

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 1900**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 12 DECEMBER, 1960.

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

QUESTIONS.

NORTH CHILLAGOE MINES AND RAILWAY.

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*) asked the Premier—

1. Did he direct that the North Chillagoe Mines inquiry should be held with open doors?

2. Why did not the Premier direct that the inquiry into the alleged use of undue influence in connection with a proposed syndicate railway should be open to both Press and public?

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

I understand that the directions in regard to both inquiries were given by His Honour Judge Mansfield on his own responsibility.

SWAN-CAPNER COINING CASE.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*), in the absence of Mr. Lesina, asked the Home Secretary—

*Re* the Swan-Capner coining case at Rockhampton—  
1. Is it the intention of the Government to release Tasman Swan; if not, why not?

2. Is it true that Capner acknowledged that the dies were obtained at the request of a Rockhampton gentleman; also if he stated that Swan was innocent?

3. Do the Government approve of this sentence of fifteen years?

4. Can all papers in connection with the case be laid on the table of the House?

5. Why was the principal released after serving three months, and the agent made to suffer a sentence of fifteen years?

6. Has the petition signed by 300 persons sent in to the Government last week been set aside by the Home Secretary?

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

1. No. It is not considered that his case is of such a character as to warrant his release.

2. It is alleged that Capner made some such statement in a declaration which he subsequently destroyed.

3. It is assumed that the judge who tried the case imposed a sentence adequate to the offence.

4. It is not desirable that the papers should be laid on the table of the House.

5. Both the judge and Crown Prosecutor were of opinion that Capner, a very young man, was of weak intellect, and was easily led into wrongdoing.

6. Some circumstances mentioned in the petition and in documents recently submitted to me are being inquired into.

#### CENTRAL DIVISION STOCK QUARANTINE.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

1. Has he received any complaint from stockowners in the Central division with reference to the injurious effect of the Central division stock quarantine line during this extended period of drought?

2. If so, is any action being taken to endeavour to remedy those evils?

3. Is any negotiation now in progress with New South Wales with a view to permitting stock to travel across quarantine lines after being dipped?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. V. Chataway, *Mackay*) replied—

1. Yes; many complaints have been received as to the losses sustained by stockowners in the Central division through being unable to take starving stock across the quarantine line.

2 and 3. Negotiations have been opened with New South Wales with a view to varying the conditions of the intercolonial agreement, in so far as to permit clean cattle to be crossed south of the line after careful dipping.

#### PORT NORMAN, NORMANTON, AND CLONCURRY RAILWAY BILL.

##### RESCISSION OF MOTION.

The PREMIER: With the leave of the House I wish to move—

That so much of the Order of the House made on the 7th instant relative to the Port Norman, Normanton, and Cloncurry Railway Bill be rescinded.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: My reason for so doing is that the Government have decided to withdraw the Bill.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: But I think it would be very useful, and I think the House would like, to have a debate on the question. That cannot take place with you in the chair unless this portion of the order is rescinded. Then I shall proceed to move that the Port Norman, Normanton, and Cloncurry Railway Bill be discharged from the paper, and we can have a debate upon that. Of course I cannot move my present motion without the unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. LESINA: That is one for the *Courier*.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion be submitted without notice?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

#### ALBERT RIVER, BURKETOWN, AND LILYDALE TRAMWAY BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be forwarded to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

#### PORT NORMAN, NORMANTON AND CLONCURRY RAILWAY BILL.

##### DISCHARGED FROM THE PAPER.

The PREMIER: I move that this Order of the Day be discharged from the paper.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I do so with much regret—regret, in the first place, that this district will for some time still remain as we found it thirty or forty years ago. On the other hand, I regret that certain discoveries have been made which compel me to move this motion. Some four months ago, when the second reading of the Callide Bill went through this House, the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, said he had a letter, which purported to be from someone offering a bribe to some member of this House.

Mr. KIDSTON: No.

The PREMIER: Well, that was the inference. It would have saved a great deal of the time of this House, and a good deal of angry debate, if that letter had then been produced by the hon. member.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: At that time I challenged him to produce the letter; I told him that if proof of such a thing was forthcoming I would immediately drop the Bill.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: But the hon. member allowed this Bill to pass its second reading, and not a word was said by the hon. member about this letter again until the Order of the Day to bring this Bill on to-day was mentioned the other night. Then he read the letter without giving the name of the writer or the name of the person to whom it was sent. Fortunately the leader of the Opposition gave us the name of the writer—

Mr. BROWNE: At your request.

The PREMIER: Yes; and then the letter was handed over to a judge of the District Court, who was instructed to hold an inquiry into the matter. We only heard the result of that inquiry last night, and owing to that result the Government has decided not to go on with this Cloncurry Bill.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I shall say very little about the men who gave evidence on this inquiry; but I certainly do not think that this colony wants to have anything to do with any railway proposals with which Mr. Withers is connected.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: And I certainly hope that Mr. Daniels will never be a member of this House again.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

MEMBERS of the Opposition: We hope he will. He ought to be a member now.

The PREMIER: And from the result of this inquiry, I don't think the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, is blameless in the matter. If, at the time he read the letter first,

he had told the House the name of the person by whom it was received, and by whom it was sent, I would not then have gone on with this Bill.

Mr. STEWART: Vir'uously indignant. Do you expect us to swallow that?

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

The PREMIER: I am keeping my promise faithfully to this House—

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: You can't help yourself.

The PREMIER: I said four months ago, and again the other night, that I would not proceed with this Bill if it was proved that there had been any attempt to bribe any hon. member of this House.

Mr. LESINA: Hear, hear! Because you are not game to do anything else.

Mr. STEWART: It has only been found out in this case.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

The PREMIER: Although it may be argued that there was no direct attempt to bribe any hon. member of this House, as Mr. Daniels is not a member; still there is no doubt that Mr. Daniels was requested to try and influence the Labour party not to stonewall the Bill—according to the evidence of Mr. Withers.

Mr. MAXWELL: What a delightful time he would have.

The PREMIER: I had no idea before that Mr. Daniels was such an influential person. (Laughter.) I never dreamt for a moment that he was such an important person as he was supposed to be by Mr. Withers. I should say that there is no man who has less influence in this colony than Mr. Daniels himself. However, I think we had better drop this Bill rather than have it brought in under the auspices of Mr. Withers.

Mr. STEWART: This is withering.

The PREMIER: But I still hope that this line will be built.

Mr. HARDACRE: By some syndicate next year.

Mr. HIGGS: Propose to build it by the State.

The PREMIER: We will not discuss that now. I have given my reasons briefly why the Government are not going on with this Bill, and I think it would not be to the credit of the colony if we entrusted Mr. Withers with the building of any of these lines.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: Will you prosecute him?

The PREMIER: If Withers can be prosecuted, it is just possible that I will prosecute him.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: It may appear on further inquiry that all the persons connected with this matter ought to be prosecuted. I certainly think the hon. member for Rockhampton should have taken the House into his confidence immediately he knew of this matter.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARDACRE: How could he break faith?

The PREMIER: Mr. Daniels said at the inquiry—I don't give much credit to anything he says—

Then I got Mr. Kidston to move for a select committee to inquire into the late Cambouya election, and from what Mr. Withers told me about certain members being shareholders in this company I thought it might injure my chances of getting a select committee to inquire into the Cambouya election if the letter was brought forward first. I showed Mr. Kidston the letter and I asked his opinion along with others, and they thought it had better stop until the committee was appointed. Mr. Kidston agreed with me; he said, "If you think it will injure you by exposing it keep it back." Afterwards he made a statement in the House in reference to the letter, but he had not the letter at that time.

I leave this House to draw their own conclusions, and I can only repeat that the Government has

no intention of having any more business transactions with Mr. Withers.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: Prosecute Daniels, Kidston, and Withers.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I shall take up very little of the time of the House in discussing this matter, as other hon. members who are more directly interested wish to speak on it. No man in this House or outside can say that I regret the withdrawal of this Bill, because hon. members know that all through I have been anxious to get these Bills knocked out; but I do regret the circumstances which have caused this Bill to be shelved. I regret we have men in our midst making efforts to get railways through this House by attempting to bribe members, or ex-members of Parliament.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: The man who accepts the bribe is equally to blame.

Mr. BROWNE: As far as the circumstances of the case concern the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, I shall leave him to deal with them, as he is better able to do so than any other member of this House. But I think I may be pardoned for saying a word in favour of an absent man, Mr. Daniels. I don't say that I agree with all Mr. Daniels's action in the matter, but I know the trouble he has been under, and the determined way in which he is fighting to get what he believes to be justice, and to remove some of the injustices which some men are now labouring under, and under which he himself has laboured from the time he ceased to be a member of this House. There is no doubt that, to say the least of it, there was something very crooked going on in connection with the last Cambouya election, and knowing the fight that Daniels was having to make over that, I say that he was justified, to some extent, in trying to protect himself before he allowed this matter to come before the House. I am very glad indeed to hear the way the Premier has spoken about having no more to do with Mr. Withers. I would not know this man if I saw him; but I know this, and hon. members on both sides of the House know it, that for the last three years that man has been haunting Parliament and Brisbane, writing letters to hon. members, trying to have interviews with them, and everything else. I am not saying that he was offering bribes to them or trying to use undue influence; but I can say that I personally persistently refused to meet the man. One hon. gentleman and ex-member of this House for Carpentaria, Mr. Sim, and a very old personal friend of my own, was captured in some way by Mr. Withers, and was continually with him, and, as hon. members know, Mr. Sim came to me time after time and brought Mr. Withers with him, and when I was residing over at South Brisbane he did the same, and I always refused to see the man. Hon. members know, too, that he fetched him up here, and wanted me to go out into the lobby to see him, and I always refused to meet him.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: We don't know that. You say, "As hon. members know."

Mr. BROWNE: A good few know it, and know that I am only stating what are facts.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: They know that this is what made that gentleman's name come up here so often, and they know that he was virtually haunting the building and members of Parliament.

Mr. ANNAR: So is Mr. Memonitch. (Laughter.)

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, I think Mr. Memonitch has tried to use some influence to get select committees and one thing and another. I

am very glad the Premier has made up his mind to have nothing more to do with Mr. Withers. I hope that when this Bill comes on again the same kind of thing will not happen. We will have time now to consider the whole matter, and it can be brought clearly before the House. We will have time too to discover whether the people in that district really do want this Bill as badly as it is said they do, and the time given may make a great deal of difference in the opinion of members on both sides of the House when they come to consider the proposal again. I will not take up any more time, but I will say that referring to the evidence, and leaving Daniels and Kidston out of it, and taking only Withers's own statement before the judge, his own statement is sufficient to convince any members of this House that he approached Mr. Daniels with the direct view of trying to get him to use some influence which he thought Daniels had on members on this side of the House to get them not to oppose the Bill.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: I think that is patent on the face of it, and for that reason I think the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government is perfectly justified in the action he has taken this afternoon.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): I was very glad to hear the Premier say this afternoon, in answer to the question put by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, that His Honour Judge Mansfield excluded the Press from this inquiry on his own responsibility, because I was rather blamed by the *Courier* in the matter.

The PREMIER: Was it not your wish that the Press should not be there?

Mr. KIDSTON: That is the statement I want to make, and I wrote it down for the sake of correctness. When I entered the room where His Honour was sitting, he asked me if I wished to have the Press admitted. To which I replied, "I do not think I have any authority to decide whether the Press should be admitted or not. You are appointed to make this inquiry and the matter is entirely in your hands. As a matter of opinion, however, while I have no personal objection to the Press being admitted, I may say that I understood, from what was said by the Premier on Friday night, that you were to present your report to Parliament, and that the Press would get it afterwards." That is exactly what I said. His Honour expressed his concurrence with that view as to what was expected of him, and told his secretary to advise the reporters accordingly. That was exactly what took place. Now, as regards the matter, I think his Honour acted quite rightly, and showed a considerable respect for Parliament, when Parliament had asked him for a report upon a certain matter, in not making that report public until he had presented it to Parliament.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: I cannot see for the life of me how the public interest has suffered in the matter, as the *Courier* has suggested, or how the public interest could possibly be injured in any way whatever by this report being kept two days later in being printed in the Brisbane newspapers.

Mr. JACKSON: No witnesses were refused a hearing?

Mr. KIDSTON: No witnesses were refused a hearing, but the judge did the work he was appointed to do, and I think, very properly, presented his report to Parliament before making it public. The Premier is of course angry with me for having brought this matter up, and he seems to be particularly angry on account of the way in which I brought it up. I think his anger

has prevented him from being quite accurate in the matter. He said that when I brought the matter up here on the 9th August last, I led him to believe that it was a member of Parliament who had been approached; but my words on that occasion do not bear out that at all. I said on that occasion—

I have in my hand the copy of a letter which I was shown by a gentleman, whose name I cannot give, and for that reason I will not even name the writer. It was offering a bribe to this gentleman. He was supposed to have some influence in promoting the passage of one of the railway Bills now laying upon the table of the House, and this was that provision in the letter.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: What page is that?

Mr. KIDSTON: You will find it at page 2485, where I quoted it last.

Mr. FISHER: Has that been corrected?

Mr. KIDSTON: Not by me. I was very careful to say—

He was supposed to have some influence in promoting the passage of one of the railway Bills now laying upon the table of the House.

Now, if hon. members will look at Mr. Withers's own statement in the evidence, they will see that that was exactly the reason he offered Daniels that bribe—because he supposed Daniels to have some influence in promoting the passage of the Bill through the House. Mr. Withers says distinctly that that was the reason he did it. I don't wonder at the Premier being displeased with me for bringing the matter up—

The PREMIER: At your not bringing it up.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: At your not bringing it up—at your holding it over.

Mr. KIDSTON: But I do think he might have tried not to blame me unfairly.

The PREMIER: I blamed you for not giving the name of the writer when you referred to the letter first.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: That brings me to another point—that hon. members have blamed me that I kept back the letter. I ask hon. members what they would have done in the circumstances? The man who showed me the letter told me that if I showed Parliament the letter, or revealed his name to Parliament, it would injure him.

MEMBERS on the Government side: How? In what way?

Mr. KIDSTON: I said in my evidence before Judge Mansfield, as hon. members [4 p.m.] will see if they look at page 6 of the report—

When Daniels told me about it and showed me the letter he asked me, if I mentioned the matter in the House, not to disclose his name or the name of the writer of the letter in case it might prejudice the House against granting a select committee. That was why I refused to give the name when I made the statement in the House on the 9th August, 1900.

That was the only reason Mr. Daniels gave for not permitting me to use his name.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that sworn evidence?

Mr. KIDSTON: No, it is not sworn evidence. Does the hon. gentleman think it would make any difference if it was sworn?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Oh, no.

Mr. KIDSTON: That was the only reason Mr. Daniels gave for not permitting me to use his name. I did not consider that was a good reason, and I do not consider it so now. But as the matter concerned Daniels himself, I was bound to respect his views in the matter. I would ask any hon. member whether he would not have done the same under the circumstances?

The HOME SECRETARY: Why not have exposed Withers's name?

Mr. KIDSTON: With regard to Mr. Daniels's statement that I agreed with him, he said in his evidence—

Mr. Kidston agreed with me; he said, "If you think it will injure you by exposing it, keep it back."

I considered that I had no right, although I did not agree with him, to use his name when in his own opinion it was likely to prejudice his case in the House. I know something of the difficulties which have been put in the way of this man with regard to the Cambooya election, and I do not wonder at him not trusting members of this House. Personally, I do not think it would have made one whit difference with any member of the select committee appointed to report on the Cambooya matter, but at the same time I am not surprised at the suspicion of Mr. Daniels after the way in which he was treated. The Premier forgot himself so far as to say that he hoped that Daniels would not be a member of this House again. Does the hon. gentleman not see that is impertinence on his part? What has he got to do with the matter? The statement is the more outrageous from the fact that the Premier knows that the man who is sitting for Cambooya has no right to be sitting here.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in going into that matter.

Mr. BROWNE: It is true all the same.

Mr. KIDSTON: I think I was justified in referring to the matter after what the Premier said.

Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He has not said it in this debate.

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes, he has. The Premier was good enough to say that he did not consider Mr. Kidston was blameless in the matter. I, of course, quite understand that the hon. gentleman has a desire to slate me, but does he think that I should not have produced the letter written by Mr. Withers?

The PREMIER: I blame you for not producing the letter before. You would have saved the time of the House by doing so.

Mr. KIDSTON: The time of the House! Why, the Secretary for Public Works took up more time on a little matter of washing dirty linen than I have taken up on this matter, and there has been no complaint at all about that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I was put upon my trial.

Mr. KIDSTON: I do not think that altogether I have taken up more than twenty minutes on this matter.

The PREMIER: No, but you would have saved the time of the House if you had disclosed the name of the writer of the letter in the first instance, as we should have had an inquiry then.

Mr. JACKSON: And you might have killed all the other Bills.

Mr. KIDSTON: If the hon. member for Kennedy will allow me to use my own judgment in this matter, I would say that I have used this letter in the most effective way in which it could have been used, and I think the result has justified the way in which I used it. The result justifies a good deal of the suspicion which has been entertained by members on this side of the House and by the public outside as to the manner in which these private railway Bills have been promoted. What has happened in America is just happening here. Human nature is just the same here as it is there, or very much the same, and the only peculiarity in this case which makes it different from others is that it has been found out. I should just like to say in conclusion, that whatever the Premier says in blame of my line of conduct in this matter has nothing at all to do with the main issue. It is a

mere side issue; the real matter is contained in the last paragraph of the report of His Honour Judge Mansfield, where he says—

In my opinion, this offer to Daniels was made as a bribe to induce him to abstain from stonewalling himself, and to use his influence to prevent others doing so—that is to say, to induce Daniels, from a hope of pecuniary gain and not from conviction, to act in such a way as to make the passing of the railway Bill more probable.

That is the whole matter, and whether I have acted in the best way in bringing this subject before the House is a small matter. Whether Mr. Daniels acted in the way in which he should have done is a comparatively small matter. The importance of this thing is its significance as to the way in which these syndicate railway Bills are being promoted in Queensland, and the means taken to further their passage through this House. I am inclined to compliment the Premier and the Government in having at least this little regard for decency that they have withdrawn the Bill after the matter has been exposed.

The PREMIER: It would have been withdrawn four or five months ago if you had exposed the matter then.

Mr. KIDSTON: After what I have said as to my reasons for not exposing it four or five months ago, for not exposing it on the second reading of the Cloncurry Railway Bill—that is, that I had not permission to use the letter—I think that should be sufficient.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Then you think personal matters should be put before public matters.

Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: You were bound to keep your word. Give the devil his due. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIDSTON: Perhaps the hon. member for Mackay does not understand the scruples I had when the man who could have given me permission to use the letter thought that if I used it it would injure him.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: And let the public interest suffer.

Mr. KIDSTON: There was no danger of the public interest suffering. I had the permission of the man to use it in case of any emergency, and if the hon. member looks at Mr. Daniels's evidence he will see that. He said I was at liberty to use it in case of emergency, but he wished me not to use it until the Cambooya report was presented to the House. Now, while I do not think that Mr. Daniels's reason was a good one, I think hon. members who are inclined to be fair in the matter will recognise that I could not well do anything else. Whether or not I should have brought the letter before the House three months ago, and disregarded Mr. Daniels, does not alter the main aspect of the matter, and although only one Bill is withdrawn, and only one case of bribery or attempted bribery has been discovered, it will be hard to make out to the Queensland public that a man like Mr. Withers, acquainted as he was with many members of the House—

Mr. STORY: Only with members on the other side.

Mr. KIDSTON: Acquainted intimately with members on both sides of the House—it will be hard to make the public believe that Mr. Withers, being in that position, chose to approach a man like Mr. Daniels, who was not a member of the House, and attempted to bribe him, and did not try it with any member of the House.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. LORD: I do not know Mr. Withers—I never saw him in my life.

Mr. KIDSTON: Nor do I know him. The difficulty in these matters lies in the absence of documentary proof.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Not always.

Mr. KIDSTON: If the present letter had been lost or destroyed hon. members on the opposite side would have said, no matter how sure members on this side were that such a thing had been done, that it was only discreditable suspicion on our part.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: In this case there happens to be a letter.

Mr. HIGGS: They blame you all the same.

Mr. KIDSTON: I think that this incident has justified everything that has been said from this side of the House as to the natural crop of political corruption that would be caused by the introduction by the Premier of these syndicate railway proposals.

Mr. STORY: You knew all about it.

Mr. LESINA: What are you growling about? Are you interested, too?

Mr. KIDSTON: Of course I know how far party feeling will induce hon. members opposite to make little of things of this kind, but I am quite sure that the public outside will recognise that if this particular instrument has been discovered, there are probably other instruments which have not been found.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY (*Bulloo*): This question which we are discussing now is one of very great national importance.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: It is one in which the deepest interest is being taken, not only by the commercial and producing interests—particularly by the mining interests of Queensland—but it is also a question which is agitating largely the different political circles which comprise the community. I think at this stage—or at all events at some stage, and as this gives me the opportunity I may as well do it now—I think the public, and this House at all events, will expect to hear something from me.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: As certain statements have been made by the last speaker, and by Mr. Daniels, in their evidence before Judge Mansfield yesterday—evidence which appears in the report of His Honour, which is now on the table of the House—I regret that I did not have an opportunity of giving evidence on that occasion. I was on my way from Thargomindah, and I only arrived by the train yesterday, when it was too late. I must say this: that it is only fair to His Honour to say that he telephoned to my office and to my private house to ascertain if I was to be found. They could not tell him, however, at what time I would return. When I came to the House I had a chat with Mr. Kidston, and I mentioned it also to the Attorney-General—two of the best channels of communication with His Honour—that if I could be of any assistance to His Honour, if it were not too late, even then or early next morning, or at any time, I should very much like to give His Honour all the information that I had in connection with the matter.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: However, it appears that I was too late. I think from the report of His Honour it appears that Mr. Kidston went a great deal out of his way to make certain statements about me which were purely hearsay statements. He gave evidence of what he said Mr. Daniels had told him; but Mr. Daniels was going to give evidence before His Honour, and he was quite capable of making those statements himself.

Mr. KIDSTON: That was for His Honour to decide.

Mr. LEAHY: Did His Honour ask you for this evidence?

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes, he asked me question by question what statements Mr. Daniels had made to me.

Mr. LEAHY: I did not know that was the procedure. I did not know that Mr. Daniels had made a statement, which came before His Honour, and His Honour cross-examined on it. I think the action of the hon. member was rather unfortunate in this matter, because if the Press had been admitted, we should have known what occurred. It is an unfortunate occurrence that the hon. gentleman, who, if not the leader of the Opposition, represented the leader of the Opposition, or tried to do so pretty strongly, in this matter, should have taken action to suppress information to the public by excluding the Press. It appears to me, after having the thing done in this hole-and-corner way, it is not fair of the hon. member to put the whole burden upon His Honour. His Honour clearly gave the hon. member the option of choosing whether the inquiry should be open to the public or not. I should have told His Honour, had I been present, that the statements made by Mr. Daniels were a tissue of falsehoods, and I will prove that before I sit down, to the satisfaction of any reasonable man, whether inside or outside of this House. Now, it is well known to members of this House that I was one of twelve members of this Chamber selected—some time after the general election—to sit on the Elections Tribunal with His Honour Judge Real. Under the circumstances, not knowing who would be chosen when the trial came on, it was very unlikely that any person identified—I do not think any member of this House with any regard to propriety, or any regard to his own self-respect, would do it—would discuss with Mr. Daniels any subject that was going to come before him on that tribunal.

Hon. W. H. GROOM: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: The hon. member says "Hear, hear," and I think the hon. member saw me engaged in some cases before the Elections Tribunal, and I think he will say that I—

Hon. W. H. GROOM: I will speak in the highest terms of you.

Mr. LEAHY: The hon. member says that he speaks in the highest terms of the way in which I assisted on those occasions, and I think that is some testimony, coming as it does from the Opposition side of the House. I think it would be very unreasonable to suppose that any member of this House would be guilty of such an action. Apart from that, I will say distinctly that I never introduced Mr. Daniels to Mr. Withers. I may say that Mr. Withers has been about three years in the colony, and I think he was two years here before I met him, and it is only within the last twelve months that I have made his acquaintance. I may say that I have seen Mr. Withers frequently, and had chats with him, but neither directly or indirectly have I had any communication with him of any sort about this matter. And yet it is made to appear throughout this business that I was a kind of third party who was acting in collusion with Daniels and Withers in order that Daniels might bring influence to bear on the Opposition. That is the deduction to be drawn from the evidence.

Mr. LESINA: Where is that in the evidence?

Mr. LEAHY: It is stated directly in the evidence that I introduced Mr. Daniels to Mr. Withers—apparently introduced him for a purpose—and as I have said, it is made to appear that I was a sort of third party who was acting in collusion with the two. That was the kind of inference which the hon. member for Rockhampton wanted the public to draw from the statements which were put before the inquiry held by Judge Mansfield.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; nothing of the kind.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LEAHY: Will the hon. member control himself?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARDACRE: You should not draw wrong conclusions.

The SPEAKER: I have repeatedly called "Order," and the hon. member for Leichhardt has not obeyed the call of the Chair. I expect him to obey the Chair, and, if he does not, I shall have to take action to enforce obedience.

Mr. LEAHY: I think I know human nature sufficiently, and political human nature particularly, to be able to say that if I had to select a person belonging to the party opposite who was likely to have influence and weight with his party about the last man I would select would be Mr. Daniels. What are the facts of the case? I am made to appear as if I had represented to Mr. Withers that Mr. Daniels was bound to succeed in his election petition before the Elections Tribunal, and that if he did get in he would be of enormous service to Mr. Withers. Surely I need hardly point out to sensible men that if Mr. Daniels thought I was a friend of his and interested in getting him into the House, mine would hardly be the first name among the twelve assessors chosen by this House that he would challenge and strike off the list. If he thought for a moment that I would fight his cause on the Elections Tribunal, is it not more than likely that he would have left my name of all other names on the panel of assessors? Now, that is a clear statement to put before hon. members, and I do not think any reasonable or common-sense man would for a moment dispute that proposition.

Mr. LESINA: It is very likely we will dispute a good deal.

Mr. LEAHY: If there is one character that I have a particular objection to above all others, it is a parliamentary magpie. However, I do not want to take up time unduly by disputing with hon. members opposite. All I want to do is to state facts, and put the case before hon. members as clearly as possible. I say again that I do not think I could give a stronger proof than the fact that Mr. Daniels struck my name off the panel of assessors that the statements made by him to Mr. Withers are absolutely without foundation. And, I may ask here, who is this Mr. Daniels of whom so much has been heard of late?

Mr. REID: The late member for Cambooya.

Mr. LEAHY: Yes, by an accident; but let that pass. He has given evidence lately in a great many cases in this city, and the kind of evidence which he has given has the contempt of every respectable person in the community. What did His Honour Judge Real say about him during the trial of the Cambooya election petition? He said he was a man who would give any evidence or suppress any evidence necessary to support his case. He expressed his utmost contempt for Mr. Daniels, and told the assessors that not much weight was to be attached to his evidence. Everybody knows the chatty kind of individual that Mr. Daniels is. He will buttonhole you on every conceivable occasion, and I confess that occasionally it is interesting to hear what he has got to say. He spoke to me on several occasions on the termination of his case, and when his select committee was appointed to inquire into the Cambooya matter he buttonholed me in the street and in the lobbies of the House and told me a great many very extraordinary things. He told me a great many of his grievances, and on one occasion I said to him that if he could prove what he had told me on more than one occasion he must have a good case. I did not think, however, that anyone who knew human nature and who listened to the extra-

ordinary statements he made could believe very much of what he said. I wish now to turn to the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston. It is a pleasure to have to deal with that hon. member, because he usually places himself upon such a high moral pedestal in this Chamber and although he does it in very dreary way, yet what he says gets into *Hansard*, and I have no doubt creates the impression among some people that he wishes it to create. I am afraid that in dealing with this matter I shall have to deal with the whole of this mining business and railway construction, and must necessarily wander a little, but I hope I shall be excused for so doing. The hon. member for Rockhampton has on many occasions in this House laid down the strictest code of morals, and advocated the highest probity, and especially on a recent occasion when dealing with the North Chillagoe. It is only fair that when a man sets up a high moral standard that he should be measured by that standard. The hon. member is reported in *Hansard* to have said—

I submit that every hon. member of this House who has any regard for the political morality, or the cleanness of our public life, ought to feel some interest in investigating a case of this sort, and if the matter should be as the facts I have given seem to indicate, to find out and punish the perpetrators of these practices.

Now, I travel a good deal in the country, and, of course, I hear things about a variety of subjects, and about a variety of persons. It may be necessary, therefore, for me, on this occasion, to say things that I should not think of saying were it not in self-defence, and in reply to attacks which have been made upon my private and personal honour. When an attack has to be repelled, it is necessary to consider the character of the man who makes the attack. If it had not been for that, I should not have attempted to deal with the character of the hon. member for Rockhampton. When in Rockhampton, recently, I learnt from an undoubted source, that the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, in his business transactions relating to mining, was the most shady character in Australia.

Mr. STEWART: Is that in order, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. W. HAMILTON: I pity him if he has as shady a character as you have.

Mr. STEWART: Is this matter to descend into a personal squabble?

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members must observe the rule of silence when the Speaker rises. The expression complained of is not in order. It is quite out of order for one hon. member to tell another that he possesses a shady character.

Mr. LEAHY: I did not make the statement. I said it was reported so in Rockhampton.

Mr. HIGGS: You have fathered the statement.

Mr. LEAHY: If a man professing such high probity and pure character as the hon. member for Rockhampton makes an attack upon my character, I think I am entitled to show the character of the man who makes those statements, and no one will deny that the hon. member has made a serious attack upon me as a public man, and upon my private character as a citizen. A good deal of reference has been made to the suppression of documents, and I desire to point out that the hon. member for Rockhampton kept this particular document for four months to suit his own purposes. He deliberately suppressed information which, in the interests of the country, he should have made public at the earliest possible moment if he had studied his own honour and the dignity and character of Parliament. Yet the hon. member suppressed that document for months fearing that he would not get certain business through the Chamber if he produced the letter; and

the business of the country and the character of members of this House have been [4:30 p.m.] made to suffer in order to try and give Mr. Daniels the trumpery gain that he has been seeking. I wish to ask the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, if he is in the habit of suppressing documents?

Mr. KIDSTON: You are very badly hurt.

Mr. LEAHY: I have been told that that hon. member was interested in a certain mine. He was not the owner of it; it was a syndicate mine. I understand that the hon. member was the leader of the syndicate—mark you—not a “wild cat” syndicate exactly, but a Native Cat Syndicate, and that he, acting for that Native Cat Syndicate, suppressed certain geological documents—certain reports prepared by Mr. Maitland in connection with that mine—for the purpose of getting a price from certain parties which he would not have got if he had not suppressed that information.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. LEAHY: I am asking a question.

Mr. HARDACRE: You are damaging your own case.

Mr. LEAHY: I ask the hon. member if he suppressed those documents? It was part of that contract that all documents should be produced. I ask the hon. member whether that is correct or not?

Mr. STEWART: What has that got to do with the matter before the House?

Mr. LEAHY: A great deal.

Mr. KIDSTON: You are very badly hurt.

Mr. LEAHY: I am arguing that the hon. member for Rockhampton, who has endeavoured to take down the public and commercial men of England by suppressing documents in a certain case, is not the man to make sweeping charges of this kind against hon. members on this side. Surely that kind of thing ought not to be tolerated in this House! Does the hon. member for Rockhampton refuse to answer me? I may be wrongly informed.

Mr. TURLEY: Interjections are disorderly.

Mr. LEAHY: I say I understand that the hon. member suppressed certain documents in connection with the Native Cat Mine in order to sell that mine at a higher price than would otherwise have been obtained, and that he got 50,000 shares in that mine for himself and his syndicate which he would not have got if he had not suppressed those documents.

Mr. KIDSTON: You are very badly hurt.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LEAHY: I ask the hon. member for an answer.

Mr. HARDACRE: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. Have the remarks of the hon. member for Bulloo anything to do with the question before the House?

The SPEAKER: In discussing the motion before the House it is quite in order for hon. members to refer to the circumstances which have led up to the holding of this inquiry. The hon. member for Bulloo or any other hon. member who feels that his character has been aspersed in the evidence taken by Judge Mansfield is entitled to reply; but the introduction of matters not relating to the question before the House would be out of order.

Mr. LEAHY: I am speaking on the question of the morality of members of Parliament in connection with mines and railways. That is the whole question. The hon. member who first brought this matter forward is the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, and I say that when he attacks the characters of hon. members on this side, and my own in particular, I claim that I have a right to refer to the nature of transactions he has taken part in. I distinctly

say that if there has been any corruption or bribery shown in connection with this measure—and we must remember that there must be two parties to bribery or corruption—the bribery was between two parties, and one of them sat on the other side of this Chamber. It has nothing to do with any hon. member on this side.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: That has nothing to do with the question now before the House.

Mr. LEAHY: It has a great deal to do with it. I want the public to know what the morality of an hon. member who makes such charges is. In 1895 the hon. member for Rockhampton floated the Native Cat Mine—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARDACRE: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in persisting in referring to a matter which may or may not have happened, against your ruling, Sir?

The SPEAKER: Order! It is impossible for me to say whether the matter to which the hon. member for Bulloo is referring is relevant until I have heard his further remarks. I cannot rule the hon. member out of order until I have heard how he applies his arguments. I have stated that hon. members have the right of discussion on this question within certain limits; but they are not entitled to go outside those limits—if they do they will be out of order.

Mr. LEAHY: I am endeavouring to speak within those limits, and I think you have shown that so far I have been acting very fairly. Perhaps I have got a little close to the edge sometimes; but that is quite legitimate under the circumstances, but if I get outside the rules then it is your duty to call me to order as I expect you will do—always having regard to the fact that as a member of some experience in this House, my reputation has been attacked. As you, Sir, have pointed out, it is difficult to say exactly where to draw the line in dealing with a question of this nature. Some allowance must be made to an hon. member whose reputation has been attacked if he does not keep strictly within the rules of order. It has to be borne in mind that this was not a matter which occurred before the hon. member for Rockhampton came into this House. It is a matter which has been going on since he has been a member, and I submit that I am not introducing any matter which is irrelevant. I understand that the hon. member came here in 1896 as the chairman of or agent for a mining syndicate which held certain properties 28 miles from Rockhampton. He floated the company in Brisbane, under certain conditions, and one of these conditions was that all reports he had in his possession should be handed over to the persons to whom they sold the properties. The hon. gentleman handed over certain papers, and the report handed over showed the properties to be of a very flourishing character; that it was studded with gold and other minerals. But it subsequently came to the knowledge of the purchasers that he had suppressed the report of the Government Geologist, and that the hon. member for Rockhampton had that report in his possession twelve months before they floated the mine.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Oh, oh!

Mr. LEAHY: When they discovered that they called upon the hon. member to cancel the contract, and the hon. member, in a document which can be produced—a document signed by himself—has admitted that it was part of that contract to produce that report—which was a vital document, and which, if it had been produced, would have prevented the selling of this mine, and which would have prevented the hon. member and his syndicate from getting 50,000 shares. If the hon. member disputes that, I can produce the document now.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear! Oh, oh!  
 Mr. LESINA: That is no reason why this Bill should not be withdrawn.

Mr. LEAHY: This shows that we should be very careful in our dealings with hon. members opposite—when they suppress documents of this kind by which they get 50,000 shares in a company and then try to shield their evil doings by making charges against hon. members on this side. I say it is only right that the country should know the character of the men we have to deal with.

Mr. LESINA: Whom do you refer to?

Mr. LEAHY: I refer to the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, who made the charge we are now discussing.

Mr. LEAHY: The hon. member sits on the front bench on that side of the House. As I have said already, he has been Treasurer here at one time, and the capacity he displayed in the particular instance I am relating would have qualified him to be President of a South American Republic. (Ministerial laughter.) I admit the skill of the hon. member.

Mr. TURLEY: Or the manager of a mortgage company.

Mr. LEAHY: Now, Sir, this document which I hold in my hand is signed by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. William Kidston—"W. Kidston" I think he signs it, and he admits in that document that he suppressed a particular report of the geological surveyor, and he asked these parties with whom he entered into the contract, not to cancel the sale, but to allow the mine to be tried for some time, and if the mine did not turn out in a certain way he would put in an amending clause which would let the company off a great deal easier.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed the hon. member to proceed thus far, on the assumption that he would apply his argument to the question before the House. There rests upon him a moral obligation to do that.

Mr. LEAHY: To apply this? Most decidedly. The motion before the House is that you should leave the chair, and the leader on this side said—

The SPEAKER: Order! The motion before the House is to discharge from the paper the order for the consideration in committee of the Port Norman, Normanton, and Cloncurry Railway Bill.

Mr. LEAHY: That is so. Technically I was wrong on that point. The motion is that the order for the consideration of the Port Norman, Normanton, and Cloncurry Railway Bill, in committee, be discharged from the paper. That raises the question why this motion is before the House, and why this matter is to be discharged from the paper. It is simply because the hon. member for Rockhampton made a certain statement in this House, and, in support of that statement, went to give evidence before His Honour Judge Mansfield, and Judge Mansfield made a report, which report is the reason why this motion is before the House at the present time—that the Bill from Cloncurry be withdrawn. I want to test the value of the evidence upon which that report is based, and that brings me to the very question before the House. I submit that is logical and proper reasoning.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: I say that not one word of the evidence given before His Honour Judge Mansfield is worthy of a tittle of credence, and I have a document in my hands upon which I can support that statement.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. LEAHY: I will produce it, unless you rule me out of order for reading this particular document. In any case I do not purpose handing

it to the hon. member for Rockhampton, or asking a judge to come and take evidence upon it. I purpose handing it to you, Sir, or to any member of the House here, and any member in the Chamber can read it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Read the whole of it.

Mr. LEAHY: Not only does the hon. member admit that he did this surreptitiously, and that he concealed that document—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. LEAHY: Am I not to be allowed to defend my character?

MEMBERS on the Opposition: Oh, oh!

Mr. LEAHY: Is the hon. member representing Rockhampton to be allowed to stab me in my absence in Thargomindah, before Judge Mansfield, and am I not to be allowed to reply? Has this Chamber got to that?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no desire to deprive the hon. member of his right to reply, or of his right to defend his character if it is aspersed, but I would ask the hon. member to couch his reply in strictly parliamentary language. It is particularly desirable that he should do so when temper has been imported into the debate.

Mr. LEAHY: I am sure—to use the words of my hon. friend in front, the hon. member for Maryborough—I am "handling him like a child." (Laughter.) On occasions, perhaps, it is my habit to speak strongly when I feel strongly. When I feel that there is nothing to say, I say nothing. On this occasion I feel that I have something to say, and I feel that it is the wish of the House that I should say it.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: I feel that it is the wish, not only of this House but of the country, that I should say it, and I certainly shall say it, unless you prevent me from doing so.

Mr. JACKSON: How long have you had that document?

Mr. LEAHY: I have not kept this document back at all. I have suppressed nothing. I had heard this report a long time ago, and when this thing was brought forward, and the hon. member came before the House in the character of an angel without wings coming down here, I thought it my duty to see if I could not ascertain where this document was. I found it, and have brought it forward, and here it is. The hon. member admits that the mine was of no value, and that he took down this company by suppressing Mr. Maitland's report. It is ten times worse, I submit, than the action of this man Duffy in connection with the North Chillagoe business we have heard so much about from hon. members opposite. This document was slightly amended when it went before the hon. member's colleagues in this syndicate in Rockhampton; but it was signed by everyone of them, and admits that they knew that this document—the report of the Geological Surveyor, Mr. Gibb-Maitland—was suppressed.

Mr. HIGGS: I think it is only fair to the hon. member that you should read the whole of that document.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: I am perfectly willing to read it—

Memorandum of Agreement, made this second day of March.

Let me first say that there are two memos. here—one made on the 6th December, and the other on the 2nd March. The one made on the 6th December is in writing, and it is slightly altered in the other in the second clause limiting the time in which the company was to take it over. But for that the one I am reading from now is

exactly the same, but it is in typewriting. I confess I would have some difficulty in reading the one in manuscript, but it is here, and anyone can have it. This is the memorandum—

## MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

made this second day of March one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six between William Kidston of Rockhampton in the colony of Queensland for and on behalf of himself and the persons mentioned in the schedule hereto of the one part the Stanwell Gold Mines Limited of the second part and the Austral Mineral Exploration Company Limited of the third part whereas by agreement dated the twenty-eighth day of May one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five made between the said William Kidston and the persons mentioned in the said schedule and Alexander Corrie and Frank Beresford Corrie the said Alexander Corrie and Frank Beresford Corrie agreed to buy the property therein described upon the terms and conditions therein mentioned. And whereas during the negotiations for the said purchase the said Alexander Corrie and Frank Beresford Corrie applied to the vendors for all reports made of and concerning the said property together with other particulars. And whereas certain reports were supplied by the vendors but a certain report which had been obtained by the said vendors from Mr. Gibbs Maitland Assistant Geologist in the employ of the Government of the colony of Queensland and which was condemnatory of the value of the said property was not supplied to the said purchasers by the said vendors. And whereas the said Alexander Corrie and Frank Beresford Corrie duly assigned to the party hereto of the third part all their right title and interest under the said agreement for purchase on the same representations which had been made by the vendors to them. And whereas the said parties hereto of the third part duly completed the said purchase and the said Stanwell Gold Mines Limited was formed with the object of acquiring the said property and in pursuance of the terms of such agreement have allotted to the said vendors shares representing one-fourth of its capital but the scrip therefor has not been issued and the said property has been transferred to the said Stanwell Gold Mines Limited. And whereas the parties hereto of the second and third parts have discovered this day the suppression of the said report and have elected to rescind the said agreement. And whereas at the request of the said William Kidston for and on his behalf and on behalf of the persons in the said schedule hereto has requested the said parties hereto of the second and third parts and the said parties hereto of the second and third parts have agreed to enter into the following agreement by way of compromise. Now it is hereby agreed as follows—

1. That the said Stanwell Gold Mines Limited shall be entitled to proceed to take possession of the said property and to examine work and develop the same and if they think fit to carry out the terms of the said agreement.

2. That if the said company shall think fit at any time before the second day of September one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six whether before or after proceeding to examine work or develop the said property they shall be entitled to notify the said vendors of their desire to retransfer the said property to the vendors and to cancel the allotment of the said shares and the said vendors shall in that event return the said scrip to the said company for cancellation and shall be deemed never to have been shareholders in the said company and the said vendors shall have no rights or claims of any kind against the said company whether in respect of the working of the said property or in respect of any matter or thing whatsoever. The notice hereinbefore referred to shall be sufficiently given by letter or telegram despatched addressed to the said William Kidston Rockhampton on or before the date mentioned. Provided always that if the said company do not so notify the said vendors as aforesaid this agreement shall become inoperative and the hereinbefore recited agreement shall be carried out by the parties to all intents and purposes as if this agreement had never been entered into. The said company or their agents shall have the right in the event of their retransferring the said property to the vendors as aforesaid to remove all buildings mining or other plant tools and utensils erected or placed by them upon the said property.

3. That the scrip for the said shares shall on the signing of the agreement be issued to the said William Kidston for and on behalf of himself and the persons in the said schedule mentioned with an endorsement thereon that the said shares are subject to the terms of this agreement in addition to any other conditions attached thereto.

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4. The said William Kidston undertakes to obtain the signatures of the persons mentioned in the said schedule to a copy of this agreement within a reasonable time from the date hereof.

In witness whereof the parties hereto have herunto set their hands the day and year hereinbefore mentioned.

Then the schedule goes on to give the names, the first signature being that of William Kidston, as agent for the Native Cat Syndicate.

Mr. GIVENS: Give us the names in the schedule.

Mr. LEAHY: I will lay the paper on the table, but I am not able to give the names, as some of them are written so badly that I cannot read them. There are William Kidston, Leslie G. Corrie, D. G. Macfie, James Ferguson, James Miller, John Morrissey, William Kimber, Adam Gray, Archibald Gray, etc.

Mr. REID: Boodlers.

Mr. LEAHY: They are all boodlers, but I cannot read all the signatures. In connection with this matter I have here a report by a man named Mr. Bagley. It is a very high-sounding document, showing that according to his opinion there was an immense fortune to be made out of this venture. I have also a report by Mr. Maitland, which is very condemnatory of the mine, a report on which no man would purchase. I have also a map which will enable hon. members to understand the particular manner in which this hon. gentleman was going to take down the Englishman. [Map produced and explained.] This map, on which the property was sold, is meant to show that a reef had reformed. The Government Geologist states that that reef had not reformed. Yet with this map he took down those people to the extent of 200,000 shares in that mine, and received for himself, and the company, £50,000. The company spent some money on the place—a sum of £1,400—and, as usually happens, the stranger got taken in. I am not going to discuss this matter at greater length. I say that aspersions cast upon my character or against any members on this side of the House, however bad those aspersions may be, could not exceed—I wish to use a parliamentary term—the transgression against public life shown in this business, and that no matter whether in connection with the Chillagoe North, or anything else, has been more disgraceful than the transactions of the hon. member in connection with this particular matter.

Mr. TURLEY (Brisbane South): The hon. member for Bulloo usually takes things quietly and argues logically, but on this occasion he puts me in mind of what I once heard of a Billingsgate fishwife. Two women were having a row about some matter, which may or may not have been of importance, and a bystander who knew their tempers said to one of them, "You start by calling her a prostitute, or she will call you one." That is exactly the position the hon. member has taken up this afternoon.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Who started first this afternoon?

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. member has taken up to-day the position which was taken up by the Billingsgate fishwife long ago. He has not touched in any particular the question before the House. I doubt whether he had convinced members of this House that he knew nothing of this question before it came up in this Chamber. The hon. member has simply said, "I discredit so-and-so's evidence," and consequently that there is justification for what has been taking place in connection with this Normanton-Cloncurry Railway. The hon. member has not even attempted to deny that such a thing has taken place, but pleads justification for the persons who have been guilty of

attempted bribery. The hon. member lost his temper. If the hon. member was not standing to lose a considerable stake in this matter, why should he lose his temper on a question like that before the House? I can quite understand that if I was interested in a matter like this, and it was a question of a few thousand pounds to myself or to a company with which I might be connected, I might lose my temper over it when I saw the gilt disappearing in the distance. I can quite understand any person doing that.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Who is doing the fishwife now?

Mr. TURLEY: I am simply saying that I could quite understand my own feelings in the event of my seeing something disappearing on the horizon, which I thought at one time was perfectly secure, and that under circumstances of that kind I might lose my temper. But I do not lose my temper now, because I do not see anything vanishing from me. I am not going into the matter mentioned by the hon. member for Bulloo, because I know absolutely nothing about it; this is the first time I have heard of it. The whole harangue of the hon. member was in connection with the suppression of documents. The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, has been charged with suppressing documents which he had in his possession. Now, the first time the hon. member mentioned this matter in the House, he stated that he had not seen the document, but that he had seen the letter. He simply said that he had seen the letter, and not that he had it in his possession.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Why did not he give the names?

Mr. TURLEY: I quite understand the hon. gentleman opposite saying he could read the names. He could be expected to

[3 p.m.] break through all confidence, as the hon. gentlemen themselves might perhaps be inclined to do. I can quite understand the position from that point of view. That is exactly the position that was taken up by the hon. member for Bulloo, who attempted to justify this very procedure for his own argument. The hon. member for Mackay says, Why did not he give the names? Simply because he would not forfeit the confidence that was placed in him when he received the letter; and I respect the hon. gentleman for so doing, or any other person, whoever he may be, inside or outside this House, who is shown anything in confidence and declines under any circumstances to break that confidence, and divulge any matter that may be entrusted to him.

The PREMIER: He read the contents.

Mr. TURLEY: No; that is where the mistake is made. He did not read the contents. He said, "I have seen a letter by which a person has been offered £150 in cash and 600 shares that are supposed to be of the value of £2."

Mr. J. HAMILTON: That is practically the whole of the contents.

Mr. TURLEY: That is what he stated; and it appears in *Hansard*. After that, when this question came up and the hon. gentleman agreed that it should be submitted to a tribunal for inquiry, the hon. member for Rockhampton distinctly stated from his place in the House, "It is only to-day that I have received permission from the person who received this letter to make use of it." There was a distinct statement, and does any hon. member say for a moment that a person who is entrusted with anything in confidence—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Rascality in confidence.

Mr. TURLEY: Rascality in confidence!

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Apparently.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: He said, "I have in my hand a copy of the letter."

Mr. TURLEY: He may have said that he had a copy of the letter in his hand, but he also said he had not been given permission by the person to use it; and I take it that no person, in connection with a matter of that sort, has the right to use what is shown to him in confidence.

Mr. STORY: He had no right to mention it.

Mr. TURLEY: He had every right to mention it. He had every right to mention that such a document was in existence, but he had no right to put that document or a copy of that document on the table of the House. Now, that is the position I take up. I am thoroughly in accord with the action of the hon. member for Rockhampton on that occasion. He simply stated that he believed a document was in existence; he held a copy, but he declined to disclose the names. We have been told this afternoon a great deal of what goes on in connection with companies, but we must not forget that the general tendency, as far as I know, or so far as it has been brought out, of those companies, is to try and fix up public men. The argument that has been used on this side by members again and again, and it has been borne out in connection with this matter, and from the evidence we have placed before us by the Judge—

Mr. STORY: Your side were speaking with a knowledge of what had been attempted.

Mr. TURLEY: When I spoke I had no more knowledge than the hon. gentleman.

Mr. STORY: I did not say you. I said some of your members.

Mr. TURLEY: I am not speaking of the knowledge of other members. I am only saying what knowledge I had; and until the night that the Premier agreed to the inquiry being held, I had no idea of the name of the person who had signed the letter, or the person who had received it. The hon. member for Bulloo attempts in one way or another to justify this matter, but if the hon. gentleman is not interested, then the members of the company that he manages are members of it, and are interested, and consequently I take it that the person who manages for a company which has certain business to transact must be interested to that extent. I wish to point out what are the aims of these people when they send their agents to this part of the world. That object, if the evidence given by Mr. Daniels is correct, is apparently shown by what this gentleman said. He stated that he had £60,000 at his disposal, which he could spend with the object of getting this Bill through.

Mr. STORY: Mr. Withers denies that.

Mr. TURLEY: I can quite understand that. I can easily understand that the agent for a company doing anything of that sort would deny it.

Mr. HARDACRE: He does not even deny it.

Mr. TURLEY: The bribe—the person who has been attempted to be bribed—produces written evidence that he had an offer made to him; and he says that the briber told him certain things. The person who is the briber in connection with a large thing like this is not going to admit for one moment that he has done any of those things. Hon. members have pointed out that they were surprised that he should think the ex-member for Cambooya was thought to be able to wield so much influence—that his influence should be of the value put upon it by the syndicate. He was to receive £125, and when the Bill became law each member influenced was to receive £125 in cash and 650 fully paid-up shares. That would be about £1,425. Now I would like to say, and I think it is a pertinent question, if that is the price of a sprat, what would be the price of a whale?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: South Brisbane, for instance.

Mr. TURLEY: If that was the price of a man whom hon. gentlemen on the other side say they did not know had any influence, I would like to know what would be the price of hon. gentlemen on the other side who wield a great deal of influence.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Beyond all price.

Mr. TURLEY: Oh, no; that does not seem to be the case. The agent is able to say that he knew perfectly well that he had forty-three solid votes in this House in favour of the Bill. The agent is able to say that before the Bill comes before the House at all. The agent of the syndicate—the man who has £60,000 behind him, by which he is able to purchase support—is able to tell another person that he admits having bribed, “I have forty-three men behind me in the House already.”

Mr. STORY: He was acquainted with the members on your side.

Mr. TURLEY: I may say I have met Mr. Withers oftentimes. I met him two and a-half years ago, when there were only two members on this side and himself present.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Something awfully bad must have been going on.

Mr. TURLEY: There was not anything awfully bad going on. Mr. Withers endeavoured to induce Mr. McDonald and myself to vote for this Bill because it would be a great benefit to the district. Mr. Withers made an appointment with Mr. McDonald two and a-half years ago in the house he then occupied at South Brisbane. I was one of those present on that occasion. There was no question of bribery mentioned. There was simply a question brought up in conversation, and he said that he represented a company in the old country that had very large sums of money behind them, and owned mineral lands in the Cloncurry district, and they desired to build a railway to that property. That is the only time I have met Mr. Withers in private. I have often met him in the street and asked him how his railway was getting along, and on more than one occasion he has said to me, “I suppose you fellows will talk our Bill out,” and my reply has been, “As far as I am concerned I will do all I can to have it thrown out.” Those are the only communications I have had with the gentleman. I would like to point out that a person interested in a venture like this may not be directly personally interested, but he may be interested through a company. I find in a letter written by Mr. Withers on the 18th July, 1898, to the Secretary for Railways, he says—

Sir,—Some months ago, when I submitted a proposal to the Hon. J. R. Dickson (then Minister for Railways), for the construction of the proposed Normanton-Cloncurry Railway, I promised to forward the names of those financially interested in promoting the undertaking.

I have now the honour to submit, for the information of the Government, the names of the following gentlemen:—

And amongst others I find the names of Thomas Rome and Oscar de Satgé, directors, Union Mortgage and Agency Company.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who is the managing director of that company?

Mr. TURLEY: The managing director of that company in Queensland is the hon. member for Bulloo, Mr. Leahy. The names which I have read are the names of the sort of people who exercise undue influence, and it is for that reason that we have always pointed to the danger of this influence being used. Those gentlemen certainly had the intention of getting Parliament within their grasp in one way or the other, so that they might carry out their own sweet will in

connection with this and other undertakings. In an interview with Mr. Oscar de Satgé that occurred away back in January last that gentleman is reported to have said—

Five-sixths of the woolgrowing districts are represented by Labour members, and to mend this state of affairs, so dangerous to British and colonial investors in the woolgrowing and meat producing industry of Queensland, either the educated youth of that colony will have to give up their easy enjoyment of life, and fight their way to success at the polls by resolute skill and industry in the use of every lawful electoral weapon, or the financial magnates that have now burnt their boats, and see themselves committed to a long struggle with seasons and Government in the preservation of their colonial interests, must import to Queensland fresh advocates of skill and training who will not be easily discouraged in the briefs they undertake on behalf of the great stake they have elected to rescue. We want new blood; in fact, some new Herberts and Bramstons to stem the current of radicalism, or, at any rate, minimise its present effects.

That is the whole thing in a nutshell. This gentleman, Mr. Withers, is only the advance agent of the people whose sole aim is to capture this Parliament in the interests of the British investor—in the interests of persons who are endeavouring by fair means or foul to exploit this country.

Mr. KENT: Queensland pioneers.

Mr. TURLEY: I have every respect for the men who do the work in the capacity of pioneers, but certainly not for exploiters pure and simple. It has been pointed out by the hon. member for Bulloo this afternoon that he discounts the whole of this evidence, because he knows of a particular transaction with which the hon. member for Rockhampton was connected, and of which he does not approve. Now, I wish to point out that while a man may live an honourable life for forty or fifty years, and while there is a possibility of him even late in life falling a victim to temptation, yet the amount of truth the hon. member has brought to bear in reference to the hon. member for Rockhampton does not indicate in any way that he has been the victim of temptation. There can be no doubt that in connection with these syndicate proposals there are wheels within wheels. The tentacles of these companies go out and drag in everything they can lay hold of. It is no doubt extremely hard to obtain evidence sufficiently strong to prove anything against these companies, and when suggestions of improper doings are hinted at, the reply usually is, “Nonsense, there is nothing in it.” I contend that if when the hon. member for Rockhampton first alluded to this matter he had said, “This letter was sent to Mr. Daniels” there would have been a loud guffaw from members on the other side, and the whole matter would have been dropped. It simply would have been laughed out of the House, and hon. members would have said, “Who would credit anything said by Daniels?”

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who said that?

Mr. TURLEY: Well, I draw that inference from the remarks we have heard here this afternoon. What did the hon. member for Bulloo say? He said, “Who is Mr. Daniels, anyhow?” The hon. member for Enoggera said he was the late member for Cambooya, and the hon. member for Bulloo said, “A member by accident.” But I say he was not. He did not get his seat on a shovel, or anything of that sort. He was able to win his seat, in 1893, against a gentleman who has on various occasions occupied high positions in this colony, an ex-Cabinet Minister, so there is no use saying that Mr. Daniels became a member by accident, because he had defeated a well-known man who was believed to carry a great deal of weight in that district. I wish to point out that Mr. Withers's own evidence is enough for us, without going into the evidence of anyone else on the inquiry.

But the hon. member for Bulloo took this matter up as a personal matter between himself and Mr. Kidston—not as a matter affecting the morality of hon. members of this House—not as a question that should be debated in a fair spirit—in connection with this system of private railway construction. The hon. member said that the hon. member for Rockhampton had laid charges against him—that he had attempted to cast a slur on his character. Now, I don't wish to cast any slur on the hon. member's character; but I would not like to repeat in this House, or outside, the many things I have heard about the hon. member out West, and which anyone who has travelled in the South-western districts has, no doubt, heard.

Mr. STORY: I have travelled there a good deal, and I have not heard anything of the kind.

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. member for Gregory and others have heard them. However, I would point out that the hon. member's contention is not borne out by the evidence; no attempt has been made to traduce his character. If I was asked to make a statement on an inquiry like this by a judge, I would have to state the whole truth, and everything in connection with the matter that I knew. What was the evidence? Mr. Kidston said that Mr. Daniels told him that—

He had been introduced to Withers by Mr. Leahy, member for Bulloo. Mr. Daniels told Mr. Leahy that he was in need of Government assistance in consequence of great expense on his election petition.

Mr. Kidston only said that Mr. Daniels told him that he had been introduced to Mr. Withers by Mr. Leahy, the hon. member for Bulloo. I don't see any harm in that. What is there in that to show that the hon. member for Rockhampton wished to traduce the character of the hon. member for Bulloo? There was no such question in the matter. But what do we get in Mr. Daniels's evidence? He says distinctly that Mr. Withers told him he must win the election from what Mr. Leahy told him; so consequently Mr. Withers thought Mr. Daniels was worth buying on that account. He only wanted to buy him. Mr. Withers may have been misled—he may have thought that Mr. Daniels could wield considerable influence with the Labour party, and that he would be able to induce us not to carry out one of the foremost planks in our platform. Personally, I do not think Mr. Daniels could have induced any hon. member on this side to vote for this or any such railway. I don't know any hon. member of this party who would remain silent and not offer most strenuous opposition to the introduction of such a system of railway construction, but evidently the judge and Mr. Withers thought otherwise. In the last paragraph but one, the report says—

Whether Daniels possessed influence over members in the House or not it is impossible to say, but there is no doubt that when Withers made his offer he believed Daniels had such influence, and, if declared elected, Daniels would certainly as a member have been able to abstain from stonewalling, and thereby to help in the passing of the Bill.

Evidently the judge was under the impression that Mr. Daniels had a great deal of influence; but even if the most prominent member, the leader of this party, tried to induce hon. members on this side—of course, I am sure he would not—not to show strenuous opposition to measures of this sort, I am satisfied he would not succeed. His influence would be practically nothing. But we see the influence that the agent of this company tried to effect, and it seems to me that the arguments adduced and the examples given by hon. members on this side show that it is absolutely impossible to carry out this system of railway

construction—under which public franchises are granted to private individuals—with benefit to the colony, and that our attitude in not remaining silent was justifiable. We know that whether it came with the introduction of this system or later on, it must lead to a considerable amount of corruption. This has been proved in dozens and dozens of cases. Time and again it has been seen that men connected with public institutions have been bought for the purpose of supporting the giving of public franchises to private companies, and wherever the system obtains, there is no doubt that corruption creeps in. That is the reason why we on this side oppose this system. We know that the object these people have in view—which is not only ostensible, but which is avowed by them—is to try and capture Parliament, in the interests of British investors.

Mr. STORY: In your case, individually, are they able to do that?

Mr. TURLEY: I can only say I have never been tempted, and consequently I have not fallen. What may happen in my case, I do not attempt to prophesy; but I have a fair amount of confidence in myself. I think the action of the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, is completely justified by the evidence adduced.

I must say that I compliment the hon. gentleman opposite in dropping this Bill [5:30 p.m.] on the production of this report,

because I think it is a good thing for the Government, or for any party in politics to say, that when this kind of thing comes out, "We will not go any further with you." I do not believe in introducing this system at all, because it is bad, and may lead to corruption. If the public outside get the idea that the public men of this colony are acting in such a way that they are prepared to sell the best interests of the colony for a consideration, it will be a bad thing for our parliamentary institutions. I should like to point out that you cannot have a case of this sort coming up and being made public without the suspicion being bound to arise in the mind of every person who hears of it, that this system has induced the introduction of corruption, or attempted corruption, amongst members, and it will be said, "This one case has been found out, how many cases are there behind this that have not been discovered?"

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*): I do not propose to detain the House at any great length. I think the Premier has taken the only course open to him in withdrawing this Bill from consideration. I only hope that, as the proposed line would appear to have such excellent prospects that the British Railways Corporation are prepared to expend a lot of money to get a Bill through for it, the Government will come down next session with a proposal to build the line with State money.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Borrowed money.

Mr. HIGGS: With money borrowed on the credit of the nation. I am satisfied that it will get a great deal more support—inasmuch as it promises to pay—than a number of those lines which the Commissioner for Railways states cannot be expected to pay for many years, but which hon. members of this House are prepared to build with State money. I think hon. members on the other side have endeavoured to get away from the real question at issue. It is a fact that a gentleman named Withers, who has, I am informed, haunted us in this Chamber for a number of months, has admitted that he was willing to pay Mr. Henry Daniels the sum of £150 in cash, and to give him a number of shares, if he would use his influence to get this Bill through the House.

Mr. STORY: He offered it for silence—to prevent stonewalling.

Mr. HIGGS: Yes; he offered it for silence. Mr. Withers admits that he was willing to give Mr. Daniels this money.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It was to go back again.

Mr. HIGGS: Mr. Withers states that he expected the money back again from Mr. Daniels. Well, I would like hon. members to tell us when it happened that a philanthropic gentleman like Mr. Withers decided to assist a man like Mr. Daniels out of pure philanthropy—a man well known to have been a member of the Opposition side of the House, opposed to the Government and the construction of private railways, and in favour of the construction of State railways. On the face of it, it is very unlikely that any company promoter from the old country is going to come to Queensland and give or lend to Mr. Daniels, or any other man in Mr. Daniels's position, the sum of £150, simply because Mr. Daniels tells him that he has been put to great expense in connection with the Cambooya petition. I am sure the hon. member for Mackay—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I knew you were going to refer to the hon. member for Mackay. Can't you find someone else for your illustration?

Mr. HIGGS: I cannot help it. The hon. member fills the Chamber, and one cannot overlook him. He has been waiting there ever since this discussion commenced expecting members on this side to trip, and every time he thinks they trip he makes a mark on his paper, and later on he will make a speech in his usual way endeavouring to cast odium on members on this side. I remember when the hon. member for Rockhampton mentioned this matter first and said he had seen a letter but could not give the name of the writer or disclose the contents of the letter at that time, the hon. member for Mackay said immediately, "It looks very fishy."

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: So it did.

Mr. HIGGS: And in every possible way he tried to ridicule the hon. member and cast odium on this side because the hon. member did not produce his letter. If he had then produced the letter he would have committed a breach of confidence, and the hon. member for Mackay would have been the first to get up and point out how ungentlemanly the hon. member for Rockhampton was in breaking his word, and in being guilty of such a breach of etiquette. A problem has been submitted to hon. members this afternoon which they may work out for themselves, and it is this: If Withers was prepared to advance £150 to Mr. Daniels, a person outside this House, how much was he prepared to offer to members inside this House—if he could get one who would so far forget himself as to listen to him—to give his support to this Bill?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: How much to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley?

Mr. HIGGS: Well, he has not come near either of the members for Fortitude Valley. Probably he knows what he might expect if he did. I know what he might expect, anyway. I know this, too, that Mr. Daniels is in a very unfortunate position in having once listened to a man like Withers.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. HIGGS: If, when Mr. Withers did come to him, he had said, "You have come to the wrong shop. Go elsewhere"—

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. HIGGS: Then this Cloncurry Railway Bill would have been put through, no doubt. Inasmuch as Mr. Daniels has produced a letter which Mr. Withers admits that he wrote, we must, I think, conclude that Mr. Withers has endeavoured to use his influence with other

persons in the community of Queensland, and probably has been successful. We can hardly believe anything else than that Mr. Withers has gone to other persons besides Mr. Daniels, and that he wrote letters to them. If he did write letters to them—and it is rumoured in town that he did—then those letters have not been divulged. In order that those who read *Hansard* should have an opportunity of reading the judge's report—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Judge Real's report on Daniels?

Mr. HIGGS: No; Judge Mansfield's report. The hon. gentleman is very innocent, and wants Judge Real's opinion on Mr. Daniels. If the hon. gentleman likes, and it is in order, I will read for him the report of the select committee in the Cambooya case. Considering the way Mr. Daniels has been vilified this afternoon, it is certainly due to him that the opinion of the select committee should be given, together with the addendum of the hon. member for Dalby, Mr. Bell, which states that if the state of affairs as disclosed in the case of the Cambooya electorate exists in all the electorates in Queensland, some drastic revision of the electoral rolls is necessary, proving that Mr. Daniels was justified in the action he took in endeavouring to gain the seat. I think it will be advantageous if I read the report of Judge Mansfield on this matter. It is as follows:—

From the evidence taken in this matter it appears that Henry John Withers has for the last three years been acting in Queensland as the representative of the British Colonial Railways Corporation, which is the applicant for the Normanton-Cloncurry Railway Bill.

About two and a-half years ago Withers made the acquaintance of Henry Daniels, then member for Cambooya, who lost his seat in 1899.

From July to October, 1899, Withers saw Daniels occasionally in the street, and Daniels used to tell him things about his election troubles. About October, 1899, Daniels told Withers that he had lost a lot of money over his election petition.

Withers says he does not remember Daniels telling him he had a chance of becoming a member; but Daniels says he told him, and I think it hardly possible that Withers could, in his position, have been ignorant of the fact that Daniels had, at any rate some chance of becoming a member, as he admits Daniels told him of his election troubles, and he would have been sure to mention his object in petitioning and his chances of success.

On hearing of Daniels's losses, Withers told him he knew of a syndicate which was being formed to take up certain copper lodes at Cloncurry, and Daniels had better have a share—he also said he would write to Daniels on the subject.

A letter [*Exhibit 1*] was written by Withers to Daniels on 6th November, 1899, which contains an offer of a share in a syndicate in which each member was to pay down £125, and on the passing of the Bill to receive his £125 back, and 650 fully paid-up shares in a company then to be formed. Withers offered to pay the £125 for Daniels, and in his evidence Withers says that he expected to get this sum back if the Bill passed and the company was floated, and to lose it if the Bill did not pass; so it is evident that Withers did not look to Daniels for repayment if the Bill did not pass.

Withers made this offer to Daniels because, as he says, Daniels had been connected with Parliament and had previously told him he could prevent members stonewalling the Bill, and because he wanted him to get others not to stonewall the Bill.

Daniels says that he promised not to stonewall the Bill if Withers gave him the share and paid the money for him.

This Withers denies, but if Withers knew Daniels had a chance of becoming a member he would have been sure to get Daniels's promise not to stonewall himself as well as his promise to prevent others doing so.

Whether Daniels possessed influence over members in the House or not it is impossible to say; but there is no doubt that when Withers made his offer he believed Daniels had such influence, and if declared elected, Daniels would certainly as a member have been able to abstain from stonewalling and thereby to help in the passing of the Bill.

In my opinion, this offer to Daniels was made as a bribe to induce him to abstain from stonewalling himself and to use his influence to prevent others doing so—that is to say, to induce Daniels, from a hope of pecuniary gain and not from conviction, to act in such a way as to make the passing of the Railway Bill more probable.

E. MANSFIELD.

Brisbane, 11th December, 1900.

Efforts have been made to somewhat discredit Judge Mansfield in this matter, but when he was appointed to conduct the inquiry everybody seemed to be quite satisfied that he was a man of sufficient ability and integrity to carry out the inquiry in a regular way. I am satisfied that the judge's report shows that the members on this side of the House, who have consistently opposed these syndicate railway Bills, who have quoted authority after authority—authorities like the present Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, and other politicians who spoke in this House years ago on this question—to the effect that the system of private construction of railways would lead to gross irregularities in the public body, had every reason for taking up the attitude we did take up in this House. And I think that the hon. member for Mackay, and other hon. members who, like him, endeavoured to cover us with ridicule and contempt, should offer an apology for the terms in which they stigmatised us during the debates.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I used no terms to render an apology necessary.

Mr. HIGGS: That is only the opinion of the hon. member, but I appeal to his sense of honour whether, in view of the disclosures which have been made through this inquiry, he should not withdraw the statements which he has made about members on this side of the House.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Tell me the statements.

Mr. HIGGS: The statements are that our minds were filled with a suspicion which was absolutely groundless, and that the action of the hon. member for Rockhampton in referring to that letter, and his refusal to break the confidence reposed in him, was a very fishy transaction.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: When were those terms used?

Mr. HIGGS: In the eighth number of *Hansard*, on the 9th of August last, the hon. member will see that he interjected to the hon. member for Rockhampton that it was a very fishy transaction, or words to that effect. The hon. member will probably rise later on, and endeavour by ridiculing hon. members on this side of the House to draw the minds of hon. members away from the judge's report, but I hope that hon. members will not be so drawn away from the main issue. The hon. member for Bulloo referred to some action of the hon. member for Rockhampton when he was not a member of this House.

Mr. STEPHENS: He was a member at the time.

Mr. HIGGS: In 1895?

Mr. SMITH: In 1896.

Mr. HIGGS: I think it was said that the matter happened in 1895, and that the hon. member was not then a member of the House.

Mr. STEWART: He was not a member.

Mr. HIGGS: The hon. member, who is the representative of the adjoining electorate, says the present member for Rockhampton was not then a member of the House. I should like hon. members to notice the distinction between acts of trade or commerce or speculation which are carried on by individuals outside this House and those acts which comprise the doing of certain things by public men on account of their influence as public men. If I go into the drapery, grocery, or any other business, and I am forced by competition to adopt

the tricks of trade, I suppose that is only what everybody else in business does. We all know what is carried on through competition outside in trade and commerce, but there is a very great difference between that kind of thing and when a member is elected to this House as the representative of a constituency. He is supposed to do his best as a public man on behalf of the whole public; and I say, although allowance might be made for me as a private individual owing to the competition that exists in trade and commerce, when I come into this House, after having told the public I will endeavour to serve them to the best of my abilities, and I use my influence as a public man for my own private ends, then I am acting a part which is unworthy of a representative in this House, and a part which should bring upon me strong condemnation in every quarter. I do not know anything about this case which has been brought forward by the hon. member for Bulloo, but it is only due to any member on this side of the House, if another member makes a charge against him, that there should be an inquiry held. Let a select committee be appointed, or a judge, and let him be instructed to carry out an inquiry open both to the Press and the public. Just in passing, I would like to say I regret very much that the inquiry held by Judge Mansfield was not with open doors.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HIGGS: I think that all inquiries which affect the public should be open to the Press and the public. The Premier to-day has cleared the hon. member for Rockhampton. He has stated, in reply to a question I asked, that he believes the instructions were given by Judge Mansfield, who, in the case of the North Chillagoe inquiry, decided that it should be open to the public, but, in the case of this inquiry, decided that the Press should be excluded upon his own responsibility.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: At the wish of the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. REID: No; the hon. member did not wish it.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Well, on his advice.

Mr. REID: He did nothing of the kind.

Mr. HIGGS: The hon. gentleman, who is always anxious to have correct definitions, and to give correct definitions, knows very well that the term "wish" does not describe the action of the hon. member for Rockhampton. I can understand that any hon. member, case-hardened though he may be, under the awe-inspiring influence of a judge, might probably defer to the judge's opinion at any time. It is only a member like the hon. member for Mackay, who has no reverence at all for anybody in a public position, who would be able to maintain his own opinion and demand that the inquiry should be held with open doors and with the Press present.

Mr. REID: Trust the people.

Mr. HIGGS: It is drawing near 6 o'clock, and I have not much more to say. The debate opened very warmly—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: As the sun goes down it is cooling.

Mr. HIGGS: For the honour and dignity of this House, I am pleased that the debate has not gone on the lines with which it commenced. I think it tended to developing into a very stormy time, and things might have been said which, when reported to-morrow, we might have been very sorry for. There is no occasion for any heat in the matter. Judge Mansfield has stated that the man Withers, who has occupied the position usually kept for distinguished visitors for many months, is guilty of endeavouring to use undue influence;

and I hope that hon. members on the other side will be a little more careful of the company that they keep.

Mr. STORY: Some of his friends are on your side.

Mr. HIGGS: I am sure no member on this side of the House has ever approached Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, and asked either of them to permit the introduction of a friend to the lobby of the Mr. Withers's stamp.

Mr. REID: He does not ask permission; he walks in.

Mr. HIGGS: If the hon. members opposite can discover any gentleman of the type of Mr. Withers introduced by a member on this side I hope he will bring the matter up in Parliament as a question that it is necessary for Parliament to consider. It may be admitted that it was a pity Mr. Kidston was not able to disclose this letter, because it might have resulted in the stoppage of these private syndicate railway Bills, and, personally, I think that would have been a very good thing for Queensland. I must say that if the Premier will reconsider this Bill, and bring it in as a State line, he will have the support of the whole of the members on this side.

Mr. BRIDGES: Will you support it?

Mr. HIGGS: I will.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*): There is one point of view in this matter that I do not think hon. gentlemen have looked at or discussed at all, and it is a very peculiar one. When Mr. Withers approached with the intention to bribe a member of Parliament, what was his intention? In years gone by the debates in this House, I understand, were conducted with decorum, lasted a reasonable time, and a vote was arrived at to decide one way or another, but of late years obstruction in the shape of talk has developed to such immense proportions that Mr. Withers approached a man, who was an ex-member on the Labour side, for the purpose of buying what? Silence—simply that. There is no record that Mr. Withers said, "I will pay you so much for your vote." He simply said, "You can vote as you like, but do not stone-wall the Bill. I will pay you so much to stop talking and to get your friends to stop talking." That is exactly and entirely the position.

Mr. REID: Who told you that?

Mr. STORY: In Mr. Daniels's evidence he states that he said to Mr. Withers, "I will not take it under the conditions, as I may not vote for the Bill." Mr. Withers said, "I do not expect you to vote for the Bill. I want you to promise that you won't talk the matter out." We may easily conceive that the reputation of

hon. members of the Labour party, [7 p.m.] unenviable as it is, has passed beyond the limits of this colony—that it has penetrated to England—and I can well understand the agent of this Normanton-Cloncurry line representing to his directors that the only danger he had to fear with regard to the passage of this Bill, was the stonewalling tactics of hon. members opposite; that he could rely on the good sense of hon. members of the Government party not to oppose this Bill; that the only obstruction would come from the other side. There is a very peculiar part in Mr. Daniels's evidence, which proves conclusively that the only danger that Mr. Withers saw with regard to the passing of this Bill was the excessive talk by hon. members of the Labour party. Mr. Daniels said—

I won't take it under those conditions as I might not vote for the Bill.

Mr. Withers said—

I don't expect you to vote for it, but I want you to promise that you won't talk the matter out—we have enough votes in the House now to carry it.

So there was no bribe for a vote; but merely for silence.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: He said that at the Gresham when shouting champagne.

Mr. STORY: Were you there?

Mr. W. HAMILTON: I know that.

Mr. STORY: I do not know anything about it. Mr. Daniels also gave the following evidence:—

He—

That was Mr. Withers—

then asked me to go to Daniels's or Lennon's Hotel, and we went into the parlour. I promised him I would not talk the Bill out. When at Lennon's, he said a good many of the members were shareholders under the conditions that they would let the Bill pass—that is, they would not talk it out. I wanted to know the full conditions. He said, "The conditions are that every member joining the syndicate pay £125 down in cash, and when the Bill is passed each member will receive as his share £125 in cash and 650 fully paid-up shares. With regard to the £125 you get when the Bill is passed, if you like I'll give you the £125 now, as I'm quite sure the Bill will pass. I have £80,000 to spend over the matter, from members of the London syndicate, and mentioned names of men behind it in England."

MEMBERS of the Labour party: Ah!

Mr. STORY:

I told him "I don't want the money, but you do this in your usual way, the same as with other members."

Then I wish hon. members opposite to pay particular attention to this part of Mr. Daniels's evidence—

He asked me if I knew of other members of the Labour party who would like to become shareholders under the same conditions. I promised to make inquiries and let him know.

Mr. Withers said he had £60,000 to spend over the matter, and Mr. Daniels was promised, in effect, £1,425 if he would not talk the Bill out. Mr. Daniels was a man who had no seat in the House and he could not be of any great value. So I take it Mr. Withers would have put a double value on the support of an actual Labour member; and if you multiply 2,850 by 21 you have £59,850—within £150 of £60,000, and I have no doubt that that £150 would have been divided between the hon. members for Rockhampton and Enoggera. Now, I think it would pay the country to give the members of the Labour party £120,000 for them to hold their tongues during the last four or five months so that we could do some business.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. STORY: The extraordinary loquacity of hon. members opposite is preventing beneficial public legislation being passed. The people engaged in the pastoral industry are crying out for legislation; selectors are being ruined, and children in the back blocks are not being educated—all owing to the overwhelming talk on the part of hon. members opposite.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: That is not true.

Mr. STEPHENSON: It is perfectly true.

Mr. STORY: I wish to retrace my steps to explain that I do not include the leader of the Labour party in what I have said with regard to the £60,000, for I do not think it likely for a moment that he will take any part in collecting that sum. The other night I was lying on that bench, when most of the hon. members were fast asleep, and one unfortunate individual on the other side was droning out long extracts from English papers and old English railway Acts, dealing with the prevention of people falling trees on roads, and so forth. I went to sleep, and when I woke up, just as the grey dawn was breaking and the morning sun was making its appearance, I found the same hon. member on his feet still droning, and others followed. How can anyone call that legitimate

and proper debating? No. Does any man mean to say that such a course of procedure here would do good to the country? Certainly not. It was simply a huge waste of time, and I think Mr. Withers was justified in thinking that there was a great danger of this Bill being talked out by the Labour party, and he only offered to pay for silence. Knowing something of hon. members on this side, Mr. Withers never approached any of them for the purpose of trying to bribe them to silence. We supported the second reading of this Bill. A great number of hon. members on this side had never seen Mr. Withers till then. Mr. Withers thought the matter was of the greatest importance, and that the passing of this Bill would be of great benefit to the colony that he did all he could to try and secure its passage. But he did not approach hon. members on this side, because he knew they were sensible men, and it would be against their policy to obstruct its passage in any way. But he knew that hon. members opposite would obstruct it in every possible way—that that was their policy. To leave that question for a moment and come to Mr. Daniels. He got this letter on the 6th November, 1899, over thirteen months ago. What kind of an honest man is it who would carry a bribe, or an attempt to bribe, in his pocket until he thought the proper time came for presenting it?

Mr. HARDACRE: Does he not explain the reason?

Mr. STORY: If he had been what has been claimed for him here, he would have brought that letter at once to the Premier and said, "Here is the sort of man you are working these syndicate railways for;" and the Premier who, without any pressure at all, promised that if any attempt at bribery at all could be proved he would at once drop the railway, would have done the same thing if Daniels had shown him that letter. But Daniels, instead of doing that, and, according to his own evidence, without answering it or telling Withers whether he was going to accept his offer or not, kept the thing in his pocket and carried it about with him for nearly a year before he said a word to anyone about it.

Mr. HARDACRE: Can't you be fair enough to give his own reason for that?

Mr. STORY: He only spoke to the hon. member for Rockhampton about four months ago. That hon. member seems to me to have the most peculiar ideas of honour I ever heard of. He thought he could not possibly outrage the confidence reposed in him. What confidence can any rogue give to an honest man? Directly Daniels showed him that letter, the hon. member's duty as a man, as an honest man, and a member of the House, was to have said to the Premier—"I have that letter now, and I claim your promise to abandon the line." We all know that the Premier would have done it at once. The hon. member keeps it until something has taken place which secures the other man from some sort of opposition he expected. They both keep the damaging document in their possession, and if it had been found out that the hon. member for Rockhampton was in possession of the information in this document, would he not have been in just the same position as Daniels—both having a guilty knowledge of a guilty document? There is no question at all that the hon. member quite mistook his duty as a member of this House, and did not know it as an honest man when he kept it to himself as he did, and did not at once make public the fact that Daniels had told him he had been approached in an improper manner. He says he was only to use it in an emergency. But can we believe for a moment that if some man had committed a crime—and I hold that this was a crime—it was a crime against good taste, and against

honour and honesty? The hon. member for Barcoo laughs, I see; but all he knows about that he is likely to learn from books, as I do not suppose there is any intuitive knowledge he could have of these things. The hon. member for Rockhampton had knowledge of the crime perpetrated, and the Premier's promise was there, and good at any time within the last four months if he wished to take advantage of it. The hon. gentleman could have claimed the fulfilment of that promise at any time, but until a certain thing was done, and the opposition from which Daniels might have suffered was done away with, he was content to remain a participator in the guilty secret with Mr. Daniels and Mr. Withers. I think the hon. member must have strained his notions of honour altogether when he said he could not betray the confidence of Daniels. If a man came and told him that he had committed a crime, would the hon. member have felt bound to withhold that knowledge lest he should break that man's confidence? If he did, he would be an accessory after the fact, and would be punishable by law.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Is this a crime?

Mr. STORY: It is one of the greatest crimes that could be committed to approach a member of Parliament in order to bribe him, and it is a crime in the eyes of the law.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Then Withers ought not to be walking about.

Mr. STORY: Why, the Gatton murderers might have confided in somebody or another, and if they did would the hon. member claim that confidence should not be betrayed in that case? Certainly not. No; there is something far higher than that, and it is a great pity the hon. member for Rockhampton did not know it. I am not going to detain the House very long, but I wish to refer to the hon. member for Brisbane South and his remarks about the hon. member for Bulloo as manager of the Union Mortgage and Agency Company. The hon. member said there were two directors of the company in London, and the manager of the company here would be interested in what they were interested in. If the hon. member had any knowledge or experience of business circles, he would never say that a director of a company would for a moment endeavour to control the actions of his manager in order to get his vote or support. The hon. member for Bulloo informs me that neither of the gentlemen referred to are in the company at the present time. If what the hon. member suggested were so, every clerk in the company's office might be accused in the same way. That sort of argument was too absurd altogether.

Mr. LEAHY: It is nothing coming from a man who admits that he was a smuggler.

Mr. STORY: That is between the hon. member's conscience and himself. We know that these companies have their branches all over the colonies, and to say that because directors have their own interests they press them upon their managers and employees to get them to carry out certain things, is only to speak in complete ignorance of the way in which a large business is carried on. Another thing the hon. member said was not, I think, altogether correct. He said he was out West a little time ago, and he would not like to repeat in this House, or outside of it, the things he heard said about the hon. member for Bulloo.

Mr. LEAHY: He was lying.

Mr. STORY: He has made a trip there, and what he heard I do not know, but I know that I lived there for nearly twenty years, and the hon. member for Bulloo was always a prominent man there, and I must say that except that people might say that the hon. member has got a way

of riding over people who stand in his way, and that sort of thing, I have never heard one word questioning his honour or integrity.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: He had got an awful character when I was out there.

Mr. STORY: I suppose there are some men always ready to speak evil of others, and they will readily confide in people who want to hear these sort of things. This whole thing resolves itself into this: That an attempt was made to bribe a man who was supposed to have influence in the Labour party. There has not been one assertion made that any attempt whatever was made upon anyone on this side.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

Mr. LESINA: It wasn't necessary.

Mr. STORY: By anybody at any time, and yet for weeks past this party has been accused of being the tools of syndicates and hoodlers and all that sort of thing. Is it not very strange that all these hoodlers and syndicators here should all support the Premier in abandoning the very best line that could possibly be made in Queensland, because someone has been dishonest enough to try to bribe—not a member on this side, but one of the party on the other side of the House? We protect their honour as much as we can. Our own honour is safe. The Premier has done all he can to protect the honour of hon. members opposite and save them from themselves.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. GIVENS: While admitting that the Premier has had a somewhat disagreeable task this afternoon, and making all due allowance for his feelings of disappointment, and also, the feeling which he has in regard to the confidence of the Government being outraged by the person he was negotiating with, yet, I think he has performed his task in a very manly way; and if any congratulations which I can offer him are of any use, I do sincerely congratulate him on the stand he has taken.

Mr. HARDACRE: Wait until next session.

Mr. GIVENS: We are only dealing with the case as it at present exists, and I say the Premier has taken an honourable and manly stand, and I am inclined to give him the fullest possible credit for it. There has been some unsatisfactory, and, I think, uncalled for tactics introduced into this debate.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Very unsatisfactory.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. member for Bulloo when he got up to speak, instead of addressing himself to the question before the House, indulged in a tirade against the hon. member for Rockhampton. A Frenchman when he is defeated in argument always retorts "tu quoque," which being literally interpreted, means "you're another." That was the whole trend of the hon. member's argument. When something is charged against a certain person, he retorts "you're another."

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: And he proved it.

Mr. GIVENS: He might have proved it to the satisfaction of such a biased mind as that of the hon. member for Herbert, but it remains to be seen whether he has proved it to the satisfaction of anyone else. The hon. member for Bulloo complained very bitterly that he did not have an opportunity of giving evidence, but let me point out that he had ample opportunity of giving evidence this afternoon; but instead of doing that he launched out into this tirade against the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. LEAHY: I told you that Daniels struck me off the tribunal. That is the best proof.

Mr. GIVENS: If the hon. member knows nothing about the case, then his evidence would

be absolutely useless, and it would have been a work of supererogation to call him before Judge Mansfield—that is, if what the hon. member stated, that he knew nothing about it, was a fact.

Mr. LEAHY: What was I referred to so often for?

Mr. GIVENS: The references to the hon. member for Bulloo in the evidence and report have nothing to do with the matter, nor do they reflect on the hon. member. If you eliminate the evidence of the hon. member for Rockhampton and Mr. Daniels, there is quite enough in the evidence given by Mr. Withers himself to condemn him as being a vile intriguer, whom the Government should never have entered into any negotiations with at all. Possibly the Government did not know him; and I give the Premier credit for having said that it was a fortunate thing for the colony that Mr. Withers was found out, and that it would be a good thing for the colony if they had no more negotiations with men of such a stamp. For my part, I place no value at all on any reference made to the hon. member for Bulloo. It does not influence my judgment in the slightest, nor do I think it reflects on the hon. member. That being so, I contend that it was out of place for the hon. member to occupy the attention of the House at such length in order to make a charge against the hon. member for Rockhampton, and which that hon. member has no opportunity of replying to. Now, what is this Mr. Withers? I was very nearly calling him a gentleman, but, considering the evidence he gave, that would be altogether a misnomer. He admits freely that he offered this bribe to Mr. Daniels.

Mr. LEAHY: He was looking for it.

Mr. GIVENS: I am not accusing or excusing Mr. Daniels. That has nothing to do with it. We are discussing the action of the agent of the syndicate. It does not matter whether Mr. Daniels is the vilest rogue who ever trod the earth or a saint from heaven, that does not alter the guilt of Mr. Withers. Mr. Withers admits freely that he offered this bribe, and he gives as his reason—"I was anxious to get him into it because he had been connected with Parliament, and I told him I wanted him to get others not to stonewall the Bill." So that the bribe was offered to Daniels with the distinct understanding that members of Parliament were to be influenced in return for the bribe. There is sufficient evidence that he bribed Daniels to influence Parliament in favour of the Bill.

Mr. STORY: We all know that.

Mr. GIVENS: Then why did the hon. member for Balonne make such elaborate excuses for Mr. Withers?

Mr. STORY: I did not excuse him at all.

Mr. GIVENS: I distinctly heard the hon. member excuse him or try to do so, and it struck me at the time that the man who would excuse such a vile wretch as Mr. Withers is almost as bad as Mr. Withers himself. We have seen time after time Mr. Withers in the Minister's lobby while these syndicate railways were going through. I have heard hon. members opposite disclaim knowing him, yet I have seen those same members go out and speak to him, and every time the gag was put on members on this side Mr. Withers grinned a grin of triumph that was visible to every member in the House. The hon. member for Balonne read members on this side a lecture on the proper conduct of business. I dare say the hon. member is a very high authority on his own side of the House, but I have yet to learn that he is accepted as a high authority by anybody else; and, with regard to the honour and independence of members on this side, I will say, fearlessly, that it compares favourably with the honour and independence of members on the

other side. We have sufficient honour and independence to deal with public questions, irrespective of any outside influence, which is more than the hon. member for Balonne can say, because he is manager of a large syndicate which comes to the Government for huge contracts, and which gets them in spite of not being the lowest tenderer.

Mr. STORY: Who told you all that?

Mr. GIVENS: The public records of the colony tell me.

The PREMIER: The lowest tender is always accepted.

Mr. GIVENS: If the lowest tender was taken in each case, I am prepared to assert that the aggregate tender would be lower than that of Cobb and Co.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. member also pointed out that Mr. Withers—and this was the excuse he made for him—did not bribe anyone to vote. He only bribed persons to be silent. The hon. member argued that a dangerous [7.30 p.m.] development of talk on the part of Labour members with reference to these railway measures was a reason to justify Mr. Withers in his offer of a bribe.

Mr. STORY: I did not say justify.

Mr. GIVENS: That was the whole trend of the argument of the hon. member—that Mr. Withers could represent to his principals in London that it was necessary to do something to stop the loquaciousness of hon. members on this side of the House. But would any honourable man say that that justified Mr. Withers in his action. Then again, the hon. member said we had the statement of Mr. Daniels that Mr. Withers told him that he was authorised to spend £60,000 in order to insure the passage of the Bill, and the hon. member said that, basing his calculation on the amount offered to Mr. Daniels, it would take the whole of that £60,000 to bribe members on this side of the Chamber. The man who wants to bribe the Labour party will have to go ever so much higher than that. Let me also give an illustration, putting it in the form of a sum in simple proportion. If it took £1,450 to bribe Mr. Daniels, who was not a member of Parliament, how much would Mr. Withers be willing to pay to the Secretary for Railways?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He never attempted anything of the sort with me.

Mr. GIVENS: I am not saying that he did, and I was careful to say that I only used that as an illustration. It appears to me that it would take the whole of that £60,000 to bribe two or three hon. members on the opposite side of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He never approached any individual on this side of the House at all.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman can only speak for himself, and I am quite willing to believe that nobody approached him. I believe it was not necessary to approach him. Members on the other side may or may not have been approached. We have no proof of it, because, as the hon. member for Rockhampton pointed out, it is very difficult to get documentary evidence in support of a charge of that nature. I am not in the possession of legal proof; I could not prove to the satisfaction of a judge or jury what I am about to say, but I am as morally certain as I am standing here that at least two members on the other side of the House have been approached.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Name! Name!

Mr. GIVENS: I am not going to give names, because I have no proof. It is not possible to get the proof, because those men do not own any

property in the syndicate. They know a little too much for that. But although they get up in this House and put their hands to their hearts and say they are not interested in the company, I believe that if the matter were investigated we should find that some very near friends of theirs were interested. I should feel inclined to speak in a much milder tone on this matter were it not for the bitter remarks which have fallen from hon. members on the other side of the Chamber.

Mr. BRIDGES: If the hon. member knows anything he should say it; it is no use going near to it.

Mr. GIVENS: Then hon. members opposite have also been accusing the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, of keeping the letter back, and the Premier was very angry on that point. The hon. member for Rockhampton assured the House when he first spoke of the matter that he had a copy of the letter in his possession, and that he saw the original of the letter. It is a rule of this House that an hon. member's statement must be accepted, and the hon. member, having made that statement, I think it should have been accepted by the House, seeing that the hon. member did not make a bald assertion, but pledged his honour for its correctness.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why did he not produce the letter?

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. member for Rockhampton produced the letter as soon as he had the permission of the owner to do so, and I do not think any hon. member can make any charge against him because he did not produce it until he had the permission of the person to whom it was addressed. I do not intend to occupy the time of the House any further on this matter. I desire again to congratulate the Premier on the stand he has taken in the House with regard to it, and with him I think it is a very great pity that the House was not in the possession of this information very much sooner. If we had been in possession of this information four months ago, it is very possible that it would have very considerably influenced hon. members, not only as regards the Normanton-Cloncurry Railway Bill, but as regards all the other private railway Bills which have occupied so much of the attention of the House this session. For that reason, I regret that the information was not in our possession very much sooner. But seeing that though it only came at the eleventh hour, it has had the effect of exposing a vile scoundrel like Mr. Withers, who tried to dominate this Parliament by means of bribes, I congratulate the Premier on the action he has taken in the matter, and am personally grateful to him for that action.

Mr. STEWART (Rockhampton North): Hon. members opposite have my deepest sympathy in the unfortunate position in which they find themselves placed. (Laughter on the Government side.) I will do them the justice to say that they have endeavoured to escape from a very difficult position in as easy a manner as it is possible for them to do. There is one thing in connection with this business that not only surprises me, but disappoints and grieves me. When hon. members opposite, who appear to be so anxious about the honour of the country, and so desirous about maintaining the dignity and honour and reputation of members of Parliament, spoke on this question I expected that they would have praised the hon. member for Rockhampton for the action he has taken in the matter, and that they would have held up Mr. Daniels before the country as a man who should be honoured. (Laughter on Government side.) I thought they would have held him up as a man who should be honoured for exposing the tricky and dangerous schemes of this gentleman,

Withers, who has been their associate in the lobbies of this House for so long, with whom they have drunk in the refreshment bar many and many a time; with whom they have hobbled in the Queensland Club goodness knows how often; and with whom they have sat in the visitors' room and wined and dined so often, but who is now found out and cast into utter oblivion.

Mr. BROWNE: What about the champagne supper that he gave at the Gresham?

Mr. STEWART: The hon. the leader of the Opposition asks what about the champagne supper that he gave at the Gresham?

The PREMIER: Who was there?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Was Daniels there?

Mr. STEWART: I do not think any hon. members on this side were there.

The PREMIER: There were none from this side there.

Mr. STEWART: The Premier says that none of the gentlemen on that side were there. I do not know, and I do not care. They may go to supper with the agent of the syndicate every night for aught I care. I do not care two straws what their conduct is in that direction. This is merely by the way. Let us address ourselves to the question before the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: Now, I expected that the hon. gentlemen opposite would have got up and praised Mr. Kidston, the member for Rockhampton, for his action—that they would have held Mr. Daniels up to the admiration of the entire colony, inasmuch as that he had exposed the wild machinations of a gentleman whom they now characterise as a villain.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why did not he disclose it at once?

Mr. STEWART: Why did he not expose it at once? If the hon. gentleman asks me my opinion on that point, I am quite willing to give it to him. The offence of Mr. Daniels was not that he did not disclose it soon enough, but that he has disclosed it too soon—that he did not take his money, put it in his pocket, and say nothing. That is the offence Mr. Daniels has committed—no other offence. The attitude of hon. gentlemen opposite abundantly justifies me in coming to that conclusion. The hon. member for Bulloo got up to justify himself, and instead of doing that he adopted the tactics of the marine creature called the cuttle-fish. He tried to whiten himself by blackening the hon. member for Rockhampton. He tried to show what a vagabond the hon. member for Rockhampton was, as if that had anything to do with the question before the House.

Mr. LEAHY: He was the accuser.

Mr. REID: No, he was not.

Mr. STEWART: The whole attitude of the hon. gentlemen opposite towards Mr. Kidston and Mr. Daniels, who have done the country a service by exposing this action of Mr. Withers, is one of condemnation. There has not been one single word of praise. What am I to conclude from that?

Mr. STEPHENSON: That they do not deserve it.

Mr. STEWART: That the hon. gentlemen opposite, instead of being pleased that the honour of Parliament has been vindicated, are sorry. They are sorry that the schemes of the syndicates have been found out.

Mr. STEPHENSON: They are not so sorry as you are.

Mr. STEWART: I can assure the hon. member for Ipswich that I am not sorry. I never stood upon such a magnificent piece of velvet as I do at the present moment, and the hon. mem-

bers opposite recognise that. They see clearly what a powerful weapon is placed in the hands of the Labour party, and they know we have the voices to use it.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: The hon. member for Bulloo, the agent of the syndicates in this Chamber, knows that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. STEWART: I am going to deal with the hon. member for Bulloo. Well, I think I will leave him just now—he is not of sufficient importance.

Mr. LEAHY: I defy you.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. gentleman says, "I defy you." I tell the hon. member to remember this: There is no man so contemptible that it is wise to defy him; and no man so powerful as to be beyond the reach of attack. The hon. gentleman says that no member was approached except Mr. Daniels. What does Mr. Withers say? He says, "I did not approach anyone beyond Mr. Daniels." He is the man who, on his own confession, deliberately attempted to corrupt this Parliament. He stands in the same relation to this Parliament as the jury-swearer stands in the court of justice. He stands in the same relation to this Parliament as the suborner of false evidence—of the men who procure witnesses to perjure themselves—stand in our courts of justice; and that is the evidence we are asked to believe. He says he did not approach anyone beyond Daniels. Does anyone believe that? I may tell hon. gentlemen that they may believe it if they like. I do not. I do not believe that Mr. Daniels was the only one approached by Mr. Withers.

Mr. LEAHY: Perhaps you know better.

Mr. STEWART: We are told that Mr. Daniels met Mr. Withers in company with Mr. Leahy, and Mr. Leahy denies that. He says that he did not introduce Mr. Daniels to Mr. Withers. I suppose we are bound to accept the word of the hon. gentleman; but even if Mr. Leahy did introduce Mr. Daniels to Mr. Withers he would have done his duty in the position that he occupies. We know perfectly well that the hon. gentleman occupies the position of a tout for syndicates—the jackal of the absentees. He would be altogether in his place in bringing Mr. Daniels and Mr. Withers together.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member is applying that language to any member of this House, he is using language which is most unparliamentary.

Mr. LEAHY: I do not object.

The SPEAKER: It is not a matter of whether the hon. member objects or not. It is a question of whether the language used by the hon. member is in order.

Mr. STEWART: Well, I withdraw the words if they are offensive, but really they are the only words that seem to express fully my ideas regarding the position which the hon. member occupies, not only in Parliament, but in the colony. Well, we will pass to Mr. Brentnall. Mr. Daniels tells us that on one occasion he met Mr. Withers in company with Mr. Brentnall in George street. Mr. Withers asked Mr. Daniels, "Have you got that letter I sent you?" Mr. Daniels said, "No." Mr. Withers said, "You will find it when you go home." I can picture in my mind's eye the disgust which crept over the features of the saintly Brentnall when he discovered that Withers had delivered himself, bound hand and foot, over to the Phillistines of the Labour party. (Opposition laughter.) Notwithstanding the insinuations of the hon. member for Bulloo, and the remarks of Judge Real, on the bench—which I am not permitted to

criticise; if I had an opportunity I certainly would—it has been proved that Mr. Daniels is an honourable man.

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

Mr. STEWART: Many of his assertions have been proved to be true, notwithstanding that in order to defeat justice in his case, bribery, perjury, robbery have been resorted to.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: I ask the hon. member for Bulloo not to forget that.

Mr. LEAHY: I thought you were going to give something about myself.

Mr. STEWART: I reserve the hon. member for a future occasion. (Laughter.) He is big enough and bold enough to have an occasion all to himself.

Mr. LEAHY: I am too big and too bold for you. (Laughter.)

Mr. STEWART: Perhaps we will find that out later on. Now, I will come to Mr. Brentnall. Mr. Daniels said at the inquiry—

I met him—

That is, Mr. Withers—

again, about a week after that, in George street in company with Mr. Brentnall. He asked me had I received his letter that morning. I said, "What letter?" He said, "The letter about those shares." I said, "No, I received no letter," and he said, "You ought to, because I posted it you this morning from Southport." Brentnall turned to Withers and said, "You don't mean to say, Withers, you have trusted Daniels?"

Just imagine the shock of surprise Mr. Brentnall got on that occasion. Why, the biggest galvanic battery in Brisbane could not have given him such a shock. I give Mr. Brentnall credit for this—it must have flashed through his mind instantaneously that Mr. Withers had by his action endangered the whole of the scheme by taking Daniels into his confidence.

Mr. LEAHY: Mr. Brentnall would not trust him with a box of matches.

Mr. STEWART: Mr. Daniels went on to say in his evidence—

Withers replied, "Yes, he's all right." I said, "Yes, he might trust a less honest man."

(Laughter on the Government side.) Why do hon. members opposite laugh at Daniels? I would remind them of the old adage, "He who laughs last laughs best," and before Mr. Daniels's case is finished perhaps some hon. members opposite will have occasion to laugh on the wrong side of their faces.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Perhaps they won't.

Mr. REID: They ought to.

Mr. STEWART: Now, when the hon. member for Balonne got up, I expected that, as he is so desirous of maintaining the honour and dignity of Parliament, he would have complimented the hon. member for Rockhampton on his action; but, instead of that, he treated members of this party to a tirade of abuse. He said the pastoralists in the West were suffering from the drought. Is the Labour party accountable for that? Has the Labour party been placed in the position of Providence? I should be very glad if we were, for, bad and loquacious as we are, we might reserve our speeches, and allow copious rain to fall from the heavens. The hon. member said selectors were being ruined. Are we to be blamed for that? He also said children in the back-blocks could not be educated because of the Labour party. Why, every member on this side supports the hon. member in all his endeavours to get education for children in the back-blocks. He contended that if we restrained our loquacity the Government would be able to do something for the pastoralists, the selectors, and for the educating of children in the back-blocks. Now, in heaven's name, what can the Government do for the pastoralists at the present

time? Can they bring down rain from the heavens? No; that is beyond their power. I should very much like to see the Attorney-General acting as a weathercock on such an occasion.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They should pray for it.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, hon. gentlemen opposite pray a good deal—you can spell the word as you like. (Laughter.) I should be very glad if some hon. members opposite were in the position of a Chinese "Joss." I believe in China, when rain hangs off for a long time, the Chinese pray to their Josses, and then if rain does not come as soon as the Chinamen desire they begin to kick the Joss, spit in its face, and treat it with contumely. Well, I would not care about kicking the Attorney-General or anything of that kind; it might be a relief to the tedium of parliamentary life if hon. members had the opportunity occasionally of kicking—

Mr. BROWNE: Make the Minister for Railways the Joss?

Mr. STEWART: No. I would object to doing that. I would not like to see any Central member placed in that position. Although the hon. gentleman is a political opponent of mine, I have a strong regard for him, coming, as he does, from the same part of the country that I represent.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Oh! you want a railway.

Mr. STEWART: I did not intend to say anything with regard to the hon. member for Bulloo to-night—

Mr. LEAHY: I think you have succeeded admirably.

Mr. STEWART: I do not intend to say very much to the hon. member; but I will give him a little bit of advice. The hon. member said that the junior member for Rockhampton would make a good president of a South American Republic. I wish to tell the hon. member for Bulloo that even if he does not possess all the qualifications to fill the lofty position of president, he is simply losing time here in Queensland. There is a magnificent field for his abilities in New York. He would be an admirable assistant to a gentleman known as Boss Croker. (Opposition laughter.) I do not think there is any position under the sun that he is more fitted by nature to fill than that; we all know that the hon. member for Bulloo subordinates everything to the acquisition of wealth. That is the one consuming desire of his soul which destroys every other emotion in his mind. Queensland is not big enough for the hon. member. He should emigrate to the United States, and join hands with the Tammany ring in New York. He would then be in his element—his native habitat. I would just like to remind hon. members that one hon. gentleman opposite, who hobnobs with the hon. member for Bulloo, has the same opinion of that hon. member as I have.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: What is the meaning of "hobnob"?

Mr. STEWART: The hon. member can consult the dictionary about that. The hon. member for Lockyer, who is one of the most intelligent members in this House—

Mr. BROWNE: On the Government side?

Mr. STEWART: No, on either side. That hon. member by some means seems to get the ear of the Government about as effectively as the hon. member for Bulloo himself does, and I am not sure that ere long the hon. member for Lockyer will not become the great rival of the hon. member for Bulloo. I advise the hon. member for Bulloo to look to his laurels, otherwise he may find a young giant alongside who will tower above and overshadow him.

Now, what does this hon. member, Mr. Armstrong, say? At page 1012 of [8 p.m.] *Hansard* for 1899, I find he says, speaking of the hon. member for

Bulloo—

Now, will the hon. member deny that he can pull the strings? Will the hon. member also say that the private necessities of certain members of this House were not taken advantage of—that pressure was not brought to bear upon them—to vote against this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What Bill was that?

Mr. STEWART: The Railways Standing Committee Bill.

Mr. LEAHY: What had I to say to that?

Mr. STEWART: The hon. member of course denied it. He said, "I give that a flat denial." It would just have had as much effect if the hon. gentleman had given it a round denial. We all know the value of these flat denials, and round denials, and these expressions of virtuous indignation. Rumour has it—and we know rumour is a lying jade—that the hon. member for Bulloo keeps eternally on the *qui vive* to see if he can by any means buy up the liabilities of certain members of this House so that he may use them.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: Well, I cannot conceive of any other motive he could have except to be in a position to bring pressure to bear upon them.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. STEWART: Of course, it is quite within the hon. member's right. I have said, I think, as much as I desire to say upon this subject. I am very glad that the villain of the piece has been found out and cast out, and the only thing I regret is that hon. gentlemen on the other side do not appear to be as well pleased with the result of this affair as I should like.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE (*Mackay*): I cannot help concluding that the hon. member for Bulloo has done some pretty good work, after what we have heard during this debate; but the hon. member's merits are sufficiently well known, and they are not in the least likely to be dimmed by any statement made by the hon. member for Rockhampton North. The statement made that any member in this House, and especially on this side, where I hope we have some intelligence, would endeavour to make anything by buying up the liabilities of other hon. members—and this is told of a commercial man—is really a little too thin. When hon. members are making a purchase, I think they will look out for something more valuable than the liabilities of impecunious politicians. The hon. member who spoke last is not satisfied that we should not find fault with the conduct of the hon. member for Rockhampton and of the once member for Cambooya, Mr. Daniels, but he actually believes that they deserve praise.

Mr. STEWART: I do.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I should like to know what they deserve praise for. Is it for hushing up a disgraceful scandal for months and months? Can anyone explain to this House how it is that, in the first place, this man Withers goes to the Labour party? Does anyone believe that he did? It is my opinion that Mr. Daniels went to him. That is much the more probable story.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Withers says so in his evidence.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: This transaction was first mentioned in this House some three or four months ago, but it took place in November of last year—over twelve months ago. We heard nothing whatever about it from Mr. Daniels, and he did not even communicate it to Mr. Kidston for eight months. That was in July. Why did he keep silent all that time?

Mr. HARDACRE: He explains the reason himself.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Is there any honest reason? He gives two reasons, and one contradicts the other. The statement made by the hon. member for Rockhampton in August was that it would have affected somebody in his business.

Mr. HARDACRE: No, he said that it was because Parliament was in recess. Here is the statement made by the hon. member for Rockhampton—

When Daniels told me about it and showed me the letter, he asked me if I mentioned the matter in the House not to disclose his name or the name of the writer of the letter in case it might prejudice the House against granting a select committee.

Mr. REID: Which it would very likely have done.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: All I can say is that if the matter was of such a character as would have prejudiced Daniels in getting a select committee, his conduct, whatever it was, should have been made known to the House. Let justice be done. Why should one member shield another if his conduct has been such that it would prejudice him in getting a select committee? Here is Daniels's own statement—

I consider the letter was an attempt to bribe me, but I thought I would take it though I felt insulted. I took it with a view of letting it be known in Parliament that this sort of thing was going on.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE:

I did not make it public at once because I thought I would be declared elected by the tribunal, and would have been able to present it to the House myself.

That is a totally different reason to that given by the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. REID: No; it is all bearing on the same subject.

Mr. LESINA: Read on. Read the next sentence.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The reason given there was that Mr. Daniels wanted to present it to the House himself, but when he knew he would not be in the House why did he not let the hon. member for Rockhampton present it? However, here is another explanation, and I venture to propose it as being on the whole a decidedly more feasible one—a good working hypothesis that will fit into the facts a great deal better than the other statements we have received: That Daniels for eight months kept the offer open, as it were. He did not get paid, and he did not refuse the offer. He did not indignantly spurn it, but said he would see other members and see whether they would assist him or not. But at the end of July the company was reconstructed, and there did not appear to be any money in it, and at that time I imagine that Mr. Daniels, being on the make, thought it better to try someone else. He had not got the money, though he had kept the offer open as long as there was any chance of getting it, and then he thought he would sell it to the Labour party.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: He kept it a profound secret.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Yes, for all that period. He said nothing of the matter; he said nothing of the outrage it was on his personal dignity, but he took good care—although he knew he could not get into Parliament—not to let it be known for months in Parliament through another source. The hon. member for Rockhampton brought the matter forward in a timid kind of way, but he did not make it public, and the only reason he gave was that it would interfere with someone's business.

Mr. TURLEY: It would have been a breach of confidence,

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That was not the statement that he made. He said it would interfere with someone's business. What business has Mr. Daniels? The only business he has is to get into this House, and stir up all the influence he could get to—

Mr. FISHER: Get justice.

Mr. HIGGS: What is your business, anyway?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It is my business when an inquiry of this sort is instituted, and evidence placed before us, to criticise it.

Mr. HIGGS: Yes; but it is your business also to get into the House.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: If the hon. member will attend to his own business I have no doubt that in a couple of years he will find that he has enough to attend to. It seems to me to have been the clear duty of the hon. member for Rockhampton to have made this thing public at once.

Mr. TURLEY: Break confidence?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: He would only have been doing what Mr. Daniels said in his evidence he wanted doing for the public benefit. What view does the hon. member take of the Labour members? He has no business. He has no employer. No one to coerce him, and if he wants something brought forward there is nothing to prevent it being done. Why should it not be brought forward without hesitation and without delay? I say that the six or eight months' delay is much better accounted for by the fact that Mr. Daniels, at one time a member of the Labour party, thought he would be better employed in keeping the matter open for his friends. After this matter was entrusted to the hon. member, Mr. Kidston, several months elapsed, and yet we are told that this great matter of syndicate railways, which hon. members opposite have so much set their hearts against, has been defeated by this one scandal.

Mr. STEWART: We reserved the shot until the proper moment.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The hon. member for Brisbane South and others have said that there was a subordination of public aims to private ones. If ever there was a case in which the welfare of the colony appears to have been sacrificed, for some personal end which I cannot gauge, it is this case—taking the matter from the standpoint of hon. members opposite. Here was a fine opportunity they saw for getting in a blow against syndicate railways, and yet they would not take advantage of it, under the pretence that they would be breaking confidence. What confidence? The confidence of whom? The confidence of the man who was more or less a party to the scandal.

Mr. FISHER: Very ungenerous.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Ungenerous! Why, you have denounced these railways as scandals. You have threatened to go round and take credit for exposing this particular proposal as a scandal. Why have you not exposed it, then? You have been hand-and-glove with the scandal yourselves. You have kept the whole matter silent for thirteen months, and your late colleague—to serve his and your ends—has suppressed information which it was for the public good to make public. It has been pointed out to me that at the time when the company was floated Mr. Daniels's name did not appear as the holder of 650 shares.

Mr. FISHER: When.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: In July. And therefore he apparently waxed virtuous, and went to Mr. Kidston.

Mr. FISHER: That is the second company.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: At any rate the matter has not been explained, and I defy anyone to explain it on grounds which will reflect credit on those who have been mixed up

in the transaction. Mr. Daniels knew all about this attempt to suborn himself and his colleagues of the Labour party, and he cheerfully undertook the task of sounding the members of the party as to whether they, as a body or any individual members of the party, were open to be bribed. Evidently when Mr. Daniels agreed with Mr. Withers for a consideration to go round among the members of the Labour party and see how many of them for a consideration would consent to refrain from stonewalling the measure, he considered it was a perfectly reasonable proposition. I suppose he thought that some would say "That is all right"; others "No, I will not"; and others "How much?" He certainly did not indignantly refuse the offer which was made, but he undertook to sound his party on the subject.

Mr. FISHER: Look at the end of Mr. Withers's evidence.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You have to explain how it was this offer was conveyed by Mr. Daniels. It might have been known to members of the Labour party all along.

Mr. REID: No, it was not.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It might have been. I cannot answer for that. I only know that Mr. Daniels was expecting support from the Labour party. That comes out in his evidence.

Mr. REID: That he did not get it.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That he did not get the support that he thought he was entitled to. And he was not supported by the syndicate either, for he did not get the shares. And not getting them, and not finding the Labour party acting up to their principles of universal brotherhood, but instead of that buttoning up their pockets—although they were receiving £300 a year, and he was receiving nothing—he then took another course, which he thought might work out profitably to himself. As the shares were of no value in the market, and as the Labour party would not assist him in getting his seat, he thought, "Now, what can I do? Perhaps they will deal with me in reference to this little exposure. Doubtless they will be able to make something of it;" and, therefore, this letter was offered for an emergency. Here is where the personal comes in. Nothing was done about the matter for months. A piece of jobbery was known to the Labour party, and that formed a conspiracy of silence. I say that what the hon. member for Rockhampton and Mr. Daniels ought to have done—when they got hold of this fraudulent transaction—was to at once make it public, place themselves right with the public, and make known at once what schemes were going on. But when the hon. member brought this matter up a few months ago he was far more anxious to shield this guilty Withers and his ex-colleague than he was to do his duty to the public. His first duty to the public, if he believes in his own doctrines—doctrines that these walls have been echoing for months—was to prevent the colony being handed over to the tender mercies of syndicators. But the hon. member did not do that. He simply said, "I am not going to produce the name of the person who wrote the letter; I have no authority from the person who sent the letter"—

Mr. TURLEY: No—received the letter.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Or received the letter. Although the hon. member would have done a public service by giving the name, yet he suppressed it because, as he alluded, if he had given the name at that time, a select committee of this House would not have got some evidence which might have affected its decision. I say that, instead of the hon. member for Rockhampton doing his duty as an important member of the Labour party, or endeavouring to protect the

interest of the public, all he considered was this man, Daniels. Under those circumstances, I do not think that hon. members opposite are entitled to any praise for their action. They seemed very reluctant indeed to come forward in this matter, and they have only come forward at the last moment. They hushed the matter up all this time. The corruption has been going on for a very long time, and they knew that.

Mr. TURLEY: Who knew it?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The hon. member for Rockhampton has known it. At any rate this matter has been going on for a long time, and it did not appear to be their object to expose it. Their only object seemed to be to get some advantage—a party advantage possibly—and the object in the case of Mr. Daniels to get some shares. As long as they could make anything out of it they said nothing, but when it was found that Mr. Daniels could make nothing in the way of shares, that his name was off the books of the company, and that the Labour party were apparently not going to make anything by keeping quiet, then, when this railway is nearly through, they produce the letter as a stage property, and call upon everybody to come round and bless them, to pat them on the head and say what virtuous creatures they are. That business is not imposed upon me. I say that their clear duty was not to have hushed the matter up so long, but in order that these transactions should at once cease, to give the Government and the public proper information on the subject. What has been the action of the Government in the matter? If anybody is entitled to credit it is the Government, but I do not say that anyone is entitled to credit.

Mr. HIGGS: The Government introduced the Bill.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The Bill was a perfectly proper Bill as far as it was concerned, and the country will lose through this fraudulent transaction having taken place and the railway not being constructed. This railway would be as eminently beneficial to the people in the part of the colony where it was to be built as the railway extending from Brisbane to Cunnamulla is to the people in that part of the colony. There is nothing in the world the matter with the scheme, but there is something the matter with the way in which it is brought about. When reference was first made to this matter the Premier said, "Disclose it to me; give me any facts whatever in support of the statement, and I will instantly terminate any negotiations."

Mr. KIDSTON: Is that the unanimous opinion of your party?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I am talking of the opinion expressed by the Premier, and he speaks for the party; but I may say to the hon. member that if he will go and canvass the party individually he will find that one and all entirely agree with the promise made by the Premier, and with the action he has taken on the present occasion. Granting, as we do grant, that it will be a material loss to the colony not to have this railway constructed, I would have to point out that we have other matters to consider. We do not hush up information for twelve or thirteen months, and we consider that although the colony will suffer a material loss by the non-construction of this railway, yet we gain something in the way of honour and good repute, and we hold that that is a higher consideration. We hold that we should not be mixed up in shady transactions, no matter what advantages may ensue from those transactions. But hon. members opposite have bottled up this information for months—it is a wonder it did not eat out their vitals—and the moment they let the leader of this party have that information he

said, with the approval of his followers, "We will have nothing whatever to do with this transaction, whether the country loses or gains, as long as people attempt, directly or indirectly, to influence the legislature or to influence any person who may be considered fairly to have a chance of being a member of the legislature." I think that nothing can more clearly show the opinion of the Government with regard to transactions which are not straightforward than the action which they have taken in this matter. Their action has been prompt and spontaneous, and would have been taken months ago if hon. members opposite had been a little more frank, and had only considered public interests rather than personal and private interests.

\* Mr. REID (*Enoggera*): The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat was very anxious to get all the credit he possibly could for the Government for the spontaneous way in which the Premier has carried out the promise he made a few months ago. I have not heard one member on this side of the House try to detract in any way from the credit that may be given to the Government for their action in this matter. But hon. members opposite are not only anxious to get all the kudos they can for the virtuous indignation they have shown, but during the whole discussion have attempted to blacken members on this side, because the exposure came at the eleventh hour. It seems to me that the virtuous indignation assumed on the other side—

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Expressed, you mean.

Mr. REID: Assumed, I said. And I am making a speech, not the hon. member for Mackay. All the trouble with hon. members opposite appears to be that they have been compelled to withdraw the Bill at the eleventh hour. We know that this was the railway of all the private railways introduced by the Government which was going to do the most injury to the colony. As to the advisability of Mr. Daniels keeping this letter in his possession for such a long time, opinions may differ. But Mr. Daniels, like everybody else in this world, wanted to do the best he possibly could for himself. I do not mean in the way of accepting shares or a bribe from Mr. Withers. But he was fighting, and had been fighting for nearly two years, an uphill battle, in which he had received every opposition from the Government and others interested in the matter in which he was concerned; and I suppose he naturally thought that if he exposed this affair it would injure his chance of getting a select committee. I do not know any hon. member who, if he had such affairs in hand as Mr. Daniels,

[8.30 p.m.] would not have attempted to do the same thing. After all, the hon. member for Mackay was not exactly fair or just to Mr. Daniels in quoting his evidence. He left out one particular part of it. Mr. Daniels says—

I consider the letter was an attempt to bribe me, but I thought I would take it though I felt I was insulted. I took it with the view of letting it be known in Parliament that this sort of thing was going on. I did not make it public at once, because I thought that I would be declared elected by the tribunal, and would have been able to present the matter to the House myself.

Anybody who knows Mr. Daniels knows with what dramatic effect that gentleman would have produced a letter like this one. We can understand what a temptation it would be to Mr. Daniels to wait until he thought he would get back to the House to produce a letter from the agent of the British and Colonial Syndicate, offering him a bribe to try to stop the stonewalling of this Bill and endeavour to get others on his side of the House to allow it to go through. I do not blame Mr. Daniels for

that. I do not blame him for keeping that letter in his pocket, in order to produce a dramatic effect. Most politicians, more or less, like dramatic effects, and no one tries to get an effect of that kind more than the hon. member for Mackay. We have heard insinuations as against the hon. member for Rockhampton as regards one transaction. Why was that kept until to-day? No other member in this House would have been allowed to bring that in in the way it was brought in than the hon. member for Bulloo. If any member on this side of the House had brought forward a similar charge against a member on that side, the whole of the hon. members opposite would have been yelling "Shame."

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: No.

Mr. REID: I say emphatically yes. We should have had every one of them howling, and we would not have been able to get it in. The hon. member for Bulloo, however, comes here with his dirty bit of scandal, and, like a larrikin from the street, revels in the filth that he has produced.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. REID: There is not one member of this House, outside the seeming puritanical and virtuous politicians, who would wash his dirty linen in public in order to prove that the other fellow was dirtier than he was.

Mr. LEAHY: You tried to put me in that position.

Mr. REID: That is not borne out by the evidence. The evidence that Mr. Kidston gave was simply as to the words which Mr. Daniels had used to him himself.

Mr. LEAHY: Mr. Daniels could speak for himself.

Mr. REID: What about the bit of exposure you brought about? No one in the House takes any notice of it. It was beneath you to bring it in in the way you did. It is one of the worst blemishes on your political character that you did bring it in.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. REID: The hon. member for Bulloo made an interjection which I must refer to. He said that Mr. Kidston, somewhere near the close of his evidence, stated that he considered the hon. member for Bulloo a sort of intermediary between Mr. Withers and Daniels. I have read the evidence, and that is not borne out by it. Whatever may have been said, which is not printed, we do not know, and the hon. member for Bulloo does not know. Daniels states distinctly—

I met Leahy and Withers, and Leahy introduced me to Withers. I said, "I have often met Mr. Withers, with Mr. Sim." We talked about the election petition. Withers asked me how I was getting on with it. I told him I was getting on all right.

I say that Mr. Kidston was absolutely compelled, in giving evidence before the judge, to introduce the matters that Daniels had stated to him. Daniels said that he had been talking over the matter with the hon. member for Bulloo, who was a member of the tribunal, and he (Daniels) was likely to become a member of the House again. Of course, whether Daniels was telling the truth I do not know. That is his evidence, and the hon. member for Rockhampton was compelled to state what Daniels had stated to him. In doing that he did not give any opinion of his own. It was stated by the hon. member for Mackay that the hon. member for Rockhampton was practically guilty of entering into a conspiracy with Daniels to keep the letter back. I knew nothing about the matter until the letter was read here the other night, except that Mr. Kidston had received a letter in confidence from a certain individual, and the Premier said if he would produce the letter he would withdraw the Bill. Mr. Kidston said he could not do that,

because the individual to whom it was written would not allow him to do so. That was the position which Mr. Kidston was in. If he had got up and said that he had seen a letter sent to Daniels, showing that Withers had offered Daniels shares in the company, without being able to produce the letter, the disclosure would have been met with laughter from the hon. gentlemen opposite. They would have ridiculed the idea of Withers approaching a man like Daniels. They would have simply treated the whole thing as a huge joke, and laughed it out of court. If Mr. Kidston had produced the letter in August, the other side would simply have laughed at it.

The PREMIER: Why did not you refer to it last week?

Mr. REID: My opinion is that hon. members on the other side would have laughed in August last at that letter being written to Daniels, because they would have scorned the idea of Daniels being thought to be able to influence members of the House. That hon. members have now been brought to regard it seriously is due to all the talk that there has been about these Bills, and the innuendoes and insinuations which have been thrown out as to certain members having been approached. The thing was worked up until it has reached a climax. The other night the hon. member for Rockhampton produced the letter, but he would not even give it to the Attorney-General; and you, Sir, scorned to have anything to do with the dirty article. The Attorney-General was so afraid to touch it that he wanted it put in a sealed envelope so as to not have his fingers soiled. That was the dramatic part of it, and it is not until after the exposure before a judge that we find the Government dropping the Bill. Naturally they would do so after such an exposure. I do not wish to detract in any way from the action of the Government in throwing over this Bill; but I wish to refer to the remark of the hon. member for Mackay, who said that the colony would lose a great deal through this Bill being dropped. If that is so, why not go on with the Bill? There is no proof that any hon. member of this House has been influenced—there is nothing in black and white to show that Mr. Withers has influenced any hon. member in connection with this Normanton-Cloncurry Bill; so why not go on with it? The insinuation is that the agent of this company has tried to influence hon. members; but there is no knowing how far that insinuation goes. I know that a similar proposal has been made by Mr. Withers, accompanied by a member of the House, to a gentleman of influence, in his office.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Name, name!

Mr. REID: I can't give his name. Mr. Withers tried to influence that gentleman and I don't blame him. Mr. Withers was sent out here with the object of his trying to do all he could to get this British-colonial company's business passed by this House. Mr. Withers went to this gentleman, who is not here now, and made certain offers to him, and said that all expenses attached to the matter the company would bear. That gentleman did not do as Mr. Daniels did, try and trap Mr. Withers; he opened the door, and told him and the hon. member of this House to go outside. And when the letter was read by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, I was watching that same hon. member, and I noticed that he bleached very much and shrunk into his seat. And when the name of the writer of the letter was mentioned he withered still more. I was watching him all the time, and I found out afterwards that two persons in the gallery noticed his demeanour at the time,

Hon. A. S. COWLEY : You had better give his name.

Mr. REID : There is no necessity for me to give his name. I have certain documentary evidence, but—

Hon. A. S. COWLEY : Other hon. members labour under suspicion.

Mr. REID : Hon. members opposite are very anxious to hear the name ; but I am not prepared to give it now. I may say that I was confirmed in my impression of that hon. member's demeanour by what two individuals who were in the gallery afterwards told me—there is no need to give their names. I do not blame Mr. Withers. He has been sent here to do all he can to get this Bill passed for the benefit of his company. So what is the use of trying to throw dust in the eyes of the public ? It all depends on his idea of what is right and what is wrong, and Mr. Withers thought, no doubt, he was justified in trying to influence hon. members by offering them shares, as he believed the passing of this Bill would be a great blessing to the country. Probably he thought, like many other people do, that he was justified in doing a little evil that greater good might come. The hon. member for Bulloo has referred to the hon. member for Rockhampton floating a company in Brisbane, and to his not producing a certain document ; but it is well known that most of these mining companies put up prospectuses in order to gull investors. Anyone who has been on a mining field knows that. I may say that I never had ls. invested in any of these mining companies.

The PREMIER : You are a very lucky man.

Mr. REID : I don't know. I may have been lucky in not losing anything, but I may have been unlucky in having nothing to lose. There is no justification for the attack of the hon. member for Bulloo on the hon. member for Rockhampton. Go anywhere you like, you will always see how investors are gulled and induced to go into such schemes. Personally I know absolutely nothing about the matter the hon. member for Bulloo referred to. I have heard insinuations and remarks about it ; but I don't know whether they are correct. This mining business is the same all the world over ; and if it was not for the faith the public have in mining speculations, there would be no mining at all. The hon. member for Mackay has accused hon. members on this side with being conspirators with Mr. Kidston and Mr. Daniels in regard to this letter, and that has been insinuated by several speakers. Mr. Daniels states that he consulted with other members of this party on the matter ; but I don't know who they are. I don't know one member of this party outside the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, who knew the writer of this letter until his name was disclosed by the leader of the Opposition. Mr. Kidston took the letter out of his pocket and showed it to the leader of this party, and—

Mr. BROWNE : He handed it to me, and told me I could make what use I liked of it.

Mr. REID : I do not think there is anything in the insinuations that have been thrown out. As soon as the name of the writer of this letter was given, the Premier knew he had to take certain action, and certain action was taken. Then why these insinuations and innuendoes ? And why should all the mud be thrown at this side ? We are not to blame for Daniels keeping it back for thirteen months. Mr. Kidston had pledged his word not to give it away until Daniels said he might, and according to his own statement he did not get possession of the letter until the other night.

The PREMIER : He got it before that. He got it in September.

Mr. REID : He had only a copy of it before, and he said he did not get the original document until that afternoon, when he knew it was the last chance he would have of bringing it before the House. This side of the House is as clear of any charge generally of suppressing it as the Premier himself, though the hon. member for Mackay said it was kept back for party purposes.

The PREMIER : Look at Mr. Kidston's evidence. He says—

After the select committee was granted on the 13th September, and before the end of September I asked Daniels to give me possession of the letter for my own protection. He gave me the letter—

Mr. REID : I see that he did give him the letter. I thought he had only a copy of it then. But the point is that he did not give him authority to use it. We have had a great deal from the other side about codes of honour and the high position the House should rise to. That sort of thing tickles my fancy. It is always the same, and the fellow who thinks he is right lectures the fellow he thinks is wrong, when it all depends on the individual himself. The hon. member for Rockhampton had the letter in September, but he had not permission to use it.

The PREMIER : He did not want to use it until the select committee presented their report.

Mr. REID : I am coming to that. I say that members on this side have a great deal of sympathy for the late hon. member for Cambooya, because they know he was cheated out of his seat by swindling and fraud at the last general election. The evidence shows that he has had a very hard fight, and, like everything in politics, everyone tries to do the best he can for himself, and I can well understand Daniels thinking that if the letter was produced it might create resentment against him, and lessen his chance of getting the select committee he wanted. I am very glad it has come out in the way it did. With regard to Daniels and his transactions with Withers, I can quite understand people letting such approaches be made to them with the honest and sincere intention of exposing them afterwards, to show what people are capable of doing ; but when a man gets into a position like that, we know what people will say about it, and however honest Daniels may have been in the matter, we know that most people would say in such a case that he would have stuck to it only the company was not floated, and he fell in, and then gave the other fellow away. Daniels says that he was leading on Withers, and knowing Daniels, I know that he would do a thing like that.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY : Where do you find that ?

Mr. REID : You will find it in his evidence.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY : I wish you would read it.

Mr. REID : He says, "I consider the letter was an attempt to bribe me, but I thought I would take it though I felt I was insulted. I took it with the view of letting it be known in Parliament that this sort of thing was going on." That is his explanation. As I stated before, Daniels might, perhaps, have brought this before Parliament at once ; but if he went to the Press and produced the letter, or, after the House opened, went to the Premier and produced it, I think I can see the Premier's quiet smile, as he would say, "Look here, don't you think he has been pulling your leg a bit ?" Then Daniels would get indignant, and the Premier would laugh at him, because he would not have thought that Withers could be such a fool.

The PREMIER : Withers did not know Daniels when he wrote that letter.

Mr. REID : That is so. He did not know him as well as the Premier knows him, at any rate. Here is a shrewd gentleman like Withers,

imported specially to take the colonials down, and he falls in over little Daniels. (Laughter.) But it is just in keeping with what, the hon. gentleman knows as well as I do, these people have done in connection with their mining investments, in sending out newchums, who have burst the whole thing up by their bad management of the mines. I do not know that I have anything more to say, and I do not know that all this discussion was necessary at all. I thought it was going to close at 5 o'clock, and that we would get on with other business; but the other side, who are so very anxious not to waste time, have been only too glad of the opportunity to do a little bit of mud slinging at the Labour party. When the Cloncurry Bill was not to be gone on with, they had a free afternoon, and they were let off the hobbles. One thing is that this side of the House has succeeded, through the Premier standing to his word and the action of the Government, and I give them full credit for it. Whatever way the result has been brought about, and whether Daniels was to blame for suppressing the letter, and Withers for writing it, I am glad that the result has been that it has come out, and even at the eleventh hour has been the means of blocking one of the most obnoxious measures ever brought before this House. It is a measure that I stated from

the first I was distinctly opposed to, because I was convinced that it was going to do a great injury to

the colony which the people who did not know that Northern part of the colony did not realise. The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is a thoroughly good Bill.

Mr. REID: Hon. members opposite may be quite convinced that the Bill would do the colony an enormous amount of good.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am quite convinced of it.

Mr. REID: I believe myself that most of the hon. members opposite are beyond taking bribes.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Thank you.

Mr. REID: The hon. member need not thank me in that sneering way, because I really do believe that. I know the high and honourable individual from Herbert may think that he is so high and so honourable that no syndicator would approach him. I do not believe they would. I believe that no syndicate would for a moment approach the majority of hon. members opposite. There may be hon. members in this House, like other individuals in the community, who may be hard up and in straitened circumstances, and who would not mind a friendly hand being held out to them. I do not say there are, but there may be, and I do not believe that any member in this House so situated is more above that kind of thing than the man in the street. I am glad indeed that this Bill has been withdrawn, but I cannot congratulate the hon. member for Bulloo in dragging in matter which has nothing to do with the subject. I can only tell that hon. member that if every private transaction of members is going to be dragged forth in this House we are going to have a particularly lively time of it. I can assure you that this will be the best theatrical company that has ever entered Brisbane if all private affairs are to be dragged into the light, and advantage taken of the privileges of this House to introduce slanderous attacks upon hon. members, and I know which side of the House will suffer most. I say those sort of things should be beneath hon. members. The introduction of such matter does no credit to the individual concerned and no credit to the House which listens to such attacks.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about your insinuations towards members on this side?

Mr. REID: The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that insinuations in political speeches

are more or less fireworks, but all the insinuations and innuendoes that have come over here to-day from the other side of the House will not have the effect of hiding the true phase of this matter. I know they are thrown across here to try and damage the effect of the explosion which has occurred in connection with this private railway scheme, but hon. members do not believe what they have said. It suits them to indulge in that sort of thing, and they indulge in it more or less to hide their disappointment at losing this railway Bill. I was told this morning that the Government side were going to wipe the floor with this side on account of this effort to introduce bribery into this Chamber. Well, I do not see that they have succeeded very well.

Mr. STEWART: Do you not feel white?

Mr. REID: No; I do not feel white, and I do not feel disgraced. I am very glad the whole thing has dropped, and it would not matter to me if Daniels had kept the matter back for two years. I am not concerned with him at all. Mr. Withers wrote the letter, and that is sufficient for me. It was written with the intention of influencing members on this side, and he might have tried the same on the other side for all I know. Whether he did or not does not matter. The main thing, to my mind, is that the Bill has been dropped.

Mr. ANNEAR: One of the best measures ever introduced.

Mr. BROWNE: We will pass a vote of thanks to the Premier.

Mr. REID: It may be one of the best measures ever introduced, and hon. members opposite may be sincere enough in their belief that it would be of great assistance to the Northern portion of the colony. I will not enter into that matter now.

Mr. ANNEAR: Can the country make the line?

Mr. REID: If it will pay a syndicate to do so it will pay the country to do it, and considering the short time during which we have had responsible government in this country, and the marvellous strides we have made without the aid of syndicates, I think we can well afford to do without them. In fact, if we continue to make the same progress during the next forty years that we have made in the past forty, there is no reason why this should not be the wealthiest and most prosperous colony of the group. We have consistently opposed these syndicates because we believe that they corrupt the political life of the colony. We have pointed out over and over again that wherever they have got the thin end of the wedge in they have introduced bribery and corruption into the legislatures of the other colonies and America. I am glad for the sake of the people of Queensland that this fraud has been exposed, and I trust it will be a lesson to our public men to leave syndicates alone, let the colony go on its natural course, and let other countries if they like devote themselves to syndicate swindles.

\* Hon. A. S. COWLEY (Herbert): I intend to vote for the motion before the House, and I heartily congratulate the Premier on bringing it forward.

Mr. LESINA: Hear, hear! The first member on your side who has done so.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: I think the action of the Premier and the Secretary for Railways should be commended by every hon. member in the House, and all the more because it is in strong contrast to the action which has been shown to have taken place in connection with other transactions. Mr. Withers has proved that he is both a fool and a knave, and no one could speak in terms of too strong condemnation of his action. I think he is a disgrace to any community. I have no doubt that through Mr.

Withers's action many innocent people will suffer, and I am certainly of opinion that the country generally will suffer, and especially that portion of it through which this proposed railway would have run. The people in the Cloncurry district have been languishing for railway communication for many years. Unfortunately, when the House voted the money for the construction of that railway, the Ministry of the day did not carry it out, and the hopes of the people of the district had been centred on the scheme which has now come to an end just as it was within their grasp. For that reason I deeply sympathise with them. But, in my opinion, there was no other course open to the Government than the course which they propose to follow, and in that I intend to support them. Mr. Withers's action is most contemptible, and so, I may say, is the action of Mr. Daniels a former member of this House. I regret that any man who has occupied a seat in this House should have proved himself such a consummate scoundrel and rogue as Mr. Daniels has done. He deliberately connived with Mr. Withers to accept a certain sum of money offered for a specific purpose.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: Mr. Daniels has shown most conclusively in his evidence that he was prepared to take the money and the shares. Speaking of his election petition, he said—

Withers asked me how I was getting on with it. I told him I was getting on all right. I said, for this reason, "Certain ballot-papers must be thrown out as informal." I said, "We have three candidates in the field," and I showed him certain ballot-papers, and said if they were thrown out I would have a majority. I then grumbled about having to fight an important question like this on my own behalf, as I considered the Labour party should be helping me to fight it. I said I was short of money, and had great work to get the necessary money to keep the case going. "and you can take it from me, if I get in, I will look after myself from this out."

MR. HARDACRE: He was pulling his leg then.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: It is all very well for the hon. member to say that "he was pulling his leg." If he was pulling his leg he was trying to induce him to commit a dishonourable action, and, even looking at it from that standpoint, hon. members must admit that it was a disgraceful thing to do. But I take it in another way—that Mr. Daniels intimated to him, "I am open to a bribe; if I get into the House you can take it from me that I will look after myself from this time henceforth." It was shown clearly later on that Mr. Daniels was prepared to accept anything that was offered to him, and I think he was very sorry that he did not get what was offered. The action of both Mr. Withers and Mr. Daniels is contemptible and beneath our notice. I am also of opinion that the action of the hon. member for Rockhampton in connection with this matter is also contemptible.

MR. LESINA: I rise to a point of order. Is an hon. member in order in describing the action of any member of this House as contemptible?

THE SPEAKER: The language is such as ought not to be applied to the conduct of a member of this House.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: I withdraw the word "contemptible," and say that the action of the hon. member for Rockhampton is open to very grave question as to its integrity. The hon. member admits that he was made acquainted with this matter some time ago. I say—and I believe every member of this House and every right-thinking man throughout the country will agree with me—that there was only one course open to the hon. member when that information was imparted to him, and that course was immediately to have made that information known, and not to have allowed a single day to

have passed without making it known to the Government or the House. I do not believe there is a single member, at any rate on this side, who would have kept that information for one hour without giving it either to the Premier or some other member of the Ministry. It is the bounden duty of every member of the House to uphold the honour and reputation of the House and of every member of the House, and where any transaction of this description becomes known to an hon. member he should, if he is worthy of a seat in the House, immediately make it known. I cannot think that the hon. member for Rockhampton is blameless in this matter. I feel sure that had he acted as any honourable man would have acted he would at once have communicated the information to the Premier or the House. I am borne out in this by the statements made by the hon. member for Bulloo, who supported his statements by documents. The hon. member for Enoggera stated that the hon. member for Bulloo dealt in scandal, and that he had raised a scandal in connection with the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston. All I can say is that if it is a scandal he proved it up the hilt. It was not a scandal on the part of the hon. member for Bulloo, but it was a grave scandal on the part of the hon. member for Rockhampton. The documents that were produced and read to the House prove conclusively that the action of the hon. member in that matter was most disgraceful and dishonourable.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. A. S. COWLEY: At any rate his action was most unbecoming, and unworthy of a member of this House. The hon. member for Bulloo showed conclusively that the hon. member for Rockhampton, acting on behalf of a syndicate, deliberately signed a document admitting that he had suppressed a certain valuable report, and that on the strength of other reports the mine was sold. The one report which would have prevented the mine being sold—a report by a responsible officer of the Queensland Government—was suppressed by the hon. member with the knowledge of the men with whom he was associated. The hon. member, and the other members of his syndicate, signed a document to that effect, and that document is now before this House. The hon. member for Bulloo has offered to lay it on the table, so that any hon. member could read it. No hon. member has attempted to disprove the statement of the hon. member for Bulloo, or to say that it was untrue or incorrect in any part.

MR. HARDACRE: We know nothing about it.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: Hon. members can read the document for themselves. The document speaks for itself, and will be read by every man who is interested in Queensland politics and in the doings of members of this House, and everyone will be able to draw his own deductions from it, so that it is unnecessary for me to say any more on the subject. I regret exceedingly that this thing has taken place. It is a terrible thing that the honour of our public men should be besmirched. I am delighted that the Premier has shown himself equal to the occasion, that he has upheld the honour of the House, and that he has shown to adventurers of a like mind to that of Mr. Withers that, whatever men outside the House may do, the Government of Queensland is pure, and intends to remain pure, and that if any transaction occurs affecting the honour of the House and the members of the House, the Government will immediately take the necessary action to show the persons concerned that they, at any rate, will not countenance it. I intend to support the motion before the House.

MR. LESINA (Clermont): I was very pleased to hear the hon. member who has just resumed

his seat start off by giving the Premier, and other persons connected with this exposure, credit for being animated by the loftiest and sincerest impulses. But I regret to say that before the conclusion of his address he became rather heated, and appeared to be animated more by bias and partisan feeling than by that calm consideration which ought to inspire an ex-Speaker and ex-Minister who poses as an authority on political etiquette in this Chamber. At the beginning of his remarks I interjected "Hear, hear," because up to that time he was the fairest-minded speaker on that side of the House. It is curious how the hon. member endeavoured to impress upon members of this Chamber and upon the public outside that when a person who represents the interests of some big men in London, who have formed themselves into a company with a capital of £2,000,000, who has been their agent in this colony for three years, and who has been in communication with this Government since 1897, is proved before a dispassionate judge to have attempted to bribe and influence members of Parliament, there is only one member on that side of the House who gets up and condemns the thing right out. I should naturally suppose that the province of members of this Chamber, when an exposure of this kind is made, is to get up and—apart from mere party considerations—denounce it in the hottest and the strongest language that it is possible to use in an assemblage of this character. Instead of that, what do they do? There is a fish called the cuttle fish. It is remarkable for the peculiarity or characteristic, that when it is pursued and driven into a corner it exudes a kind of inky liquid for the purpose of discolouring the water, and under cover of this inky discolouration it escapes. The tactics of hon. members on the other side remind me of the cuttle-fish. They are political cuttle-fish. Having been driven into a corner by this particular exposure, with the idea of escaping the proper condemnation they will certainly get in the country, they try to cloud over the issue by pouring slander upon the hon. member for Rockhampton. That, however, has nothing to do with the matter at issue. We have the report of Judge Mansfield, and that is what we have to deal with. He is a cool, dispassionate English judge, paid by the people of Queensland, and he has their confidence. He looks at the evidence placed before him, and this is his decision, and I would be content to accept that decision even if I sat on the other side of the Chamber. He says—

From the evidence taken in this matter it appears that Henry John Withers has for the last three years been acting in Queensland as the representative of the British Colonial Railways Corporation, which is the applicant for the Normanton-Cloncurry Railway Bill.

We had a paper laid on the table of the House containing the correspondence dealing with this particular line, and in that is a letter sent by Mr. Jeremiah Lyon, chairman of the British Colonial Railways Corporation, Limited. It contains a paragraph to this effect—

The company of which I am chairman have sent out an accredited representative, Mr. H. J. Withers, now in Queensland, with a view to obtain a contract from your Government, under the Land Act of 1892. We are prepared to comply with the requirements of that Act; but, as a matter of fact, the scheme will be a much larger one, involving a capital of something like £2,000,000.

That was written to Sir Hugh Nelson, then Premier of Queensland. On the first page of this particular document, I find a letter dated 9th April, 1897, from Frederick T. Brentnall to the Minister for Railways, then the Hon. J. R. Dickson, the present Chief Secretary, in which Mr. Brentnall points out that Mr. H. J. Withers

was presented by him to the Hon. R. Philp on 4th December, and his object in coming to Queensland was to arrange, under the terms of the Land Act of 1892, for the construction of a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry. Mr. Withers was the representative of the company, and he was entitled to act on their behalf, and according to Mr. Daniels he had £60,000 to expend in promoting the passage of this Bill.

Mr. KEOGH: Who got the money?

Mr. LESINA: I want to know where this money has been expended. Mr. Withers is a plain business man, a man who has the confidence of his company—a company which consists of such persons as Sir William Ingram, Bart., London; Sir Saul Samuel, Bart., London; Sir Robert G. W. Herbert, G.C.B., London; Sir Edwin Dawes, K.C.M.G., British India S.S. Company, etc.; Sir Alfred Seale Haslam, Derby; Hon. Henry S. Littleton, director Union Bank, P. and O.S.S. Company; W. K. D'Arcy, director Mount Morgan; T. S. Hall, director Mount Morgan; Vicomte de Satge de St. Jean, Norwich; Oscar de Satge and Thomas Rome, directors of the Union Mortgage and Agency Company, Limited.

Mr. LEAHY: There is no such company.

Mr. LESINA: Not the Union Mortgage Company, Limited?

Mr. LEAHY: No.

Mr. HARDACRE: It has only changed its name.

Mr. LEAHY: There are no such directors, either.

Mr. LESINA: They are on this list. Then there is Edmund J. Doxat, chairman of Dalgety and Co., Limited, and sundry other persons. It cannot be said that Mr. Withers is not a representative man. Daniels said that he told him he had £60,000 to expend, and that £60,000 was advanced by this company for the purpose of promoting the passage of this Bill through the House. We know that it is the custom in the old country for hundreds of thousands of pounds to be spent on promoting railway legislation. Royal Commission after Royal Commission has shown that. In giving £60,000 to promote the passage of this Bill through this Chamber, the company were merely going upon English precedent, but whereas they would require £100,000 in England, a paltry £60,000 would do out here. Mr. Withers had to influence two things—the Press and the Parliament—and if there are any more powerful weapons or engines for pushing ahead private speculations of private individuals, than the Press and the Parliament, I should like to know what they are. He bought as much of the Press as he could lay his hands on, and he then turned his eyes upon the politicians, of whom there are always some impecunious ones, ready to sell themselves to the highest bidder. If Mr. Withers is a fool and a knave, as the hon. member for Herbert pointed out, it is curious how quickly that is found out, the moment the champagne becomes flat and the banquets at the Gresham are no longer possible. That Henry Daniels expected that he would come back to this Chamber sooner or later, Judge Mansfield makes clear. He says—

Withers says he does not remember Daniels telling him he had a chance of becoming a member; but Daniels says he told him, and I think it hardly possible that Withers could, in his position, have been ignorant of the fact that Daniels had, at any rate, some chance of becoming a member, as he admits Daniels told him of his election troubles, and he would have been sure to mention his object in petitioning and his chances of success.

Withers made this offer to Daniels because, as he says, Daniels had been connected with Parliament, and had previously told him he could prevent members stonewalling the Bill and because he wanted him to get others not to stonewall the Bill.

Daniels says that he promised not to stonewall the Bill if Withers gave him the share and paid the money for him.

This Withers denies; but if Withers knew Daniels had a chance of becoming a member he would have been sure to get Daniels's promise not to stonewall himself, as well as his promise to prevent others doing so.

That is the opinion of the judge in whose hands we were content to leave the matter, and I will stake His Honour's opinion against that of the hon. member for Bulloo.

Mr. LEAHY: He would have a lovely time to make you stop stonewalling.

Mr. LESINA: I will stake his honourable opinion against that of the hon. member for Bulloo, or any other member who has spoken on this question. We are all more or less concerned in this fact that this gentleman approached Mr. Daniels—if this attorney for this big English syndicate offered what he says he offered him. That is, that when the Bill became law he was to receive £125 in cash, and 650 paid-up shares, valued at £2 each, when the company was formed. In fact, if this Bill went through the Chamber

the shares would at once jump to [9.30 p.m.] over £2, so that these promoters—whose agents have been filling the lobbies for months past, and who were doing their utmost, both inside and outside the Chamber, to secure the passage of this legislation—would stand to make an excellently good thing out of legislation of this character. If hon. members will look back for a month or two, when the second reading of this Bill was on, they will remember that hon. members on this side quoted the experience of America, England, and Europe in connection with the passing of legislation of this nature. They will remember it was stated that the lobbies there were filled with the agents and the promoters of such companies. The same has been the case in Queensland just recently. Where before in the history of the colony have we seen such a crowd filling our galleries and lobbies? At present we have only lifted a corner of the curtain. It is a very frayed, dirty curtain that hangs between the public and the Government. It is rather broken in places, and through it we can see some of the peculiar transactions of the Government. There is the Queensland National Bank business, the Barron Falls transaction, the Seaforth Estate, the Clarendon Estate, the leasing of the Cairns wharf, the North Chillagoe prospectus business, and we should not forget this one, which is the granddaddy of the lot. These are half-a-dozen items that we should not forget; and it is time that people should consider whether this Government is perfectly pure and spotless or not. The Government has made a virtue of necessity. What expression of indignation would the public have made use of if the Government had not withdrawn this Bill? As the leader of the Opposition pointed out, this Bill was only the pilot fish that would lead the way to the big shark; but this shark has got into a net made of strong network bribery from which it cannot escape. When we see a man like Mr. Withers, who has £60,000 at his command, offering Mr. Daniels £125 cash and 650 shares in this company, which are valued at £2 each, what might not any members of this Chamber be offered if they were willing to accept a bribe the moment the Bill passed? As I have said before, this syndicate legislation is a curse all the world over. It poisons the wellsprings of national life; it leads to corruption in public life; and—if I may use the term—it makes political prostitutes of representative members of the community. It is a kind of thing that we should set our faces against on every occasion. As long as I am in this Chamber I shall always condemn the introduction of this

foreign element into our politics, because it does harm to the people of any community and it leads to the degradation of Parliament. I interjected when the Premier was speaking, "Why not prosecute this man?" and I now ask will he be prosecuted?

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Prosecute the three of them.

Mr. LESINA: No; there is nothing to justify the prosecution of Mr. Daniels or of the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston. The evidence condemns Mr. Withers only. Judge Mansfield says in his report—

In my opinion, this offer to Daniels was made as a bribe to induce him to abstain from stonewalling himself and to use his influence to prevent others doing so—that is to say, to induce Daniels, from a hope of pecuniary gain and not from conviction, to act in such a way as to make the passing of the Railway Bill more probable.

No mention is made there of the position of Mr. Daniels or the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston. These gentlemen acted on their own initiative, and the judge does not condemn them in any way. In connection with the "faking" of the Chillagoe prospectus, Mr. Duffy was condemned as being primarily responsible for that, and in this case Mr. Withers has been condemned on his own evidence, and by the letter he wrote himself. Why should Mr. Daniels and the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, be dragged into the matter in this way? Mr. Daniels tells us distinctly that he would have liked the letter he read to have become public property earlier. He says—

I did not make it public at once, because I thought that I would be elected by the tribunal, and would have been able to present the matter to the House myself. I did not make it public when I found I was not to be elected, because Parliament was in recess. Then I got Mr. Kidston to move for a select committee to inquire into the late Cambooya election, and from what Mr. Withers told me about certain members being shareholders in this company, I thought it might injure my chances of getting a select committee to inquire into the Cambooya election if the letter was brought forward first.

Is it likely that a man who was fighting for a seat in this House would throw obstacles in his own way? He thought the publication of that letter then might prejudice his case. The tribunal decided in favour of Muckintosh, so he could not place the facts before the Chamber; and when the hon. member for Rockhampton read the letter he had no authority from Mr. Daniels to disclose the name of the writer. It was held back until it was revealed at the recent inquiry. But it has not come too late, for the public have been saved from the passage of a Bill which has been buttressed up by men who have £60,000 to buy support for it. It does not matter that the withdrawal of this Bill hurts Northern Queensland, or that some employment will not be given, so long as we have saved this Chamber and the colony from the passage of this Bill. I think we on this side have done all that is necessary. We have vindicated the honour of Parliament; we have vindicated the rights of hon. members; and we have exposed this man Withers. I thought that we could have looked for a little more than ordinary support from hon. members opposite. I think hon. members opposite should have risen one after the other and admitted that Mr. Daniels and the hon. member for Rockhampton had done good work, instead of making pettifogging personal attacks on the hon. member for Rockhampton, as some hon. members opposite have done. There seemed to me to be an undertone—a monotone of sorrow in the speeches of hon. members opposite that the Bill would not go through. And I was particularly surprised at the waspish and venomous utterances of the hon. member for Bulloo with regard to the hon.

member for Rockhampton. He was repeatedly called to order, and he had to withdraw several remarks which were derogatory to the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston. Why was the hon. member so envenomed at the hon. member for Rockhampton's discovery of this corrupt business?

Mr. ANNEAR: Why is his name brought so prominently forward by Judge Mansfield?

Mr. LESINA: That cannot be helped. I would like any hon. member to point out any part of the evidence taken before Judge Mansfield which shows that either Mr. Daniels or the hon. member for Rockhampton were inspired with any desire to injure the hon. member for Bulloo, who, it is said, is prominently connected with this and other syndicates.

Mr. LEAHY: Where do you get that?

Mr. LESINA: That is the inference people draw.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I never heard it before.

Mr. LESINA: Probably not. The hon. member for Cook only hears things when it suits him. However, Mr. Daniels says that he was introduced to Mr. Withers by the hon. member for Bulloo.

Mr. LEAHY: He says he was introduced by Mr. Sim.

Mr. LESINA: I know that Mr. Withers denies that the hon. member for Bulloo introduced him to Mr. Daniels, and says that it was the late hon. member for Carpentaria, Mr. Sim, who introduced them.

Mr. LEAHY: Mr. Daniels says so, too.

Mr. LESINA: I remember, in reading the evidence, that he makes reference to them both; but that is not the material point. The real point is that this House entirely agrees with the opinion expressed by Judge Mansfield, and with the action of the Premier in redeeming his promise that if, after an independent inquiry, he was satisfied that there was anything crooked or corrupt attempted in the passage of this Bill, he would drop the Bill. I was glad to hear the hon. gentleman say, in the manly speech he made this afternoon, that he would not only withdraw the Bill, but would decline to have any further dealings with Withers as representing this or any other syndicate in Queensland or out of Queensland. I think he has taken the right stand in that, and I will support him in it. Every member on this side will support him in that action, and we trust there will be no more transactions entered into by this or any other Government of Queensland with a person named Withers—it matters not on whose behalf he appears. For three long years this Government have been altogether too much bound up with this gentleman who has sat behind your chair, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. STEWART: Beware of Withers! (Laughter.)

Mr. LESINA: Week after week he has sat in the lobby there listening to the discussion upon measures going through this Chamber in connection with private railways, and we have frequently seen the Secretary for Railways go out and consult with him, and then come back with his back stiffened to take up an attitude opposed to us.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Never! Not on one single occasion.

Mr. LESINA: It was common talk in the Chamber, and common talk in the country, and people were beginning to come to the conclusion that Parliament had abrogated its sovereign rights, and had been handed over, body and soul, to a group of irresponsible boodlers and to their champion Withers. That was the impression, but I am glad to see that Withers has broken himself. I am glad that through the instrumentality of a Labour man he has fallen into the trap that was set for him, that he

has been held with a grip of steel, and has been held up this evening to the scorn of this House and of the country. We have succeeded in beating Withers and his syndicate and the Cloncurry Railway Bill, which is now in the waste-paper basket, and under the circumstances we can claim credit for checking the growth in this colony of these syndicate proposals, which never thrive so luxuriantly as when they are fed with the juice with which Withers tried to feed Daniels, and with which he fed members on the other side, for aught I know. As for the hon. member for Rockhampton, whether he has been right or not in this matter, is of no consequence to me. I would denounce him as freely as anyone else if I thought there was occasion to do so, but we are not dealing with that matter now, but with Judge Mansfield's report, and to that we should stick. I hope the House will pass this motion, and rid Queensland of this wretched growth which is calculated to poison the life springs of the colony.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (Cook): The action of the Premier in refusing to proceed with this measure directly he had reason to believe that improper influences were being used, should convince the country that this party will be no party to any shady transactions.

Mr. RYLAND: When they are found out.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: The Premier said that if it could be shown that any attempt had been made to bribe any member in connection with any of these Bills he would at once drop any syndicate railway in connection with which that had been proved. In spite of the numerous charges made by members opposite in connection with all these railways, this is the only one bit of evidence that has been brought forward.

Mr. RYLAND: There is more to follow.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I do not believe there is a word of truth in that statement, and unless the man who makes a statement like that has evidence, and brings it forward, we will know what to think of him. The Premier's challenge was that if any attempt was proved to have been made to bribe a member, he would drop the line in connection with which that was shown, and although even that has not been proved in this case, the Premier has not stuck to the letter of his challenge, but considering that the agent has been guilty of improper conduct, he has at once dropped this railway, with his endorsement of the whole of the members of his party.

Mr. FISHER: Where do you find that it was to be "a member"?

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I recollect what was said.

Mr. FISHER: Find it.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Let the hon. member find it for himself. We know it is the whole policy of the Labour party to make these charges, but we have never seen them have the manliness to produce evidence in justification of their statements, and an individual who makes charges of this kind, and makes no attempt to prove them, is a scoundrel and nothing else. With regard to Daniels, we know the opinion of Mr. Justice Real about him—one of the most respected judges in Queensland—after listening to his evidence. His Honour: "I do not think you have improved that character by the manner in which you have brought forward evidence in this case. You have kept information back which you could have produced. It is a peculiarity of the mind that every mind has to be judged by itself. It is the peculiarity of yours that you seem to take the view that you can win this election by suppressing the truth." It is evident, therefore, that this is an old game of Mr. Daniels. The judge again says, "Any means that are honest according to your lights,

but I must tell you that I do not think that suppressing a fact in a case of personation, when you know it, is an honest thing." It is impossible to believe a word the man says. Not only does Judge Real's remarks prove this, but the member for Bulloo does also when, in reply to Mr. Daniels's evidence that the member for Bulloo and he were friends, and that he relied on getting his seat back on the strength of statements made by the member for Bulloo that he must win, the member for Bulloo showed that the very first man who was struck off the list of assessors by Mr. Daniels was himself. Or refer again to the evidence given by him before Judge Mansfield. When asked why he had kept secret the existence of this letter for such a long time, he replied, "I did not make it public when I found I was not to be elected, because Parliament was in recess." One lie will show how the wind blows as well as forty, and reference to *Hansard* will show that Parliament was not in recess when he found he was not to be elected, as the verdict of the Elections Tribunal was given on the 22nd December, and Parliament sat until the 29th December. Mr. Daniels forgot that, and he gave as a reason what he knew at the time was a lie when he said he had kept the letter secret, because the verdict in his case was given after Parliament rose. The hon. gentleman who last spoke said that someone should be prosecuted. That is true; Daniels should be prosecuted for perjury. There is no doubt that he did commit perjury, for the verdict was given on the 22nd December, and Parliament was sitting for a week after. But what was his real reason for suppressing this letter? Do we not know that he had this offer in October of last year and kept it secret until after that company died in July this year and another one rose from its ashes, and Mr. Withers said that Daniels was out of it? Is it not very singular that not until Mr. Withers said so that Mr. Daniels showed this letter to Mr. Kidston?

Mr. BRIDGES: Did he lose the chance of his money?

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Of course he did. There was a new company formed last July, and then he makes use of this letter. Mr. Kidston has admitted that Mr. Daniels said, "I will not let you use this letter until you get my committee." There was an act of bribery in itself. And what did Mr. Kidston do? He got the committee, and when he had got it Mr. Daniels would not let him use the letter until he got the findings of the committee. Another act of bribery in which the chairman of the committee took part, and the letter was then published after the finding of the committee.

Mr. ANNEAR: Who was the chairman?

Mr. J. HAMILTON: The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, was chairman. It has been stated by several members of the Labour party this evening that the hon. member for Bulloo made an unprovoked attack on the hon. member for Rockhampton. The facts of the hon. member were rough, but not his words. The hon. member for Bulloo merely stated that there was a mine near Rockhampton called the "Native Cat," for which Mr. Kidston was the agent, and in which he was a shareholder; that the hon. member sold the mine on the special condition that all the reports on the mine should be shown to the purchasers. When the sale was completed, and just before the shares were allotted, the purchasers discovered that a most damaging report by the Assistant Government Geologist, Mr. Maitland, had been suppressed by the hon. member, Mr. Kidston. Then the purchasers immediately called upon the hon. member for Rockhampton to set aside the agreement on account of fraud. He did so, and

signed a document confessing that he had been guilty of suppression, and giving purchasers permission to make their own tests, and then act as they chose. They did test it, and found it worthless. The hon. member for Bulloo read to the House the document signed by the hon. member for Rockhampton making the confession. And this is the pure-souled patriot who is going to regenerate us all, and who declares that members of Parliament should, like Caesar's wife, be above suspicion. This is the hon. member who lectures us about morality—a man who has signed a confession that he had suppressed a damning report by the Government Geologist, which, if it had been shown to the purchasers, would have prevented them from even looking at the mine. An English company had actually purchased the mine from the hon. member, but luckily had not allotted the shares. Someone who knew the hon. member suggested to them that they had better be careful in dealing with him; they, therefore, made further inquiries, and found that this suppression had taken place. The North Chillagoe swindle was nothing compared with this. The hon. member for Bulloo has been viciously attacked by various Labour members. The member for South Brisbane, Mr. Turley, said that he wouldn't like to repeat what he had heard out West concerning him. Well, any cur can go to a street corner and make similar statements about every man and woman who passes, but no true man would degrade himself by making such statements. No man worthy of the name of man would make such vile insinuations against anyone, unless he was prepared to produce evidence in support of them. The mere fact of making such statements degrades the man who makes them, and not the man against whom they are made.

Mr. LEAHY: The man who made the statement admitted he was a smuggler.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Yes; he admitted it. Then the hon. member for Rockhampton North followed, and, amongst other things, said it was well known that the hon. member for Bulloo was a greedy grasper for money. Do we not know the character of the hon. member for Rockhampton North in that respect. It is well known in the House, while the generous, open-handed nature of the hon. member for Bulloo is equally well known. Let hon. members opposite look to the patriotic fund, and every other charitable fund, for an example of what I say; but they will search in vain for representatives of their own party on such lists.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. HAMILTON: We have heard a lot also of the amount of champagne which has been consumed, both here and at the Gresham Hotel, in celebrating the passage of these railway Bills. If that is so, the members opposite know a great deal more than I know. I have not heard of a single bottle of champagne being cracked during the last year in this building or at the Gresham. We have also been told something about the Seaforth business to-night, but I recollect—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I should have liked to reply to that charge, but, since I appear to be out of order, I cannot do so. But we recollect that Mr. Dalrymple, the member for Mackay, offered £100 to any of the Labour party who could prove any ground for their charges against himself and his colleague, and they have not accepted the challenge.

Mr. KERR: If we go into your private character it will not stand much examination.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I challenge you to do so at any time. I heard the member for Clermont state just now that a member of the Labour party said he knew of two men on this side who had

been bribed in connection with this matter, but he would not give the names. During the whole of this session we have noticed that members of the Labour party, in accordance with their usual policy of vilification and slander, have stated that Mr. Withers has bribed members on this side. We hear these statements, but without an atom of proof, every day, and when we find Parliament degraded day after day, and week after week, by vile slanders of that kind, I think strong measures should be taken to put a stop to the practice. What I suggest is that the Premier should appoint a judge of the Supreme Court, or some other tribunal, to hold a searching investigation into the matter. Let every member of the House go before that judge, and say on his oath whether, directly or indirectly, he has any interest in any of these syndicate railways; whether he has been promised any interest, whether anyone has approached him, and let these damnable slanderers who are continually making these statements be challenged to come forward with their evidence, and then let the public decide.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): I do not think the hon. member was happy in his suggestion that the Government should appoint a judge to be the confessor of hon. members opposite in the matter of bribery and corruption. The Premier and Attorney-General deserve to be congratulated for the way in which they have acted in appointing a judge to carry out this inquiry, but I think the hon. gentleman at the head of the Department of Justice would hesitate before naming a judge to act in such a capacity as the hon. member for Cook suggests. Such an office is not necessary, and it is pitiful that a gentleman of the experience of the hon. member for Cook, who is also Government whip, should make such a foolish suggestion, because it must be taken seriously. The hon. member stated earlier in his speech that the charge made by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, was that an attempt had been made to bribe a member. That charge was never made in this House, and the hon. member, who waxed indignant because a member on this side would not quote chapter and verse for certain charges, was unable to produce any evidence in support of his statement. Yet he condemns hon. members on this side for making rash assertions.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: You know what I mean.

Mr. FISHER: I do not know what the hon. member means. There are few members of the House more capable of expressing their meaning than the hon. member, but in this instance he invented a fact to suit his purpose of maligning members on this side of the House. Why are these insinuations made against the characters of hon. members? Have hon. members forgotten the time when an hon. gentleman who occupied the position of Premier of this colony stated that a member of this party was the associate of thieves? When hon. members on this side were endeavouring to safeguard the interests of the country, instead of getting credit for standing up in the face of great odds to keep this colony sound and in a position of credit, the hon. member for Bundaberg, Mr. Glassey, was dragged in as the associate of thieves and forgers, and yet the statement then made by Mr. Glassey was afterwards verified and proved up to the hilt. It was the pleasure of hon. members who were then in a majority to drive the hon. member for Bundaberg from pillar to post, and now we are told that the maligners are not maligning individuals, but are maligning the Government. Whatever we may say about the policy of the Government, I believe it is composed of as honourable gentlemen as are to be found in any of the Australasian colonies. But

they have departed a long way from sound political principles when they find it necessary to try to draw a red herring across the trail of the matter which has been exposed by this side of the House.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It has been covered up for months and months, and you knew all about it.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. member for Mackay states that virtuous indignation has been aroused in this matter because it has been concealed by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, for four or five months. In my opinion the hon. member for Rockhampton could do no other thing than what he did. If the hon. member received this letter from Mr. Daniels in confidence, he had either to accept it in confidence or return it to Mr. Daniels with a statement that he could not accept the letter on those conditions. The hon. member has stated that he received a copy of the letter, and that he mentioned the purport and importance of it in the House. The Premier, acknowledging the seriousness of such a communication, made a statement on behalf of the Government, and asked the hon. member to produce the letter. The hon. member was not in a position to produce the letter at that time, and I think the reason which he gave for not producing it was a good reason. He was not free to produce the original letter to the House until the very day when he did produce it. Is that not a sufficient justification for his action?

Mr. KIDSTON: Up to within three hours of the time when I produced the letter in the House I had not permission to produce it.

Mr. FISHER: Quite so, and I think the action of the hon. member was justified. If the hon. member has erred at all he has erred in the right direction—he kept the confidence reposed in him by the recipient of the letter. Whatever other members might have done under the circumstances, I am persuaded that it will be to the credit of the hon. member for Rockhampton that he did not break the confidence reposed in him by Mr. Daniels.

Mr. ANNEAR: And secure a committee for it.

Mr. FISHER: I admit that it is a reflection on members of this House to say that that committee would not have been granted if the letter had been produced earlier, but in my opinion it would have been much more difficult to have got the committee if the letter had been produced before it was appointed, because hon. members are influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by a great many circumstances. I feel confident that the indignation which has been aroused by the production of this letter now would have been aroused if it had been produced at an earlier stage. Is it not the desire of hon. members on both sides to carry on the Government honestly? Do the Government think they alone are custodians of the honour of the House? The speeches made this evening would indicate that the only virtuous members in this House occupy seats to the right of the Speaker, and that the Labour party, or a member of that party who had been the confidant of Mr. Daniels, connived at corruption, while the Premier stated that if bribery could be proved he would drop the Bill. The Premier made a very fair offer, and a very fair condition, which was that if the letter had been written by one of the principals concerned in this syndicate he would do so-and-so. It is not a fortunate thing that an attempt has been made to bribe and corrupt, but it is a fortunate thing that by some means written evidence has been produced in this House to show that an attempt has been made to use undue influence to secure the passage of this syndicate railway through the House. That, I think, every sensible man will admit is a good thing, and I venture to say that had a very

different, a very much worse method been used to get possession of the letter, it would be justified and excused on the ground that it was got for the purpose of purifying the Parliament and preventing the Government doing a thing, at the instance of a gentleman whom the Premier's own friends admit is a person unfit to carry on any negotiations with the Government for the company, or to even remain here as a citizen of this colony. Mr. Withers, who was the friend and counsellor of the hon. gentlemen opposite until this letter was produced, is now denounced and made the scapegoat; but I say that he is no worse to-day than he was three months ago. He is practically the same person as he was when he wrote that letter, but the probability is that he is a wiser man—he is naturally wiser to the extent that he sees it is unwise to put a bribing proposition in writing to any person.

Mr. KERR: That is where he made a mistake.

Mr. FISHER: I am not here to suggest that there are any others. It is not necessary to argue that there are any other persons who have been treated in the same way as Mr. Daniels, but it is fortunate that at least one has been discovered. I think hon. gentlemen should be prepared to congratulate the hon. member for Rockhampton upon his astuteness in being able to discover any written document which can be produced to prove that Mr. Withers was an unworthy man for the Government to treat with, and should no longer represent the great company which is going to assist the colony in this private railway scheme. I have only one thing to add in reference to the subject. Mr. Hamilton, the member for Cook, has charged Mr. Daniels with untruthfulness as to the reasons why he did not bring forward that letter. My recollection of the facts are these: The Election Tribunal did not give their decision until late in December, and then there was an appeal to the Full Court upon a question of law. The matter was not finally dealt with until a considerable time after Parliament went into recess. How was it possible for Mr. Daniels to bring down this question to the House before the matter was decided; and yet the hon. member, who should know better, gets up and seriously condemns Mr. Daniels, because he did not do it while the House was sitting, after the tribunal had delivered his decision. My recollection is that the decision of the Full Court was not laid on the table of the House until this session. Is not that ample proof that Mr. Daniels could not possibly do it last session? The hon. member for Cook, disregarding that fact, has argued on the assumption that he could, and has put down Mr. Daniels as a liar. In that the hon. member for Cook is making a reckless statement in this House, where Mr. Daniels has no opportunity of denying it.

Mr. HARDACRE: Daniels was quite correct.

Mr. FISHER: I feel it is a great compliment to this party, that Mr. Withers in his evidence states that in November, when it was discovered that the Labour party were about to enter office, he took ship to England. He thought that there was no more chance of his syndicate railway being proceeded with that year, and he did not think it worth while waiting until the hon. gentlemen who now occupy the Government offices were restored to power. It is something that he thought he had a much better chance of working the ground for his syndicate proposal with them than he could possibly have with a Labour Government. I remember very well that during that short period there were very busy inquiries made with regard to the persons who were to take the portfolios in that short-lived Government. I take it as a high compliment to the persons who took office,

even for so short a period, that gentlemen like Mr. Withers thought it desirable to leave the country so long as they remained in office.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*): During the debate several matters have been brought out, and one that has surprised me more than any other is that the party on the other side are in so deplorable and humiliating a position that it is necessary for a gentleman of the high moral character of the member for Cook to get up and defend them. I remember that saying about the devil reproving sin, and I think that saying has been amply verified to-night by the hon. gentleman attempting to defend the moral character of the other side of the House. Now, apart from the side issues that have been raised during this debate, there is one that has not been even attempted to be defended, and that is, the deliberate attempt which has been made by this agent of a syndicate to bribe an individual who, it was considered, had some influence with the members sitting on this side. I will only say that it is rather unfortunate that this matter has not come out before. It is unfortunate for many reasons. I can well understand, from the explanation that has been offered to the House by the member for Rockhampton, that it was impossible to bring this matter out before he did. If this question had been brought out earlier, I am inclined to think that those Bills which have already passed this House would not have found a place on the statute-book of Queensland, at least this year. I am satisfied that hon. members on the other side strongly resent the action of this individual, because his action is undoubtedly a slur on every hon. member who sits in this House. I am pleased the Premier has taken the action he has taken, for it is the only action he could properly and wisely take. But, on the whole, I think that the hon. member who is most deserving of the thanks of this House and of the country is my hon. friend, the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, for his bringing this matter forward as he has done.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDONNELL: I cannot understand why several hon. members opposite have taken upon themselves to criticise that hon. member's action in the way they have done. I can only understand it in this way: That some hon. members, being so annoyed that this diabolical act on the part of this agent has been found out by the hon. member for Rockhampton, wished that it had not been discovered until this Port Norman to Cloncurry Bill had been passed. They seem to regret that this attempt at bribery had been made public. But "better late than never." I can only say, after what has fallen from some hon. members opposite, and after seeing their attitude in the matter, that it would have been well in the interests of the whole colony if the hon. member for Rockhampton had been in a position to bring this matter forward before now. I remember a few years ago this very same gentleman, who has acknowledged writing this letter to Mr. Daniels, tried to get other members of the party sitting on this side of the House to meet him in a certain hotel in Brisbane. One member of this party at that time tried to get several members of this party to meet Mr. Withers at the Gresham Hotel.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Who?

Mr. McDONNELL: Mr. Sim. I believe some members of this party did meet Mr. Withers; but he did not make any such offer to them as he had made to Mr. Daniels. On several occasions I know he tried to impress on several hon. members that so far as possible no opposition should be offered to the construction of this Normanton-Cloncurry line. It was generally understood right throughout the debates on these

Bills that there was a certain unseen influence at work, and I think that hon. members on both sides will agree that the action taken by the House to-day is the best and the most ample justification for the action which this party has taken in the discussions on these private railway Bills, in this House.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRIDGES (*Nundah*): As it is too late to proceed with any other business to-night, I may say a few words on this matter. I am of the same opinion as my friend, the hon. member for Enoggera, when he states that this debate should have been concluded by 5 o'clock this afternoon, for then hon. members would have had an opportunity of dealing with other more important business. There has been too much talk to-day on this matter; but although the speeches on the whole on both sides have been about the same length, I think two members on the other side have spoken to one on this side. I think everyone in this House is agreed that the action taken to-day by the Premier is the right one. That seems to be generally admitted, and although the Premier did not waste any time, he certainly spoke with no uncertain sound. He said he was not prepared to go on with this legislation while such a man as Mr. Withers was at the head of this company.

Mr. KERR: No more champagne.

Mr. BRIDGES: Hon. members opposite seemed to know a good deal about the flow of champagne, but I was not aware that Mr. Withers was very free with champagne. I deprecate the insinuations which have been thrown across the Chamber to-day. I was very much surprised to hear the hon. member for Cairns say that he had proof that two hon. members on this side had been offered bribes.

Mr. GIVENS: I rise to a point of order. I said nothing of the kind. I said I was morally certain that two hon. members had been approached, but I had no legal proof.

Mr. BRIDGES: I have no intention of misquoting the hon. member. He said he had no doubt that two hon. members had not only been offered bribes, but that they had accepted bribes—

Mr. GIVENS: I again raise to a point of order. I never said anything of the kind. I said that I was morally certain that two hon. members on the other side had been approached.

Mr. BRIDGES: I distinctly understood the hon. member to say that they had accepted bribes. He said that hon. members had wives and friends who were very convenient. Now, if the hon. member has that information he should give it to the House—he should say who those members are.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRIDGES: I do not suppose any hon. member would want to encourage any hon. member accepting a bribe. We receive our salaries as members, and we should be satisfied with them or else go to some other occupation. The hon. member for Enoggera has referred to a certain hon. member on this side whom he had watched on a certain occasion shrinking into his seat when this letter of Mr. Withers's was read and when Mr. Withers's name was mentioned. Why did not the hon. member mention the name of the hon. member who had received a similar letter. If what the hon. member for Enoggera said is true, I should like the hon. member he referred to to shrink right out of this House. A good deal has been said about the late member for Cambooya, Mr. Daniels. It

[10:30 p.m.] is a very strange matter, and one that I can scarcely understand, that, as soon as this company became defunct, Mr. Daniels at once reported the letter to the hon.

member for Rockhampton. The letter was kept very secret and close until there was no hope of its being of any use to the gentleman to whom it was sent. We have sat in this House with both the hon. member for Rockhampton and the late member for Cambooya, and it would be just as well for the Premier to get up in his place and say that I had over-persuaded him as it is for the hon. member for Rockhampton to say that he was over-persuaded by the late member for Cambooya. The thing is simply ridiculous. I do not think that many members of this House would believe that the late member for Cambooya could persuade the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. LEAHY: He was going to persuade the whole party.

Mr. BRIDGES: I do not think he could. I believe the other side of the House is just as honest as we are on this side.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Withers did not think so.

Mr. BRIDGES: I look upon Withers as a fool and also a fraud.

Mr. REID: Who got all this money?

Mr. BRIDGES: It does not seem to me that there was very much money about. Withers seems to have been full of promises, but not very anxious for their fulfilment, and the one man who waited long for the fulfilment of his promise seems to have lost hope and reported him. I am very glad that he was reported, because it should be a lesson to those who send out agents or representatives to this colony to instruct them that they must have clean hands if they are to expect any sympathy from the members of the legislature of Queensland on either side of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRIDGES: I would not have spoken had there been any hope of doing any real work to-night, but it seems this is our afternoon out, and I wanted to refute the statement made by the hon. member for Enoggera—that his side wished to proceed to work, and to drop this thing at 5 o'clock. Seeing that they have put up two members for every one from this side, I think that cannot be borne out. I shall support the motion before the House, and I am pleased that the letter, though it did come late, came in time to enable us to give the man who sent it the rightabout. I trust he will never be in a position to make a similar attempt upon this or any other Parliament of Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put.

Mr. KIDSTON: I would like to make some remarks by permission of the House.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has already spoken.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for Rockhampton be allowed to speak again?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: In the pretended justification for the virulent personal attack he made upon me, the hon. member for Bulloo gave as his reason that I had dragged him into this business. I wish to assure the hon. member that I did not drag him into the business at all. I had no concern with him in this matter. I am glad the Attorney-General is in his place, because he will bear me out in what I have to say. When the hon. gentleman introduced me to Judge Mansfield, and I handed over the letter to the judge, I said that Mr. Daniels had made a statement to me as to how he came to get such a letter, but I thought it would be better that the judge should get the statement from Mr. Daniels at first hand—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You did not mention Mr. Daniels's name.

Mr. KIDSTON: I beg pardon. The hon. gentleman is right in that. I did not mention the name. I said that the receiver of the letter had made a statement, but I thought it would be better that the judge should get the statement from him at first hand rather than take it from me at second hand. That is correct, I think.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. member for Bulloo will therefore see that I had no desire to give any evidence in the matter at all, and I had no desire to drag his name into it. What I wished to do was to hand over the letter to the judge, and let him find out at first hand from the person who received the letter what were the circumstances explaining his receipt of it. When I saw the judge after he had received the letter—he appointed 10 o'clock on Monday morning to hold the inquiry—he asked me what was the statement that Mr. Daniels made to me when giving me the letter, and I had, of course, to repeat briefly the statement that Mr. Daniels made to me. I therefore said—not of my own knowledge—that Mr. Daniels had told me that Mr. Leahy had introduced him to Mr. Withers.

Mr. LEAHY: I am all over the blooming report, anyhow.

Mr. KIDSTON: What I wish to call attention to is this: that Mr. Daniels in his evidence says the same thing; so that there is absolutely no justification for the nasty feeling the hon. member for Bulloo expressed in regard to me on that ground.

Mr. LEAHY: Everybody knows that you were instructing Daniels.

Mr. KERR: That is a very serious charge to make. We might as well say that you were instructing Mr. Withers.

Mr. LEAHY: I assure you I was defending myself.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KIDSTON: I hope I shall be allowed to proceed without interruption. I attempted to impute no particular motives to the hon. member for Bulloo, and I had nothing to do with his name coming up in the matter. It seems to me that, if the hon. member had read the evidence, he would have seen that there is no serious charge made against him. The only charge that can be said to be made against the hon. member is that he introduced Mr. Daniels to Mr. Withers. Mr. Daniels's statement is that he met the two gentlemen standing in George street, and that, while they were talking together, the hon. member for Bulloo introduced him to Mr. Withers.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: There is the construction that he was the go-between.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. REID: That is your construction.

Mr. KIDSTON: Whatever the construction may have been, that was the extent of my statement, and I do not see that the hon. member for Bulloo has any reason to complain, and I do not think that he did complain of that. It seems to me that the hon. member was simply animated by a spirit of revenge against me for having brought this matter forward.

Mr. LEAHY: Not at all.

Mr. KIDSTON: Well, others can be the judges. That is what I think about it, and both members of the House and those outside can form their own conclusions. Now, I wish to say a few words about the offence with which the hon. member for Bulloo charged me, although it has nothing to do with this.

Mr. LEAHY: I charged you with no offence.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KIDSTON: It has nothing to do with this matter, and if it had not been that the hon. member had used the names of other persons in connection with it, I probably would not have

said anything about it. I do so now simply for the purpose of exonerating those other persons from blame. Whatever fault was committed on that occasion I am entirely responsible for it. I take this opportunity of taking that responsibility and blame on my own shoulders.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: You have got to.

Mr. KIDSTON: At the time I thought I was doing a quite permissible thing. It is not possible for me to go into all the circumstances now, and explain why I thought I was doing a permissible thing. I very soon found out that I had committed a very serious blunder, and that I was guilty of a very serious fault, and I can assure the House—although I am aware that I am speaking to unsympathetic ears, and to men who rejoice that they have found a flaw in my armour—I have been exceedingly sorry for it ever since.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: So is Duffy.

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. member for Bulloo has thought fit to make this matter public in the House, but at the time it was quite well known what other persons were concerned with me.

Mr. LEAHY: You should make a little allowance for other people's feelings.

Mr. KIDSTON: I have already pointed out that this matter had nothing to do with the question before the House.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: It was dragged into this business this afternoon for one of two purposes, neither of which in my opinion are creditable to the hon. member for Bulloo. Either he wished to drag a red herring across the trail, or he wanted to have revenge on me for the injury I had done him and his friends in exposing this business. In spite of the venom with which I have been attacked, and the venom with which Mr. Daniels has been attacked in regard to matters that had nothing to do with the present case, and in spite of the conviction I have that I have not heard the last of this matter, and that hon. members will wreak their vengeance on me for what I have done in regard to this Normanton-Cloncurry Railway, I rejoice that I have been successful in knocking this project on the head.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You could have knocked it on the head months ago if you had chosen.

Mr. KIDSTON: Let me say again, though I have said it before, that no fairly honourable man in my position could have used that letter until he got permission. As the hon. member for Gympie said, I could have given back the letter and held my tongue about it, or I could have done as I did, and use the letter as soon as I could fairly do so, and I took the latter course. I think the public outside, who are concerned in this affair, will recognise what has taken place in this House to-day. They will recognise that, with the exception of the hon. member for Herbert, not another man on the other side of the House, unqualifiedly and without excuse, justifies the Premier in withdrawing the Bill.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Oh, yes they do.

Mr. KIDSTON: Whatever justification the Premier has got, he has got from this side, and that has been manifest in the speeches. From the other side there has been bitter anger and resentment against Mr. Daniels and myself for exposing this matter.

Question—That so much of the Order of the House, made on the 7th instant, as relates to the Normanton, Port Norman, and Cloncurry Railway Bill be rescinded—put and passed.

Mr. KERR: There will be no champagne in Cloncurry to-night.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There will be great disappointment in Cloncurry.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE  
ACTS AMENDMENT BILL—SUGAR  
WORKS GUARANTEE ACT AMEND-  
MENT BILL.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from the Legislative Council, returning these Bills, with amendments, in which they requested the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

Amendments ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill without amendment.

KILKIVAN TO COOLABUNIA  
RAILWAY.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council approving of the plans, section, and book of reference of the Kilkivan to Coolabunia Railway.

CENSUS BILL.

COMMITTEE.

The several clauses and preamble of this Bill were put and passed without amendment.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment, and its third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at eight minutes to 11 o'clock.