineering difficulties to contend with, and that it would prove of more general utility.

That there would likely be sufficient traffic on line to pay interest on construction (if not cost off), maintenance, and working expenses.

I would point out that this correspondence passed between these bodies and the Minister for Railways. Mr. F. J. North, the surveyor, does not recommend, in his report, the route the Minister proposes in this Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The company made their own survey.

Mr. BROWNE: I say the Government surveyor does not recommend the route in this Bill. Only a few days ago we had a motion for the construction of a light line of railway, which attracted a great deal of sympathy from hon. members on both sides, and I was pleased to see that the Premier was in sympathy with these light lines. Now, according to Mr. North, here

is a place where a light line could be built. At the end of his report, after giving full particulars, Mr. North says—

I consider this district offers a good opportunity for constructing a light railway, as the line would only serve the Boyne Valley and is not likely to be extended beyond Glassford Creek, which promises to become a large mining district, which can only be developed by a railway.

I am dealing with this correspondence, and I say that from the commencement of [8 p.m.] it down to page 4 the correspondence is between recognised public bodies

and the Government. Then, at the middle of page 4, we get a brief note from Mr. V. M. Dowling, dated the 21st June, 1900, as follows:—

SIR,—On behalf of the Glassford Creek Copper Mine Proprietary, I have the honour to apply to the Government for the necessary authority for the construction of a tramline from the mine at Glassford Creek to connect with the Government railway system at Miriam Vale, and beg to state that we seek no concession beyond the necessary legislative authority and the Crown land actually required for the line. We are prepared to comply with all reasonable conditions in this matter, and shall feel obliged if you will be good enough to take the necessary steps for preparation of a draft Bill to give effect to the proposal.

That is the first we hear about this Glassford Creek Company. For months and months the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce and other bodies had been bringing this matter before the Government, but without success. On the 21st of June Mr. Dowling wrote that single letter, without giving any particulars of his proposal, and asked to be allowed to construct this railway. On the 27th June, or six days afterwards, the secretary to the Commissioner for Railways replied as follows:—

SIR,—I am desired by the Minister for Railways to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st instant relative to the construction of a tramline from the mine at Glassford Creek to connect with the Bundaberg to Gladstone Railway at Miriam Vale.

I have, etc.,

T. S. PRATTEN.

Then, on the 6th July, another week afterwards, the secretary to the Railway Commissioner wrote to Mr. Dowling the following letter:—

SIR,—Referring to your letter of 21st ultimo, addressed to the Hon. the Minister for Railways, applying to the Government on behalf of the Glassford Creek Copper Mines Proprietary for authority for the construction of a tramline from the mines at Glassford Creek to connect with the Government railway system at Miriam Vale, and asking that the necessary steps be taken for the preparation of a draft Bill to give effect to the proposal, I am desired to inform you that it will be necessary for the company themselves to prepare the draft Bill, and I have informed Mr. Woolcock, who usually drafts such Bills, that this department will not offer any objection.

I am, etc.,

T. S. PRATTEN.

Immediately afterwards, of course, the Bill is drafted by the Government Draftsman. Was there anything preceding that letter, or is that all the information in the possession of the Government? Public bodies had been writing to the Government for months, and a Government surveyor had made an exhaustive report on a line they had proposed, but no satisfaction was given to those people. Yet as soon as this one individual writes one letter of about five lines to the Secretary for Railways the whole thing is fixed up.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Those people were writing in the interest of the same line.

MR. BROWNE: If those people were writing in the interest of the same line, how is it that they say another line would suit them a great deal better?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would suit them better, of course.

MR. BROWNE: If we are going to act for the public good, and hon. members opposite are always saying that we should obey the majority, how is it that the representations of public bodies like the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce and the Calliope Progress Association were disregarded, and the request of the one individual, Mr. V. M. Dowling, was acceded to at once?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He is the man who is going to spend the money on the construction of the tramline.

MR. BROWNE: Hon. members know, because it has appeared in the public Press—I hope I shall not be accused of heresy again, and get letters from above for repeating it—that Mr. Bergl stated at a meeting of his company in London, that they had selected their route, and sent a Bill to the Government, and that as soon as that Bill was passed they were prepared to give a big price to put the company on the market. And according to the *Courier*, the *Telegraph*, and the *Queensland Mining Journal*, Mr. John Ferguson, when he was asked the probable price he was going to sell for, said he would not say, but it would run over £100,000. I have not one single word to say against the proprietors of this mine, or against their trying to get this concession. I believe there are some very good men in this Glassford Creek Company, and I should like to see the property developed, but I say it could be done in a different manner. But I contend, from the meagre information supplied to us, that there must have been underhand work in this matter, when public bodies could be in communication with the Government for months asking for a railway in that district, and without success, and when one individual—a very estimable gentleman, I believe—can write a letter of five lines and get the whole thing fixed up immediately.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Dowling is one of the owners of the mine.

MR. BROWNE: I can quite understand that his request is acceded to because he is the owner of that place, but will the hon. gentleman say that if anybody came to him and said he was the owner of a property, he would give him authority to build a railway?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you expect the owner of the Glassford Creek Mine to construct a line to Calliope?

MR. BROWNE: I do not want any private individual to construct a line; I want the Government to construct these lines. But in any case I say no matter how well a Minister might know a man, or how much he might believe in his *bona fides*, he should require that individual to state in his letter the terms of his proposal.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The terms are in the Bill.

MR. BROWNE: The terms and concessions should have been stated in his letter.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What concessions are there?

MR. BROWNE: I will tell the hon. gentleman. Hon. members opposite are continually saying that there are no concessions in these Bills. The hon. member for Carpentaria on one occasion said he was going to throw all sorts of light on the matter, and show that there was no concession in regard to one particular railway, but when he stood up he showed that he had not read the Bill, or that if he had he had forgotten its provisions, because when the hon. member for Gympie contradicted him and said there was a concession of 10,000 acres of land he denied it, and when I contradicted him and said there were another 2,000 acres he denied that until he was corrected by the Premier. But what I am pointing out now is that in this case someone must have had a lot of influence with the

Government, because we have only the one letter containing a proposal in the whole of this correspondence. More information than that should have been required by the Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you know that the Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce wrote in a similar way, and that they held a meeting at which they asked the Government to construct a railway to Miriam Vale to suit the convenience of Bundaberg?

MR. BROWNE: I am not dealing with chambers of commerce all over the country. I am dealing with this correspondence, and I say from that it appears that certain public bodies had written to the Government asking for the construction of a particular railway, and that a report had been received from a Government surveyor on the subject, and no notice was taken of either the request of those bodies or the report of the surveyor. These people say they want no concession, and the Secretary for Mines says they have got no concession. In the first place, they have got the right to charge $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the amount charged on State railways.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They don't want to do it at all.

MR. BROWNE: It is strange that all these people don't want to do anything of the sort, but the Government comes down and kidnaps them or shanghai's them into doing what they don't want to do. We know very well, however, that the Government are not going to force people to do things they don't want to do like that. Take away the concession, and see if they will build the line then. In New South Wales in nearly every case they are compelled to keep the traffic open at all times, and if they stop without the sanction of the Commissioner the line is forfeited; and if it is stopped through a strike, and they refuse to go to arbitration, it is forfeited; but here is a benevolent provision in this Bill by which if the line proves unremunerative they can stop whenever they like.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you desire them to keep on if it does not pay?

MR. BROWNE: If they want to build a line to compete with State railways they should be subject to the same conditions, and should not have any privilege beyond those conditions. Then there is another provision in the Bill—the hon. gentleman says that has been altered—by which they are to get 2,560 acres of mineral lands for fifty years without conditions.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Four hundred and sixteen acres.

MR. BROWNE: Of course, the hon. gentleman said that had been altered, but I can only deal with the Bill. We are told about wasting time; but the time of the country has been wasted for six or nine months in preparing these Bills, and in every case we have the admission from the other side that they do not know the provisions. In this Bill and the others they are all taken up as mineral lands. They are to be exempted from labour conditions, and they do not—as is done in every other country in the world—even reserve the gold.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Gold and silver are reserved here.

MR. BROWNE: That is only in one Bill. I had amendments relating to that matter prepared for the other Bills. Again, if those people don't want any concession, if they have the money to build the line themselves, what do we want with the clauses giving them power to assign and mortgage and all the rest of it? We know very well that one of the promoters, John Ferguson, stated in London what he is there for—to get this off. I believe Glassford Creek is likely to turn out a good mineral field, but I am going to oppose this railway on principle. There is a crowd of men there at the present time.

The Government are laying off a township, and are going to sell allotments, and, of course, there is the usual crowd. I am getting letters and petitions one day from men who hold land under miners' rights, residence areas, and business areas, and they are clamouring about these lands going to be sold and about being driven away. I go to the department to get that rectified, and I get letters from other people about a lot of landgrabbers who have taken up all the land under miners' rights and business licenses to block the legitimate miner who is prepared to put his hands into his pocket.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You refuse to pass this Bill, and it will clear them all out.

MR. BROWNE: From what I know of many of the people there, judging by my own correspondence and the correspondence I have been shown by the Under Secretary for Mines, if throwing out this Bill would have the effect of clearing out some of those people not only from Glassford Creek but out of Queensland, I should think it would be doing a good thing for the colony, for they are neither miners nor mining speculators, but people who are there for the purpose of levying blackmail on the honest working miner and speculator. I have not a word to say against the gentlemen who want this Bill, but I am opposed to the principle. I believe that if the Government took the matter in hand and built a light line to Glassford Creek and a small branch to Callide Creek to provide access to the coal it would satisfy both parties, and do a great deal more good than what is proposed. I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Lockyer and one or two others, even in favour of these Bills, voice the same opinion as I hold in regard to what the Government ought to have done. Instead of bringing in these Bills one after another as individual measures—in all of which amendments will be necessary—they ought to have brought down one general measure, laying down the conditions under which these companies could build private lines; and then there would have been only one lot of amendments to be considered, and not nearly so much time taken up. This is the last of these Bills, unless the hon. gentleman dips down into his box and finds another, and comes down tomorrow with his old cry, "Here I am again." I am going to oppose the second reading of this Bill.

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker—

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: The Premier.

MR. KENT: I'm prepared to sit down.

THE PREMIER: Go on.

MR. KENT: Anyone knowing the country between Miriam Vale and Glassford Creek, as I do, could have not the slightest hesitation in supporting a syndicate line in preference to a State line there. With the exception of the first 10 miles from Miriam Vale I know this country well, having ridden over it and run cattle over it. We all know that we could borrow the money to build that line as a State line.

MR. McDONALD: The Government say we cannot borrow the money.

MR. KENT: I disagree with the Government occasionally. I believe we can borrow the money, but we would have to pay for it. A State line through that country would cost at the very least £100,000, and from my knowledge of it I should say it is perfectly impossible that any development of that country would find sufficient traffic to make a State railway there a self-supporting line. With the exception of the first 10 miles from Miriam Vale there is no country there that can possibly be considered suitable for close settlement. It is mountainous country, and any hon. member who wants to know the kind of country it is should take a track across from

Murphy's Creek to Toowoomba, and he will find that level country in comparison to the Glassford Creek country. If the State were to build this line it would be at least fifty years before it would be reproductive, and paying £100,000 to build it, and allowing 12 per cent. for interest and cost of working. The Commissioner allows 15 per cent. for State railways, but a syndicate would certainly work the line cheaper than the Government could, and, therefore, I take 12 per cent., and at that rate the construction of this line by the syndicate rather than by the State would mean a saving to the country of something over £500,000. The syndicate propose to find the freight for this line, and who is going to benefit by the development necessary to produce that freight? I say the one man who has most to gain by it will be the working miner of the district. Almost every shilling spent there will be to develop the mine, and I cannot understand hon. members representing mining constituencies, and professing to be the friends of the miners, objecting to any of these syndicate lines to develop mining properties.

Mr. McDONALD: What are the miners going to get out of them.

Mr. KENT: I will tell the hon. member the hon. member for Gympie told us that 25 per cent. of the wages of miners on Gympie went in working shows and paying calls. I think the hon. member told me that previous to the development of the Scottish mine in Gympie the working miners on that field paid at least 50 per cent. of their wages back into working shows. If they did that will not the miners of Glassford Creek put as much of their wages back into the shows in that district. The whole of that country is mineral country, and the shows at Cania, Monal, and between Gladstone and Glassford Creek will be worked if the miners of the district have any money to put into them, and I say let this syndicate find the money for the miners to prospect and work these shows. I represent a considerable number of miners, and I will not be afraid to go back to those men after voting for this line, because I know they are in full sympathy with it. It is to me extraordinary that men who pose as the friends of the miners should oppose this line. I will not waste more time in talking about it, but as the leader of the Opposition stated that there might be a connection between this line and the Callide Creek line, I may tell him that that would be almost impossible. You would have to go right round the country to do it, because the range there is something too rough to talk about. You cannot ride a horse over it, let alone take a railway over it.

Mr. BROWNE: I was referring to a suggestion by the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. KENT: That is because they want the traffic to go that way. The line going to Miriam Vale would probably take the traffic to Bundaberg, and the Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce would favour the other line.

Mr. FISHER: I thought you said it was impossible?

Mr. KENT: No, nothing is impossible, but it would be impossible without going right round the country, or if you had hydraulic lifts you might do it that way.

Mr. KIDSTON: I thought that as a matter of courtesy we should have had some Minister replying to the leader of the Opposition, but possibly the courtesy of the Premier is beginning to get threadbare from use. I agree with the hon. member for Burnett in his manifest earnestness to see this Glassford Creek copper property developed. He recognises that it will be a large benefit to the miners of the district, and I would

just add that it will be of benefit to all the people of the district, whether miners or not, if that property is developed, but with a very large number of people who make the same mistake with regard to this question, the hon. member does not seem to see clearly that that very desirable result will follow whether the mine is opened up by a Government railway or a private railway.

Mr. KENT: It would cost £500,000 more.

Mr. KIDSTON: That is one of the most fallacious arguments used in this House—the allegation that a syndicate will be able to build and work a line cheaper than the Government. If that is so, the sooner we dismiss the Secretary for Railways, the Commissioner for Railways, and the Chief Engineer for Railways, and get one or two of these syndicates into their places to build and work our railways for us, the better. These companies can only build and work the lines cheaper than the Government by one means, and that is by sweating it out of their employees.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: And I do not want cheap railways in Queensland at that price. Perhaps the Secretary for Railways is willing to pay that price for them, but I say frankly I am not. All that the hon. member for Burnett has said in his description of the country between Miriam Vale and Glassford Creek is in accordance with everything I have heard of it, but while he says that no Government would ever build a line through that country he is prepared to authorise a syndicate to do it. I think I can show that these are elements in this case. I would just like to

[8.30 p.m.] call the attention of the House, in the present instance, to a thing that struck me most forcibly in reading the correspondence—in regard to the offer of the syndicate to build this line. It was pointed out by the hon. member for Croydon, Mr. Browne, that there was only one letter from the company—that was the letter from Mr. Dowling, asking for permission for the company to build a railway, and asking the Government to draft a Bill to give effect to their proposal; and the reply of the Government was that if the company wanted a railway they would have to draft a Bill themselves. Manifestly, the Government were of opinion at that time that that was a private Bill, but the circumstances have altered since then, and they have discovered that it was necessary, if they wanted to get these Bills through this House, to make them Government Bills, and use the Government "whip" and get them through the House. I suppose that that was the explanation. I can hardly believe that hon. gentlemen, like the Premier and the Minister for Railways, who are so desirous of encouraging the introduction of capital, who are so well disposed to these gentle syndicates—I can hardly believe that those gentlemen would inflict upon these benevolent syndicators the burden of paying for the drafting of a Bill when it was the duty of the Government to draft their own Bill. I assume that they recognised that it was a private Bill—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. KIDSTON: I recognise that the Government at that time recognised that it was a private Bill.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. KIDSTON: Perhaps I should not say recognised, but that the Government at that time thought this was a private Bill, and it was only circumstances which happened between then and the opening of Parliament that induced them to use the Government promise to get these Bills through the House. Now, I may just say, in regard to this Bill,

that it seems to me to be the least objectionable of all the private railway Bills that have been introduced this session. The reasons to my mind are, first, that I believe the property is a *bond fide* good property, and I believe that the company who discovered and developed that property are perfectly honest in their desire to work the property themselves. Another thing is that the line will be a short one connecting with the Government railway; and I am not very sure whether it is not the purpose of the Government to build a 2-foot tramway, although that, I understand, would necessitate them re trucking their goods at Miriam Vale, but in any case the traffic will go over the Government railway at Miriam Vale, and, as it is said in some of the correspondence, it is not very likely it would go past Glassford Creek. If it went from Miriam Vale to Glassford Creek it would end in a sort of *cul-de-sac*, and it would certainly be very difficult to get it beyond that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It could not get further.

Mr. KIDSTON: I do not think so from what I know of the character of the country. The line would simply run from the Government line to the company's property, and, as one hon. member put it, they only look upon it in the light of building so many drays. They could not get their property developed or work it successfully without getting the railway, and they were prepared to build the line themselves; nor do I think that the company, in making this proposal to the Government, have any desire to engage in general railway traffic, or have any desire to become railway owners and obtain over-lordship over the whole of the district. So far as I know the circumstances, I believe the proposal is a perfectly *bond fide* and honest one, and I say it is the least objectionable of all those proposals that the Government have put forward. Still, if it turns out that a large population settles there the company will have the over-lordship of that particular district. The men who run the railway into it, will control the district, and if they are large mineowners there that will be the result. Whether they mean it in the present instance or not, once the concern gets into the hands of a big company, though the individuals who at present hold it may be perfectly honest, and without any ulterior designs, they will only be units in the company having the real power for the decision or working of the company. Now, I must say that I would not support this railway if the Government proposed to build it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: I would not support it if the Minister for Railways proposed to build it, because I think this is a bad way of building this railway; that it is a bad way to get to Glassford Creek. I do not only object to giving a private company this concession, but I object to the route proposed. I do not think the Government would be justified in building a railway in that direction. Even what was said by the hon. member just now corroborates my own opinion in this matter—that it is a most foolish proposal to attempt to get to Glassford Creek from Miriam Vale, at least from the Government's point of view. My idea in building this railway would be that the resources of the district might be developed; and if anyone will look at the sketch-map that accompanies this Bill they will see for themselves that there is a little bit of high country—ridgy, hilly country about 40 or 50 miles south or south-west of Gladstone, and it is along that hilly district that all this mineral wealth lies. On the western watershed is Callide Creek, and just over the eastern side, about 30 or 40 miles away, is this Glassford Creek, and in between them is

another property—Acroombie head station, and then there is another property somewhere about 10 miles from Glassford Creek. So that all that ridgy country is a rich mineral district, and in addition to that down in the Boyne Valley is a rich agricultural district; and if this railway is built, that rich agricultural district will be left at one side; and the Callide Railway, if it is built, will leave it out on one side.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This line will cross the Boyne, and will run right through that tract of country you speak of.

Mr. KIDSTON: The Minister for Railways has been there. I have not, and yet evidently he knows less about it than I do. The line from Gladstone to Callide Creek crosses the Boyne Valley at its mouth. It does not go into the Boyne Valley at all. I am quite right when I say that the railway from Gladstone to Callide leaves the rich agricultural land on the one side, and the railway from Miriam Vale to Glassford Creek leaves it on the other. Neither of those railways will open up that land. What I contend is that the proposals of the Government are bad, for the reason that instead of building two railways they might have proposed to build one which would have done more than the two will do. If the railway had gone from Gladstone to Glassford Creek *via* Callide and the Boyne Valley it would have opened up all the rich agricultural land in the Boyne Valley, and get to Glassford Creek just the same as it will get from Miriam Vale.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Double the distance.

Mr. KIDSTON: Oh, no; it would shorten the distance. It would increase by 16 miles the amount of railway to be built, but it would decrease by about 25 miles the mileage of railway traffic that would be required; for where there are only 35 or 36 miles from Glassford Creek to Miriam Vale, there are 44 miles from Miriam Vale to Gladstone. As far as I make out, the distance from Glassford Creek to Gladstone, which is its nearest port, *via* Miriam Vale, would be about 90 miles.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What I meant was that it was half the construction.

The PREMIER: Where do you get the 90 miles?

Mr. KIDSTON: This is how I make it out. This is Surveyor North's report, on page 3 of the correspondence—

After crossing the Eastern Boyne some ridgy country has to be crossed opposite Milton Station; thence up the Boyne River the country is flat, crossing the river, and joining the Gladstone route at about 47 miles. From Bororen to the 47-mile the distance would be about 31 miles. This route could, by crossing the Boyne lower down, also join the alternative route up Riddle Creek.

On the top of the same page, he describes that route as 65 miles. If he gets up to that 65 miles at 47 miles from Gladstone, that will be 18 miles, and, as there is 31 miles from that point to Miriam Vale, the distance, according to him, is 49 miles. You thus get a distance of some 90 miles from Glassford Creek to Gladstone instead of 65 miles by the Boyne Valley route. As the member for the district described to us to-night, going over that distance will produce nothing; it is not an agricultural district from which the railway will get any source of income except from the copper-mines at Glasford Creek. If it goes by the Boyne Valley, it will open up a rich agricultural country, which will become very valuable in supplying farm and dairy produce to the industrial population that will settle about the head of Glassford Creek. I do not think this country has been examined sufficiently to justify us in deciding the line of railway to be adopted.

Surveyor North was sent up to survey a line of railway across to Callide Creek, and he surveyed a line going across Barmundoo Station, but I have a strong belief that if the railway from Gladstone were taken down the Boyne Valley for the purpose of getting to Glassford Creek, some way up the eastern face of the high land there might be found to be practicable, and then a shorter and better route would be got to Callide Creek. Then, instead of having two lines, each of which will cost a lot to maintain, we would have one railway running southwards from Gladstone into the Boyne Valley, with one branch to Glassford Creek, and another westward opening up the Callide coalmines and the Kroombit mines, which will provide such traffic as will pay interest on the cost of construction. I do not think any man in his senses would deny that that is the better proposal if it is practicable. All the evidence which we have before us indicates that that is the way in which the mineral district lying to the south and south-west of Gladstone should be opened up, because it would not only open up the mineral country, but a large agricultural country as well, which is of no value now.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Isn't it?

MR. KIDSTON: It is of no value because there is no market, but it is country that will become very valuable if there is a large mining population settled within a few months on it. The Government, whose business is not to assist syndicates, but to develop the resources of the country, should adopt that method of doing this particular work which is most likely to develop the country. I claim that one line that will open up the whole of this rich mineral district, and will at the same time open up the rich agricultural district lying close to it—I claim that that would be a very much better method of developing this country than going round by the east and tapping one corner, and then on to the north-west and tapping another mining district, because the Callide line will not open up any country except the Callide Coal Field. It would not open up the Kroombit copper country and all round about there. But a railway from Gladstone to Glassford, with a branch to Callide Creek, would pass through Kroombit, and the whole of that district would be opened up. Just before I leave this subject, I notice in the *Queensland Government Mining Journal* of the 15th June last, this remark—

I should have mentioned that it is also proposed to construct a trainline from Glassford Creek to Gladstone. The route surveyed by the company strikes across the range and meets the coast railway at Miriam Vale; but it is quite on the cards that the Glassford and Callide Companies will come to some understanding upon a common route, and make one line serve both for a portion of the distance.

I believe that that was the understanding, and no man knowing that district could say that that would not be a wise course to adopt. But I do believe that the Glassford Creek people are very dubious about the Callide Coal Company being able to find the money to help to build this line, and they naturally look for the shortest route for themselves. I don't hesitate to say that the very fact of having the line to Callide Creek a joint line would greatly assist in developing the country and in finding a smaller amount of money in order to open up the Callide coalfield. I think the company will be very brave men who will start building a line from Gladstone to Callide Creek, knowing that the only source of their revenue, and the only source from which they could get money to pay interest on the cost of the construction of that line, will be from the coal at Callide Creek. I think the Premier believes that, and I am sure that neither the

Premier nor the Minister for Railways would risk their money in it.

THE PREMIER: Would you?

MR. KIDSTON: I would not, and I don't think any man of standing in Queensland would either, and I have made many inquiries into this matter. I know men who will invite other people to put their money in it, but I don't know one who will put his own money in it. It is very desirable that this coalfield should be developed. There is untold wealth there, and that only wants a railway that can be worked under such conditions as will enable the coal from Callide to travel to Gladstone at something like 3s. 6d. per ton for the whole journey. It only wants that to make it highly probable that in the near future a very large coal trade will be developed in Gladstone. I claim, seeing that the Premier knows that there is very small likelihood of any company undertaking the enormous expense of building a railway from Gladstone to Callide—

THE PREMIER: I don't know that.

MR. KIDSTON: You do not know; you are pretty sure, all the same.

THE PREMIER: How can I?

MR. KIDSTON: Seeing that that is so, and that a much stronger company want to get to Glassford Creek, and that two railways could be combined with considerable advantage to the Gladstone district, and to the opening of a rich agricultural district, I say it would have been quite legitimate for the Government to have said to these two companies, who propose to build those two lines: "Combine and give us a guarantee and we will help you to construct your lines." If it would cost £250,000 to construct a railway from Gladstone to Glassford Creek, with a branch line that would go to Kroombit and Callide, then I say it would have been quite legitimate for the Government to have said to these two companies: "If you each give a guarantee of one-third of the capital cost, we will build the railways that will open up your properties, and work them on behalf of the State." That would be much better for the country and for these companies. It would have been much better for the country in this way: Apart from the assumption that these mines turn out a failure—I myself do not think these Glassford Creek mines will turn out a failure, because I have every confidence in the men who are working them, both as regards their skill and their business capacity. I think, in a few years, this property will be one of the best mining properties in Queensland. Some people think the other way, but I hope and trust they will be mistaken. But even if that happened, I do not think the Government could possibly lose by building a railway in that district in the way I suggest; they would only have to find one-third of the cost of building such a line. I think that is quite evident. Now, on the assumption that the mine turns out a failure—that both mines turn out a failure—on the extreme assumption that all the mines in that mineral district south-west of Gladstone turn out failures—and the Kroombit properties are just about as good as the Glassford Creek properties. The assays I believe show $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of copper, 4 dwts. of gold, and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of silver—

MR. FISHER: Assays are worth nothing.

THE PREMIER: You must have quantities.

MR. KIDSTON: I am quite well aware that a single assay is only of very [9 p.m.] limited value, but I believe I am justified in saying that the Kroombit River property is a very promising one. But

assuming that all these properties turn out a blank failure, then the Government would have a line down the Boyne Valley from Gladstone which would open up a very rich district for one-third of the cost of its construction.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is only a very limited district.

Mr. KIDSTON: No, it is not a very limited district.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is very little good land there.

Mr. KIDSTON: As a matter of fact, I believe there is very good fruit land at Glassford Creek. I am told that on the ridges at Glassford Creek there is a magnificent possible fruit district.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Fruit land is generally rather poor land.

Mr. KIDSTON: I was not aware of it. The description I have of the Boyne Valley country is that there are approximately 120 square miles, or 80,000 acres of good land, and the authority I am quoting from is much more reliable than the Secretary for Railways. The opinion expressed here is that very much of what are called the Boyne flats is only excelled—if it is excelled anywhere in Australia—by some of the rich Hunter River district.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Nonsense!

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. gentleman says "nonsense."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have seen both places, and know all about them, and I am a judge of those things.

Mr. KIDSTON: As a matter of fact the Boyne River flats are celebrated—they are a matter of legend in that district.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For what?

Mr. KIDSTON: I am sorry the hon. member for Port Curtis is not present to defend the character of the rich agricultural land in his district, but I am quoting from an authority that has no partiality one way or the other, that is not interested in cracking it up or cracking it down, and I have every reason to believe that the Boyne Valley is a very rich valley. But it seems to me that if the prospects of this district are so small that they will not justify the Government in risking one-third of the cost of the construction of a railway, then it is a shameless proposal on their part to offer a syndicate the right to construct that railway. I notice in the correspondence here a letter from the Calliope Progress Association to the Commissioner for Railways. I do not read it because it is an authority on the subject, but because of the arguments they adduce in favour of building the railway *vid* the Boyne Valley. Those reasons are as follows:—

1. That Glassford Creek is very rich in mineral deposits, which have been extensively developed, and that it gives abundant promise of becoming a permanent mining centre.

2. That it would tap a number of rich gold-mining districts on the Calliope and Boyne Rivers, which, in the near future, are likely to become large industrial centres.

3. That there are large areas of extremely rich land in the Boyne Valley, the development of which, by the construction of the line, would receive a strong impetus.

4. That this line would pass through, and be convenient to, large areas of country from which extensive supplies of valuable timber could be procured.

5. That a branch line from the proposed line could be extended so as to open up and develop the very large coal measures of the Calliope.

6. That agricultural centres in immediate vicinity to the line would be materially benefited thereby, and, in short, the general resources of the whole district would be benefited by the construction of the line here advocated.

7. That the cost of construction would be considerably less per mile than by the Miriam Vale route, as there are few, if any, engineering difficulties to contend with, and that it would prove of more general utility.

8. That there would likely be sufficient traffic on line to pay interest on construction (if not cost of), maintenance, and working expenses.

As I have already said, I do not quote that because it is from Calliope, but because the reasons there given for building the line by that

route are plain on the facts of the case. I submit that all the information submitted to the House goes to show that the line to Glassford Creek ought to go *vid* the Boyne Valley, and I think that if the House wishes to do the best thing for the country, and if the Government wish to do the best thing for the country in this matter, they will try to get these two companies to combine to give them a joint guarantee of a certain proportion of the cost of the railway, and then have the railway built by the State. I have no doubt that the railway will ultimately pay, for it is a rich district, and if properly opened up it will give handsome returns in the future. I regret very much that the Government have chosen to deal with the matter in this way, which I believe is about the worst possible way they could have proposed to deal with it. It would be much better for the company if the Government did as I suggest, and it would certainly be better for Queensland.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, Townsville): I do not wish to stonewall this Bill, but I should like to answer a few of the arguments of the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston. Really, I should have thought that he would have supported this Bill, because he has given us more arguments why we should build this line than have been given by any members on either side of the House.

Mr. KIDSTON: I think it is an eminently desirable thing to have the railway constructed, but not to Miriam Vale.

The PREMIER: And by this company. I imagine that these people must know their own business best, and they think it will be to their advantage to build a line from Miriam Vale rather than from Gladstone—a distance of 33 miles rather than 65 miles. The hon. member talked about getting a guarantee of two-thirds from the company, but I don't think we would be justified in taking a guarantee from any company; and no local authorities have approached the Government with the view of building a guarantee line. The hon. member is of opinion that the district is rich in minerals, and contains good agricultural land. If that is so, I think we are taking the cheapest and best way to develop that district by allowing these people to build this tramway. And if the district turns out to be what he says it is, the Government will be justified in building a line from Gladstone.

Mr. KIDSTON: Be serious, now.

The PREMIER: I am serious. I take it that there is more than one mine there, and this line will very likely be the means of developing other mines than those at Glassford Creek.

Mr. RED: You would not enter into competition with the company after them spending their money.

The PREMIER: If we find the company overlording the people, as the hon. member for Rockhampton said, and making things so bad for the people in that district that they are in serfdom and bondage, and the traffic would justify the building of a line, I am certain any Government would undertake its construction.

Mr. KIDSTON: After there is a railway there already?

The PREMIER: Yes. The Government could make a line by another route. This route would only serve the company seeking to build this line, and I take it that is all they want. The leader of the Opposition does not object to tramways being built under the Mining Act simply to serve one mine; but we say to these people that if they want to build a line to their mine they must build one that will serve the district too. What does the overlording amount to? A penny a ton per mile on ore is 2s. 9d. a ton, and 25 per cent. in addition to that would amount to

3s. 5d. a ton. I suppose they are paying now not less than 30s., or £2 a ton, considering the nature of the road.

MR. FISHER: They would not get it done for that.

THE PREMIER: That makes the argument all the stronger. Suppose it is £3 a ton. Is it not better for them to get it carried for 3s. 5d. a ton than £3 a ton? A good many people talk about the parrot cry of the miners; but the hon. member for Gympie and the hon. member for Charters Towers must know that there are hundreds of young men growing up on Gympie and the Towers learning the business of mining; and do they think that Gympie and Charters Towers will provide employment for all those young men? Don't they want to seek further fields?

MR. FISHER: Just what I said.

THE PREMIER: We want to provide employment for them, and we are doing that by allowing companies to build lines to their mines. The hon. member for Rockhampton knows that there has been no agitation to build the line he advocates by the Government, and I don't anticipate any company would offer to build it.

MR. KIDSTON: I think you could get assistance to build that line.

THE PREMIER: So far we have not had any offer. I know of fifty places in Queensland where there are good mines that would justify the building of railways to them, but the Government cannot build those lines. Look at the Etheridge? That has been opened twenty-five or thirty years, and we have not built a railway there yet; but we would be justified in building a railway to a district like that before building one to Glassford Creek.

MR. KIDSTON: You should remain the boss—the Government should be the boss.

THE PREMIER: Nearly two-thirds of the railways in the world are built by companies.

MR. KIDSTON: That is not to the purpose.

THE PREMIER: It is to the purpose. Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that two-thirds of the people are serfs as far as those railways are concerned?

MR. KIDSTON: Nearer nine-tenths.

THE PREMIER: I meet people who come here from America, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, and Scotland, and I don't hear them complaining about the overlordship on the part of the railway companies.

MR. REID: I do. I am just reading an article now on it.

THE PREMIER: Of course, you can get articles against anything. There are plenty of articles written against the Labour party and plenty against the Ministry, but we don't believe all the articles written for or against a thing. We have an enormous area of country to develop and we need the assistance of these people to develop that country. We know that there are more railways asked for than the Government can construct. I am sure the hon. member for Rockhampton could name half-a-dozen that ought to be built in his district.

MR. KIDSTON: I dare say four would do us.

THE PREMIER: There are no less than twenty or twenty-five lines that the people concerned think ought to be built first, but everyone knows that all those lines cannot be built in a reasonable time.

MR. KIDSTON: Of course they cannot all be built first.

THE PREMIER: I am sure the majority would not vote for the building of any of the five syndicate railways by the Government; and we would not be justified in asking the House to consent to the Government building the line to Glassford Creek.

MR. KIDSTON: The Government could afford to build it if they had to provide only one-third of the capital.

THE PREMIER: I want to know where the other two-thirds is to come from.

MR. KIDSTON: The company.

THE PREMIER: They would not provide two-thirds for the Government to build the line.

MR. KIDSTON: If they can provide the lot, why not provide two-thirds?

THE PREMIER: For one thing I maintain they can build a line cheaper than we can.

MR. LESINA: And they pay a higher rate for their money.

THE PREMIER: They would be satisfied with a lighter line. If they are wise they will build a 2-foot tramway.

MR. KIDSTON: You can do the same thing.

THE PREMIER: It is only the other day that a request came from Beaudesert to build a line there from Beaudesert to Lara. The estimate of the Chief Engineer was £26,000 for 10 miles, and they had another estimate from Mr. Phillips to build 20 miles of tramway for them for £30,000. I say they ought to take advantage of Mr. Phillips's offer and get that tramway built, and the Government are prepared to lend the board the money.

MR. JENKINSON: The same gauge?

THE PREMIER: Yes, the same gauge, only the Chief Engineer insisted upon building a line above flood level, and the other engineer was satisfied to follow the natural contour of the country, and that would be quite sufficient for the district. The Chief Engineer's estimate for the line from Townsville to Ayr was £144,000. Well, that line will be built for half that money, and that is by following the natural features of the country, whether it is sometimes flooded country or not, and the line will amply serve the district.

MR. KIDSTON: How would a new Chief Engineer do?

THE PREMIER: Our Chief Engineer insists upon building lines which will stand a flood if it comes.

MR. KIDSTON: He would build light lines if he was authorised to construct them.

THE PREMIER: We are a long time getting the light lines. We have plenty of light lines which the Government are prepared to build, enough to keep the staff going, and quite enough to ask this House to find the money for.

MR. KIDSTON: When?

THE PREMIER: I would like to see these lines out of the way first. I can assure the hon. member for Rockhampton that there is not one of these lines that we would dream of bringing in as Government measures—as railways to be built by the State. Take the largest of the lot, and the hon. member for the district and the hon. member for Enoggera say they would not vote for it as a State railway.

MR. REID: If it went down the Flinders we would.

THE PREMIER: You will probably be asked this session to vote for 80 miles of that line.

MR. REID: It will be built before the syndicate's line too.

THE PREMIER: I think it will. It is only 80 miles, and the syndicate's line is 250 miles. This property is more than 30 miles from a railway, and the proprietors, in order to work their mines at a profit, must have a railway or a tramway, and I cannot understand a single member of this House objecting to it. I suppose hon. members opposite would be willing that these people should run their stuff over the road in a wheelbarrow, or in a bullock-draw.

MR. HARDACRE: It is the monopoly or fifty years that we object to.

The PREMIER: A monopoly of 8d. a ton! I say that this line means the opening up of a rich district.

Mr. KIDSTON: I believe that what I propose would be better terms for the company than the terms you give them.

The PREMIER: I wish the hon. gentleman had seen the companies and given them good advice before they came here. They do not offer to build the lines on the hon. gentleman's terms. They say they want to build them themselves, and I say let them build them themselves. I am tired of repeating the old arguments, and I only remind hon. members that we have already built two lines to copper districts—Clermont and Mount Perry—which have not paid.

Mr. KERR: You know that the Peak Downs line was not built to a copper mine.

The PREMIER: I know the big inducement to this House to build it was that there was a chance of those mines again commencing to work if the line was built.

Mr. KIDSTON: It will pay when you carry it on to Charters Towers.

The PREMIER: It will pay much better then, but it does not pay now.

Mr. HARRADACE: It pays well now, indirectly.

The PREMIER: So do all our lines, it might be said; but if we were to depend upon their indirect payment to meet the interest on the national debt we would be a long way behind.

Mr. HARRADACE: We get the advantage through the Customs.

The PREMIER: The Customs will by and by belong to the Federal Government, and we will have to depend more upon our direct revenue than we do at the present time. The hon. member for Rockhampton admits that this is the test line of the five of these proposals, and other members admit that some other of the five is the best. I think the Mount Garnet is the best. I think the Callide Creek line is a very speculative line. I think the Burketown line and the Cloncurry lines are big risks, and the people who find the money for them will have to wait a long time before they will get good interest on it, unless their mines turn out exceedingly well. The country will lose nothing by allowing these companies to build these lines, and there is no doubt that a lot of money will be spent in developing the mines. I hope myself that every one of these lines will pay, for it would be an exceedingly bad thing for the colony if these people were to spend a lot of money here and lose it.

Mr. KIDSTON: We all hope they will pay.

The PREMIER: I think hon. members do, but the fact remains that neither this Government nor any other would be justified in asking this House to build these lines even if we had the money. For that reason I intend to support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): The declaration the Premier has just made is quite unnecessary. We understand that a Premier usually supports measures introduced by the members of his Government, but apart from that we must give the hon. gentleman credit that he is prepared to support any syndicate railway.

The PREMIER: No, not any syndicate railway.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman to do him justice has always advocated private enterprise in railway construction.

The PREMIER: On good grounds, yes.

Mr. FISHER: On every occasion I have been able to look up the hon. gentleman has advocated and supported this principle, and it is therefore surplusage for him to say he intends to support this measure. This is the fifth private railway Bill brought in as part of the public policy by the present Government, and they have now

left it to a private member to get up and answer the leader of the Opposition, and declare that the policy of the Government was to ask a syndicate to construct these railways to compete with the State lines and crush down the employees, and work them cheaper.

The PREMIER: The talk about sweating the employees came from your side.

Mr. FISHER: No, the hon. member for Burnett declared that the syndicates could work the lines cheaper than the State. But how are they going to do it? The Premier will follow me in this: That the State can borrow money cheaper than any private company can, and the State has or should have the best engineers and others at command in constructing the railways. If they have not, there is only one duty for the Government to perform, and that is to get them.

Mr. KIDSTON: Their duty is to keep themselves there.

Mr. FISHER: No, it is a secondary matter in this case, but whether the [9.30 p.m.] Ministry remain or not, I say it is a secondary matter to a question of this importance. Their duty, undoubtedly, is to get the best talent they can for carrying on that particular work. I was in doubt first whether the hon. member for Burnett, Mr. Kent, was speaking on behalf of the Government, and now we have corroboration of that, when the Premier states that syndicates can build a line cheaper than the Government.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: You mean to advocate Government railways because they run them cheaply.

Mr. FISHER: Quite true. We have a direct contrast here. I say that the Premier now, by implication, admits the contention of the hon. member for Barnett, Mr. Kent, was correct.

Mr. KENT: You pay two men to do one man's work. The syndicate don't.

Mr. FISHER: There is another most serious charge levelled against the Minister for Railways, and levelled by a Government supporter. Here we have no less than a parliamentary statement that in the railway service, and in the public works of the colony, they have two men employed where one is required.

Mr. FORSYTH: Don't lose your temper.

Mr. FISHER: I say it is an outrageous statement.

Mr. FORSYTH: Only chaffing.

Mr. FISHER: It looks as if the Government are driven into the position of getting an irresponsible person to declare the policy of the Government, because it is unpopular. I say it is more than unpopular. I say it is a wrong policy. I say it is almost cowardly for the Government not to face the position, and put an irresponsible person to face it for them. It does not matter to me whether a thing is popular or not; I take the course which I believe in, and I am frequently wrong no doubt, but I am sometimes right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Why do you not give other people credit for the same?

Mr. FISHER: I have never denied that the hon. gentleman sometimes may be correct, but I think he is mostly wrong.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are always right.

Mr. FISHER: No, I say I frequently make mistakes. I give the Government some credit, but they are mostly wrong with regard to public policy. But I never thought that they would come down to the position that they occupy this evening—of making a declaration to the effect that they have failed in carrying out the public works of the colony. Then there was the extraordinary statement by the hon. member for Burnett, Mr.

Kent, who was put up to reply to the leader of the Opposition, that there are two men engaged by the Government to do one man's work.

The PREMIER: Does that declare the policy of the Government?

Mr. FISHER: Well, I understand that the hon. member was prepared to sit down to give way to the Premier, and the Premier said he would allow the hon. member for Burnett to go on. I say he was either dealing with the Government policy, or it was a discourtesy to the leader of the Opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Whose policy are you dealing with?

Mr. FISHER: It is the Government policy, or the Government want of policy. The Premier in his speech declared that these were not private Bills, but not altogether Government Bills. They have been made Government Bills during the discussion; and here we are, in the middle of the session, dealing with Bills for concessions to syndicates, and the Premier has rightly argued what we should do unless we bring in railway construction by private enterprise. Well, there is a railway promised by the Chief Secretary—a railway which would settle numbers more of people on the land than all these mining railways can settle—that is, the railway from Kilkivan to Nanango, but we hear nothing about it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It will come in good time.

Mr. FISHER: That is why we have five syndicate railways to discuss and no attempt made to declare the public policy of the Government. That is not even promised; we have no hint of it.

Mr. KERR: They are not game to put it on the table.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are game for anything.

Mr. FISHER: There is one remark made by the Premier that I am inclined to reply to. He appealed to me as a member representing a gold-field where young miners were growing up and will ultimately require to go to new fields to look for employment, and the inference was that by giving these concessions to syndicates they would open up these fields for miners. Now my contention is the very opposite. I contend that the proposal of the Government will shut up these particular fields for fifty years against these young enterprising miners.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The very reverse! Open them up!

Mr. FISHER: I can prove my statement. Every one of these Bills contains concessions to these syndicates to take up land and hold it for their own use for fifty years—land between 28, 48, and 120 miles wide from the railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are wandering.

Mr. FISHER: No, I am not wandering. Take the case of the Normanton-Cloncurry line—there the syndicate can monopolise 65 miles on each side of the railway. That is 130 miles for the whole length of the line, and 65 miles beyond it, making a distance greater than that from Brisbane to Gladstone, right beyond the main range. That is the concession granted in one of the Bills before the House; and all the other Bills contain concessions of the same kind. The present Bill I think contains the least concession with regard to taking up mineral lands. What chance would young men have under conditions like this? The syndicates in all probability will be absentee syndicates, and they will be able to hold the land and deprive these miners of the liberty of going to prospect for themselves. They will simply have to become wages-men. There being no labour conditions at all in the contract

made between the Government and the syndicates, they will simply have to work for wages, for the barest pittance that they can subsist upon.

Mr. FORSYTH: They could take up land.

Mr. FISHER: They can take up land now, but the syndicates under these Bills will be able to take up land and hold it for fifty years without any labour conditions, which are the protection of the miner. As the hon. member for Croydon will tell you, with labour conditions, if a company will not work a piece of land they have to throw it up, and another prospector may come along and work it. But these Bills allow 5,000, 6,000, 2,000, and 3,000 acres to be monopolised by these syndicates. Well, the magnificent mineral field of Charters Towers is comprised within 2,080 acres, and that of Gympie within 1,100 acres; and out of that small area has come millions of profit. And we may form some idea from that of what may result from these syndicate concessions. I do not intend to go deeply into this Bill, but the Minister, in introducing it said, that there were no concessions in it.

Mr. REID: He said that about everyone of them.

Mr. FISHER: I do not think the hon. gentleman could have read the Bill with that care that he should have given to it. In this Bill we find that there is a principle involved different to that which is in the other Bills. The labour conditions of the Mining Act are to apply, but there is a condition attached to the application of the Mining Act, and that is of such a character as to deprive us of the advantage which would accrue through the Mining Act applying. The Bill provides that the employees on the railway, which is to be about 33 miles in extent, shall be counted as though they were working on the lease itself. Does the hon. gentleman believe in that principle? I think he should answer that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am interested to know what you believe in.

Mr. FISHER: It will be the duty of every mining member to resist that principle to the uttermost. That provision will enable the company at any time to shut down the mine. The total area of their lease will be 416 acres, and one man to 10 acres would mean, say, the employment of forty-two persons altogether. Now, on those 33 miles of railway there are likely to be quite forty-two persons employed, so that there need not be a single man employed to hold the ground under the Mining Act. Therefore, I warn the hon. gentleman that the mining members at least will strongly oppose that proviso.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That can all be thrashed out in committee.

Mr. FISHER: That is one of the principles of the Bill, and it is set forth as one of the reasons why we should pass the measure. I am quite prepared to thrash it out in committee, and that is the reason why I raise the question now. If the Government will agree that that provision should be eliminated much of my opposition will cease.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That provision would only be in operation during the construction of the railway line.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman is in error, I believe; but if he adopts that as his view I shall be satisfied. I am thankful that the debate so far has shown that the hon. gentleman does not approve of that provision. I am very happy to see that he has conceded my point, and that he recognises the necessity for altering the proviso to which I have alluded. Having gained my point, I shall not discuss that matter any further.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The mines would not be worth running if they could not employ the necessary number of men after the line was constructed.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman does not follow me. If they can withdraw the men wholly they can stop the mines. If the labour conditions are fulfilled by the railway going on, how will these young miners that the Premier is so solicitous about be affected? Suppose there is a labour dispute, the company will be able to shut down the mine, and no penalty will be attached to the conditions as to the number of men to be employed not being carried out.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They would not work the mine at all—is that what you mean?

Mr. FISHER: Certainly, that is what I mean. Is the hon. gentleman not aware of the fact that there are two methods adopted in labour disputes? Either the men strike or the employers lock out the men. In this case the employers would have the men in their hands, because the number of men on the railway would be sufficient, according to this Bill, to fulfil the labour conditions. Subsection 2 of clause 25 reads—

During the currency of the leases the said labour covenants shall be deemed to be sufficiently performed if the total number of men prescribed in respect of all the leases is employed in or upon any part of the mineral lands or on or about the tramway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If what you contend is correct the mine would be practically abandoned, and it would not be worth owning.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman is wrong. He surely does not read at all. Why, at Broken Hill the mines were shut down for months at a time. Does the hon. gentleman say that those mines were not worth owning? If Mount Morgan was shut down for twelve months, would he contend that it was not worth owning?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is it likely to be shut down for twelve months?

Mr. FISHER: It might be. We have seen strange things happen. I am afraid the troubles that the hon. gentleman has recently gone through have somewhat upset his reasoning powers, and I sympathise with him. If he applies his mind to the subject he will discover that the chief weapon used by mining companies to oppress their workmen has been the shutting down of their mines. In earlier days labour difficulties were put down by the military. Of late years we have become more civilised, and starvation is the weapon used. We have been told by the irresponsible representative of the Government—the hon. member for Burnett—and I congratulate him on his promotion—

Mr. KENT: I'll put the gag on when I am promoted.

Mr. McDONALD: You have always got the gag on over there.

Mr. FISHER: Now, I pay great attention to what that hon. member says on this matter, because he knows this country well. But if he says that this line will cost £100,000, why is it provided in this measure that the Commissioner can give a certificate for an extra year if the expense incurred exceeds £20,000? The position is altogether unreasonable. I congratulate the Minister in that he has seen it wise to reduce the concession of mineral land from 2,560 acres, as mentioned in the Bill, to 416 acres, as he proposes to amend it. One wonders how these "2,560 acres" ever got into the Bill at all, and hon. members, especially on this side, wonder how far their arguments have contributed to this good result. Some hon. members talk about waste of time, but the Minister has seen fit, through our efforts, to reduce the acreage in this Bill one-fifth. Yet in the other Bills of this nature, the acreage is five times greater than in this Bill! In the other

Bills, these companies can pick the best lands anywhere and everywhere they like over an area 130 miles wide. Yet in this case the Government have decided that 416 acres are ample for the company. Now, this railway is to go from Miriam Vale to Glassford Creek. Will the hon. gentleman tell us where he gets the information from that this line should start from Miriam Vale—who recommended that?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is the company's desire.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman sent out a surveyor to survey this line, but I cannot see anything in his report stating that this line should start from Miriam Vale.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is in the Bill. Isn't that sufficient for you?

Mr. FISHER: Only in the Bill. In the correspondence we see that it is recommended that the line should start from Bororen. Here is your own surveyor's report.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FISHER: The report says—

BOROREN ROUTE.—Leaving the railway about 1½ miles from Bororen Station, the line would go up the valley of Logan Creek; thence through the divide between Logan Creek and Eastern Boyne, which would require a tunnel under 10 chains; and thence follow down a gully to the Eastern Boyne. Although this part is very broken country, a fairly easy section can be got. After crossing the Eastern Boyne, some ridgy country has to be crossed to opposite Milton Station; thence up the Boyne River the country is flat, crossing the river, and joining the Gladstone route at about 47 miles. From Bororen to the 47-mile distance would be about 31 miles. This route could, by crossing the Boyne lower down, also join the alternative route up Riddle Creek. Bororen is 8 miles from Miriam Vale, and I understand this route would be 1½ miles nearer to Miriam Vale and 6½ miles towards Bororen.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is that a matter of grave importance?

Mr. FISHER: Decidedly. Why did not the Government see their way clear to approve of their surveyor's suggestions?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The company had their own engineer and made their own survey.

Mr. FISHER: Then, where is that information? All the correspondence was called for, and yet we have not had the information just given to us by the Minister. How can we legislate unless we have all necessary information at our command?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The company asked for a railway from Miriam Vale to Glassford Creek. Isn't that sufficient?

Mr. FISHER: No. That may be sufficient for some hon. members on the other side; but it is the duty of every hon. member to know what he is doing. It is not sufficient to say that a railway shall run from point to point. That was one of the most contentious issues raised in connection with the land-grant railways. I hope the House will insist upon having the information as to where this line is going; what it is going to do; whether it is going to "gerrymander" all over the country, or go from point to point. At any rate, Mr. North, the surveyor, recommends the Bororen route as the best to Glassford Creek. There is a great deal of contentious matter in this Bill, and I am pleased to hear that the Minister for Railways recognises that the clause in the Bill which enables the company to make their railway servants appear as working in the mines is to be eliminated or amended. I trust that if I have misunderstood the Government in accusing them of having a policy to endeavour to reduce the status of working men of the colony that they will show some proof of that. The best proof is not for the Government to put up men to say that these syndicates can work their lines cheaper than Government lines

are worked; but to bring down a policy that will do what they are always crying out about—give work to the unemployed and advance the interests of the public generally. The Government seem to think that there is a grave necessity for these private syndicates, but I say it is deplorable to see a whole Government captured by syndicators. We have seen an example lately of unprincipled syndicators, and I am not prepared to truckle to any low syndicate schemes. I trust that the Government, having had these

[10 p.m.] ingly careful in dealing with syndicates of every kind. Many of them are, as the Premier said, honourable and straightforward; but it is a kind of business that seems to create, if not to breed, an undesirable class of speculators, who are prepared to do questionable things in order to get money.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): Before dealing with this Bill, I should like to take exception to an interjection of the hon. member for Burnett with regard to the railway men of this colony. In that interjection an insinuation was thrown out, whether intentionally or otherwise, which certainly needs refutation. It reminds me very much of a statement made by a Government supporter at one time to the effect that when travelling along the railway he looked out of the window, but never saw the railway men doing any work. They were always, he said, standing by the line when the train passed; as if they should be standing in the middle of the line working when a train went by! The hon. member for Burnett seems to have the idea that the railway men of this colony are not doing sufficient work, and that it takes two men to do one man's work.

Mr. KENT: I never said that. I said they paid two men to do the work of one man.

Mr. HARDACRE: That amounts to the same thing, and I think it is only fair to say that on more than one occasion the officers of the Railway Department have praised the men for their services. Now, with regard to this Bill, whatever may be said as to the merits or demerits of this particular line, it is open to the same general objection that has been advanced against the other private railways proposed by the Government. On the other hand, whatever may be said with regard to the other lines being remunerative, in my judgment this is one that certainly will be remunerative, and that certainly ought to be built by the Government. There is no other railway in the whole bunch of these private railways that offers such inducements for the Government to construct it as this one.

Mr. NEWELL: The Mount Garnet Railway.

Mr. HARDACRE: I do not know much about the district in which that railway is proposed to be built, and I am only going by the reports we have had submitted to the House. Judging by those reports I say there is not one of the whole bunch of railways that is likely to be as remunerative as the one now proposed, and I do not know of any railway proposed by the Government or asked for in any district which is as likely to be remunerative at an early date as this line to Glassford Creek. The country has great mineral resources, and great promise of settlement. The Secretary for Railways told us about the immense copper deposits in that district, and the very great population that is likely to be settled there in a few years. The only objection he had was that while the lodes were valuable, copper deposits often cut out. As a matter of fact it is copper deposits which do not cut out. Copper as a rule is found in immense masses, and the deposits do not cut out like a small narrow reef of gold, but often extend very great distances. The Peak Downs copper deposit is

not cut out. As a matter of fact about two years ago a company was formed to rework the copper deposits in that district, and are at the present time doing some work in the mines, but there is great trouble with regard to water. I was at Mount Perry three weeks ago, and I know that there are some good copper deposits there at the present time, and I think that district will become a very large mineral district in time. However, we have in connection with the proposed railway to Glassford Creek, such inducements offered for the construction of a railway as are not offered in connection with any of the other private railways submitted by the Government. We have been told over and over again about the large number of railways asked for all over the colony, and the cost has been put at £24,000,000. As a matter of fact every railway that has ever been proposed has been raked up in order to form a large list of railways on paper, while, I suppose, you could count on two hands, almost on one hand, all the legitimate railways that are likely to be constructed, even if the Government had millions of money. A number of little railways, such as a line to Geebung or Goombungee, have been mentioned, but there is really no intention of constructing them, so that the building of this line by the Government would not take the money away from those railways. I should like to read a short description of the Glassford Creek copper lodes. The *Bundaberg Mail* says—

Situated in the mountain heights of one of the roughest and hitherto most isolated spots in Queensland is the Glassford copper mines, a place that is becoming known, in name at any rate, throughout the length and breadth of Australia—a place that will, in all probability, surmount in importance the great Mount Morgan, and eclipse all the most wonderful mines in Australia.

Mr. LESINA: What do they get an inch for that?

Mr. HARDACRE: I do not know what they get an inch, or whether it is put in as an advertisement for the company, but I shall show directly that the description here given of the place is borne out by the Government Geologist.

Its value at the present moment cannot be even roughly computed, nor can any idea of its enormity be even roughly computed. One can only imagine miles upon miles in extent of enormous mountains composed of copper ore, some portions excessively rich, and in other parts yielding but the smallest percentage; but both quantities, taken at long distances apart, over a length of many miles, all going to show that the whole is highly payable.

That description is borne out by the geologist's report, which reads like a prospectus, and bears out to the full the richness of the district. He says—

The syndicate hold 312 acres—viz., four leases, comprising altogether 252 acres, and a reward claim of 160 acres. Their ground extends in a north and south direction for a distance of over 2½ miles. The main portion of the deposit is a true lode.

Further on, dealing with the shafts he went down, he says—

These shafts have proved a big lode down to an average depth of about 120 feet for a distance of 700 feet in length. . . . Immediately above the tunnel the lode stands out as a big bluff on the eastern side of the hill.

And his conclusion is as follows:—

It is only during the last twelve months that the syndicate have been prospecting for copper, and necessarily the work on so large a deposit, extending over such an area of rough country, cannot have advanced very far in that time. Sufficient, however, has been done to show that the properties contain large deposits of payable ore.

If that is the case, and if the statement of the Minister for Mines is borne out, that when this railway is built there will be a large population settled around there, and a township will grow up, then it will be a most profitable thing for the

Government to build that railway. I have heard it said that it is anticipated that in three years there will be a population of 10,000 settled in that locality. We know what has occurred at Mount Morgan. Mount Morgan is a mining township of the same kind, with a population of some 10,000, and the railway recently built there returned interest at no less than 11 per cent. on last year's operations.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What about the railway built to Mount Perry?

Mr. HARDACRE: I am pointing out that from the geologist's report, from the general description of the place, and from the Minister's own statements to-night, that this railway offers such inducements that should not only warrant the Government in building it, but should lead to its being the very first they put forward.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The reports concerning Glassford Creek are as nothing compared with those about Tenningering, Mount Perry.

Mr. HARDACRE: Surely the reports with regard to Mount Perry were not based on the geologist's own personal visit, as in this case. They were probably the prospectus or the report of some private company who had no other interest to serve except to float the mine. Here we have a report from our own special officer whose word can certainly be relied on. At any rate, the facts of the case show that, whether we believe the geologist's evidence or not, the company believe it, and they believe it so firmly that they are willing to go to an enormous expense in order to build a railway and work the mine. They are so convinced of the richness of the mineral deposit there that they are prepared to plank down a vast sum of money. We have been told—and it is one of the strange arguments we are constantly hearing—that we are not offering this company much privilege. All the company require is simply to be allowed to construct the railway, and it is not going to cost the country a single penny. Hon. members seem to think that this railway is going to drop down from heaven, or spring up as a bubble from the earth. It is like one of those conjuring tricks we sometimes see. The conjurer takes a great number of things out of a small hat; they come from nowhere. Hon. members seem to think this railway is going to come from nowhere. Our contention is that this will be the most costly way of building the railway. The colony must pay for it in some way or other. When the Government builds a railway it brings out the money borrowed for the purpose in the shape of railway material. It gets the railway and agrees to pay a certain rate of interest over a number of years. The company will work in exactly the same way. They will get the railway material and pay for it in the shape of interest, but that interest will come either out of the revenue from the railway or out of the pockets of the people of the colony in the end. Therefore the colony as a whole must pay for this railway, only they will have to pay at a very much greater rate than if the Government built it. It is not a piece of legerdemain; it is not a miracle; it does not come out of nothing. It comes out of the pockets of the people of the colony.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Supposing the Government do not buy it?

Mr. HARDACRE: Whether the Government build it or buy it, if it is built at all, and is remunerative, as we have every reason to believe it will, it will be far more costly to the colony than if it is built by the Government.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is an assertion.

Mr. HARDACRE: Every statement is an assertion. The question is, is it a fact or not? I was speaking about the privileges or concessions

we are giving the companies. As a matter of fact, we are giving them such great privileges that the companies can take those privileges and borrow all the money they want on the London market. They are going to take the asset we are giving them, and borrow on that asset enough to build the railway. Now, assets, as a rule, are not of less value than the money which can be borrowed upon them. The Chillagoe Railway Company borrowed £350,000 on the concessions we gave them, so that we must have given them much more than £350,000 worth of the assets of the colony.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: They borrowed on the output of the mine.

Mr. HARDACRE: Did we not give them that mine?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: No.

Mr. HARDACRE: I am not concerned in whether it was a mine within the definition of "mine" in the Mining Act, although I think that it would come within that definition. What I am concerned with is that it was on the strength of the valuable mineral resources which we gave to that company that they were able to go on to the home market and borrow the whole of the money they required to build their railway. The same thing will happen in connection with this line. If this company can borrow money on the concessions which we are giving it, we are giving it a most valuable privilege.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They can borrow money on their own credit.

Mr. HARDACRE: Of course they can, but I point out that the Chillagoe Company did not borrow money on their own credit, and the Chief Secretary knows very well that this company will not borrow on their own credit either. I have no objection to their borrowing money. It is a perfectly legitimate transaction to borrow money and pay interest on it, but I contend that they will take this concession which we are giving them as the chief security they offer for the repayment of the money they borrow. In that case, the asset we give them must be of more value than the money they borrow, and in that case, by giving them this enormous concession, we are really building the railway ourselves, but in the most costly manner possible. It is building the railway in an indirect way, something like the old system of farming out the collection of the taxes in France to the highest bidder. And what did that lead to? It not only led to extortion, but it was the most clumsy and costly manner of raising revenue that could be devised. In the same way this indirect system of building railways is the most costly that we could adopt, and in the end will probably be ten times more costly than if we were to build it directly for ourselves. We have been told that we are against private enterprise, and that we do not wish to see people engaging in industries. Now, we do not object to private enterprise. I firmly believe in the old saying that he is a public benefactor who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before. It is the same with all industries, whether it is growing grass, establishing factories, or building railways. I have not the slightest objection to even a company building a railway. What we do object to is not to private enterprise doing this, but to the monopoly which is involved in the proposal. It is a combination of private enterprise and monopoly. We get contractors to build railways for us, and there is no objection to that. In that case we take over the railways when they are constructed, but in this case we offer this company, among other concessions, the lease of the railway for half-a-century, and that, to my mind, is the chief objection to the Bill. We have had examples of that sort of thing in the past history

of this colony. It is the traditional policy of hon. members on the other side. They sold the Darling Downs in the early history of the colony, later on they sold the Brisbane lands, and within the last few years they sold our Western and Central lands. It is the same principle in every respect. Every argument that is now employed in support of private railways applied to those other things. "Let us get the money now, and it will create a temporary prosperity, and afterwards the deluge!" We have an example of that in the history of the A.A. Company in New South Wales. That company obtained possession of the lands around Newcastle at $\frac{1}{4}$ d. an acre on consideration that they did certain kinds of work, and I have no doubt the same arguments were then used that are being used now in connection with this proposal. Well, a few years ago they sold some of those lands which they got for $\frac{1}{4}$ d. an acre for £10,000 an acre. We are going to do exactly the same thing over these proposals. I admit there will be some temporary gain, but we ought to have some regard to what may be said in half-a-century with regard to this proposal. There may be some excuse for it now, but in another twenty or thirty years Glassford Creek may be another Newcastle with a very large population.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: You neither want population nor railways.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: By your plan you will certainly get no population.

Mr. HARDACRE: I certainly want population. I desire to see this country much more largely populated than it is now, and I desire to encourage every legitimate enterprise. But it is not industry that hon. members opposite are trying to encourage. It is what is antagonistic to industry. They are seeking to establish monopoly, which prevents industry and production within the circle of its influence. This policy is not a new policy. It is the policy of thousands of years ago. It is the policy that was in vogue when the Roman citizen, with a high sense of the value of his citizenship, on returning from the wars beggared and hungry, sold himself as a slave in order to appease his momentary pangs of hunger. It is the old tradition of Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. With regard to the future, he sold certain things for a temporary gain. If we cannot build a railway to-day we may be able to build it to-morrow. I think Herbert Spencer and his apostle, Professor Fiske, of America, have pointed out that it is only the lowest forms of life that think only of the present. The lower form of brute thinks only of the gain of to-day.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Thanks for the compliment.

Mr. HARDACRE: If the cap fits the hon. member, he can wear it; but I certainly did not intend any personal discourtesy at all.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Some people think neither of the present nor of the future.

Mr. HARDACRE: It is only the lowest forms of intelligence that work only for to-day. The higher and more intelligent mammals work not only for to-day, but for to-morrow, and for next year, while the highest, and most intelligent—man—works not only for to-day and for next year, but for the future, when he himself may have passed away, and when he may be entirely forgotten. Here, to-day, we are thinking only of temporary gain. If there was in this Bill the [10.30 p.m.] right of repurchase, it would reduce my objection to the vanishing point, because then whatever evil there may be in it could be overcome in time. In leasing our lands we retain the power to resume at any time, and we should retain that power in this case, even if we had to pay 10 or 20 per cent. in addition to

the cost. There is no private railway in Australia in regard to which there is not the power of resumption after a certain period. In the Tasmanian Acts there is the right of resumption on paying the cost, and 20 per cent. in addition. That is a big amount; but it would make my objection smaller even if we could repurchase at that cost. With regard to changing the policy of the country, we have been twitted with our cast-iron platform, and it may be interesting to inform hon. members how the Labour party came to have a platform at all. It grew out of the fact that Sir Thomas McIlwraith, though he had distinctly promised both verbally and in writing that he would not, if elected, support land-grant railways, was instrumental in passing through this House a very big land grant railway Bill; also Sir Samuel Griffith disregarded his public pledges, and without consulting the electors turned round on his Polynesian policy.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question before the House is the second reading of the Glassford Creek Tramway Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE: I was trying to justify continuing a public policy to which members were pledged until the electors had an opportunity of saying whether or not it should be altered. It is said that though we might be in favour of this Bill we cannot vote in its favour because we have made certain pledges. We have found public men disregarding their public pledges; and we hold that a man should state distinctly what he means when he is elected, and that he should keep all his pledges. Surely, hon. members consider their position one of public trust. If a man undertakes a private trust he is required to enter into an engagement—there must be something tangible.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: As a guarantee against dishonesty.

Mr. HARDACRE: It would be necessary—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: For rogues, yes.

Mr. HARDACRE: The hon. member must surely think we are rogues when he twits us with not daring to go back on our public pledges. What else could we be if we did go back on them? I say that, being in a position of public trust, having made pledges to support certain things because we believe in them, and to oppose certain things because we disbelieve in them, and having been elected on those pledges, we ought, as honest men, to fulfil those pledges, until we have gone back again to those who elected us. We do not object to any change of policy, but what we say is that if the people are to govern the colony, before there is a change members should go back and consult their masters who sent them here. Holding the views I have expressed, I enter my protest against the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. DIBLEY (*Woolloongabba*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think there is plenty of time to finish the debate to-night. I am most anxious to get this Bill through and get on with the business of the country. We are here to do business, not to waste time in this way.

Mr. REID: We only started this at 7 o'clock.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have wasted quite enough time.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think it is the duty of the House to get this business passed through to-night.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is very unreasonable.

Mr. BROWNE: I thoroughly agree with the hon. gentleman as to the anxiety to get on with the business of the country, and if we had not been so long occupied with business which the

hon. gentleman has just admitted is not business of the country, we would have done much better. I think there is a great deal of reason in this motion for the adjournment of the debate. We have had only a little over three hours' discussion upon this very important measure.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The session will soon be over.

Mr. BROWNE: Whose fault is that? Is it not the fault of hon. gentlemen who were stumping the country electioneering and banqueting until the latter end of July. We had nothing to do with delaying the meeting of Parliament until that time. We have had nothing to do with the bringing in of this business which is not the business of the country and about which even members on the Government side have complained, that one Bill is piled in on top of another. I have time after time pleaded that the real business of the country should be gone on with, but the Government have told us "No; the country's business must come to a standstill because certain syndicates are running us, and we must do as they tell us."

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. BROWNE: We have practically been told that by hon. gentlemen themselves.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. BROWNE: I admit that the Premier has acted fairly courteously, and on my part I have done my best to try to curtail debate, but to say that after three hours' discussion, in a house of seventy-two members, all that can be said on an important measure like this has been said is plainly unreasonable. The Secretary for Railways has told us that instead of giving these people 2,560 acres, as provided by the Bill, we are to give them only 416 acres, and I do not think 10 per cent. of hon. members have read the Bill.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will permit me to draw his attention to the fact that the question before the House is the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. BROWNE: I think this indecent haste should not be shown in rushing business through the House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Rushing! We have been two months at it.

Mr. BROWNE: We have been about three hours discussing a Bill of this importance.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It could be done in an hour.

Mr. BROWNE: The whole business of the House and the country could be done in an hour, to suit the hon. gentleman. Of course the business is in the hands of the leader of the House, but I think we should at least have to-morrow to discuss this Bill. The hon. member for Woolloongabba, who has moved the adjournment, does not take up much of the time of the House, and those who have spoken might be satisfied; those who have not spoken should be considered. I think the motion reasonable, and will support it.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: It is true that we have only discussed this Bill for about three hours to-night, but whose fault is it that the whole day has been lost in discussing a matter there was no necessity to discuss at all. If the leader of the Opposition asked the Premier what steps he intended to take in connection with the North Chillagoe business, he would have got the answer that he has got, that it is intended to have it thoroughly investigated, and there would have been an end to it. Instead of that, member after member on the other side got up and expressed his opinion about it. Hon. members opposite advocate eight hours work for the day, and now

they wanted to go home to their little beds after doing only six hours work. We might very well go on for another two or three hours over this.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): I think there is an urgent necessity for the debate to be adjourned. If we pass this Bill, we affirm a principle, and before we do that, we should have a more complete and comprehensive discussion than we have had to-night. That being so, I think we should adjourn now, and continue the discussion to-morrow.

The PREMIER: There is no one more anxious to go to bed than I am.

Mr. REID: Hear, hear! Let us adjourn.

The PREMIER: If this had been the third of the syndicate Bills it might be unreasonable to expect to close the discussion to-night, but this is the fifth Bill, and we have discussed the principle over and over and over again. To my mind these Bills are almost the same, though they are not exactly similar. We have had a fair debate upon this one, and we shall have plenty of time to discuss it in committee. I shall be quite satisfied if the leader of the Opposition will take only two nights to discuss this in committee.

Mr. BOWMAN: You are very easily satisfied.

The PREMIER: I am afraid I shall be disappointed. I think we may as well get rid of this second reading and get into committee on some of these Bills. If we finish this one now, we can take the Callide Creek Bill in committee to-morrow.

Mr. REID (*Enoggera*): I am astonished at the Government insisting on getting this Bill through to-night. I do not think there has been any unnecessary discussion. This afternoon's business was rather important from a Queensland point of view, and I do not think this side can be accused of wasting any time, after the Premier had given his promise to have the perpetrators of this business prosecuted, if there was any possible way of getting at them, and if not, to have an inquiry. This Bill was started at a quarter-past 7 o'clock, and after the Minister for Railways had spoken I do not think any long speeches were delivered. There are still several members interested in the Bill, and they desire to speak; and three or four speeches could not very well be compressed within an hour. I know that some members, thinking they would have an opportunity of speaking to-morrow, left, and now we hear that the Government are going to force the Bill through. I think it will be an injustice to the Ministers, who have to look after their respective departments, to keep them here until the debate is finished, if it is decided to conclude it to-night. I do not think the Government ought to expect a measure like this to go through in one night. No Government in Queensland has ever expected such a thing before, and I am sure if the present Government were over here, and we were unfortunate enough to be in their places, they would not allow us to get an important Bill like this through in three hours.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have been discussing it for two months.

Mr. REID: We have not been discussing this Bill more than three hours; and there seem to be several alterations in this Bill. There are several others who desire to speak, and that is our argument why this debate should be adjourned. I think the Government are expecting too much.

They should certainly recognise the [11 p.m.] reasonableness of the request that has been made, and not sit after 11 o'clock. Considerable progress has been made this evening.

The PREMIER: No progress has been made.

Mr. REID: Considering the nature of the business brought forward, I think great progress has been made. The Premier must know that such a spicy thing as the North Chillagoe business could have been made much more of by the Opposition if they had wished, but they have been reasonable and have devoted three hours to the Glassford Creek Tramway Bill. It is very unreasonable to spring upon members such a surprise as that the Government want to finish the second reading of this Bill to-night, considering the understanding among many members that a division would not be taken. If the Government insist upon going on further to-night they must, of course, take the responsibility upon their own shoulders. Members of the Opposition have tried to facilitate business. Personally speaking, although I have been very quiet on all these private railway Bills, and have been very reasonable, yet, if the measure is going to be forced down my throat, I am going to be unreasonable. You may persuade me, but I will not have anything thrust down my throat. The Government are certainly likely to make more progress with their business if they act reasonably, and adjourn at a fairly early hour.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is nothing to prevent your going home.

Mr. REID: No; but the Opposition have a duty to perform, and are not prepared to go home. Several hon. members assured me before going away to-night that the debate would not terminate, and I therefore trust the Government will, at all events, keep faith with what seems to have been an understanding on their part and adjourn the debate.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*): I know that members on both sides have gone away under the belief that a division would not be taken to-night. I do not think the Government can complain about the progress of business up to the present time. The Premier has met us very fairly, and business has been conducted to the satisfaction of the House in general. Still, I think to-night we are asked to do too much, when it is suggested we should pass this Bill after three hours' discussion. I have not opened my mouth on any of these syndicate railways—not because I am not as strongly opposed to them as my colleagues on this side of the House—but this is a Bill I had an idea of saying something about. Being satisfied, however, that the debate would not close to-night, I have made no preparation. Still, if the Government persist in forcing the Bill through I shall be obliged to talk. I was amused at the indignation expressed by the member for Cook at the waste of time that he says has taken place. I do not think that time was by any means wasted by the discussion we had early this afternoon. On the contrary, I think it will prove most profitable. I know at least three members who have paired on the understanding that the Government would not force this Bill through, and one member on the Government side assured me that there was no intention of finishing it at this sitting. As business has, so far, gone on in such an amicable manner, I hope the Premier will not persist in his present intentions. I have no doubt we will be able to come to a division to-morrow. It has been contended that the principle of the Bill has already been discussed on the other private railway Bills, but we must remember that this measure contains one or two principles different to its predecessors, and it is necessary that they should be fully discussed. And even if the principle had been fully discussed, so strong is the feeling on this side against Bills of this nature that we cannot repeat too often our condemnation of the policy of the Government in respect to legislation of this character. I don't think the Government have any reason

to complain; on the contrary I think they should be grateful for the moderate discussion that has taken place on this measure. There was considerably more discussion on the Chillagoe Bill.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McDONNELL: Under all the circumstances, I trust the Premier will agree to adjourn this debate.

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*): I hope the Government do not intend to force the second reading of this Bill through this evening. If hon. members opposite think that by their leaving the Chamber they will upset my equilibrium, they are very much mistaken. I suppose this is the penalty we have to pay for our attack this afternoon. I submit that this is not the time to force a Bill of this nature through—in the dead of night, when wild beasts commence to prowl, and when thieves and robbers go about.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: And when editors are at work.

Mr. HIGGS: This may seem a suitable time to hon. members opposite to fully discuss this Bill; but I don't think so.

Mr. STEWART: Suitable for syndicates.

Mr. HIGGS: I suppose it is. There is a very great contrast in the method of dealing with public and private syndicate business.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: Although dealing with very important business, the House adjourned at 10:30 last Friday night, but to-night we are being forced to sit all night. We have been charged with wasting time; but if we are to conserve our energies to oppose these proposals of the Government, we should have reasonable hours for recreation and sleep. We should have time to read all the available literature in the library, in the School of Arts and other institutions on this important matter. How is it possible for us to argue on this Bill, unless we read up all the literature to be obtained?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You want to adjourn for a fortnight if that is your condition.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Adjourn for six weeks, if you like.

Mr. HIGGS: I trust the Mephistopheles of this House will keep his interjections to himself.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That term applies more to you than to myself.

Mr. HIGGS: The other night the hon. gentleman took exception to my attire.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would call the hon. member's attention to the question before the House.

Mr. HIGGS: We shall require to consult the statutes of the old country and endeavour to see if this Bill contains ample provisions that will protect the public. Hon. members opposite may have a flimsy idea of their duty, but our sense of duty is so keen that we feel that we want time to learn all about this Bill. I have not even read the Bill through, and I think other hon. members are in the same position. We on this side cannot be charged with wasting the time of the House. The Premier anticipated that the discussion on the Financial Statement would take three weeks, but it only lasted two or three days. We know that after 12 o'clock the reporters will cease to take notes of the discussion.

Mr. STEPHENSON: It is to be hoped so.

Mr. HIGGS: At 12 o'clock on last Thursday night I was offering pearls of great price to hon. members opposite—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. HIGGS: But the reporters ceased to report my remarks after 12 o'clock. I wish to get my opinions in opposition to this Bill recorded in *Hansard*. What is the reason for our not being fully reported after 12 o'clock? Do the Government think that our arguments are penetrating into the hearts of the people—

MEMBERS on the Government side : Oh, oh ! and laughter.

MR. HIGGS : And, therefore, they want to shut out mouths—to prevent the reporters taking down our arguments. In justice to the public, if the Premier is going to force this business through to-night, I think some arrangement should be made for our speeches to be taken down. My constituents desire to hear my reasons in opposition to this Bill ; and how will they know my position if my remarks are not recorded ? The newspapers have not sufficient space in which to place my few observations, especially after the debate this afternoon. There are thirty-two clauses in this Bill, containing most important provisions, and if the Government are going to force the Bill through, I suppose the only thing we can do is to oppose them with all the force at our command, which unfortunately is only wind. The Premier has said that no progress has been made to-day. Does not that bear out what I said, that the promised committee of inquiry would be of no use ? The hon. member for Mitchell, who does not take up much of the time of the House, wishes to speak on this measure, but he will be debarred from doing so because the Minister desires to force the Bill through to-night.

MR. FITZGERALD : And from voting, too ; I arranged that with the hon. member for Toombul before tea.

MR. HIGGS : When the Premier wishes to get a Bill through at a particular time, he usually gives us some intimation beforehand, but he has not done so in this instance, because, I suppose, he is angry at what took place in the Chamber earlier in the evening, and is going to punish us for it. Reference has been made to the Trades Hall—

The SPEAKER : Order ! I must ask the hon. gentleman to confine his remarks to the question before the House.

MR. HIGGS : I have no desire to infringe, but the disorderly interjections made by hon. members opposite draw me off the track.

MR. STEPHENSON : I did not hear any member say anything about the Trades Hall.

MR. HIGGS : The hon. member only hears when it suits him. However, I trust that if the Premier proposes to force this Bill through to-night he will make arrangements to give us the services of the reporters to place in *Hansard* the reasons we advance against the passage of this Glassford Creek tramline.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE (*Mackay*) : I was under the impression that we might just as well be going on with business. Hon members have spoken of the Premier wishing to force this Bill through. The Premier never said he wished to force the Bill through. What was said was that we might just as well be discussing the Bill, because time is short and tongues are long. We have been twelve weeks in session, and I venture to say that if it is possible to assert that business has been done it is a very small amount of business for twelve weeks.

MR. REID : Whose fault is that ?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : We have only about two months before Christmas, and unless we proceed at a more rapid rate it is quite impossible that the business that the country expects us to do can be done by that time. As to whose fault it is that very little business has been done, I think the hon. member for Enoggera need not go far to discover whose fault it is in the main. Attention has been called by the Press to the enormous amount of talk which has been monopolised by hon. members opposite.

MR. REID : Only the *Courier* does that.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : The hon. member can challenge the Press, but I have not the least desire to challenge that statement—the truth of which is borne out by a reference to *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER : The question is that the debate on the second reading of the Bill now before the House be adjourned, and the debate should be confined to that question.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : My argument is that in consequence of a vast amount of time having been taken up already, we shall no longer have a great deal of spare time, and that it is therefore necessary to utilise the time we have, even if we have to sit a little late, and I thought that in advancing that argument I was not out of order. If Ministers themselves do not complain of sitting late, I do not think it devolves on the hon. member for Enoggera to suggest that the House should protect Ministers against themselves. One argument which has been advanced why this debate should be adjourned is that several members who desired to speak on the question have gone away. The hon. member who spoke last waxed absolutely pathetic when he alluded particularly to the hon. member for Mitchell as desiring to speak. I really cannot credit that that hon. member is seized with an overwhelming desire to speak on this question, because the hon. member for Mitchell does not as a rule rush into quarrels with which he has very little concern.

MR. REID : This railway is in his district.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : I am not aware that it in any way affects his electorate. But the object of hon. members opposite in continuing the debate is not to go to a division. Nothing is more plain than that reasonable people can have very little more to say on this matter, seeing that five other Bills of a similar character have already been discussed by the House. If hon. members opposite have anything more to say on the principles of these Bills, that is really admitting that they have been either very negligent or very dull of comprehension.

MR. DAWSON : Do you look upon the Press as your jockey ?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : If I am expected to confine myself to the subject before the House, I think hon. members who take it upon themselves to interject should comply with the same rule, and not make interjections which have no earthly relevance to the subject. I do not object to intelligent interjections ; the difficulty is to get them.

The SPEAKER : Order !

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : If I may be allowed to continue my remarks as [11:30 p.m.] to whether the debate shall be adjourned or continued I shall do so. The hon. member, Mr. Higgs, has been good enough to supply me with material. That hon. member's reason for not continuing the debate was that it should not go on—and there was no indication of dissent from hon. members who usually work with him—until he had read all the books on the subject he could possibly find in the library. We are asked to stop business until that hon. member can fill himself up with all the lore he may be able to discover in the library here or in the School of Arts. It seems to me that hon. members who take that view cannot be serious, and that they are turning the business of the country into a somewhat laboured joke.

MR. DAWSON : Do you object to information ?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : I do not ; I welcome it. The difficulty is to get any more information on subjects which have been stated by the Press to be dead horses, nor do I expect that a single fresh argument will be offered

against this Bill that has not been offered dozens of times already. If it is said this Bill differs in some details from the other Bills, that would be a very good reason for a discussion in committee, but unless hon. members are prepared to offer some variation in the objections which they have already urged against the principle of these Bills they might as well pass the second reading, and deal with details in committee. But if hon. members urge that they are going to bring up a variation in the arguments they have used so far I can only say I do not in the least expect that that assertion will be justified by what we shall hear. Nothing can be more plain than that all the objections brought against this Bill are precisely the same old objections.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I am endeavouring to show that the country will not be benefited by our stopping the discussion. A great deal of time has been occupied this afternoon by a debate on the adjournment of the House, and that is one reason why we should be more diligent now. But we are asked to adjourn this debate, not because an hon. member wants to consult a dictionary or some other interesting book in the library, but because the hon. member for Fortitude Valley wishes to read up everything bearing on the subject—a task which would probably take him several months. We have been the whole of this day, and we have done very little for a day's work. That more has not been done to-day is owing to the motion for adjournment this afternoon. After the statement of the Premier that the matter would be taken into consideration, and that it had already been submitted to the Crown Law Officers for an opinion, all the subsequent debate was unnecessary.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Well, if I am out of order, I regret it, but I was endeavouring to show that time had been taken up in the past with very little result. If, during the first part of the session we waste time, it is necessary to be industrious during the remaining part of the session.

Mr. DAWSON: What is the object of the stonewall?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The stonewall, I take it, is being erected on the other side. The interests of the country have been committed to our charge, and it is our duty to look after those interests honestly, faithfully, and laboriously, and, when such important matters as we have to consider this session engage our attention, we should endeavour—even at the cost of a little personal inconvenience—to put through that business. It is not very long since the hon. member for Fortitude Valley talked till half-past 1 in the morning, and on that occasion hon. members opposite were not desirous of lying comfortably on their beds as they are this evening. Hon. members on the other side appear to claim for themselves something that they will not allow to hon. members on this side in that respect. There is no particular reason why we should be here, except that we desire to attend to our duty.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must remind the hon. member that the question before the House is—"That the debate be adjourned."

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I think it is advisable that we should go on with public business, and the reasons which have been given for adjourning the debate are lamentably weak. It is no reason to adjourn the debate to say that somebody else may want to speak. If the hon. member for Mitchell, for instance, desires to air his eloquence, there is nothing in the world to

prevent him doing so. The Speaker is in the chair and the unfortunate reporters are in the gallery.

Mr. REID: Why are you keeping them there?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: On Thursday last the unfortunate reporters were kept there till half-past 1 in the morning, and it is nothing like as late as that yet. I have endeavoured to show that the arguments of hon. members opposite are quite insufficient to justify their unwillingness to proceed with a debate of such importance.

Mr. REID: You try it. You will never forget it if you do.

Mr. McDONALD: At this late hour, I certainly must protest against this stonewalling by the hon. gentleman. It is a deliberate waste of time.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: What about the hon. member who preceded me?

Mr. McDONALD: None of the hon. members who preceded the hon. gentleman spoke for more than five minutes. We could have taken a division, and seen whether hon. members were desirous of adjourning the debate or not, but, instead of that, the hon. gentleman kept us here for no less than forty minutes. It appeared to me that he was talking merely to fill up the time, so that anyone else who spoke would not have a chance of being reported. If you are going to have the speeches reported after 12 o'clock I would as soon see it finished as the hon. gentleman; but it is unfair to ask for the debate to be finished when nobody will be reported. Those who deliver speeches on the Bill think they are of sufficient importance to get into *Hansard*, and if they are not reported while the Speaker is in the chair, the speeches will be repeated over and over again, till they do get into *Hansard*, and instead of occupying two hours on the second reading, they will occupy four hours very likely in committee. It would have been an act of courtesy for the Premier to have told the leader on this side, that he wanted to come to a division to-night. The general impression until about 9 or half-past 9 was that the debate was to be carried on till about half-past 10 or 11. Surely it is not seriously contended that we should go on because we have made no progress.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The progress is very small for three months.

Mr. McDONALD: I think we have made good progress. I challenge the hon. member to show any instance in the Queensland Parliament where so many contentious measures have been introduced in one session. I think it would be better to adjourn the debate now, and it can be finished at a reasonable hour to-morrow. If the Premier insists upon going on now, members on both sides will get their backs up, and that is not at all desirable.

Mr. STEPHENSON: This question of the adjournment of the debate has two [12 p.m.] sides to it. Members on this side are sent here to attend to the business of the country, and it is about time we set ourselves squarely to work and transacted some business. Parliament does not consist of the Opposition side alone; hon. members on this side have rights as well as hon. gentlemen opposite. I do not think that hon. members on this side are likely to be deterred by the argument of the hon. member for Flinders that this course will lead to ill-feeling, because we know that, if hon. members opposite can bring it about, we shall have that ill-feeling whether we do any business or not. I think the Government are adopting a proper course in deciding to take a vote on this measure to-night, and I hope this is only an earnest of a resolute determination to press on with the business in future.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear! We were waiting for that proclamation by deputy of what Ministers were not game to say for themselves.

Mr. MAXWELL: I think it very unreasonable to expect a Bill of this kind to go through with three hours' discussion when there are members on both sides who desire to speak upon it. The other Bills of this character were discussed for two days. Are the Government afraid of this Bill, or what does it mean, when they are wishing to force it through in three hours?

At ten minutes past 12 o'clock,

The SPEAKER left the chair, and resumed at 1 o'clock.

Mr. MAXWELL argued that in view of the progress which had been made during

[1 a.m.] the session, a measure of this kind should not be forced through in one evening.

The CHIEF SECRETARY considered that there had been an unwarrantable waste of time in discussing the question of adjournment. This kind of thing was turning the deliberations into a fiasco. It was degrading one of the grandest institutions we possessed, and belittling the Parliament of Queensland, which had held the position of one of the most dignified assemblages on this island continent. He hoped that better counsels would prevail.

Mr. TURLEY claimed that many members desired to speak upon the question, and they had the right to express their opinions without it being said that they were degrading or lowering the dignity of Parliament.

At 1:20 a.m.,

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. TURLEY, continuing his remarks, mentioned that it was unreasonable to attempt to force the measure through, without giving hon. members, who desired to speak, and represent not only their views, but those of the people they represented, an opportunity to speak.

Mr. BOWMAN denied that there had been any waste of time on his side of the House, but now he was there, and if the Government were so anxious to press this measure through he was prepared to stop there all day, and the Government would see whether they would be any further forward than if they had granted the adjournment. He was satisfied that the Bill would not go through without opposition.

Mr. KIDSTON was surprised at the action of the Premier. At the time the adjournment was asked for it was a very reasonable request to grant. The progress which had been made with these Bills had been largely due to the good-natured way in which the Premier had conducted the discussion, and he thought the hon. gentleman was making a mistake in now attempting to force this Bill down their throats. He protested against that being done. He recognised that this matter could not be settled with rose-water, and sooner or later they would have to contest it, and when that contest came he was quite prepared for it. He thought the Premier was acting unwisely in forcing it on. He denied that there had been any great waste of time during the session.

Mr. FISHER argued that there was no urgency in the matter, and he appealed to the Premier to grant another day for the discussion of the Bill. If hon. members could not get a hearing in the House, the only alternative they would have would be to address the people from the public platform.

Mr. STEWART regretted that the Premier had not seen his way to grant the reasonable request which had been made for an adjournment. He resented the imputation by the Chief Secretary that they were attempting to degrade

Parliament. There was no degradation in free and full discussion; the degradation would come on when there was an attempt to apply the gag. One reason why he supported the adjournment of the debate was that he was a believer in the eight-hour system; another reason was that he saw that most of the hon. members opposite were asleep, and that struck him as a peculiar method of legislating.

Mr. KERR pointed out that the only result of the refusal of the adjournment would be that the time would be spent in useless talk. He believed it would be far better both for themselves and for the progress of the business if they went to their homes. The present proceedings were a waste of time and a waste of energy.

Mr. RYLAND did not think it was possible for hon. members to do their work properly if they were kept sitting for an unreasonable period.

Mr. HARDACRE pointed out that these all-night sittings were productive of no good. He would favour a limitation of the hours during which the House could sit.

At 3 o'clock,

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

The SPEAKER stated he was satisfied that there was a quorum within the precincts of the House.

Mr. FITZGERALD pointed out that out of five railway Bills he had only spoken on the Callide Bill, and he claimed the right to speak on this Bill at a reasonable hour in the day. Personally he had informally paired with the member for Toombul, and could not vote if the Government pressed the question on the House. He wished, therefore, his position clearly understood, because when the division bell rang he should be in duty bound to walk outside the bar. He contended that the Independent party in the House, who had announced their intention of treating each private railway on its merits, should be given an opportunity of discussing that matter.

The SPEAKER: I must invite the attention of the hon. member to the question before the House.

Mr. FITZGERALD: Referring to the general question of railway construction by private companies—

The SPEAKER: I must again request the hon. member to confine his remarks to the motion for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. FITZGERALD again dealt with merits of various railway proposals.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the motion for adjournment and not transgress the rules on this subject.

Mr. FITZGERALD appealed to the Premier to permit the adjournment to take place.

Question—That the debate be adjourned—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 16.

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

NOES, 21.

Messrs. Foxton, Rutledge, Philp, Dickson, Murray, Dalrymple, O'Connell, Stodart, Kent, Hanran, Lord, Bridges, Campbell, Forsyth, Grimes, Stephenson, Story, Hamilton, Mackintosh, Armstrong, and Newell.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Jackson, Jenkinson, Glassey, Groom, Fogarty, Turley, W. Hamilton, and W. Thorn.

Noes—Messrs. Bartholomew, Curtis, Boles, Forrest, Smith, G. Thorn, Callan, and Moore.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. HIGGS: Although totally unfit to address the House at that hour in the morning, still he must do his duty to his constituents.

At twenty-five minutes to 4,

Mr. GRIMES took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. HIGGS : Pointed to the danger of no provision being made in the Bill preventing members of Parliament from holding shares in the company either for their own benefit or in trust for others.

At 3.45 a.m.,

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. HIGGS quoted at length from a speech by Sir Samuel Griffith in opposition to privately-owned railways. He pointed to the numerous clauses in the Railway Acts of Great Britain providing for the protection of the public, and the absence of all such provisions from the Bill under discussion. He urged the withdrawal of the Bill and the recasting of it, to prevent the unlimited talk which would take place in committee.

Mr. McDONNELL rose to a point of order. The hon. member was orderly debating the Bill, and could not be heard in consequence of the noise going on on the other side of the Chamber. He would refer the Deputy Speaker to Standing Order 117.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : It appears to me that through the protracted sitting some hon. members are sleeping, and breathing rather hard. He could not see that that was in contravention of Standing Order 117.

Mr. HIGGS : He wished to refer to another important departure from the policy of the State in allowing private persons to construct and maintain telegraphic and telephone lines. The control of those matters would shortly be handed over to the Federal Government, and the provisions contained in the Bill in that respect were therefore distinctly anti-federal. One of the most important objections he had to the Bill was the tremendous danger of immense industrial upheavals arising out of the inevitable oppression of the syndicates. The agitation which had been going on in Great Britain for some years past for the acquirement by the State of all railways should make them pause before departing from a railway system which had undoubtedly been a success, and which had led to splendid development throughout the colony. Another strong argument which he would advance in favour of State as opposed to private railways was that the two keenest competitors of Great Britain—Germany and Belgium—owned and maintained two of the finest State railway systems in the world. The reports of all the commissions went to show that preferential rates were granted to private syndicates against the interests of home producers. Large companies might subsidise smaller companies in order to prevent these small companies from competing with them. With regard to preferential rates, the President of the English Board of Trade said recently that the present state of things could not last, as these syndicate companies were straining the patience of the public. The Government could not expect good treatment from these syndicate companies. They would put the screw on when they desired and make all their profits out of the public. It is misleading to say that we paid two men for doing one man's work. We worked our State railway employees at reasonable hours and for reasonable wages, and yet we could show that our railway working expenses were less than the working expenses of private lines. All the expenses in connection with these private railways would have to come out of the pockets of agriculturists, pastoralists, miners, and other workers; not out of the pockets of these syndicators. The position of

the employees of private railway companies in the old country was worse than that of any other employees there.

Mr. LESINA : Hon. members on his side had been charged with wasting time; but where were all the hon. members of the other side, who were supposed to be doing their duty to their constituents and to the country.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : The hon. member is out of order in referring to the attendance of hon. members now. There is a definite question before the House.

Mr. LESINA said he would now endeavour to discuss this Bill. It provided, amongst other things, that the company should deposit £2,500 in some bank as security for the construction of this tramway, and also 5 per cent. on the cost of construction. There are also provisions with regard to labour conditions, telegraph communication, rates, leases, and many other matters. The first question to be considered was, "Is this line justifiable—will it pay—will it be a success?" If it was going to be a success, why should not the Government share in the success? The whole question with regard to all these lines was "Will they pay?" Some of the arguments used by members on the other side were, first, that State railways had been a failure; secondly, that our public credit was so limited that we could not borrow money at a sufficiently low rate in order to construct these lines; thirdly, that we could not build them anyhow, because private companies could build lines much cheaper than the State; fourthly, that the construction of these lines would find labour for our unemployed; fifthly, that we could get private enterprise to build these lines and we would not be put to any expense; and sixthly, if they turned out a failure Queensland would lose nothing. On the other hand, he contended that our State railways had not been a failure, but had proved a success, although not a huge success. Again, immigrants should not be brought here, if we had a number of unemployed here. He had forty-nine objections to this Bill, and would deal with them one by one. With regard to the arguments of hon. members opposite that the colony stood to lose nothing by the construction of these railways by private enterprise that was utter "flap-doodle," as was also the allegation that railways could be more cheaply constructed and more economically administered by private enterprise than by the Government. Jerry-building of the most infamous kind, and cheap labour had characterised the construction of the Chillagoe Railway.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : Order! The hon. member is now wandering again from the question before the House. I must ask him to confine his remarks to the second reading of the Glassford Creek Tramway Bill.

Mr. LESINA pointed out that they had no guarantee that this Glassford Creek Railway would be as well constructed as Government railways, any more than we had in the case of the Chillagoe Railway. Some time ago a Government inspector was obliged to condemn the cuttings on the Chillagoe Railway, because they were so narrow that he could touch the sides while riding along in the train. It was also generally known that the approaches to some of the bridges on that line sank several inches when the first train passed over the railway.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : Order! I desire to call the attention of the House to the continued irrelevance of the speech of the hon. member, and I warn him that if he continues on the line he is now pursuing I shall have to ask him to discontinue his speech.

Mr. LESINA : He was endeavouring to reply to certain arguments advanced by the Secretary for Railways to the effect that State railways

have been a failure, that the construction of these private railways would afford employment to the people, and that private enterprise in railway construction meant more economical administration; and he failed to see that he was out of order in referring to a railway that was being constructed under a similar measure to that before the House and showing that it was not properly built. However, he was prepared to bow to the Chairman's ruling. He should like to know if the hon. member for Port Curtis and some other hon. members would support in committee an amendment in this Bill fixing a minimum wage and a maximum day's labour for the employees on the proposed Glassford Creek Railway.

At 8 a.m.,

The DEPUTY SPEAKER said: I shall resume the chair at half-past 9 o'clock.

The SPEAKER took the chair at the hour named.

Mr. LESINA, resuming, said he was strongly opposed to handing over to a private syndicate the right to construct a line of railway between Miriam Vale and Glassford Creek, where they were the owners of valuable mineral lands. The Bill contained provisions which conflicted with the principles which hon. members on that side were bound to adhere to on all possible occasions. He desired to ascertain the reasons which hon. members on the other side had for passing such Bill.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Speaker informs me that he has already on four occasions called attention to the irrelevancy of the hon. member's remarks. I now draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that his remarks are not relevant to the motion before the House. I ask him to address himself to the motion for the second reading of the Bill, and I shall require him to do so.

Mr. LESINA: How could he make his opposition to the Bill clear unless he picked out statements made by hon. members on the other side, analysed them, and replied to them?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will be perfectly in order in discussing the second reading of the Bill. Beyond that he will not be in order.

Mr. LESINA said he would address himself to the principle of the private construction of railways, although it would lengthen his speech by two or three hours. As the syndicate were paying the few men now employed at one of the mines only 48s. a week, he hoped the House would insist on the insertion of a provision fixing a minimum rate of wages and a maximum number of hours.

Mr. JACKSON: Supposing the mine does not pay, what would you do then?

Mr. LESINA: That was the business of the syndicate, not of the State. He cited the wages paid on the Great Eastern Railway Company in England—porters, from 12s. to 18s. per week of seven days; ticket collectors, 19s. to £1; under guards, £1 3s.; head guards, £1 7s.; plate-layers, from 3s. to 3s. 9d. a day, and signmen from £1 to £1 3s. per week of seven days, and the hours were anything from twelve upwards. Were they going to allow to be established in Queensland similar rates of wages? In committee he would take the opportunity of ascertaining by a direct vote whether hon. members opposite, who spoke so glibly about those private railways finding work for the unemployed, were really in earnest in their desire to protect the wages and hours of the working men of Queensland, or whether it was a mere lip-service they were paying to democracy.

At 10.15 a.m.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. LESINA said he was inclined to believe that their sincerity was only skin deep; they did not want to find work for the unemployed.

The SPEAKER: I again call the hon. member's attention to the fact that he is not addressing himself to the question before the House. I invite the attention of the House to the continued irrelevance of the remarks of the hon. member for Clermont. I will give the hon. member one more opportunity of bringing himself within the rule. If he does not avail himself of that I shall call upon him to discontinue his speech.

Mr. LESINA proceeded to ask what object the syndicate could have in finding work for the unemployed.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has adduced that argument at least a dozen times since I have been in the chair. In compliance with Standing Order No. 134, I now require him to discontinue his speech.

Mr. LESINA: I beg to disagree with your ruling on that point.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not competent for the hon. member to do so.

Mr. McDONNELL said he was opposed to the second reading of the Bill. While he wished to see the mining industry developed to the full he objected to the Government devoting almost the entire time of Parliament to advancing the interests of a few wealthy men engaged in that occupation. More attention ought to be paid to the agricultural industry, yet the Government had practically set aside the policy of building light lines of railway into agricultural districts. Perhaps the present Bill was not so entirely objectionable as some of the others of the same class, but they, as a party, felt bound to protest against the giving away of any concessions to enable private syndicates to construct railways. But, opposed to the Bill as they were, it would be some satisfaction if in committee a provision could be introduced that the men working on the railway should not be paid a lower rate of wages than that paid by the State. A clause to that effect was moved in the Mareeba-Chillagoe Bill by the hon. member for Brisbane South, Mr. Turley; but it was defeated, with the result that the company, instead of paying the average wage in the North for similar work—9s. to 10s. a day—had been only paying their navvies 7s. a day; and a standing advertisement in the Southern papers to the effect that work was plentiful in that district, and that all going there would be engaged on the line, gave them always a large reserve force of labour to fall back upon. If there was a necessity for such an amendment three years ago, there was far more necessity for it now, when the construction of several hundred miles of private railways was projected, and as we had got some valuable and reliable information bearing on this matter, such an amendment is absolutely necessary. The Bill ought to be referred to a select committee in order to obtain further information, and there was no doubt that more information was available. If hon. members were satisfied that the Chillagoe Company had been such a success, and that the people in various parts of the colony were strongly in favour of the construction of private railways, how was it that they were afraid to take a referendum on the question? Before the Bill went through, an effort should be made to give them more information, as there was no doubt there was a conflict of opinion with regard to the route to be followed. He hoped that some of the unfair provisions of all those Bills would

be modified in committee. He intended voting against the second reading, as he believed the principle was a bad and vicious one.

Mr. STEWART intended to vote against the second reading of the Bill for several reasons. The first question that ought to be settled was whether there was sufficient justification for the line being built. So far, the only information that had been placed before them was a communication addressed by the Calliope Progress Association to the Commissioner for Railways in favour of the construction of the railway. Before proposing such a complete change in the settled railway policy of the country, the question should have been submitted to the people, and if they decided in favour of the new system of railway construction, although he thought their decision was foolish, he would accept their mandate. In the absence of any such mandate, he felt himself constrained to offer all the private railway Bills his strongest opposition. The only object of a syndicate was to serve itself, regardless of the public interests. The railway companies had, no doubt, done a great deal in developing Great Britain and America, but the development would have been much greater if the railways had been owned by the State. He found that in Queensland they were carrying goods at half the rates charged on the State railways in Belgium, notwithstanding the dense population in that country, and in Queensland they offered very much greater conveniences to the public than were offered in densely populated countries in other parts of the world. That ought to make them pause before they reversed their policy of State-owned railways. There was not a single industry in the colony which did not owe more or less of its success to assistance rendered by the State.

The SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. member of the question before the House.

Mr. STEWART: We are discussing the question of private enterprise *versus* public enterprise.

The SPEAKER: The question under discussion is the motion that the Glassford Creek Tramway Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. STEWART: Well, the Glassford Creek tramway was a private enterprise, and if he could not buttress his arguments against such a private enterprise by referring to the results of private enterprise in other directions, it was impossible to deal intelligently with the question at all. The concession to build branch lines would give the company control of a district 40 miles in length by 30 miles on either side of the line, and every individual and every industry in the district would be completely at the mercy of the company for fifty years. They ought to benefit by the experience of America in that direction. Of course, they might be told that it would be in the power of the Government to construct another line alongside the company's line, but the example of Broken Hill should teach them that it was a very difficult matter to get any government to take such a step. The result of the advent of the Chillagoe Railway had reduced the wages of workmen in Northern Queensland from 1s. to 2s. a day. That was the general tendency wherever syndicates had supreme power, and the employees of such syndicates were deprived of their independence of character. A particularly objectionable provision in the Bill was that which said that at the end of fifty years the Government might buy back the railway. No one could tell what developments might take place in that time, and if the Government did not reserve the power to purchase at any time, the limit should not exceed twenty-one years. That was the period fixed in similar

Bills in the other colonies, and hon. members on the Opposition side should insist on that amendment being made. At present there was a conspiracy against the continuance of the State control of railways, so that those who favoured State control should insist upon the maintenance of efficiency and economy in the administration of their railways. The Government ought to make a proposal to the company to construct the railway on the guarantee system; and, in that connection, the hon. member for Rockhampton had made a most business-like proposal—the company to find two-thirds of the money required to build the line, the other one-third being found by the Government. When the proposal to build the line was made by the syndicate, the Government should have made an investigation to ascertain whether it would not pay to build the line themselves; but, so far as he could discover, nothing had been done. The surveyor recommended an entirely different route; and, in order to enable them to obtain additional information, he moved the following amendment:—

That all the words after "be" be omitted with a view to inserting the following:—"Referred for the consideration and report of a select committee, such committee to have power to call for persons and papers, and leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, and that such committee be selected by ballot."

At 1 o'clock,

The SPEAKER said: I shall resume the chair at 2 o'clock.

The SPEAKER resumed the chair at the hour named.

Mr. STEWART continued his remarks in support of referring the question to a select committee.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL asked whether it was in order at this stage, without notice, to move such an amendment as that proposed by the hon. member for Rockhampton North. He could not just now lay his hand on the authority, but he felt certain that the Speaker of the House of Commons had recently ruled that a motion of this sort, under the circumstances, could not be accepted.

The SPEAKER: The amendment is in itself quite in order, and it is quite in accordance with the practice of this Chamber for a member to move such an amendment at the conclusion of his speech on the second reading of a Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS very much regretted that it was only after this question had been under discussion for twenty hours that members opposite had found it necessary to move for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into all the circumstances surrounding this Bill. It was worse than childishness to conduct the business of the House in that way. A select committee could get no more information than had already been given to the House even if it sat from now till doomsday. The amendment was simply another means of delaying the business. The Government had submitted this business to the House, and they intended to carry it through. He could not accept the amendment.

Mr. TURLEY (*Brisbane South*) protested against members on his side being charged with childishness, and argued at length in favour of the amendment.

At 3 o'clock p.m.,

The SPEAKER having announced that, according to the Standing Orders, the hour for the commencement of Wednesday's sitting had arrived, declared Tuesday's sitting terminated, and left the chair until 3.30 p.m.