

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 1901

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

QUESTIONS.

LOANS FOR PROSPECTING BATTERIES AND MACHINERY.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

1. What amounts have been expended in loans or otherwise in assisting prospectors to procure prospecting batteries, and pumping and winding machinery?
2. Where are such batteries or other machinery situated?
3. What portion of these moneys, if any, has been refunded?
4. Is it the intention of the Minister to further assist in this direction deserving prospectors?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) replied—

1 and 2—

- 1897—No. 1 Block Claim Bower Bird, pump and winding plant, £180.
- 1899—Miners of Klondyke (Coen Gold Field), water-wheel battery, £500.
- 1899—Deep Wet Shaft Syndicate, Clermont, pump, £73.
- 1900—Mowbray Gold Mining Company, Woolgar, battery, £600.
- 1900—Mount Jimna Company, Jimna Gold Field, crushing plant, £400.

3. None.

4. Applications will be considered on their merits.

DEVIATION, ROCKHAMPTON-GLADSTONE RAILWAY.

Mr. CURTIS (*Rockhampton*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. When does he expect to receive Mr Phillips's report of the result of his recent examination of the proposed deviation of the second section of the Rockhampton-Gladstone Railway?
2. When received will he place the same upon the table of the House?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bulloo*) replied—

1. I do not know. Mr. Phillips will be allowed to bring his report up in his own way and time without interference by the department.
2. Yes; after perusal by the department.

RAINFALL AT WARWICK AND GAYNDAH.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW (*Maryborough*) asked the Chief Secretary—

What is the mean annual rainfall for twenty-five years—1871 to 1895—for the towns of Warwick and Gayndah?

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

Warwick, 29.10 inches; Gayndah, 31.75 inches.

ALLEGED IMPORTATION OF JAPANESE AT THURSDAY ISLAND.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*) asked the Premier, without notice—

Is it true that special concessions have been given or arrangement made by the Government allowing pearl-shelling companies at Thursday Island to import a number of Japanese for employment in the pearl fishery?

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

No special arrangement has been made with anyone.

SUNDAY EARNINGS, SUBURBAN RAILWAY.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Burke*), on behalf of the hon. member for Clermont, asked the Secretary for Railways—

What were the total takings on the railways to and from Clayfield, Woolloowin, and Albion—

(a) On Sunday, 15th September, 1901;

(b) On Sunday, 22nd September, 1901?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

(a) £27 19s. 9d.

(b) £19 6s. 10d.

PAYMENTS TO CROWN SOLICITOR IN TYSON PROBATE CASE.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Attorney-General, without notice—

Whether any private arrangement has been entered into between the hon. gentleman and the Crown Solicitor with respect to the payment to the Crown Solicitor of costs in the Tyson probate case?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL replied—

All the information on the subject is already laid on the table of the House. There is no other private arrangement.

Mr. LESINA: What date?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Weeks ago.

CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING NORMANTON-CLONCURRY RAILWAY.

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

That there be laid on the table of the House copies of all correspondence since 21st September, 1900, to present date, respecting the construction and maintenance of a railway from Port Norman by way of Normanton to Cloncurry.

REVENUE OF FIRE BRIGADES.

On the motion of Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*), it was formally resolved—

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

(1) The number of fire brigades within the State of Queensland.

(2) The revenue of such brigades respectively.

(3) The respective amounts contributed during each of the last five years to the said brigades by—

(a) The Queensland Government;

(b) The local authorities respectively;

(c) The insurance companies respectively.

POSTPONEMENT OF ORDERS OF THE DAY.

On the motion of Mr. BELL (*Dalby*), the following Orders of the Day were postponed till after the consideration of Order of the Day No. 4—Prickly Pear Selections Bill:—

Assistance to Land Settlement (Mr. Plunkett's motion);

Return *re* Unalienated Land (Mr. Kates's motion); and

Mortgages on Resumed Properties (Mr. Lesina's motion).

PRICKLY PEAR SELECTIONS BILL.

INTRODUCTION IN COMMITTEE.

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

1. That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to facilitate the eradication of prickly pear from Crown lands.

2. That an address be presented to the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to recommend the necessary appropriation to give effect to such Bill.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, and the report was adopted.

ASSISTANCE TO LAND SETTLEMENT.

Upon the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of the adjourned debate on Mr. Plunkett's motion—

1. That, in the opinion of the House, it is desirable that immediate steps be taken to facilitate settlement on the land in this State.

2. That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the various schemes for assisting land settlement which have been adopted by, or are under the consideration of, the Governments of the other Australian States and the colony of New Zealand.

3. That such committee have power to send for persons and papers, and leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, and that it consist of the following members, namely:—Mr. Bell, Mr. Kent, Mr. Hardacre, Mr. Fogarty, Mr. W. Thorn, Mr. Paget, and the mover—

Mr. FOGARTY (*Drayton and Tooroomla*) said: In the course of the speech delivered by the hon. member for Albert, he made some strong charges against the lands administration of the Government. The Attorney-General in replying introduced a considerable amount of heat; in fact, the hon. member for Albert did not show half the warmth in dealing with this question that the Attorney-General did. The hon. member said that certain legislation which was receiving the attention of the House would not have a tendency to promote close settlement, and he mentioned certain things which would, in his opinion, prevent close settlement taking place. The Attorney-General said that that was not the case, but I certainly think that the Special Sales of Lands Bill, if it becomes law, will prevent close settlement more than anything else I know of. The Premier in his excellent speech in supporting this motion intimated that the Government were prepared to sell land, no matter where, so long as purchasers were forthcoming, and he anticipated that a considerable amount of revenue would be derived in this way. The Attorney-General also said that the pastoralists recognised that their days were numbered, and that a large number of them would cheerfully make way for the selector. I would be very pleased to find that to be correct, because I know the hostility that was shown in the early days to the selectors. The small selectors are certainly not received with open arms by the pastoralists—quite the

reverse. They placed every possible obstacle in their way, and by petty persecution made their lives unbearable. I don't know the prominent member of the other Chamber who made that statement; but even if it was made in all sincerity, I do not think it represents the feelings of this particular class. I say this, having a personal knowledge of the feeling which existed between the pastoralists and the would-be farmer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Does that feeling exist to-day? We are dealing with the present, not the past.

Mr. FOGARTY: I hope it does not exist, but I am sadly afraid it does exist. Of course the pastoralists are compelled to accept the position, and they do try to do it with the best possible grace. We also heard the Attorney-General say that the Minister for Lands has a new Bill upon the stocks, and that it was his intention, if time permitted, to introduce that measure this session, but I do not think there is any probability of our seeing this new Bill this session. We had a forecast of it—that the selectors under the 1884 Act would be placed on the same basis as the selectors under the 1897 Act. If that is the intention of the Government I say that legislation of that sort is of far greater importance than the legislation which has occupied the attention of the House since the opening of this session. Evil-disposed people would consider that statement a piece of electioneering, but I am not prepared to say so. The hon. member for Lockyer, in the course of his contribution to the debate, pointed out that small farmers had been fairly treated, but I think they have been very unfairly treated. If we take the runs on the Darling Downs, we will find out that the Eton Vale selectors were compelled to go out on to stony, waterless, and almost inaccessible ridge country, while the magnificent land which Nature intended for the *bona fide* farmer is still in its natural state. Is there any encouragement to land settlement in that? The whole of the land on that run was purchased by means of walking fences, and in other ways which are unnecessary to mention here. Then in connection with another large holding, farmers at Goombungie and Merrington scrubs were compelled to go out on to waterless country, and one beneficial effect has been that what was once a howling wilderness is now studded with smiling homesteads. No thanks to the people in power at that time for this excellent settlement! Then, on Yandilla, selectors were driven into places like Back Plains, Millmerran, Punch's Creek—land which is certainly very much inferior to that which is devoted to sheep and cattle walks. If this is called assistance to small farmers, I don't know what assistance means. The selectors at Felton have been driven into the Beauraba scrub. They have had to go to a lot of expense and trouble in clearing their holdings, and after the timber was removed from the land, they were compelled to erect paling fences to protect their crops from the marsupial pest. That may be thought to be encouraging settlement, but I think it is quite the reverse.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Government did not put the marsupials there.

Mr. FOGARTY: No; Providence put the marsupials there and provided a feeding ground on the magnificent plains, which Nature put there. But those plains were surrounded by wire netting, and the marsupials were compelled to live on the small farmers, if possible. We have also been told by the hon. member for Carpentaria, in the course of his very excellent speech, from his point of view, in discussing a certain measure, that the rental paid by the grazing farmers was not so large as had been

mentioned from time to time in this House, that on the average it was only a fraction over a penny per acre. But it would be very interesting to discover what average the pastoralist pays. It is about a farthing an acre—and he is allowed a reduction in his rental for unavailable country—which would reduce his rental to a very small item indeed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why should they pay for unavailable country?

Mr. FOGARTY: I will tell the hon. gentleman. I am surprised at the hon. gentleman asking such a question. He knows [4 p.m.] as well as I do that the so-called unavailable country was their salvation during the present drought. It is well known that that was the only means of keeping the horned stock alive; and in numerous cases the scrubs, irrespective of grasses, have fattened stock.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not unavailable under the Act.

Mr. FOGARTY: That land is unavailable as far as rent is concerned. There is no revenue derived from it, although it is of immense benefit to the person who has the adjacent country.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is not unavailable under the 1897 Act.

Mr. FOGARTY: The scrubs during the last two years have saved the lives of thousands of stock. I am very pleased that such is the case; but why this should be allowed as a stand-by, and no revenue derived, I am at a loss to know, considering that it is one of the most valuable assets the leaseholder possesses; and I am certain the country that is classed as unavailable is that of scrub. We were also told yesterday evening that the Government gave considerable assistance to the dairying industry. I admit that they have done a fair amount, but they should do much more. It is only the other day that a large and influential deputation waited on the Secretary for Agriculture, asking him to provide better means of conveyance as far as the only market of any magnitude is concerned—that is, the old world—for dairy produce. I believe the hon. gentleman was in perfect sympathy with the deputation, but he was not in a position to give effect to their request. I say that machinery should be provided, and, if necessary, vessels constructed for the purpose should be purchased for carrying this produce to the old world.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What if the produce was not forthcoming when the vessels were purchased?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Get them to remove the old world here.

Mr. FOGARTY: It is a pity that some ever left the old world; it would have been better for the new if they had remained in the old. Another matter is the fact that there is a universal demand among the repurchase selectors that the first payment should remain in abeyance for three years, so that men who have only a little capital might have an opportunity of making some headway. I know the Minister for Lands is aware of this fact, because I have mentioned the matter to him; and, if the Government are so anxious to benefit the agricultural industry, why do they not amend the Act in that direction?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do you want done?

Mr. FOGARTY: That the first payment should remain in abeyance for three years. And, in order that no loss should fall on the general taxpayer, a small sum in the shape of interest might be charged for the first three years.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Nothing is to be payable, evidently.

Mr. FOGARTY: They are about the only class, as far as the Government are concerned, who meet their engagements—that is, the repurchase men. I am not speaking of the repurchase sugar-grower. The purchasing of land under the provisions of that Act in the sugar districts has been a total failure; and, as for the price paid at Mackay, it is the unanimous opinion that more was given for that land than it was worth.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What is the question?

Mr. FOGARTY: If the Government were sincerely anxious to benefit the small man, I say they should amend the Repurchase Act in the direction I have indicated.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not the ordinary selector—only the repurchaser?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why should they be favoured?

Mr. FOGARTY: I say that if the Government were anxious to assist the smaller man, why not have introduced legislation with a view to assisting them instead of assisting the larger men? It is utterly impossible in the time at our disposal before we meet the electors to benefit both, and I think—I am not prejudiced in the matter in any shape or form—I think it is very clear that they are prepared to assist the larger men at any cost. We were also told that it would be of no earthly use to appoint this select committee, as a Royal Commission was appointed four years ago to report on the best means of settling people on the land. That commission was described at the time as a consolation stakes. Those are the words that were used, I think in the *Brisbane Courier*. It is well known that some members of the House were dissatisfied, and the Government, on the principle of being good to their friends, appointed a Royal Commission, which cost the taxpayers a very considerable sum of money. The Royal Commission travelled throughout Queensland, and nearly throughout the whole of Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Oh, no! Not as bad as that.

Mr. FOGARTY: They received information from New South Wales and Victoria. They sat in New South Wales, and they returned thanks in their report to the officers of the Lands Department of Victoria for the valuable information they supplied.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you object to that? That was their business.

Mr. FOGARTY: If that was such a valuable report, why was not effect given to it? Some of the most valuable suggestions of that commission were completely ignored.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member was in the House when the Bill of 1897 went through; and why did he not put them into the Bill?

Mr. FOGARTY: Anybody who has had any experience in this House knows that it is utterly impossible to get into a Bill anything of which the Government do not approve.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no evidence that you made any attempt.

Mr. FOGARTY: I think there is some evidence. They also pointed out that there should be more surveyors employed by the Lands Department, and that branches of the department should be established in the respective centres, because it is well known that applicants are very often put to considerable cost, both in time and money, before their applications are dealt with. That, I think, was a very important recommendation, but up to the present no effect has been given to it. Another suggestion—I think the best they made in their report—was that the principles of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act should be applied to the

wheat districts with the view of establishing flourmills; but, unfortunately for the wheat-grower, there was not a sufficient majority in this House to have effect given to that suggestion. We can afford to spend £500,000 to bolster up the sugar industry, but not a single fraction for that of wheat.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They pulled down a flourmill at Roma the other day.

Hon. G. THORN: Do you know there has been no wheat grown on the Downs for the last twelve months? (Laughter.)

Mr. FOGARTY: I say that if the Government were anxious to settle a permanent population on the land, they would take the earliest opportunity of giving effect to that recommendation, but they have not moved one iota. I will go further and say I believe that as the Darling Downs are very favourably situated for the growth of beet sugar, mills should be established there. But nothing of the sort was done. The whole of the half-million of money was given to the Northern portion of the colony, and I shall be agreeably surprised if it is returned.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was the Nambour Mill and the Nerang Mill.

Mr. FOGARTY: They represent a very small portion of the £500,000. The hon. member for Dalby, Mr. Bell, was a member of the Royal Commission, and he recommended that agricultural homesteads should be extended to 640 acres.

Mr. W. THORN: Which we have got.

Mr. FOGARTY: I anticipated that statement, and thought it would come from the Secretary for Lands. I am sorry it has fallen from the hon. member for Aubigny. The 1897 Act provides for 640 acres of valueless land being granted, and 320 acres of inferior land, but the hon. member for Dalby recommended 640 acres of good land. If that recommendation had been carried out we should have had a very large addition to our population, and those who took up the land would have been able to live comfortably, and have been a great benefit to the community.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the maximum you would recommend under the Repurchase Act? Would you give 640 acres?

Mr. FOGARTY: Yes. Would it not be preferable to have 640-acre holdings on the Darling Downs than see 400,000 acres of land devoted to stockgrowing? If such a state of affairs as that could be brought about, the Government would not be in the financial position they are in to-day.

Mr. CURTIS: Would the land have been settled?

Mr. FOGARTY: I am certain it would have been settled.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you would give 640 acres of first-class land, what is the maximum of inferior land that you would give?

Mr. FOGARTY: Well, inferior land is dear at any price. If it is valueless, it matters not whether you grant 600 acres or 6,000 acres.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Well then, how much second-class land would you grant?

Mr. FOGARTY: In the past the lands have not been classified as carefully as they might have been, and I believe that is one of the weakest spots in the land administration. I am not complaining of the present Government; their predecessors did likewise, but I am sorry to say the present Government have made no effort to change the condition of things, and the sooner an effort is made the better for Queensland. Professor Shelton, when under examination by the Royal Commission, pointed out that

160 acres of land were given in the United States at a cost of £3 10s. as the whole purchasing price, and that a considerable time was allowed to elapse before the purchaser was called upon to pay that amount. In addition to that, further assistance was given to settlers. As far as I can see, however, there is no assistance whatever given to the struggling men here. They are one and all bound down hard and fast, whether they require any assistance or not. Certainly the persons whom the Government propose to assist are not in as much need of assistance as the small struggling men I speak of. Perhaps the Government may even at this late hour see the error of their ways, and give the small men the assistance which they so urgently need.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What assistance would you propose?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is the question.

[At fifteen minutes after 4 o'clock p.m., Mr. Speaker being unable to continue in the chair, the Chairman of Committees took the chair as Deputy Speaker during the Speaker's absence.]

Mr. FOGARTY: We have an agricultural college which is doing very good work. Of course the Government have taken all the kudos for establishing that agricultural training-ground, but I say the matter was forced from them, as nearly every concession given to the small agriculturists has been forced from them and their predecessors. Fortunately for the agriculturists there have been some men who have been alive to the general interests of the colony. They did not shut their eyes to all but a small favoured circle; they took a broader view, and looked to the general interests of the whole colony. I remember the member for Aubigny, speaking a short time ago at a luncheon, expressed himself as being extremely sorry that more good land was not available, and he also said he thought the Government should purchase much more land under the Repurchase Act than they had done.

Mr. W. THORN: I never said that.

Mr. FOGARTY: Well, I say so. The member for Aubigny pointed out that the students at the Gatton College, after the careful training in all branches of agriculture, needed land. It is a very great pity that the Government have not given more assistance to the *bona fide* agriculturist.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Tell us what remedy you would propose.

Mr. FOGARTY: Well, instead of sacrificing the land as they propose doing at auction, I would say that if it was suitable for close settlement people should be allowed to get it. In that way freight would come to our railways, and we should soon overtake the balance which is on the wrong side of the ledger. But the Government do not propose to do anything of the sort. They propose to sell land wherever a purchaser can be found for it.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: The Special Sales of Land Act does not enable them to sell agricultural land.

Mr. FOGARTY: It is simply a matter of classification, and splendid agricultural land has been sold as pastoral land. No member can deny that. No member is better aware of that fact than the senior member for Maryborough. The motion moved by the hon. member for Albert will cost not a single shilling, and it is quite possible that good will accrue from it. It cannot possibly do any harm, and I am certain that the suggestions which will be offered will be a guide to the incoming Government, whoever they may be. What we need is population. We have the land, and are much richer than any other State in Australia.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: How will you get the population?

Mr. FOGARTY: By offering facilities to people to go upon the land.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: Give them the land?

Mr. FOGARTY: Yes, in some cases it would pay to give them the land. It would have been much better to give the people the sugar land on the Johnstone River than sell it at 5s. an acre and have it locked up for a number of years by owners who are waiting for the unearned increment. It would have been much better if that land had been given under certain conditions in fee-simple to people who would work it. I believe that if a certain class of immigrants were introduced—I do not care to say from what portion of Europe—if a certain proportion of Europeans were introduced here, and the sugar lands I have spoken of were given to them under certain conditions, that they would not only solve the labour problem, but show that sugar can be profitably grown by European labour.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you know what it costs to grow sugar?

Mr. FOGARTY: The motion that is now proposed will entail no expense. A number of those whose names are mentioned have a considerable knowledge of farming, but if any other gentleman would wish to take the place of John Fogarty, John Fogarty will gladly retire.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FOGARTY: The motive I am actuated by is to provide the means for settling people on our lands. I recognise that Queensland can not become greatly prosperous until we have a greater population, and the only means of settling a permanent population is by agriculture.

Mr. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I do not intend to say very much this afternoon, but I think, judging from the speeches that were made both yesterday and to-day, by the hon. member for Albert and the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, it would indicate at least that in this particular matter they have very little confidence in the Government.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is a vote of censure on the Government.

Mr. BARNES: The hon. gentleman who has just sat down referred to the warmth with which the Attorney-General replied to the hon. member for Albert's remarks yesterday, but as the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture suggests "no wonder." From the very first one might suppose that it was a vote of want of confidence, and was being followed up by speeches to carry that vote of want of confidence.

Mr. ANNAR: Backed up by the leader.

Mr. BARNES: Yes, backed up by the leader; but it seems only right to say this afternoon, knowing something of the farming community, that many of them, if they had happened to be here this afternoon, would have said most vigorously, "Save me from my friends." It seems to me that we are asked to believe, directly or indirectly, that farmers are not grateful men, whereas they are really grateful men, and I am convinced that they are willing to recognise the work which the Government have done in the past in the direction of assisting them in getting on the land. I want to say that I feel from my knowledge of agriculture, that the Government have done a very great deal to help settlement in Queensland, and a very great deal to help agricultural settlement.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARNES: A remark was made about struggling farmers, but are the farmers at the present time a class that are struggling? I think not. I take it that at the present moment—and I say it advisedly—the majority of the farmers in Queensland are very much better off

than any other class at the present time in Queensland. They are doing very well indeed; they are doing remarkably well.

Mr. JACKSON: Better than the miners.

Mr. BARNES: Well, my hon. friend speaks of the miners, and he knows a great deal about them, while I do not; but I am certain of this: that, generally speaking, in mining the majority do not do very well. The minority certainly do the best thing in mining. I want to remind hon. members this afternoon of what the Government have done; to remind them of the efforts they have made in assisting agriculture and dairying. May I ask what about the travelling dairy that went all through the Southern, the Northern, and the Central portions of Queensland? What about that? Did not that show a sincere desire to help the industries of the colony? Then what about the help which has been given to butter factories in the past? Surely, in the past, some assistance has been rendered even in the direction of a bonus—I speak subject to correction, but I think even in the direction of a bonus assistance has been given. And the very gentlemen who represent some of the constituencies most deeply interested in this matter, have turned round and abused the Government for what they have done in the past. I want to say this afternoon that I think there is a tendency on the part of some hon. members to speak to their constituents, in the hope that they will make them believe that which cannot be borne out by facts. If anything could be said which is true, I should be the first to recognise it, but certainly in this case I do not think that has been done. As to the motion, and the amendment which has been moved upon it, I do not think anything will be gained by passing them, and I shall not support them.

Mr. W. THORN (*Aubigny*): I should not have risen to make any remarks on this motion introduced by the hon. member for Albert, but for the fact that my hon. friend the member for Toowoomba, Mr. Fogarty, was good enough to draw me out in this debate. I will say that the remarks I made at the college were that I wished to see the people on the land, and if the Government were to carry some light lines of railway into the farming centres, it would settle more people than if they were to repurchase the whole of the Darling Downs. Those were the remarks that I made, and although the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba reckons that the plain lands of the Darling Downs are the best portions for agricultural settlement, I am quite in opposition to him. I hold the opinion that the scrubland on the boundaries of the Darling Downs, if we could only get light railway communication into those centres, are where we would be able to settle far more people on the land, on 160 acres or 320-acre blocks, and they would be able to live a great deal better than they would on 80, 160, or 320-acre blocks on the Downs. I am of opinion that before many years are over the whole of the plain portion of the Darling Downs will revert back into small sheep farms. So far as I can see, federation is going to kill the wheat industry on the Downs. The farmers there will not be able to compete with the southern farmers for many years to come. I notice that already the millers are starting to shift their mills from the Downs to Ipswich and Brisbane. For what reason? They know very well that the wheat industry on the Downs is going to die out. They will have to go in for other crops. My

hon. friend says they will be able [4:30 p.m.] to grow beet, sugar, and similar crops. I believe they will, but they will have to go to the scrub lands to do it. The hon. member also made reference to the Special Sales of Land Bill. I voted for that Bill on

principle. I voted for it for the reason that I thought it would be far better to sell a few portions of land in the Southern, Central, and Northern districts, away out where they never get any rainfall, than to put a land tax on the farmers already on the land. Let us keep on the land those who are already there by giving them facilities to get their crops to market. I believe this is what the Government are trying to do, and I shall give them all the assistance I can to settle people on the land and keep them there. It is only by running light railways into farming centres that they will be able to compete with the southern farmers and that the country will prosper.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. B. H. O'Connell, *Musgrave*): I am sorry I was not here to hear what the mover of this motion had to say yesterday afternoon; but, judging from what he is reported to have said, he certainly moved a vote of want of confidence in the administration of the Lands Department. He has not the slightest cause for any such notice as far as I am concerned.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I never said so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Every debate on the land question, as we all know, gives rise to great diversities of opinion. We nearly all hold different views as to what is the best form of settlement. This afternoon we have the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba urging that we should give 640 acres of first-class land to homestead selectors. The repurchased estates are to be cut up into 640-acre blocks. How the hon. member can call that close settlement is beyond my comprehension. It seems to be an established fact that 160 acres of really good agricultural land well cultivated is very well able to keep a family. Very often a larger area is only a snare and a delusion to the man who takes it up. It costs a certain amount of money; he does not look after it properly, and instead of good farming on the ground he ought to have cultivated he is wasting his time over large areas and getting no crops from them. Another point is that if the Government were to cut up first-class land into large areas there would be a danger of their getting into the hands of capitalists. As a rule, the small man has not money to take up large areas, and you will prevent him from getting the land. This is what has always been put to the administrators of the Lands Department. Another contention is that we want more elasticity in our Land Acts. I want to point out that our land legislation provides every facility for the various conditions of settlement and for the various positions of land thrown open for settlement. You have power to throw open land with a maximum area of 160 acres; this is first-class land, near railway communication, and with a good rainfall. Then we have 320-acre selections, which are supposed to be further away from railway communication, and perhaps with not such a good rainfall, which conditions make it necessary for a man to go in for grazing in a small way as well as agriculture. Then you have the 640-acre men, who are supposed to like less available land still. Then come selectors of 1,280 acres, at prices varying from 10s. upwards. Selectors can be suited in any portion of the country and under any conditions. We take into consideration railway communication, rainfall, price, and locality, and we grant areas on which men can make a living. Then take grazing farms. The Crown can throw open anything up to a maximum of 20,000 acres, and give leases up to twenty-one and twenty-eight years. They recognise that the conditions are different in different parts of the country, and make provision accordingly. If land is thrown open near railway communication, and is likely to be wanted for

agricultural settlement, you naturally throw it open in smaller areas and with shorter leases. It has been a matter of the greatest care with the administrators of the Lands Department for the time being to see how the land should be thrown open in order to best encourage settlement. Take now the prices at which land can be got. The homestead selector can get his land at 2s. 6d. an acre, with ten years to pay it in. The agricultural farmer has to pay 3d. a year for twenty years, or 2½ per cent. as interest on the nominal value of the land at 10s. per acre. After twenty years he is asked, not to pay the 10s., but one-half of it. In New South Wales they ask 5 per cent. interest on the nominal value of the land. The man then gets breathing space for a year, and has then to pay 1s. a year for the term of twenty years, which, in addition to the interest at 5 per cent. on a land value of £1 per acre, brings the payment up to 2s. per acre per annum. The Government of New South Wales get the full price of the land, whereas here we get only 50 per cent. of it. In many instances land will increase enormously in value during the next twenty years, where it is suitable for agricultural settlement.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: No wonder the Treasury is empty.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the present rate does not encourage settlement nothing will short of giving the land away, and paying men to settle upon it. It cannot certainly be denied that we are offering land on most liberal terms. This committee would, I suppose, really bring up a sort of criticism of the past and present administration of our land laws. The hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, Mr. Fogarty, took us back to the dark ages in the administration of our land laws, and, referring to the Darling Downs in the old days when dummying was rampant, spoke of the things that selectors had to put up with there. I do not think there is anything of that sort going on at the present time. At any rate I do not know of anything of the kind the hon. member mentioned. The land is being opened to selectors, and intending selectors are giving every assistance possible. If they go to the Lands Office they get a selector's ticket. They have to pay for that ticket, but if they select land their railway fare is refunded to them, and a free pass is given to them and their families and the freight paid on their furniture. Surely that is rendering assistance to them to go on the land. That seems to me a very liberal provision, and it was initiated by the Government a few years ago. The fullest information is always obtainable from our land commissioners. I am quite satisfied that no man can say that our land commissioners are not obliging and civil in giving information to the public. I was rather sorry to hear the hon. member for Dalby speak slightly the other day of the way in which our land commissioners do their duty, especially in regard to reporting irregularities in connection with the observance of the land laws. I wish to say that, from my few months' experience in the Lands Office, I cannot help but admire the pluck with which those men invariably report anything they consider wrong, no matter who it is that is concerned in the matter. They invariably send down to the office a very clear report if they have reason to believe that anything wrong has been done. But they have common sense, and because they have reason to believe that a certain thing has been done they do not tell the Government that it can be proved. They say, "We have reason to believe that there is collusion in connection with the selection of certain grazing farms, but we cannot say there is any proof which would be accepted in a court of

law." They have sense enough to see that they do not run the department into a hopeless case. It is the Minister's duty, when he has the information which they supply, to say whether it is sufficient to warrant him in taking legal proceedings. He must take the responsibility. I must clear our land commissioners most distinctly from any charge of shirking their duty in regard to these reports. I know that very often they send down to the Minister reports which get them into disrepute. I remember myself a case in which the land commissioner at Cunnamulla got into great disrepute over some recommendations which he made with regard to grazing selectors, and that officer made those recommendations knowing that in doing so he would get himself into disrepute in the district, but he did it knowing that it was his duty. I say these officers do what is very often disagreeable and unpleasant work honestly and carefully. I do not think any good will come from passing this motion. If at any time a general amendment of the existing Land Act is proposed with the view of altering our present land policy, there will be ample information in the hands of the House and of the Government as to what the other Australian States are doing. Coghlan gives a very good *résumé* of the land laws of the different States, and I do not think that a recommendation by this proposed committee would be of any very great value. As I said earlier in my remarks, there is one thing that is very patent, one thing that stands out prominently, and that is what is the best way to settle people on the land? I contend that our present Land Act is admirably suited for settling people on the land, and that the Lands Department through its officers is doing everything it possibly can to facilitate settlement, and give men information and assistance to settle on the land. The officers have no interest whatever in doing anything but their duty. Those persons who go to the department in Brisbane, and meet the Under Secretary and the different officers under him, will admit, I think, the unvarying courtesy which they always receive from the department, also that the fullest information is always obtainable. The hon. member for Leichhardt often visits the office, and I am sure he will bear me out in these remarks.

Mr. HARDACRE: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I really cannot see how we are going to better our present position, unless we are going to initiate a new scheme of land laws altogether, and I do not think there is any hope of that position being taken up this year, nor do I think there is any serious flaw in the existing law, unless it may be that the House has come to the conclusion that in the West the maximum area of grazing farms is not large enough. That question is fairly debatable. The House at present has come to the conclusion that 20,000 acres is large enough for a grazing farm; some hon. members consider that in many cases 20,000 acres is too large. If you make any alteration in that respect you can do nothing but give the Minister power to increase the maximum area, and the difficulty would be to define that power, and say in what cases it should be used. I was speaking to the hon. member for Gregory about this matter last night, and pointing out the difficulty which has to be considered. You may think that in some of the Western districts it would be a fair thing to make 40,000 acres the maximum area, while in other portions of the same districts you would not give anything like 20,000 acres. There would have to be a classification of some sort indicating in what cases an increased maximum area should be allowed. But I think the House would rather object to giving the Minister the

power to grant areas up to 40,000 acres without some definite limit within which that power might be exercised. That seems to me the only thing in our land laws with regard to settlement that wants discussing. With reference to the cry that is always made about the small man, I can assure the House that the small man gets every consideration, that nothing that we can do to assist him, either in the way of giving information or enabling him to get about the country, is left undone. Of course we often have trouble in this way: that men expect to get land exactly where they want it and in the way they want it, but that cannot always be done. The land is thrown open on a certain day on a certain plan, and each individual has to take his chance of getting the portion of land that he wants. If that land is not selected on that particular day, and somebody afterwards comes along and says, "If you will alter the plan and give me land of a different shape I think I could take it up and make a living on it," his request is always carefully gone into. The land commissioner is asked to make a report on the matter and say if there is any objection to alter the previous plan, and if anything can be done to meet the wishes of the intending selector it is done as far as possible. By allowing land to be selected in a certain way the value of all the land around it might be deteriorated, and that has always to be taken into consideration, so that the eyes of the land should not be taken up and the remainder become valueless in consequence. If an alteration of the boundaries will induce a man to take up land, the alteration is invariably made, if it can be done, having due regard to the public interest. It would be unfair, however, to do that, and allow anybody to take it up without first throwing it open afresh for selection with the altered boundaries. Someone else might say, "Well, if I had known that the Government would allow the land to be taken up in that way, I would have gone for it." Consequently, in every case notice is given of the intention of the Government to open the land for selection in that way, and then the whole of the would-be selectors have an opportunity of applying to take it up if they wish. It is not my wish in any shape or form to block any inquiry into the working of my department. I court the fullest inquiry. But I do not think that a select committee of this House is necessary at the present moment. I believe that the department is being worked as liberally as it can be in the interests of the would-be selectors. If hon. members wish to make any recommendations with regard to the administration of the department, I shall be only too delighted to give them the fullest consideration. If they consider that in any case proper publicity has not been given to anything, if they will let me know of it I shall try to rectify it. I quite admit that in a big country like Queensland it is absolutely impossible that the public estate can be managed without making some mistakes. I do not care who is in authority in the department, or how good the officers of the department may be, oversights will occur, and have occurred; but those oversights will always be rectified, so far as I am concerned, if my attention is called to them, and if it is possible to rectify them; and I believe that has invariably been the practice of the administrators of the Lands Department. I do not see that any good can come out of this motion, and consequently I am going to oppose it.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): I intend to say a few words on this motion, but so far I have not been able to obtain the opportunity.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I was waiting to hear you before I spoke myself.

Mr. HARDACRE: I see that my name is on the proposed select committee, and, naturally, I take that as a great compliment to myself. I did not ask to be put on the committee, and did not know my name was there until the proposer of the motion put it before me. It is not for that reason, however, that I intend to support the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Didn't he ask you before you saw your name on the paper?

Mr. HARDACRE: No.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not before he nominated you?

Mr. HARDACRE: No.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then the motion is out of order under Standing Order 185.

Mr. HARDACRE: I speak now to the best of my recollection.

MEMBERS of the Government: Oh! Ah!

Mr. HARDACRE: Speaking to the best of my recollection, when the hon. member informed me about it, my name was on the paper.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; then it is out of order.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He put it there without your consent?

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes, without my consent. I make the statement to the best of my recollection, whatever the result may be.

Mr. TURLEY: It would not make any difference.

Mr. HARDACRE: In any case it is not because my name is on the committee that I approve of the motion. Perhaps the *personnel* of the committee is not the best that could have been suggested. I think the hon. member for Lockyer should certainly have been on the committee, and also some member from the Northern district, and I should be prepared to stand aside in favour of anyone else. I also desire to thank the hon. member for Lockyer and the hon. member for Maryborough for the complimentary remarks they made with regard to me. I think sometimes that the very high compliments they make are not, perhaps, altogether deserved.

The PREMIER: Perhaps they are not quite sincere.

Mr. HARDACRE: Perhaps they are not quite sincere.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*): It is my painful duty to rise to a point of order. In consequence of the statement which has been made by the hon. member for Leichhardt, it is my duty to ask you, Sir, whether this motion has any *locus standi* at all? The hon. member has stated that he was not spoken to in connection with his nomination to the committee, and Standing Order 185 says—

A member intending to move for the appointment of a select committee shall endeavour to ascertain previously whether each member proposed to be named by him on such committee will give his attendance thereupon.

The hon. member for Leichhardt says that all that he knows is that he found his name on the business-paper.

Mr. TURLEY: That is not contrary to the Standing Order.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not feel positive myself, but I ask for the Deputy Speaker's ruling as to whether this matter is properly before the House. It appears to be very irregular.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have not sufficient evidence before me at the present time that the hon. member who has moved this motion has not made his best endeavours to ascertain whether those who are named on the committee would sit.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is the statement of the hon. member for Leichhardt no evidence?

Mr. HARDACRE: I do not remember whether the hon. member informed me before he gave notice, but he certainly informed me before he moved the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He won't believe you, you know.

Mr. HARDACRE: I was dealing with the statement of the hon. member for Lockyer. The hon. member said that one weak point in regard to myself in connection with land is that I have not been practically connected with agriculture. After all there is not a great deal in that. You might as well say that no person could write a book unless he was a bookbinder, or that no man could make a pick or a shovel unless he was a miner. Apart from that matter altogether, I am in favour of the motion, and I may say that I was surprised at the antagonism shown yesterday by the Government to a simple, harmless motion of this kind. If any proof was wanted for the statement that the Government are not in sympathy with land settlement, their action in regard to this resolution furnished that proof. Here is a simple, harmless motion, which does not entail any expense—or very little expense—on the Government, which has for its object a good purpose—that is, to facilitate settlement—and yet we have the strongest opposition shown to it and the greatest warmth displayed against it by the Government. The Government may be in sympathy with settlement on the

[5 p.m.] land, but, if so, they are like the pastoralists; they are in sympathy with it in the abstract. They may be like the American slavedriver, who was in favour of liberty 10,000 miles away, but did not think it was good for his own niggers. No doubt the pastoralists are in favour of settlement in the abstract—that is, not on their own runs but on someone else's; and no doubt the Government are in favour of settlement generally, but they do not do what they ought to do to give effect to their sympathy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What ought we to do?

Mr. HARDACRE: Well, the Government might support this resolution.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This will not assist in putting people on the land?

Mr. HARDACRE: I will come to that later on. I think the passage of this motion will do a great deal towards settling people on the land. Perhaps it would do as much as a report of a Royal Commission would, although nearly all the recommendations of the Royal Commissions are ignored by the Government. I believe that some valuable suggestions and hints could be obtained if we had an inquiry into the systems in force in the other colonies in this relation. The Attorney-General asked what good this would do. Seeing we have the Government, the Minister for Lands, the Lands Department, and the assistance of all members of Parliament, he thought we should be able to devise some good scheme for promoting settlement. Quite so, but this resolution is moved by a member of Parliament who is trying to assist the Government and the Minister for Lands in this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why, he vilified the Government and the Minister for Lands for over a quarter of an hour.

Mr. HARDACRE: That has nothing to do with this motion. I am dealing with the Attorney-General's opposition to this resolution, and not with the remarks of the mover of this motion. The Attorney-General asked—*cui bono*—what good would this motion do if passed, and contended that, as the whole department and

the Government were trying to devise the best scheme possible, there was no necessity for it. Now, the senior member for Maryborough very pertinently told the House that the Government are not omniscient; that they do not know everything. There may be some suggestions and some other systems which the Government are not aware of, in other places, and very valuable information may be obtained from the other colonies in this matter. Another objection was that the character of lands in and the climate of the other colonies was dissimilar to that in Queensland, but I do not think the conditions are very dissimilar. They are not very dissimilar in New South Wales, or Western Australia, or in South Australia, to what they are in Queensland, although they may be dissimilar in Victoria. I happened to go through the whole of the Acts in force in the other colonies about three years ago, and, generally speaking, I found that the provisions of these Acts were almost similar to our own. I don't know whether they copied our provisions, or whether we copied theirs. It may be that owing to the general character of the climate, and other conditions in the whole of the colonies, that systems similar to our own have grown up. In any case, the provisions in force in the other colonies are very similar to our own provisions.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you speaking of the whole of the colonies, or only of some parts of the colonies?

Mr. HARDACRE: I am speaking of the colonies as a whole.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Surely the same conditions do not apply to all parts?

Mr. HARDACRE: Of course, the conditions are not the same in all parts of each different colony. I grant that, but I say that the conditions are generally the same in the other colonies as they are in Queensland. We have localities where there is little or no rainfall, and that is the case with regard to some parts of the other colonies, but the general conditions are practically the same in the other colonies as they are in Queensland, and the general provisions of the Acts there are practically the same as those in force in the other colonies. They have provisions dealing with homesteads, a Grazing Farm Bill, which is equivalent to our grazing farm selection measure, and a measure which is equivalent to our Pastoral Holdings Bill. Therefore, I say that the Acts in this connection in force in the other colonies may be taken to be practically similar to our own Acts. As a matter of fact, I think that many valuable suggestions may be obtained from the other colonies. Let us take what is in force in South Australia, and what it is proposed to put into force in New South Wales. There is in South Australia a working man's homestead measure, giving certain blocks.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What is the area of them?

Mr. HARDACRE: Five or 10 or 20 acres each, and that is for the purpose of providing residences for workmen round centres of population—round about inland towns.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Can you mention any inland towns where this is in force?

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes, some.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Tell me one of these inland towns.

Mr. HARDACRE: I can't remember the names of them now, but I give you my word that this is so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is so in Adelaide.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes, but lands have been thrown open for this purpose in some inland towns; and, as I pointed out some time ago, in

some cases the land has been increased in value by fencing and other improvements, as a result of the working of this Act.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I spent a week investigating the question on the spot, so I know something about the matter.

Mr. HARDACRE: Surely the hon. member does not contradict my assertion that this is the case in some inland towns?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The trouble is that you do not make a distinct statement.

Mr. HARDACRE: It is in force in Adelaide, and in some inland towns, and the result has been a great benefit to South Australia. One of the members of Parliament there said that it was one of the best measures that had ever been passed there for placing men on the land. The same measure is proposed in New South Wales. We have not got it here, and it would be a great advantage to Queensland if we had. Then take the system in force in New Zealand. They have a system of throwing open farms in order to get men to improve alternate farms—that is, that selectors on farms alternate to Crown lands are permitted to make improvements at a certain price on adjoining Crown lands. Afterwards these Crown lands are thrown open, and this enables men to get on the land, find employment, make improvements on the lands, and so assist them during the primary part of their settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How do they help him to get employment near his selection?

Mr. HARDACRE: By giving him the work of improving the Crown land adjoining. Every other selection belongs to the Crown; and the selectors on alternate selections are allowed to do work improving the Crown land.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And what happens when the alternate selection is taken?

Mr. HARDACRE: They put them up with a price on the improvements, and men with money come along—

MEMBERS on the Government side: Oh, oh!

Mr. HARDACRE: Men with some means—*bona fide* selectors.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Capitalists!

Mr. HARDACRE: I am not concerned with who they are; I am concerned with a system of settlement that has been of great benefit in New Zealand, and which would be worth trying in Queensland at the present time when we have so many unemployed. Then there is the system of the Government putting down artesian wells.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Bores.

Mr. HARDACRE: Artesian bores—and throwing open to selection the land round the bores. In New South Wales they are trying that system, but I don't know whether it has been successful or not. Information on that matter might be obtained, and if the system is successful in New South Wales it might be adopted here. The Government have done something in that way in Queensland, but I don't know whether the localities were very suitable. I think, however, that even the success that has been attained might justify them in trying the system to a larger extent in other parts of the colony. At any rate, information as to the result in New South Wales would be of some benefit, because, if the system has not been successful there, we should be warned against it, and if it is successful there it will be an encouragement to go on with it here.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Didn't the commission get that evidence?

Mr. HARDACRE: In connection with facilitating settlement, I would like to point out that in Western Australia they have published an illustrated handbook giving a description of the districts in which lands are open to selection;

and in New South Wales they publish, and have posted at every railway station in the colony—and I believe at every post office—a list of the whole of the selections open in New South Wales. I think that if we had something like that here it would be of some assistance.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We do better. I give them a free pass to go and look at the land, which is a good deal better.

Mr. HARDACRE: That is another system which is, no doubt, good. Even there the Government is not doing anything like it ought. They do not give the selector a free railway fare to go and view the land, but after a man has selected land, if he signed a document before he went that he was going to select land, they give him a refund of his money. But how many people in Queensland travel over the railway lines at their own expense, and are not successful in getting land, and are not allowed any refund by the Railway Department? And there are others who travel at their own expense, looking for land, over country that is not near a railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You don't know what they are allowed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Everybody would be looking for land if people looking for land were charged nothing on the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In that case no man would travel except a man looking for land.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course not.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARDACRE: The Government might go as far as this: They might say that one who has selected land might have a refund of his railway fares whether he gave notice previously or not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How would you know he had travelled then?

Mr. HARDACRE: You would find out from the station-masters.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do the station-masters keep a record of every man who travels?

Mr. HARDACRE: To a large extent they can tell.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not at all.

Mr. HARDACRE: In many cases. And the Minister could take into consideration what was reasonable proof. How can the Minister tell that a man is going to select land, or going to look for a selection, when he gives him a pass?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am satisfied as to his *bona fides* in advance.

Mr. HARDACRE: Another argument used was that there was no necessity for the select committee, because of the work done by the Royal Commission some years ago; but the work performed by the Royal Commission was not so much inquiring into the Acts and systems in force in the other colonies as inquiring into the conditions of settlement in this colony. They travelled to Sydney and to Bourke in New South Wales, and the rest of the time they spent in Queensland. The province of this committee is entirely different. Its object is to examine the Acts and systems in force in the other colonies, and find out if there is anything in them that would be of advantage to this colony.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: We can find that out for ourselves.

Mr. HARDACRE: I suppose we can find it out for ourselves if we go to the trouble of doing so; but the object of appointing a select committee is to get them to obtain information for the whole of the members instead of the information being obtained by the members of the House individually. And whatever recommendations they may make need not be followed if it is not found advisable.

Mr. LORD : The committee would have to visit the other colonies.

Mr. HARDACRE : Not necessarily. They can get the information. And how can a select committee travel? There are no funds provided for them, and I think that is one of the benefits of this motion. It proposes to do work which may be valuable, and at the same time it does not entail any considerable expense.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS : Don't you think that if the report is to be worth anything you should compare the class of land which legislation applies to with the class of land in our colony to which you would desire it to be applied?

Mr. HARDACRE : I don't think that objection is valid. I agree with the Minister for Lands when he says that our present Land Act is extremely elastic. We have provisions in it which apply to all classes of land whether it is bad, inferior, or good, and we have provisions made which are applicable to all parts of the colony. What the committee would do would be to find out what provisions of the laws of the other colonies were in force which so far had not been made applicable to Queensland. We have learnt from the other colonies in other matters. In the matter of loans to settlers, which was first attempted to be dealt with by the Government last year, a law has been in force in South Australia for five or six years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS : It has been in force for 100 years in other places.

Mr. HARDACRE : At all events, the other colonies have given us the lead in many matters, and therefore it is only reasonable to assume that there are provisions in the Acts of the other colonies from which we can learn something. Seeing that the work of the committee would cost very little, I can see no reasonable objection to allowing the motion to go, except that the sympathies of the Government are very much more apparent than their acts. Actions speak louder than words, and, in opposing a harmless motion like this, I think they have shown vividly that, whatever their sympathies may be for the pastoralists, they have no real, genuine desire to help the small settlers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*) : I should hope that a deeper interest would have been taken in this subject, more especially by members sitting on the side of the hon. member for Leichhardt, who seems to think that, if any member does not fall in with the views of the hon. member for Albert, that is evidence of his want of sympathy with land settlement. Now, this is a scheme, ostensibly, in order to discover some means of assisting land settlement which has not hitherto been known to the world. My opinion is, that it is quite a different kind of proposal in its intent to what it purports to be. Instead of assisting to settle the farmer on the soil, I think it is a plan which is intended to assist certain political speculators, whose seats, perhaps, are not altogether secure, to obtain a better settlement than they are likely to have otherwise on the floor of this House.

Mr. JENKINSON : Contrary to your usual style, you are ungenerous.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE : The hon. member says "most ungenerous." We will deal a little with that. How did the hon. member deal with the Ministry, and those who sit on this side of the House, when he got up to support his friend the member for Albert, and how did he deal also with the other side of the House? Did he deal with generosity? I venture to say he did not deal even with common justice. He maligned the Government. Both he and the hon. member for Albert did. They showed, without any question, that this motion was not intended to benefit the selector, but to

damage the Government, and consequently benefit the Constitutional Opposition, which at present is hard put to it to make both political ends meet, and explain the extraordinary and anomalous position which it finds it so dreadfully and painfully hard to occupy, and to justify to its constituents.

Mr. JENKINSON : We need no justification of our position.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE : Now, the hon. member desires generosity.

Mr. JENKINSON : I did not say I desired generosity.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE : The hon. member says we on this side should show more generosity.

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE : Well, I credit the hon. member with benevolent feelings, but he appears to reserve to himself the liberty to denounce his opponents.

Mr. JENKINSON : I said that, contrary to your usual style, you were ungenerous.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE : I have not the slightest objection to being charged with want of generosity towards my political opponents every day of the week. Now, this is what the hon. member for Wide Bay, who seemed in a charitable mood, says of the Government. He says the Government is the squatters' friend, and the hon. member who said he approached the matter in a purely non-party spirit, said that the Government were the friends of the large men, and that it was a part of their system to put obstacles in the way of the small selector.

Mr. JENKINSON : Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE : The hon. member says "Hear, hear," and thereby emphasises a charge which would be most disgraceful and discreditable to the Secretary for Lands. He asserted further that nothing but bad land was available, and that the Crown ranger dogged the selector; and all this to show that he was anxious to benefit the selector. But what he did show was a most bitter party spirit. I do not object to the hon. member flowing over with party spirit, but what I do object to is that the hon. member for Wide Bay, who is supposed to be the leader of a party, always provided he has got one—I do not wish to commit myself to something of which I have no evidence—should rise up in support of the motion of the hon. member for Albert in a purely party political spirit and blackguard the Government.

Mr. JENKINSON : No, not blackguard the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE : Well, disparage the Government. The hon. member for Albert was even much more outspoken and bitter, and indeed the professions of both those hon. members are altogether different to their practice. They first of all show this bitter spirit of partisanship, and want at the same time to get credit with the outside public for advocating the discussion of the motion in a non-party spirit. Now, what good is going to be derived from passing this motion? No one has spoken in favour of the motion except the hon. member for Leichhardt and the two members who are supposed to belong to the Constitutional party. Hon. members have said if the motion is not

very good, it will not do any harm.

[5.30 p.m.] It does not seem to me that that is the proper way to deal with it. We might bring legislation forward in this House, dealing with millions of matters, and we might legislate upon them in the perfect certainty of not doing any harm. We might legislate with regard to the sun, or with regard to the weather in the Arctic and Antarctic regions,

and we should not do any harm, but that would not justify us in taking up time which should be devoted to some useful purpose. That is a kind of argument which I think is not very creditable to the hon. gentleman who made use of it. I say, so far as the motion is concerned, that if it had been introduced in a friendly manner, it might have been allowed to pass without argument at all, but it was not introduced in a friendly manner. It was introduced with the wish to benefit the scanty ranks of the Constitutional Opposition, damaging the Government as far as it possibly could be damaged. It was certainly not introduced in a manner to commend it to the House except on pure party lines.

Mr. JENKINSON: It was opposed before it was introduced.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member treats the action as hostile because someone says "Not formal." It is perfectly reasonable, when you wish to discuss a matter, to call "Not formal," and there are many cases where that is done in order that information may be given to the House; and because this action was taken in this case, the hon. member for Albert complained that the Government wish to stifle all private motions, and all private members' business. Why? Simply because we ask for it to be discussed. If the Government and its members have not the right to claim discussion, what right can they have, and what is the use of their sitting here? If the moment they wish that a thing should be discussed they are to be charged with hostility, then it comes to this: that anyone will have the right to thrust matters upon this House without any discussion at all. The implication of this motion is very plain. It is that the present Minister for Lands, the Royal Commission, which sat years ago, the Under Secretary for Lands, all the previous Ministers for Lands, and all the appliances or means which exist within Parliament, or in the Lands Office, are all inefficient and unavailing, and consequently we have to call, or rather the hon. member for Albert has to call, in some other engine to obtain or produce a lot of information, which is at present unavailable. The committee do not propose to go outside the colony to get information. They intend to meet, I presume, two or three times during the session in one of the lower rooms in this building. There will be a reporter there, and probably a typewriter. The reporter will take down what these gentlemen have to say, but in what way will information be elicited in this manner which is not already in the Lands Office is not at all clear. The hon. member for Leichhardt himself, I have no doubt, could in a very short time get up a report upon the various systems of land settlement in the world by going into the library. They will get all the information there. How do hon. members expect by going into a room below these premises—how do they expect to enlarge the amount of knowledge at the disposal of the community? If they go to the Lands Office, or if they go into the library, they will get all the Land Acts of all the colonies. They could go further than that. They could get reports and all the information without this clatter—this clatter which has a political object in view, which is of no value to the selector, or any value to settlement. It is only a determined attempt at self-advertisement, and is proposed for no other reason. No one has pointed out yet how those gentlemen, having met down below, getting nothing per week, paid daily, will be able to elicit any more information than is already in the possession of the Lands Office, or in the library. What is intended to be implied is that the information cannot be got. If you go to the Lands Office you can get the information. You

have got the inquiry office there, and you have got the reports of the Lands Office. I say that any member of Parliament without going through this form of being enrolled in a select committee can get all the information that there is to be got. If they want this information, there is nothing in the world to prevent the hon. member for Albert, the hon. member for Toowoomba, the hon. member for Leichhardt, or the hon. member for Wide Bay getting all this information, without in this way getting the House to approve of their being called a select committee, and thus give them a certain amount of cheap publicity.

Mr. JENKINSON: I am not on it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, that is a great pity. I am quite sure the hon. member's services would be as useful as any of the other hon. members. It has never been shown yet that the means of getting information that are now in existence are not ample, nor has it been shown that these six gentlemen meeting in a room down below, and exchanging their experiences with regard to books—because there are no other means apparently by which they can learn anything about New Zealand—are going to obtain any better information. If the hon. gentleman had said, "I wish to see the United States—the great United States of America—and I wish to proceed and discover their system of settling the land," I could have understood it—it would have impressed me with the idea that his object was of a much deeper character. But these gentlemen, it seems to me, are to get practically all their only information out of books. If they were altering the methods of obtaining information in that way—if one said, "I would like to go to America," or if all said, "We would like to look into the conditions of the Western States of America, and in the course of the journey look in at Chicago, and afterwards visit Pennsylvania, New York, and New Orleans on the way"—I could understand it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You would not vote for that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I would not vote for it, because I am sure the Treasury is sufficiently burdened by the demands already made upon it. I am quite sure if those hon. members were permitted to visit various parts of the world in pursuit of information, with the right to expend what they thought necessary, the charge on the Treasury would be very considerable. I should have to object to it, and I object to this motion because there is no need for it; because there is no object in it apparently, except self-advertisement, and because it implies that the Government have done nothing whatever to reasonably promote or make easy settlement on the land. It implies that until the sun of these gentlemen arises on the horizon, all is darkness in the information of the Lands Department. Generally speaking, a terrible dereliction of duty cannot be charged against the Government.

Mr. LESINA: Give us something about the French Revolution.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If I am led off the track I may be induced to unduly prolong my remarks and prevent other hon. members who may desire to speak from doing so. It has been asked, with a great deal of truth I venture to say, by several hon. members who have spoken, that even supposing you do get information with regard to other countries, would it be of much value to this colony? We can get the information very cheaply, I admit. The members of the committee, if they are appointed, have only to get hold of "Coghlan" and a few other standard compilations, and to study the agricultural reports which they may receive from all parts of the world. But when they get them, will they be of any particular

value? The conditions which apply in one part of the world may be entirely misleading if applied in Queensland. What would it matter to us that in Patagonia a certain method of land settlement had met with great success; or that in Hindostan a certain land system had led to the existence of 237,000,000 human beings? And what would be the value to us of the experiences of Argentina or the adjacent settlement of Cosme? Supposing we got all this valuable information and tried to apply it to our own husbandmen, and the citizens settled on the soil, it would probably lead them hopelessly astray. And all the knowledge that this committee could get is obtainable in the library, and in the various repositories in the Lands Office. The resolution assumes that there is no Department of Agriculture, and that hon. members on this side of the House generally are absolutely indifferent to the settlement of the country. It assumes that nothing whatever has been done in the direction of spreading knowledge or giving information or benefiting that class of people connected with the soil. To begin with, we have a Department of Agriculture which last year spent about £44,000. I believe that money was profitably expended. Certainly it was an expenditure that was approved of by the House. We have persons to instruct the agriculturists when they get on the land; that is of some assistance to them, I hope. Then there is the college to train persons who may desire ultimately to settle on the land. All that, I take it, goes to promote land settlement. Then we have just passed an Agricultural Lands Repurchase Bill, which was not approved of by the Labour Opposition. I do not know whether it was by the Constitutional Opposition, but I should guess, without having access to *Hansard*, that anything which was brought forward by the Government would be disapproved of by the hon. member for Wide Bay and whatever spectral following he may have. I should assume, therefore, that that Bill must be one which he and his friends oppose. I am exceedingly sorry—

Mr. JENKINSON: What! are your fellow-Ministers going to gag you?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am always delighted to show the greatest consideration to those who are opposed to me. At the same time I am entitled to have what is called a "show" myself. I have no desire to keep on talking until the time arrives when private business is interfered with. I want to give somebody else a chance to speak. I believe a man's liberty ends where another man's liberty begins. I shall, therefore, conclude my remarks by saying that the Government have done all they could do in order to facilitate settlement. They have given selectors facilities for railway travelling, and furnished them with the fullest information regarding land open to selection. They have also spent £500,000 on sugar-mills, which has led to a very large settlement. There is really no necessity for the motion introduced by the hon. member for Albert.

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*), in reply: The Secretary for Lands stated that he was very sorry that he was not present yesterday afternoon when the motion was introduced, and I may say that I also regret his absence. The Attorney-General spoke a long time on the motion, but all his argument amounted to was that we had a Royal Commission on land settlement in 1897, and that this proposed committee would not obtain any more information than was procured by that commission. And the other members who have spoken against the motion have really advanced arguments in support of it. In fact, nothing has really been said against the proposal, except that the Ministry do not want a

select committee appointed to deal with this question. I do not think that the hon. gentlemen on the front Treasury bench have any reason to conclude that I want to injure the Government. I am not excusing myself for anything that I said yesterday, but I say that my object was rather to assist the Government than to do them an injury. I told the Secretary for Lands and other Ministers, in a friendly manner, that I was going to bring forward this motion, and suggested that they might allow it to go as formal; but they would not agree to that. At the same time, I must say that I would not for one moment ask the House to agree to the motion without giving reasons for its introduction. I am not going back on one word that I said yesterday afternoon. I have read the *Hansard* report of what I said, and I do not retract one word. As to the speech made by the Secretary for Agriculture, it was more claptrap than common sense, and I do not think it necessary to reply to it. The Secretary for Lands certainly made a very able defence of the department, and I give him every credit, personally, for doing the best he can, and for his courtesy. I believe there is no man in the colony who would make a better Secretary for Lands than the hon. gentleman, but all the same I do not go back on one word I said yesterday. Even the principal of the Gattton Agricultural College complains of the difficulty there is in getting land to settle on, and the same complaint is prevalent all over the colony.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We cannot take land away from people who have leased it, and give it to other people.

Mr. PLUNKETT: There is plenty of land available. I think the Government would have acted wisely had they accepted my motion, but even if it is not passed I think this discussion will result in good in the future, and I may say in conclusion that I have no political object in proposing it.

Mr. McMASTER (*Fortitude Valley*): I did not think that we should come to a decision on this motion this evening.

Mr. JACKSON: Isn't it very unusual to speak after the mover of a motion has replied?

Mr. McMASTER: I know that it is not customary to do so, but it has been done. There are precedents for my action, for I have often seen it done in this House. I should be one of the first to support this motion if I thought it would be likely in any way to assist in settling people on the land, but I fail to see what benefit will accrue from appointing the proposed committee unless they are allowed to travel and get evidence from people on the spot. As far as getting information from the Acts of Parliament which are to be found in the library is concerned, every member of the House can do that for himself. It is no good appointing a committee of this kind unless they have leave to travel to the other States and New Zealand. If they did that, their inquiry might result in some benefit, but that is not proposed to be done. I think the hon. member for Leichhardt gave us as much information this afternoon as the committee would be likely to get, and I therefore fail to see where the benefit of appointing this proposed committee would come in as far as the farmers are concerned, or how it would assist the Government to settle people on the land more than they are doing at the present time. It has been shown by previous speakers that the Government are doing a great deal to facilitate settlement on the land, and I am satisfied that the Government for the past eight or ten years have done everything they could to promote settlement. They have engaged men to go round with a travelling dairy in order to show farmers how to carry on dairying operations,

they have sent men round to the farmers, and they have appointed an Agricultural Adviser to go round the country. They have also sent a man round to teach the people how to grow tobacco, and have established experimental farms, and invited farmers to come from all quarters in order to get information that it is desirable they should have in the prosecution of their industry. They are giving bonuses to those who are exporting, they are assisting the meat and dairy producers in order that they may be able to establish factories and export their products to other countries. I should like to know what other information this committee would be likely to obtain from the other colonies that we are not in possession of already. I dare say it would be a very nice thing to have a trip to New Zealand, and perhaps such a trip would be very profitable, as the committee would be able to take evidence in different places and see for themselves the class of land that was available for settlement and the conditions under which it could be obtained. I should like very much to see the farms and homesteads that the hon. member for Leichhardt has pictured to us this afternoon. He told us that there were small holdings, and that the Government held every alternate block.

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

PORT NORMAN, NORMANTON, AND CLONCURRY RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

* Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*): I am quite willing to give the Premier and the Secretary for Railways credit, in bringing forward this Bill, for believing it to be in the best interests of the country. In doing so, I am quite sure they will be willing to accord to those who do not agree with them that they are likewise actuated by the best of motives when we point out what we consider to be the defects of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hear, hear!

Mr. JENKINSON: In the first place, although it was not enunciated by the Secretary for Railways last night, I would like to ask him if this is a vital portion of the policy of the Government?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All Government measures are.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is right. It seems peculiar, if the Government consider the construction of railways by private enterprise a vital portion of their policy, that they should have stumped the country in various constituencies on behalf of candidates who deliberately declared their intention of opposing these measures. I need not refer further than—

Mr. FORSYTH: That shows their independence.

Mr. JENKINSON: I fail to see where they can possibly show their independence when they endeavoured to secure the return of candidates who were pledged to oppose a vital portion of the Government policy.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government advocated this principle on every platform, all the same.

Mr. JENKINSON: And yet were willing at any price to secure support, even although the gentlemen whose candidature they were advocating would oppose them on a vital portion of their policy.

The PREMIER: Give us something new.

Mr. JENKINSON: I have never heard that mentioned before.

The PREMIER: Oh, yes; it has been mentioned.

Mr. JENKINSON: Well, if it hurts the hon. gentleman, I will not mention it again.

The PREMIER: You cannot hurt us.

Mr. JENKINSON: I know the truth hurts some people.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You cannot throw a strong enough spear to hurt us.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is not a spear at all. I make an assertion, and endeavour to prove it by facts, and the Premier and his colleague, the Secretary for Railways, who is in charge of this Bill, object to it. Therefore, I say, I will not hurt their feelings by proceeding any further with that. The Secretary for Railways, in speaking last night, said that there were five different alterations in this Bill, all of which would be to the advantage of the country. That being so, it does not speak well for their action in introducing a Bill last session which contained five provisions, which, on their own admission, would have been detrimental to the country.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say they would be detrimental. I said they would be beneficial, but these would be more so.

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. gentleman said that there were five provisions in this Bill that would be more beneficial—would be to the advantage of the country. I believe those were the terms the hon. gentleman used. Consequently, if those five provisions which appeared in the Bill introduced last session had been included in this Bill, the reasonable conclusion is that they would have been detrimental to the country.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not at all.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Government were quite prepared to force that Bill through, the same as they did the others, with all the faults that were supposed to be attached to them; and they would probably have done so but for what is termed in the *British Australasian* "a misunderstanding," and was referred to by the hon. member for Croydon last night. Last year it was proposed to deal with what might be termed a non-proprietary company; but, in deference to the opposition that was shown to the principle last year, the Secretary for Railways last night said that the Government had bowed to that opposition, and now they were dealing with a proprietary company, who would not hawk about the concession.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say it was on that account. That was one of the reasons, and I would have preferred a company of this kind myself last year, if we could have got it.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is where the advantage of the present Bill comes in.

Mr. JENKINSON: I am quite satisfied that if they had been alive to the importance of the measure they would probably have got as much as they have got now. The hon. gentleman said that he could see no harm in a non-proprietary company. Well, I disagree entirely with that assertion. I think it is entirely to the detriment of this State that any set of persons or exploiters should get a concession from this Government or any other Government, and be hawking it about and trying to make money out of it. I do not think it is in the best interests of the State that that should be done. The Government has no right to grant a concession of that sort.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is true of every mining lease in the colony, and you know it.

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. gentleman knows distinctly that it is not true; he knows that there are certain conditions safeguarding it.

attached to every mining lease, and that the same conditions are absent from the provisions of the Bill we are discussing now. He knows that as well as can be.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, you can hawk about your mining leases. Lots of people do it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JENKINSON: We are bound by the Mining Act. The difference here is that you are allowing them leases to work mining areas, with no conditions at all attached to them with the exception of the payment. If it is necessary that the provisions of this Bill should be granted, why not put the concession up to auction, and let the State get the best they possibly can for it? We have nothing to show us at the present time that this particular company will give the State the best that it could receive. There is nothing whatever to guide us. On the other hand, I believe we have not made as good a bargain with this company as we might have made with other people. Therefore, I believe that the Government have not been consulting the best interests of the State in doing that. To show that the Government do not altogether believe in this measure—because I presume the Minister for Railways is the mouthpiece of the Government in regard to this particular thing—in speaking last night the hon. gentleman said that he tried his utmost to get the term of fifty years reduced, but he failed to do so. I presume that, having made the attempt to get the fifty years reduced, he saw that it was not likely to be a good thing for the State that this absentee company should have a term of fifty years for this railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It gave us an option—that is all.

Mr. JENKINSON: I take it that the hon. gentleman realised that it was not to the advantage of the State that they should have this concession for fifty years—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think it is.

Mr. JENKINSON: Otherwise he would not have tried to get an alteration of the term. Now we all realise that the hon. gentleman is about the strongest man in the Ministry, and I believe, if he is likely to be thwarted in his will by his colleagues, he would just as soon leave the Ministry as he would take his breakfast tomorrow. I believe he is a strong man—I have said so before—and, having that strength of will, which I believe every member of this House is willing to accord to him, why did he not say that in the best interests of the State this term must be reduced below the fifty years? I am only going by what the hon. gentleman said himself; he said that he tried to get the term reduced, and was unsuccessful. And incidentally he said that he had failed the same as I have always failed. I asked the hon. gentleman then, and I ask him again now, to give me an instance where I have failed. He was unable to do so last night, and I believe he is unable to do so now.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There has never been a case where you succeeded.

Mr. JENKINSON: You have not inquired sufficiently, that is the reason for that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You did not convince Mr. Barlow the other night.

Mr. JENKINSON: I did not try to convince Mr. Barlow. I am very glad the hon. gentleman has referred to that, because as they are always throwing that at me, it shows that the Government are inclined to take some notice of what I said.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. REID: They are getting afraid.

Mr. JENKINSON: Then it comes to this: If the hon. gentleman endeavoured to the utmost

of his ability to get the term of fifty years reduced, and he was not successful in so doing, we are brought face to face with this position: Are we going to allow any private company or any syndicate to dictate terms to us with regard to what we give them, or are we still to be allowed to be a legislative body and legislate in the best interests of the people of the State and do our very best on their behalf?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You cannot dictate to me.

Mr. JENKINSON: This is the attitude we should assume if we have the true interest of the people at heart.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We don't assume attitudes at all; you do.

Mr. JENKINSON: I am not a contortionist like the hon. gentleman, and I never intend to be.

Mr. REID: You said he was a strong man a few minutes ago.

Mr. JENKINSON: If there is any justice in our cause, I maintain we should press it to its ultimate conclusion. We have to face the danger of allowing our political life to be controlled by institutions, financial and otherwise. That has been very plain for the last few months in this House, and the sooner it is realised outside the better. The hon. member also said that there is no chance of the Government building this line for the next fifteen or twenty years. Why is that? If arguments can be adduced to show that it would be in the best interests of the people for the State to build this line, is the hon. gentleman still prepared to adhere to the statement that it is not possible for the State to build this line, even if it would pay handsomely? I shall endeavour to prove by the prospectus issued by the company that there is a very fair prospect of this line paying.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are arguing from a postulate. Do you know what that is? It is a position taken up without proof.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Hon. the Minister for Railways has lately taken up the rôle of schoolmaster in this House; he has not done that in altogether a nice manner, and I think there is something in what the hon. member for Croydon said the other day with reference to the hon. gentleman—that he should take about with him as a necessary accessory a block of ice with which to cool the swelling that seems to have taken place since he has occupied a seat on the front Treasury bench. Since the hon. gentleman has occupied the position he now occupies he has been very fond of throwing all sorts of innuendoes across the Chamber, and the position of schoolmaster which he has taken up is entirely unwarranted by any capabilities he possesses.

Mr. GIVENS: You complimented him just now.

Mr. JENKINSON: That won't prevent me complimenting him when he is deserving; and when he deserves condemnation, he will get it all the same.

Mr. REID: Won't his strong will keep the swelling down.

Mr. JENKINSON: I don't think so. It is probably his strong will that is causing it. I think this Bill is the connecting link of the present day with what is well known as the transcontinental railway. Again and again efforts have been made to endeavour to bring this matter to the front from the time it was first introduced to the notice of the country by Sir Thomas Mellwraith. Now I will just quote what the *British Australasian*, in its special supplement, dated 9th May, 1901, says—

In the early eighties, Major-General Fielding, representing an influential London syndicate, reported on the country between Point Parker on the Gulf and

Longreach in the South, taking in Cloncurry and Winton, with a view to constructing a transcontinental railway on the land-grant system.

The paper goes on to give the reports submitted to the House in connection with this matter. The first is the report of the select committee appointed in 1886. Then it says that efforts were made in London to try and induce Sir Hugh Nelson to approve of the scheme. That was done, and then it says that a delay was caused by the retirement of Sir Hugh Nelson in favour of the late Mr. Byrnes, who was not favourable to the object of the company. Then it refers to the late Sir James Dickson, who made it plain that he was of the opinion that the land-grant system should be dropped. After giving the names of the subscribers and the directors of the company, there is the following very significant paragraph:—

It is seldom that one sees such a strong list of names in connection with any one concern. More powerful have never been associated with any Australian undertaking. The railway has also the approval of the leading Australasian banks—the mortgage, finance, pastoral companies—a large number of whose interests will be greatly improved by the construction of such a line.

Now I think that if this concession is granted, it will not be so much in the interests of the people of the colony as in the interests of these financial institutions. The Minister has pointed out that section 14 is put in as a safeguard, for fear this company may come into competition with the State lines in the future. When Captain Reid was a candidate for political honours in Gympie, he indicated the reasons he had for opposing the building of this line in this way. He said it should be a portion of the trunk line, and that it would be detrimental to construct the line by private enterprise, inasmuch as it might be the means of taking away traffic from the State lines in the future. I think that was a very reasonable attitude to take up; that there is good reason for forecasting danger in that respect. Then we find that the company will have power to build two tramways, which are marked on the map given to us by the paper I have quoted from, but which are not marked in the schedule attached to this Bill. Under this Bill we are giving the company authority to construct these lines if they desire to do so. The Bill itself is not only one to authorise the construction of this line, but there is something subsidiary attached to that. As has been mentioned by the leader of the Labour party, the preamble states—

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

And these are said to be of public and local advantage. If that is so, and good cause can be made out for the construction, it would appear to be the duty of the State to construct the line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Where are you going to get the money from?

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. member knows where we have got it in the past, and if we can show good cause for getting money I believe we could get more. Clause 3—"Power to construct the railway"—indicates that there is a route delineated in the schedule; but there is nothing in the schedule to bind the company, because the Commissioner is given power, from time to time, to alter the proposed routes. With regard to the penalties, I notice all through they are permissive and not imperative.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If an earthquake occurred, I suppose you would impose penalties on the contractor for the earthquake?

Mr. JENKINSON: Of course that is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the position, and the Minister knows as well as I do. The Bill not only gives power to construct the railway, but to construct innumerable tramways. According to the plan given us, the whole of the railway and the tramways amount to 375 miles, which will bear a respectable proportion to the Government lines of the State. Subclause 2 of clause 4 provides that no tramway shall exceed 25 miles in length, but there is one marked in the schedule 60 miles, and another 30 miles in length.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not in the schedule.

Mr. JENKINSON: Then there must be a difference between the schedule given to the Minister and what was given to me. The schedule given to me last night indicates clearly that there is one line of tramway 60 miles long. We also find in clause 8, with regard to certificates, that the railway shall be inspected by a competent engineer under the authority of the Commissioner, and, as there is nothing provided in regard to the expenses being paid by the company, I presume it will be done at the expense of the State. Subclause 2 says—

In certifying to such cost the Commissioner shall include therein such payments as are properly included by him in ascertaining the actual cost of the construction of a line of railway authorised by Parliament.

I believe I am right in stating that this includes administration, supervision, salaries, interest, etc. As bearing on this matter I would like to show what our neighbours have suffered in regard to this. In the *Courier* of the 4th July this year appears an account of the Midland Railway Commission of New Zealand. It is as follows:—

The Midland Railway Commission have issued their report on the state of the various sections of the railway constructed by the company at a cost of £1,108,628. The commission found that the amount expended by the company on administration, supervision, salaries, interest, etc., was out of all proportion to the cost of construction, and therefore fixed the reasonable cost of the lines as £374,784 instead of the larger sum. The commissioners asserted that the selling value of the line was less than the sum total of the lands and moneys provided by the Crown; so that under this process nothing remains for the debenture-holders or for the shareholders.

Consequently it is reasonable to assume that if it comes to fighting the company the country will be put to the expense of appointing a commission to decide as to the amount that is to be paid; and the probability is that it will be an expensive job.

Mr. FORSYTH: You have the maximum cost.

Mr. JENKINSON: What is that?

Mr. FORSYTH: The cost price of the railway originally.

Mr. JENKINSON: We also find that as soon as the railway is completed and certified safe for traffic, the company shall be entitled to deeds of grant in fee-simple of all Crown lands taken, used, and occupied by it for the railway, reserving to the Crown the minerals. That is in subsection 2 of clause 9. Now I would like to draw attention to subsections 5 and 7 of clause 11. By the subsection of clause 9 to which I have just referred, the company is to be entitled to lands that are to be utilised; and we find that the lands we are going to give them can be utilised for any of the following purposes:—

Erecting fixed or permanent machinery, stations, or other structures or buildings.

And also this very ambiguous and comprehensive clause—

That they shall be entitled to the freehold of lands for any other purpose connected with the construction or working of the railway.

I would like hon. members to bear in mind that this is in connection with the working of the railway, because I desire to draw their attention particularly to the interpretation clause where the word "railway" is defined. To an ordinary layman, of course, a railway is a line of railway, but the Government are not satisfied with giving those people the line of railway; they also say in the interpretation clause that the railway shall mean—

The line of railway and all lands, buildings, and works authorised by this Act to be constructed, acquired, and used for the purposes of the railway.

We find that the purposes of the railway are not only to work the mines and carry away their ores, but to erect freezing works, smelting works, crushing works, labourers' dwellings, artisans' houses, wharves, wharfage accommodation, and sundry other things. It is about the most comprehensive monopoly I ever heard of; and it is altogether out of reason to ask hon. members in their sane senses to accept such a Bill as it stands. We also find, in clause 10, that certain Crown lands shall be resumed by the Commissioner on behalf of the company, and no matter to what extent the Commissioner resumes those lands for the company—it may be £1,000, or £2,000, or £3,000—he cannot demand more than £200 from the company if they refuse to take them, and in the event of the company refusing to take them the country will be mulcted. Clause 13, dealing with mines under the railway, is, I think, one of the most arbitrary clauses I ever read. We discussed this matter in connection with similar Bills last session, and I say that if there is one thing more than another that will tend to block the ordinary miner in the interests of the company it is this clause.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you going to discuss the Bill clause by clause?

Mr. JENKINSON: No; that can be done in committee. I am pointing out several defects, as I consider them, in the Bill, and I believe I am quite within my right in doing so. Sub-section 4 of this clause provides that the Commissioner may do certain things, [7.30 p.m.] and it seems to me that the expense will fall on the Commissioner, and not on the company.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner is not bound to do it at all if he is not satisfied.

Mr. JENKINSON: I see it is a permissive clause.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is purely optional.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Minister is not going to lead me off the track; in committee we will have an opportunity of discussing these matters.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: My objection is that you are not on the track.

Mr. JENKINSON: Now, the following clause is one which I think might be applicable if we were dealing with a railway owned by the State, but to put such power into the hands of a private company is, I do not hesitate to say, nothing short of scandalous. It appears from the Minister's utterances, and also from the clause itself, that there is a danger of this company entering into competition with the State railways. We find that they are to be given 5,000 acres of land practically without any labour conditions at all. They are to have these lands for fifty years. Under the Mining Act 500 men would require to be employed by the company on this area of ground; whereas under the provisions of this Bill the company will be exempted from labour conditions. The company is also to take and acquire all the minerals, not including gold, and it appears, from what I have

read in regard to this matter, that there is a great deal of auriferous ground in the Cloncurry district, inasmuch as there have been claims that have returned from 4 oz. to 5 oz. of gold per ton.

Mr. FORSYTH: Infinitesimal.

Mr. JENKINSON: I wish I could get hold of a mine which would return 5 oz. to the ton, and I am quite sure the hon. member himself would also rush anything like that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It depends upon how many tons you can get.

Mr. JENKINSON: We also see that the company are given grants in fee-simple of sites along and contiguous to the railway for the erection of a large variety of works which are specified in the Bill. I have referred previously to the interpretation clause, so that it may be gathered from that that they will be enabled to get the fee-simple of any land that they require for the purpose, not only of building the railway, but for the purpose of erecting freezing works, artisans' cottages, and other things. It seems a probable thing that if this line is constructed to the mine there will be a large population settle in the vicinity of the port, or at the terminus where the mines are worked. Consequently, the company will be at all events able to hold 10,000 acres of freehold land.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If the Governor in Council likes to give it to them.

Mr. JENKINSON: If the Governor in Council likes to give it to them, certainly, but we know very well that the Governor in Council simply means the Ministry of the day for the time being.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Ministry of the day for the time being also means the majority of this House for the time being.

Mr. JENKINSON: It does not follow that because the Ministry have a majority in this House that they have a majority in the country. I believe that is particularly the case in the present instance. The hon. member for Croydon has touched upon the matter of the sites at the terminus of the wharf, and I am at one with him in what he has said. I think the Government are not doing a wise thing in not also acquiring the wharfage sites as well as the railway at the end of fifty years. It is all very well for the Premier to say there will be plenty of land on which the Government can get their wharfage accommodation, but I maintain that this is giving too much to the company. Now, with regard to the term of fifty years after the completion of the railway. That will mean fifty-five or fifty-six years at least, because they have five years after the passing of the Bill in which they will be allowed to construct the railway. Then fifty years after that the Government have the right to purchase, if they desire to do so. Now, fifty years in the life of a new country like this means a great deal. In this *British Australasian* that I have quoted there is a portrait of a gentleman who is still living—Mr. John Bramston—who was a member of the first Queensland Ministry.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: No; wrong again.

Mr. JENKINSON: I am quoting from the paper.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: I was here, and know that he was not a member of the first Ministry.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is crooked information.

Mr. JENKINSON: The member for Carpentaria says that the paper from which I have been quoting is wrong, and that the information is crooked. If that is so it is not my fault. These people who have issued this prospectus are responsible, and what object they can have in issuing crooked information I do not know. At all events, I am not responsible for it. I have

quoted from this paper believing that it contained a true record of the things it is supposed to put before the public, and if they are wrong I am certainly not to blame. At all events, we know there are people living at the present time who remember the formation of the first Ministry in Queensland. It seems a long time for us of younger growth to look back upon—fifty or sixty years—and it is indeed an immense time in the life of a growing State like this. I would like to point out too that under the interpretation clause I have read it does not necessarily mean that the Government of the day will be enabled to repurchase this line at the end of fifty-five or fifty-six years, because if there is a growing township springing up alongside of the works and the company are anxious to erect works or buildings, they can drag them on for year after year, and, as I have pointed out, the building of the railway includes the erection of freezing works and other things in connection with the railway. They may be all necessary in order to carry on the business of the company, but they have no right to be included in the interpretation clause under the heading of building the railway. I had intended to quote largely from this paper which has been distributed to hon. members, and show the enormous quantity of minerals that exist in the Cloncurry district, but as some doubt has been cast upon the truthfulness of the report, I do not think I should be justified in reading it to the House. I was myself of opinion that this report was a truthful one, and that it was written for the purpose of giving a faithful account of the resources of the district, but if it is not reliable, of course I do not want to base any argument upon it. That is admitted by several people. I have seen it also in some of the papers circulated in Southern Queensland that this railway is not intended for mining purposes only, but there will be other traffic, and the district is likely to develop into a large pastoral district.

Mr. W. HAMILTON : There are grazing farmers going down there every day.

Mr. JENKINSON : The hon. member for Gregory says that there are plenty of grazing selectors going down there every day. That indicates that they do not intend to depend only on the mineral resources of the district, but they also expect to get other traffic that will probably be remunerative to the company. I say that that being so, if they are likely to get traffic that will be remunerative to the company, the Government, if they are convinced that this line is worth building, should, in the interests of the State, construct it. That has been said again and again by other members. The Hon. the Premier in his speech quoted the utterance of the late member for Flinders, who said he would not support the railway if it were introduced. Now, the utterances of the late member for Flinders did not commend themselves to the Premier as a rule. He rather discounted the utterances or that hon. member.

Mr. FORSYTH : They might commend themselves to hon. members on the other side of the House, all the same.

Mr. JENKINSON : There are many who believe that Mr. McDonald, the late member for Flinders, had a very fair grasp of things, and I think they were justified in thinking that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS : On that occasion he had, anyhow.

Mr. JENKINSON : I am aware that it will be of very little use for any member to attempt to move any proposition in opposition to the second reading of this Bill. The Government will probably state that we are doing it for the sake of factious opposition. That is very likely what they would do. Our contention is that the

other States have tried this principle, and they have found it wanting. Queensland is the only one of the group now that is going in for the construction of railways by private enterprise, and we assert, and I believe I am correct in stating it, the Government are doing it without the authority of the electors. It has never been brought into prominence; it has never been made a vital point of their policy as submitted to the electors.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS : The Chillagoe Railway was previous to the general election.

Mr. JENKINSON : The Chillagoe line was previous to the general election, but at the time the country was being canvassed in 1899, no prominence was given to the question. It seemed to be generally understood that that would be the only line that would be constructed until they had had an opportunity of ascertaining whether it was likely to be a success or not. The people have never had an opportunity of deciding whether they are in favour of the construction of these lines by private enterprise, or whether they are of opinion that the settled policy of the State is that all lines shall be constructed by the State.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS : What about Toowoong last year?

Mr. JENKINSON : What about Toowoomba? What about Gympie? And what about North Rockhampton? The hon. member need not give one particular case. There have been five members returned to this House opposed to the construction of private railways, as against one on the other side, where it was made a prominent feature of the election; so the Minister for Railways and the Government cannot lay the flattering unction to their souls that they have the support of the people of this country, because it has never been put to them. It has never been made a particularly vital question. My suggestion would be that the second reading of this Bill should take place this day six months. We would then have an opportunity of going to the country, and it could be made a vital plank in the Government policy, and if they were returned with a majority after bringing it to the forefront, then I believe we should be quite willing to bow to the will of the majority. But the Government are not likely to do that. As this district has waited so long, I do not think it will be any particular hardship if it has to wait a little longer. I am altogether opposed to this principle of giving any company a monopoly for fifty years. We do not know what is likely to happen, and I say we should look beyond the narrow space which circumscribes our vision at the present time. The leader of the Labour Opposition mentioned last night the letters that he had received from various States. I have an utterance here of the Premier of New Zealand with regard to this particular matter. He was asked—

Could you give us an opinion on the private ownership and control of railways, a question of burning interest here?

Without hesitancy Mr. Seddon responded: "I say that any State that gives up its water supply, its means of transit, rail or tram, is doing serious and incalculable injury to the present and future generations. All these should be maintained in the hands of the State. We have had experience of granting concessions to private railway companies. Those which were bought back by the State in 1886 have been of great benefit to the Government and to the country."

I believe that these remarks will commend themselves to many members of this House, and I would like the Government to really take them to heart, and see the advisableness of not pushing on this Bill. I believe, however, that the Premier and the Ministry in bringing forward this proposal, and also the proposals of last year, are simply forcing upon this country ideas of a past generation. It is not in accordance

with the spirit of the times, and as has been said before, I believe, they have been converted to an expiring faith, and have passionately embraced a corpse. It is my intention to vote against the second reading of this Bill.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

After a pause,

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*): I am rather astonished that no Minister or leading member on the other side has risen to answer the speech of the leader of the Independent party. I think that such an important measure as this requires certainly fuller discussion than has been given to it, although we are told by the Minister that this Bill has improved since it was introduced last year. It strikes me that there is still room for much greater improvement. If the delay of a few months has led already to the improvements, perhaps a longer delay might lead to still more improvements. If six months have produced five fresh provisions which we are told by the Minister will benefit the State, then twelve months should lead to ten improvements, and so on. If we defer the Bill for another five or ten years we may perhaps get a good Bill by the end of that time. This puts me in mind of a recipe I once read for treating cucumbers. The cucumbers were to be sliced nicely, salted, placed between two plates, and put carefully away till the morning. They were then to be drained carefully, more salt added, and again put away. This was to go on for several days, and in the end the cucumbers were to be taken out and thrown to the pigs. That is how this Bill should be treated. It would improve by delay, but even in the end it would still remain so dangerous to the community that it should be thrown to the pigs or destroyed somehow. It is certain the Bill, if given effect to, will lead to serious results in this young State. We have been told by Ministers that it will improve the condition of the people, that it will provide work, and bring in its wake many benefits to the State. I do not think so, although I must say I give the Government credit for doing according to their lights what they think is possible at present to mend the evil position into which the colony has fallen. I am not, therefore, going to say anything against any individual member of the Ministry for bringing forward this Bill. Whatever their motives have been, the Bill is here and we have to consider it on its merits, apart altogether from the Government or those who introduced it. The Minister for Railways, when introducing the Bill, said some capital was made in the discussion of the same measure last year out of the alleged fact that the people of the district were not in favour of it. But we know now as an actual fact that the people in the Cloncurry district are not in favour of the Bill. There were more votes cast at the last federal election for Mr. McDonald than for his opponent. Mr. McDonald was an out-and-out thick and thin opponent of the measure.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was a federal election.

Mr. DUNSFORD: I admit it, but this was made one of the chief questions in the election by both sides, and Mr. McDonald polled more votes there than his opponent. That shows that in the district they are opposed to the Bill. Why are they? There are many reasons, but one especially is that they do not desire this railway to go *via* Normanton. They do not desire, in the first instance, that it should be a syndicate railway, and they want the State railway to go *via* Richmond, Hughenden, and Charters Towers to Townsville, which is the natural outlet of the Cloncurry district to the sea. I am astonished at the Premier, who represents Townsville, sinking the whole of the interests of the Eastern

coast, and of Townsville especially. That railway, if built at all, should be built by the State, and should follow the route I have described. The Premier, when speaking on the Bill, referred to what he called the inconsistency of members on this side, and pointed out that when the mining laws were going through we passed clauses which made provision for granting leases of mineral land for a period of forty-two years which might contain twenty Mount Morgans. As my leader, Mr. Browne, interjected at the time, he came off a sick bed to oppose those very clauses, and mining members on the other side assisted us in trying to prevent those clauses from finding a place in the Mining Act. But according to the Mining Act, if a mineral lease contained one or twenty Mount Morgans it would not remain the property of the owners of the lease. In that Act it is clearly laid down that if a man owns a mineral lease he can mine only for those minerals; he cannot mine for gold. The gold remains the property of the Crown, and anyone with a miner's right may go into a mineral lease and mine upon it for gold. All the gold is reserved to the Crown, subject to the lease being open to any owner of a miner's right. That is not the case in this Bill. Gold is certainly reserved to the Crown, but it must not be forgotten that the Mining Act does not apply, and, therefore, that although the gold is reserved, no one can enter upon the land and mine. It is not possible under this Bill to mine on any of those mineral leases for gold.

Mr. BROWNE: Except by the company itself.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Because they are not subject to any of the clauses of the Mining Act.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It belongs to us, and we can do what we like with it.

Mr. DUNSFORD: If it belongs to us, we cannot touch it through the Mining Act, at any rate, because it is clearly stipulated that they are not subjected to the conditions of the present or any amending Mining Act. The Premier also asked, "Would any Government have the hardihood to ask the House to build 250 miles of railway at an enormous cost for the sake of 200 or 300 people?" I presume he meant the town of Cloncurry. As a matter of fact it is just what a Government did do, and what this Parliament sanctioned. We sanctioned this very line at one time. It was to be a State line. The money was voted and the rails were purchased.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was never appropriated.

Mr. DUNSFORD: No, but it was voted, and the rails were purchased.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Rails are not purchased for any particular railway.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The money was voted by this House for that line, and should be used for that purpose; the unexpended [8 p.m.] balance is still standing. The

Premier has asked the question whether we have the hardihood to vote that money in face of the fact that Parliament did that very thing. Now, although there are only 200 people at Cloncurry to-day, I believe it is within the bounds of probability that before the expiration of the fifty years' term, during which the company will have a monopoly of this line, there may be 2,000,000 of people in that part of the country. I fully believe that, because I trust in that fifty years North Queensland will be a separate and distinct State of the Commonwealth, and I believe the capital of the State of North Queensland will be within a reasonable distance of this very line. Mining towns will spring up, the seaport will in all probability have a very large population, and around this mountain of copper at Cloncurry

there will be large numbers of people settled. We should never lose sight of the fact that we are legislating not merely for to-day but for the future. I will guarantee that this syndicate is looking ahead; they are not merely going into this as a speculation on the basis of population of to-day—not at all.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course not.

MR. DUNSFORD: Then why should not the State look ahead? Is it not preposterous for the Premier to talk about the absurdity of erecting a railway for 200 people, when the probability is that before that line is completed the population at both ends of the line will be much larger than it is at present? We must remember this also: that it is just possible that that line may ultimately become the terminal key of perhaps a transcontinental State railway. See what that may lead to—the company being there in possession for fifty years of that end of the railway which will be necessary to complete the through Australian State railway—I believe it will lead to dire effects; and for that reason only, hon. members should consider the matter. I believe on those grounds that the Federal Government would be thoroughly justified in using all the means they could to prevent the passing of a syndicate line like this.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They have no power whatever.

MR. DUNSFORD: Whilst I believe in the sovereignty of any State remaining with the people of that State, and whilst I would object to outside interference of any sort, still I think that where the people of the whole of Australasia may be injured by a line such as this, that the Federal Government—representing the people of all Australasia—would almost be justified in stepping in and using all reasonable means to delay and prevent the construction of a line such as this by private hands.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You might just as well whistle "Tommy make room for your uncle."

MR. DUNSFORD: I am not musical to-night, and I am not going to whistle, but if the hon. gentleman likes to strike up a tune he can do so. I think that in passing such a measure as this we may be making room for our "uncle"—we may be going further into the pawnshop than we are doing at the present time. The Secretary for Railways has declared that the private indebtedness of a country is just as injurious to that country as the State indebtedness. And this will increase the private indebtedness of this colony, and we shall probably be whistling to our "uncle." The Premier, speaking of the wharfage at Port Norman, stated that there were millions of acres along the Norman River, all of which were available for wharves. That may be so. The hon. gentleman also said that if the Government took over the end of the railway, as they have the right to do, they could build wharves of their own. But I would point out that, once this company becomes possessed of the land at the terminus of the line at Port Norman for wharfage purposes—and this Bill gives them 10 acres for that purpose—vested interests will be immediately established, and we all know how very difficult it is to get away from vested interests. I have heard the Secretary for Railways complain of vested interests in the wharves in Brisbane, and you could almost place your hat over those wharves, they comprise such a small area. What is the result of that monopoly? It may have injurious results to the community. We are giving this company 10 acres of land for wharfage purposes under this Bill, and the giving of those 10 acres of land may lead to very dire results to that portion of the colony. One may point to

the Brisbane River and say, "What does it matter about the wharves here? They only cover an acre or two; look at the hundreds of acres of land along the river." But people do not go to those other portions of the river, and the present wharves, which cover only a small area, have the monopoly of wharfage in this district.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What I said was that the owners of wharves in Brisbane had no legal rights.

MR. DUNSFORD: Speaking of this matter from a legal standpoint, section 51 of the Commonwealth Act provides that the Federal Parliament may make laws respecting certain matters, and among those is the matter of transport for naval and military purposes over State railways. How will a railway such as this proposed line to Cloncurry be affected by such laws? If it were necessary to transport a number of soldiers, or naval men, or military stores from one end of the colony to the other they would be compelled to utilise this syndicate railway, and since the syndicate are only required by this Bill to run their trains twice a week, they could snap their fingers at the federal authorities.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Don't you know that the Commissioner has running powers over the line?

MR. DUNSFORD: The Commissioner has only the powers given within the four corners of this Bill, and he has no power to compel the company to run more than two trains per week.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He has running rights over the line.

MR. DUNSFORD: Only under certain conditions, and the Commissioner may not be in touch with the Federal Government. This power in the Commonwealth Act is given to the Federal Parliament, instead of to the State Parliament.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What do we care for the Federal Parliament?

MR. DUNSFORD: The Federal Parliament will have absolutely no authority over syndicate railways, and so the terminal key, which is absolutely necessary to our railway system in Australia, will be in the hands of a syndicate which can snap its fingers both at the federal and at the State authorities. This key may be absolutely necessary in order to safeguard the interests of Australasia in the case of war, or threatening war. This should be considered, and I again say that the federal powers would be perfectly justified in putting in their oar and raising their voices against such an iniquitous measure as this.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Well, let them try.

MR. DUNSFORD: I hope they will try. The tug-of-war will have to come. I do not know whether it will come over the kanaka question, but I would rather see it come over a question of vital interest to the people than over the kanaka question, which is in itself a small black spot. Subsection 33 of section 51 of the Commonwealth Act provides for the acquisition, with the consent of the State, of any railway of the State. Now, what is a railway of the State? Is this a railway of the State? I want a definition of that. If it is possible for the federation to come in and take over, with the consent of the State, any railway of the State, which includes a syndicate railway, then, of course, we will be sailing along somewhat in safety. But if a railway of the State—that is an ambiguous term—if a railway of the State does not include a syndicate railway, then the syndicate can snap its fingers. Twenty years hence, when North Queensland has become a separate State, when there are large cities there, when there are flourishing mining towns there, when the seaports support large populations, and when we have great commerce there, then the State of

North Queensland, and this State of South Queensland, may see the wisdom of agreeing to handing over to the Commonwealth their railways, and the Commonwealth may agree to take them over. But this syndicate can say, "Oh, no; I am sitting on velvet. I have got this railway for fifty years; and you may want the railway—the whole population of Australia may want the railway—but you will not get it." They may want it to meet the growing needs and the new conditions of a larger nation than we have at the present day. A new State of North Queensland may desire that the Commonwealth should run the railways, and this Southern part of Queensland may desire it—everyone in the Commonwealth may desire it—but an absentee syndicate may not desire it. Their profits would be their first consideration. They would say "No." They would be the final judges, and their "No" would outweigh the "Yes" of the whole population of the whole of this Commonwealth. If for that reason alone, I say again this deserves further consideration than it has got at the present time. We talked the other night about sacrificing the status of the State. Well, if this is not sacrificing not only the status of the State, but the State itself, and not only the State itself, but the Commonwealth itself, to a syndicate, then I do not know what is. We have heard of some pretty large sacrifices to syndicalism in the past, but here we have one of the largest sacrifices that has ever been offered to a syndicate. Looking ahead—looking to the future large State in North Queensland—looking to the increased population of Queensland, and to the progress of the Commonwealth—they will be only too ready and willing to grip this concession with a tight hand, and they will not let it go until the whole of this fifty years has expired. With your consent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to consider the Bill from a mining standpoint. I suppose that the Bill will affect the miners of North Queensland more than any other portion of the population at the present day, though ultimately it will vitally affect a larger number of people than it will to-day. We know that this Bill will give the syndicate an unlimited number of tramways. These tramways are a kind of feeder to be put on each side of the railway; and we are told that none of them is to be of greater length than 25 miles; yet, remarkable to say, on the map that accompanies the Bill we have tramways shown 60 miles in length.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: That is a totally different thing from the tramways you are talking about.

Mr. DUNS福德: They are not the same?

Hon. E. B. FORREST: No.

Mr. DUNS福德: Well, are they placed there to mislead hon. members? The map shows tramways 60 miles long, and I will also point out that the mineral leases taken up by the company may be 65 miles away from the railway, according to the Bill; so that, in order to be of any utility, their tramways will have to be of greater length than 25 miles.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A good job for the colony if there are more railways.

Mr. DUNS福德: I am not talking of what is, or what will be, good for the colony. I am only talking of what may be done within the four corners of this Bill, and it appears rather inconsistent to give the company the right on the one hand to take up mineral leases 65 miles on either side of the railway and then to say, "You can build as many tramways as you like, but none of them shall be more than 25 miles in length."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They can build tramways under the Mining Act now.

Mr. DUNS福德: I am glad to have got that interjection. Then we are to understand that, although the length of the tramways is limited under this Bill to 25 miles, really there is no limit at all. This company will have the right to take up land for the full length of the railway—I believe it is to be 265 miles in length—and within 65 miles of the railway on either side, for mineral leases. That is to say, they will have a piece of country 130 miles in width by 265 miles in length, in any portion of which they can run tramways, and take up mineral leases. They will have the right to take up 5,000 acres of mineral lands. We are not told how many mineral leases that may constitute. There are conditions imposed under which I, or any other holder of a miner's right, can take up a miner's lease; but there are absolutely no conditions imposed upon this syndicate, which will be able to take up 5,000 acres, extending over a length of 265 miles by a width of 130 miles, in as many separate and distinct pieces as they like. They can take up fifty separate leases, if they like, each comprising 100 acres, and they can "gridiron"—that is the term used in mining parlance—they can "gridiron" the whole of that extent of country. As has been said, they could pick the plums, or if the Minister prefers it, the eyes out of the whole of this country, and so they will be enabled to monopolise the best portions of this country, and prevent others from prospecting upon it. Now, that is a very serious state of affairs. Remember we have to look ahead and see what the effect of this will be. Perhaps to-day it may only prevent hundreds, or perhaps a lesser number, from prospecting in these different localities. But in a few years to come it may prevent many new townships like Charters Towers springing into existence. The Minister for Mines has already admitted that some of these mineral leases may include many Mount Morgans—that is to say, we are giving this company many mineral leases of vast areas, which means that they will have the right to monopolise many of the Mount Morgans. It seems to me that it is rather a dog-in-the-manger sort of business, for this company is not allowed to work these mines themselves—according to the Bill they shall not work them themselves for gold—and yet there is no provision that anyone else can work them. The Crown cannot work them because they are within the lease which this company or syndicate will have, and the holders of miners' rights cannot enter these areas, for this Bill removes this company outside the provisions of the Mining Act; so I say this measure is likely to be very injurious to the miners of North Queensland, and indirectly to the whole of the miners in Australasia. Then, again, these mining leases will not be subject to labour conditions—not subject to any of the conditions in the Mining Act of 1898 or any Mining Act in substitution for that; and yet, very remarkable to say, in the Glassford Creek Railway Bill it was directly stipulated in one clause that as far as that company was concerned, they were to be subject to the conditions of the Mining Act. If it was thought advisable to place that provision in the Glassford Creek Railway Bill, why not place it in this Bill? Would it not be reasonable to ask the company, if we gave them the right to the railway for fifty years, and when we are giving them also, subject to an annual payment, the right to take up 5,000 acres of land, in as many separate portions as they like for 65 miles on either side of the railway—having given them these privileges, which are not given to any miners or mining syndicates in Queensland—would it not be wise to make them subject to the mining laws of the colony?

Our mining laws apply to everyone who lives within the boundaries of our mining towns. Then again, we have a separate and distinct mining court; we have wardens' courts, and wardens who have great powers in their several districts; yet so far as this company is concerned and so far as any townships that may spring up along this line are concerned, this company will be absolutely outside the provisions of the Mining Acts of the colony. I am sure that this will lead to very grave conditions. If there is a mining accident there, it does not matter in what way it is caused, no inquiry will be held, because the Mining Act does not apply. It does not matter if there is not good ventilation in the mines, no mining inspector can go down the mines, for this company will be outside the provisions of the Mining Act. It will not matter how badly these mines are ventilated or how they are worked, as the company will be outside the mining laws of the colony, and the result to the whole mining community will be very dire. The fact is that this company will be able to snap their fingers at all our mining laws.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know that is not so.

Mr. DUNSFORD: That is so under this Bill, and the hon. gentleman knows it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Read the section.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Yes. It says—

Such leases shall not be subject to any of the provisions—

That is referring to the 5,000 acres—of the Mining Act of 1898, or any Act amending or in substitution for that Act.

That is very clear. The hon. gentleman knows the Mining Acts, and he must know that the Mining Act of 1898 is a very comprehensive measure—a measure which amalgamates and consolidates all the previous Mining Acts. It really embraces the whole of the mining statutes, and is it right that this company should be legislated outside the provisions of all these Acts? I have enumerated some of the concessions to this company; and further, they need not have certificated engine-drivers and their miners will not need to take out miners' rights. Again, under the Mining Act the wages of the miners are made a first charge on the properties of the mining companies, but there is no such provision in this Bill. As a matter of fact, this company will be able to snap their fingers at their miners every time any difficulty arises.

Mr. KERR: Is this an English company?

Mr. DUNSFORD: It does not matter whether it is an English or colonial company; and I am not saying anything against the shareholders in this company individually. I am speaking against the absurdity of passing a measure such as this, which I am sure will lead to dire results to the whole mining community. Let the hon. gentleman consider the probability of five or six mining townships like Charters Towers springing up along this line, and what the effect of this legislation will be. These mining camps will be owned by this company; they will be controlled by this company in every way, because the men there will be living on the property of the company, and the travelling public will be compelled to travel over these lines, and I suppose the men living on the property of the company will have to consume the goods of the company. Directly and indirectly they will be completely under the thumb of the company. Let us calmly imagine the position of these mining camps established along this line. If there is any trouble between the company and the miners, say, owing to bad ventilation, the men will not be able to strike,

for, if they do, the company will just shut down the mines, and that will mean ruination to these mining townships. I remember when the owners of a mineral lease at Ravenswood thought it advisable to shut their mine down, and the dire effects that had on the miners and the business community there. Business people had to shut up their businesses, and most of the miners there had to pack up and go to Western Australia. The effect of that was very injurious to the community there, and indirectly to the whole mining community in the North, and in a lesser degree to the whole of Queensland. And so it will be if these mining camps are under the thumb of this company from the time they spring up. I trust the Government will reconsider the position and see that this company will be compelled to obey the mandates of the mining laws of the colony. If there is any encroachment by this company on other mines in the neighbourhood there will be no possibility of persons working adjoining claims entering in and observing where the encroachment takes place, and to what extent. No injunction can be got against the company. There are no residence reservations upon the leases, and in many other ways the effects will be very injurious to the mining public of the colony. In the Mount Garnet Railway Act I think there is a wages clause which says that the wages paid to labourers engaged in the construction of the line shall be the wages current in that district. That was a very good saving clause, and I am sorry to see it is not in this Bill. I

[8:30 p.m.] do not wish to take up any more time, and briefly I will say that I shall vote against the Bill, because I do not believe in the principle of handing over State monopolies to a mining company, and if anything should be a State monopoly it should be our railways—our roads. Our railways are our travelling ways, and we should be quite as justified in handing over our roads, our footpaths, our bridges, and our waterways, to companies, as in handing over any portion of our railways to a company. I am opposed to the Bill, secondly, because it is unjust to the North, where most of these sacrifices are taking place. It is unjust to the prospector, because it will prevent him going over a large portion of the colony of Queensland—the chief portion of the colony worthy of being prospected now. It is unfair to the federal powers; and I notice, also, that the Bill exempts the company from paying rates. That will be unfair to the municipal and other local bodies. They should be compelled to pay their rates in order to make improvements in roads, just the same as private individuals. I am also opposed to it because the company is exempted from the Mining Act, also because the passage of the Bill will retard the growth of the State. It gives a monopoly to the company, and since they are not compelled to run more than two trains a week, it is not likely they will meet the needs of the community. There are many other reasons I could give, but I should be sorry to take up too much time. I am opposed to long speeches, and, as a rule, I endeavour to concentrate my words into as brief a space as possible.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): It is really surprising that hon. gentlemen on the other side, who appear so ardent in favour of the system of syndicate railways, have not a single word to say in favour of them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not necessary, they speak for themselves.

Mr. GIVENS: Certainly the proposition does speak for itself; and anybody who is not blinded by prejudice and is intelligent enough to read the writing on the wall can understand what the proposition means. There must either be a great

dearth of reasons on the other side in favour of the proposition, or else hon. members have been chained up. I notice that the Secretary for Agriculture especially is very silent to-night in comparison with what he is on Thursday afternoons.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You put up thirty-four columns on Thursdays this session—only thirty-four.

Mr. TURLEY: That is pure assertion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I'll bet you on it.

Mr. TURLEY: It is against the law.

Mr. GIVENS: If I have taken up thirty-four columns this session, the Secretary for Agriculture has taken up sixty with imbecile interjections. If the hon. member does not desire that I should have my say on the Bill—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I want you to get on the railway. You never get on it.

Mr. GIVENS: I am prepared to stop off the track until 12 o'clock to-night.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are welcome to do so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. GIVENS: If hon. members opposite will persist in being disorderly by making unseemly and idiotic interjections I can't help it, but before I sit down I intend to get on the track, and perhaps in a way the hon. gentleman will not like. If the junior member for Fortitude Valley wants to hear me he will have ample opportunity.

Mr. McMASTER: We want to hear some sound argument against the railway.

Mr. GIVENS: I always notice that when the hon. member gets up we hear a great deal of sound, but very little argument.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. GIVENS: The Minister for Railways pointed out what a good thing it would be to give these concessions for nothing—what a splendid thing for the country; and on another occasion, in speaking on another matter, he strongly advocated the selling of almost all the lands of the State to private individuals. I remember reading a story—I think it was about a renegade Irishman, who, when asked if he had sold his country, replied, "Yes; and I was very thankful to have a country to sell." It appears to me that such is the attitude taken up by the Minister for Railways; only he does not want to sell the concessions to this company—he wants to give them away for nothing. The chief argument adduced by the Minister for Railways in favour of the Bill was, that the country could not hope to build the line, and that if we wanted the line at all we must give a concession to a private syndicate, and in contending that he said we would have to wait a very long time if we waited for the Government, with its limited financial resources, to build the line. Allow me to remind hon. members that the money was borrowed for building a considerable portion of the line a good many years ago; but it was diverted from its proper use, and in accordance with the policy of the continuous Ministry put into the Queensland National Bank to prop up an expiring financial institution in which many of the friends of the Government were involved. How can the hon. gentleman tell us we are not in a position to build that line for ourselves, seeing that we were in a position to borrow the money to build the line many years ago?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no use in talking about where we were; it is a question of where we are now.

Mr. GIVENS: If we are so much worse off now that we cannot build this line, it only shows to what a state a country with wonderful resources can be brought by an incompetent

Ministry. Forty years ago the population of this State was only about 50,000. Since that time we have been able to build all our Government railways; and now we have a population of over half-a-million, are we so financially stranded as not to be able to build this line? If that is the case, why have those who have managed the affairs of the country landed us in such a financial bog?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Look at the railways they have built for you—more than any other country in the world in proportion to the population.

Mr. GIVENS: Governments have not built them for us at all. The people have built them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: With the help of absentee capitalists.

Mr. GIVENS: Since this colony was founded forty-one years ago, instead of outside capital coming into it we have exported no less than £42,000,000 worth of gold more than has been brought into it. Therefore I say we have nothing to thank the foreign capitalist for, and are under no compliment whatever to him.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You seem to know all about it.

Mr. GIVENS: It appears to me that nobody in the world knows anything about any subject whatever but the Secretary for Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, he knows just about as much as you do.

Mr. GIVENS: I am not a quack at any rate, and am not continually quacking in this House.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You may be a goose although you do not quack.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. GIVENS: Now the Secretary for Railways also told us that this system of building railways by private enterprise had proved beneficial in Canada and the United States, and in other countries. Before I sit down I intend to read to this House the opinion of an independent witness—a man who is not a Queenslander but has travelled throughout Queensland, and who came to his present opinion some years ago, before the building of this railway was thought of. The opinion of that gentleman will show that the Secretary for Railways is entirely wrong in stating that the building of railways by private enterprise has been beneficial either in Canada or the United States.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Will your friend's opinion show that my opinion is wrong?

Mr. GIVENS: Perhaps the opinion of this gentleman is no better than the opinion of the Secretary for Railways, but he is dealing with the actual facts of the case acquired by personal observation and knowledge, and I think, therefore, his opinion ought to carry considerable weight, especially as he is a man of worldwide reputation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is your opinion we want.

Mr. GIVENS: I know the hon. gentleman places a very high value on my opinion, and that is why I propose to give it to him at very considerable length on this occasion. Another argument brought forward by the Secretary for Railways in favour of the construction of this railway by private enterprise was that the great majority of the people in the districts concerned were in favour of the project. I deny that altogether. There may be a few interested landowners and others who may be favourable to it; but I maintain that, if you were to take the people of the whole of the districts which will be affected by this line—that is, all the people in the Western country, right down to the New South Wales border, and all the people in the Gulf country, and right across to the Eastern coast—I say emphatically that a large majority of those people are opposed to the construction

of this railway by private enterprise, and even the few people who are in favour of it being so constructed would infinitely prefer to have it constructed with State funds.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The member for the district said he would not vote for it.

Mr. GIVENS: The member for the district is here, and can speak for himself.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I mean the late member, Mr. McDonald.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman is entirely wrong, as I can very soon prove, and shall be very happy to prove to him outside the House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is proof we want inside the House.

Mr. GIVENS: Well, this is not the place to discuss private opinions. If the hon. gentleman wants a discussion of that sort outside, I shall be very pleased to give it to him. Now, supposing the residents at the two terminal points of this line are in favour of this particular project, does that show that the project is a good one, or that it should be consented to by the country? Will the Secretary for Railways take up that position? If you take up that position, then you would be perfectly justified in giving legislative sanction to any Bill that could be conceived. There is not the slightest doubt about that, because there are plenty of people who, if they thought they would make a personal gain by engaging in a transaction through which the whole country would suffer, would be perfectly prepared to sanction that transaction and give legislative effect to it. But we are here not to legislate in the interests of individuals, but to legislate in the interests of the whole of the colony. I think the Secretary for Railways will agree that that is a correct statement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is what we are supposed to be here for, but it does not look like it just now.

Mr. GIVENS: It certainly does not look like it when we find the hon. gentleman coming here and giving all sorts of valuable concessions to people who are not even citizens of Queensland. It does not appear as if the Government cared much about the welfare of the people of Queensland. The position I take with regard to syndicates is this: I am quite prepared to see them develop our resources. I am quite prepared to give them every facility for doing so. I am quite prepared to let them do good work within the colony, but when I say that I mean that I am quite prepared to see them doing it on the same terms as every other individual in the State. Why should we give concessions to particular individuals, and particularly to individuals who are not citizens of the State, which we refuse to our own citizens? Can any adequate reason be advanced for such assinine conduct on the part of people who call themselves statesmen?

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Do you want a railway?

Mr. GIVENS: I want several things, but I do not want them at too high a price.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Do you want a railway to the Gulf?

Mr. GIVENS: Yes, certainly I want a railway to the Gulf, but I do not want a railway on such terms as will make the people of that portion of the colony the serfs of the company for all time. I would ask some of those gentlemen opposite to give me one solid reason why we should give to a foreign company—because it is quite possible that some of the European capitalists will be concerned in it—concessions that we would not give to our own people?

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Where are our own citizens who are prepared to do it? Let us see them. Not one.

Mr. GIVENS: There are plenty of our own citizens who would be quite prepared to take a

concession like this, and do the same that this company is going to do—float it on the London market.

Mr. FORSYTH: Where are they?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has a right to speak without interruption, and I trust hon. members will afford him that opportunity.

Mr. GIVENS: If these hon. members find any pleasure in interjecting, I have not the slightest objection, but I hope when they speak on the subject they will give us some good reasons why we should grant favours to foreigners which we will not grant to our own citizens. Now, I ask the Secretary for Railways why we cannot build this railway for ourselves? Can we not get the money to build the line as cheaply as the people who will get this concession? I say we can get it infinitely cheaper if we are to judge by the one experiment which has been tried so far. When the Chillagoe Railway and Mines Company's proposition was before the House we were told that they had ample money with which to build the line, yet what did we find? As soon as they got the concession they had to go to the London market to borrow the necessary money, and according to the published balance-sheet of that company, they had to pay £83,000 for the privilege of borrowing £400,000. They only got £317,000 of that, although they owe £400,000, and they got that at 6 per cent. Any hon. member who will calculate it will find that the interest will be increased, owing to the terms on which the loan was floated, by another 1 per cent.; that will make 7 per cent., and by the time the debentures fall due, the company instead of paying the £317,000 which they actually borrowed, will have to pay back the £400,000. Now, this State in its worst times could borrow money at 4 per cent.

Mr. FORSYTH: No, it has paid 5 and 6 per cent.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Many years.

Mr. GIVENS: Many years ago?

Hon. E. B. FORREST: No, not many years ago, for many years.

Mr. GIVENS: Well, at present we can borrow at 4 per cent. We were told that the Chillagoe Company were very wealthy and had ample money to build this line, but they had to borrow £400,000, and it cost them 7 per cent. In addition to that we find a statement published by the company that that money was not sufficient to build the line, and they borrowed another £50,000 in the shape of an overdraft, on which I suppose they will have to pay about 8 per cent. interest. Thus we see if we are going to build these railways, it is much better to build them by the State than by private enterprise, because the people will have to pay far less interest by their being built by the State. It must be remembered, and there is no getting away from the fact, that it does not matter whether a private syndicate or the Government build a line, it is the country which has to pay the interest on the money.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The railways do not pay it generally.

Mr. GIVENS: Supposing that this line should succeed, and the traffic be sufficient to pay ample dividends, these dividends will have to be paid out of the earnings of the railway, and what do the railways make their earnings out of, but the traffic—the money collected for that traffic.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They may make it out of the mines.

Mr. GIVENS: Perhaps they may make it out of their mines, but it does not matter where they make it, the interest in some shape or form has to be paid to these foreign bondholders. Therefore I contend that if the money has to be

borrowed, no matter whether it is the syndicate or the Government that build this line, the interest will have to be paid by the State. That being so, I say that it will be better for the State to build this line and work it, because it could work it more effectively and more cheaply.

MR. FORSYTH: And if it does not pay, what is the result?

MR. GIVENS: Then we shall have these railway companies continually coming down, cap in hand, to ask for further concessions. They will always be asking for more, and, like the cormorant, they will never be satisfied. I would like to ask, Why should the Northern portion of the colony be specially handed over to the mercies of private railways? It must be remembered that the public debt of the colony, which was largely incurred in building railways, has been borrowed on the credit of the people of the whole State, and not on the credit of the people of a small corner of it; and I maintain that the whole of the colony is equally entitled to the spending of that money, in providing railway facilities, as the people of one particular corner are. I say, and there is no getting away from it, that if we are to build this railway, the Cloncurry people—who will be the people who will use the railway for the next fifty years according to the terms of this Bill—will have to pay at least 50 per cent. higher freights than people living alongside Government railways, while the people living alongside syndicate railways will have to pay taxation to make good the interest deficiency on the Government railways. Thus they will have to pay for the cheap carriage provided for the citizens in one portion of the State, and will have to pay through the nose for the dear carriage provided by the syndicate railways in their own. Why should the people in one portion of the colony be treated in that unfair manner? Again, the Minister for Railways said that building a railway to a mining district was a risky thing, and he took up the position that the Government should not undertake the building of railways to mining districts, but should keep all their resources for building railways in agricultural districts. Let it be remembered that the miner should not be regarded as a social outcast or pariah in this fashion. The miner is as good a citizen as we have in this country, and in fact it was the miner who developed nearly all the resources of this State, especially in the Northern portion of the colony. Years before anyone thought of going there they took their swags on their backs and with their lives in their hands set out to open up the resources of this country. Now we are told that the miner and the mining occupation are too risky to be helped by a Government railway. I would like to point out that when the Minister for Railways says that it is too risky a thing to build a railway to a mining district he ought to have a better knowledge of what the actual facts are than to make such a wild statement. Let me remind him that one of the first mining railways we had in Queensland was the railway from Maryborough to Gympie, and it was without exception during a number of years the best-paying line we had in Queensland. Even now, when we have added the railway from Brisbane to Gympie, the Maryborough to Gympie line, if it were not handicapped by the agricultural lines running side by side with it, would be among the best-paying lines in Australia. If we go a little further North, we find the railway to Mount Morgan is one of the best-paying lines in the colony.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where is Mount Perry?

MR. GIVENS: I am coming to that presently. And if we go a little further North, the railway

from Townsville to Charters Towers, I believe, is, without exception, almost the best-paying line in Australia, and certainly in Queensland.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have only built railways to successful fields—fields that have been proved.

MR. GIVENS: The railway from Townsville to Charters Towers, if the earnings for the last ten years be averaged, will be found among the best-paying lines in Australia; and certainly it is the best-paying line in Queensland. Now these are three purely mining line railways, and they are proved by actual working to be the best-paying lines in Queensland. As against that we have a line from Bundaberg to Mount

Perry, which is the only other real [9 p.m.] mining line we have got, which does not pay. Out of four mining lines, three are the best-paying lines we have and one is not; and if you average those four mining lines it will be found that they return a very high percentage of profit.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What about the Cairns line? That also is a mineral line.

MR. GIVENS: If the hon. gentleman wants to know something about the Cairns line I can tell him, and also about the Mirani to Cattle Creek line. This is the position, that out of four railways to mining districts, three are the best-paying lines we have got; only one of them does not pay; and if you average the whole four it will show that mining lines are highly remunerative. How many lines have we to agricultural districts that do not pay? Instead of one out of every four there are three out of every four. And yet we are told the mining industry must not be encouraged by railways. I forgot to mention that the line from Normanton to Croydon is also a paying line.

MR. FORSYTH: It is nothing of the sort; it never has paid.

MR. GIVENS: At any rate it is not amongst those which do not pay working expenses like some of the agricultural lines. Just imagine the position if the line from Townsville to Charters Towers had been built by a private syndicate on terms similar to those contained in this Bill. And remember it is quite possible that Cloncurry in the next fifty years may turn out to be even a greater place than Charters Towers. If the railway from Charters Towers had been built by a private syndicate on those terms, with similar mineral rights, what would have been the effect on Charters Towers? Instead of there being about 100 companies sinking shafts, prospecting, and working mines in all directions, you would have had the whole country monopolised by one company, and every individual working upon it would be at the absolute beck and call of that company, with all their freedom, all their manhood, all their independence crushed out of them. In the whole of Queensland there are not 5,000 acres of payable mines at present at work, and yet we propose to give this company who are going to build this line mining country to the extent of 5,000 acres for the next five or ten years; and if it turns out payable all the resources of that part of the country will have been given away for nothing. Take one instance. As soon as the Chillagoe syndicate got their concessions they floated it. After their first six months' operations they issued a balance-sheet, and in that balance-sheet they distinctly state that they value the concessions they had received at £1,000,000.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That may be the value of their mine.

MR. GIVENS: No, they said the concession was worth £1,000,000. Why should we give another concession worth £1,000,000 to the private syndicate who want to build this Normanton to

Cloncurry railway? I ask, why should we not make the best bargain possible? The Secretary for Railways said he had got the best bargain possible for the State, that the company had taken up a hard-and-fast line, saying, "This is what we require, and we will accept nothing else." That simply means that this Parliament is to be dictated to by a private syndicate, whose only desire is to make profits out of the country. There are two parties to a bargain, and although the company has told the House, through the Secretary for Railways, what they will accept, I say it is competent for this House to say what conditions it shall dictate to the company. We have just as good a right to say to the company, "We will give you this concession only on certain conditions," as the company have to tell us they will only accept it on certain conditions. Therefore, it would be wise that we should have plenty of discussion, and see that we do not enter on a bargain which may prove injurious to the State. If the Ministry, especially the Minister for Railways, was desirous of making the best possible bargain for the State, why does he not make out a list of the concessions which the Government are prepared to give, advertise them all the world over, and invite tenders to be sent in by a certain day?

Mr. FORSYTH: This has been before the world for years.

Mr. GIVENS: The Government have never advertised it, but have entered into a private and secret negotiation with one particular company; and if I were to express the opinion which I hold I should say the whole thing was tainted with jobbery. We have it on evidence in the papers placed before us last year that the agent for this company, who was negotiating with the Government, and who came out to see the Bill passed, stated that he had £60,000 to spend to get the Bill through. I should like to know how that money was disposed of. Is it not a fact that some members who supported this proposed line did so hoping to make gain out of it? Everybody knows it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All bad-minded ruffians may suppose so.

Mr. GIVENS: Everybody in the country knows it, and everybody in the country says it. Is it not a fact that members of this House have had shares in the Chillagoe syndicate? And is it not also a fact that when they did not have shares themselves their wives had them, and that they put their hands to their breasts in this House and said they were not personally interested in the company?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Name them.

Mr. GIVENS: One hon. member told me that he had not shares himself but that his wife had.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Name!

Mr. GIVENS: I do not know that I should give the name to gratify the hon. gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have shares; I bought 100 shares last week, but not in the syndicate.

Mr. GIVENS: Let me point out a danger which I think will be appreciated by the Secretary for Railways if this sort of thing continues to go on. It is provided in this Bill that agreements may be made between the Railway Commissioner—that is really the Government—and the syndicate who own the railway, and yet we find that in at least one case, which is already before the country, the present Secretary for Railways is the manager of a company who are the Brisbane agents for the railway syndicate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What railway syndicate?

Mr. GIVENS: The Chillagoe Railway Syndicate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They have no agents here; there is nothing done.

Mr. GIVENS: Is it not a fact that the present Secretary for Railways used to sign cheques for the Chillagoe Company?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. GIVENS: Is it not a fact that the Australian Estates Company, of which the hon. gentleman is manager, are the Brisbane agents for the Chillagoe Mines, Limited?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We did some shipping business for them, but nothing else.

Mr. GIVENS: I do not object to that, but I say it is an unfortunate position for the Secretary for Railways to be placed in—that he as manager of one company has to transact business for a railway syndicate which makes agreements with the Government of which he is a member. There is an agreement between the Government and the syndicate with reference to the use of rolling-stock on that line, and if any conflict arose between the Secretary for Railways and the Commissioner we know who would go under. The Commissioner would be rolled under quick and lively.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I never interfere with him in his province.

Mr. GIVENS: It is an unfortunate position for the Minister to be placed in.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Certainly not; there is nothing wrong at all about it. It is perfectly legitimate and aboveboard. If I have done anything wrong, say it.

Mr. GIVENS: I know that in the House of Commons, when a member becomes a Minister of His Majesty, he is expected to sever his connection with all private companies.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Well, I have no intention of doing it for one.

Mr. GIVENS: There was a case in which that beneficent rule was ignored; that was the case of Mr. Mundella, and the result was that afterwards he was hounded out of politics through his connection with those private companies.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is all wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not a professional politician; I can live without politics.

Mr. GIVENS: I am sorry that the hon. gentleman takes pride in not being a professional politician. There are generally only two classes of workmen—that is, the amateur or quack, and the professional. The professional workman does really excellent work, while the work done by the amateur or quack is generally characterised as "jerry-built." If we are professional politicians we are prepared to do professional work and to stand criticism. We all know the kind of work that is done by the quack or amateur; and the quack, amateurish statesmanship with which this country has been cursed for a number of years is very evident in the colony to-day. It is very evident in the Bill before us, for by it the Government practically say that, though we have ten times the population we had when the State built all its railways itself after separation, it is not prepared to build them now. Then they reproach members on this side of the House as being professional politicians. I am proud to be called a professional politician, because it means that I am a competent workman.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They go the way they are paid.

Mr. GIVENS: The amateur and quack also go in the way they are paid, but they do not do such good work. The Secretary for Railways also made a statement when he was moving the second reading of this Bill, which shows that he did not actually understand the Bill himself.

Mr. RYLAND: How many misstatements?

Mr. GIVENS: I have not time to refer to them; it would take me six months to enumerate them all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I moved the second reading of the Bill in half-an-hour.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman knew that there was really so little to be said in favour of the Bill that he did it in the shortest time possible for the sake of decency, because he was ashamed of it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I admit my unworthiness for the position I occupy.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman stated that the provision in the previous Bill giving the power to sell had been omitted, and that there was a provision in this Bill somewhat different which gave the company the power to lease, and that under it they could not assign or give away or sell the concession.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say it exactly that way.

Mr. GIVENS: That is the sum and substance of what the hon. gentleman said. I do not presume to give his words *verbatim*.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said that the provision in the Bill of last year which gave the company power to sell had been struck out.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman said that the company might assign or mortgage the concession.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not the concession—the railway.

Mr. GIVENS: It is all the same. If the hon. gentleman will look at the interpretation clause he will find that the word “company” is interpreted to mean—

The Norman-Cloncurry Railway and Copper Mines, Limited, its assigns or successors in interest.

So that where the company is alluded to right through the Bill from start to finish it means not only the company, but “its assigns or successors in interest.” I do not mean to say that the Minister was making a wilful misstatement or trying to deceive the House when he used the words I have referred to, but I maintain that his statement is not in accordance with what is actually contained in the Bill, and that to that extent he does not understand the Bill himself.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I understand it perfectly.

Mr. GIVENS: The interpretation clause is definite, because it says the word “company” means not only the particular syndicate seeking this concession, but “its assigns or successors in interest.”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have got the best legal opinion in Brisbane on the subject.

Mr. GIVENS: We know that all lawyers differ, and that their clients' pockets generally suffer, but that is the plain English of that provision.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What is the Irish of it?

Mr. GIVENS: I am not here to instruct the hon. gentleman in the Irish language. If he does not know his native language, so much the more shame to him. He also says that another great argument in favour of granting this concession is that the syndicate cannot benefit themselves without benefiting the country. Well, that would be an argument for a band of brigands. I know that in Italy in the old days the brigands were generally the pets of the Government, simply because they said that they brought money into the country and benefited the country, because they took toll of the people who travelled through the country.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where was the Government?

Mr. GIVENS: Which Government?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government which had brigands as pets.

Mr. GIVENS: In the southern States of Europe in times gone by.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Ah! in the remote parts.

Mr. GIVENS: If you are prepared to agree to a thing simply because it will give you some pecuniary benefit, that would form an excuse for almost any kind of villainy. But, supposing for a moment that that statement is absolutely true, and that the country will benefit to an almost equal extent with the syndicate, that is still no the second best when we can give them our very sound reason why the country should be given best. I say the country would benefit infinitely more by the construction of this line by the State than by its construction by a private syndicate. Therefore we are entitled to give to the people of this State—not the second best, but the very best; and the very best for them in this connection would be the construction of the line by the State itself. A great deal has been made of another alteration that is made in this Bill as compared with the Bill of last year—that whereas last year the company had the right to take up 5,000 acres any time during the currency of their concession—that is fifty years—this year the Bill provides that they must take up the 5,000 acres within five years. Well, I contend that if they cannot thoroughly prospect that country and pick the eyes out of it in five years they do not know their business.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You or anybody else could take it up to-morrow before them.

Mr. GIVENS: That is so. I can take up mineral land in any part of the colony where I can find it; but I cannot take it up except under the mining laws of this State. I shall deal with that matter by and by. But let me point out to the hon. gentleman who is in charge of the Railway Department at the present time, an instance of the dominance that is exercised by these private syndicate railways. At the time that the Chillagoe Railway Company—I am quoting a concrete instance which I brought under the notice of the hon. gentleman's own authorities—at the time that the Chillagoe Railway Company had their line opened for traffic to Lappa, which is about half-way along their line, and when the Government were running the traffic for the syndicate that distance, there was one man working there who was formerly in the Government service. I believe that at that time he was working for the Chillagoe Company—that is to say, he was transferred from the one service to the other. Although the syndicate's line was supposed to be run under the Government regulations, the engineer came along to this man and asked him to do something that was contrary to the regulations. The man refused to do it, with the result that he was immediately dismissed. He was taken on by the Government the next day, and put at his usual work at Mareeba—the terminus of the Cairns Railway. One would think the whole thing was then done with; but was it? No. Mr. Frew, the engineer of the Chillagoe Company's railway, wrote to the railway authorities, stating that he took it as a particularly unfriendly act for the department to employ a man whom he had dismissed. That is, he was not satisfied with dismissing the man, but he pursued him afterwards, and tried to prevent him making a living at all. And, strange to say, the department accepted the dictation of this Mr. Frew, and sacked the man again.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I never heard of it before. I do not think it was right. It should not have been done if it was.

Mr. GIVENS: I will tell the hon. gentleman more. I saw Mr. Thallon, the present Traffic Manager, on that particular case, and Mr. Thallon agreed with me that it was not right that it should be done.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think it right that it should have been done.

Mr. GIVENS: But it was actually done, and Mr. Thallon promised me that the man would get the first vacancy that was open for his position, but on some other line than the Cairns Railway; but the man has not got it yet. That has actually occurred, and the man's name is Bannatyne.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The reduced traffic, you see, has made us put off a great many men.

Mr. GIVENS: But it was not on account of any retrenchment or reduced traffic. The reason the man was discharged from Mareeba was because Mr. Frew wrote down saying that he took it as a "particularly unfriendly act"—those were his exact words—that the man should be employed in his old position.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Did you see the letter yourself?

Mr. GIVENS: I did. That is only one instance of the dominance exercised by these syndicates. Not only will they sack a man themselves, but they will pursue him in the most venomous fashion, and try to prevent him obtaining a living at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We had a case like that last year of a policeman or something of the kind. So you see that Governments are sometimes accused of the same kind of thing.

Mr. GIVENS: That is the only instance I can quote.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am glad that is the only case.

Mr. GIVENS: There may be hundreds, but I am quoting this as an instance—not of what may be done, or what will be done, but of what actually has been done.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If I had any control over the department I would not allow a man to be sacked to please anybody if he suited the department.

Mr. GIVENS: However, those were the words, and that was the action. The hon. gentleman can look up the facts for himself.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You never told me about that before.

Mr. GIVENS: I did not. I did not believe in going and pulling the hon. gentleman's leg on behalf of this man.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I don't think you would do that, anyhow.

Mr. GIVENS: I went to the proper man—that is the Traffic Manager—and I laid the facts before him.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; he was the proper man. But there is no harm in giving this information to me all the same.

Mr. GIVENS: Well, I am telling the hon. gentleman now. I believe that the Traffic Manager is a very fair man. He told me he did not consider it desirable to put this man back on the Cairns Railway after he had once been dismissed, because it was not desirable that there should be friction between the Government officers on the Cairns Railway and the Chillagoe Company's officers on the Chillagoe Railway.

At 9:28 p.m.,

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. GIVENS: Much has also been made by the Secretary for Railways of the fact that the power to construct this line beyond Cloncurry, which was provided for in the Bill before this House last year, is denied to the company in the

present Bill. But I would like to know why was that? It was simply because the constituents of the Premier, who are served by the Northern Railway going out into the Western country, were afraid that a large portion of their trade would be taken away from them by the operations of this Bill.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have never heard that before.

Mr. GIVENS: I contend that the constituencies we represent are quite as [9:30 p.m.] worthy of consideration as the constituencies represented by the Premier or anyone else.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They don't all show equal intelligence in their selection.

Mr. GIVENS: No, they don't all show the same eagerness for corruption either. If hon. members will look at the schedule of this Bill they will see that this line must take a large proportion of the trade of the State line from Townsville to Winton. Hon. members will see that there are a number of important stations on that line which provide a large quantity of the trade which comes to Townsville through the Northern Railway, and that trade will be largely taken away by this syndicate line. I ask would any private individual, if he owned this Northern line, and owned the rest of the country as well—is it possible to imagine that any private individual who owned it would give away to a private syndicate a concession which would take away a large proportion of his own trade and profits? I am sure there is no single man in this country, or in any other country, that would ever do anything so foolish, and yet the Government, who are supposed to be sensible business men, propose to do that very thing which no private individual would do. Anyone who looks at the map which is a schedule to this Bill will see the situation of the country, and that a large proportion of the trade that comes through the Northern Railway will be absorbed by this proposed railway. Therefore, the State will suffer by having that trade taken away by this line, and also in other ways, because we know that a large amount of trade over this particular line helps the State in many ways, but once trade is taken away through another line competing with the State line, the State will lose the benefit of its trade on this line. The Secretary for Railways also said that he tried to reduce the concession of fifty years to this company to a lesser number of years. Now, that only goes to show that the Minister himself is convinced that it is not a good thing to give a concession like this for fifty years, and I think this House will unanimously agree with him in that. Yet, strange to say, although he is convinced, judging by his own words, that it is not a good thing to do this, he wants us to give this concession straight away. He comes down and enthusiastically supports the giving of this concession, which he himself says, if his words have any meaning at all, is not a good thing to do. Why did the hon. gentleman want the term to be reduced? I would point out that it is not the province of this House or of this country to accept dictation at the hands of any syndicate. They say, "These are the terms we want, and we will not accept one jot or tittle less." If that is the case, the Bill should be incontinently thrown out. They were making the bargain, and were metaphorically putting a pistol to our heads, and saying, "We must give them this Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." I say that we should refuse to consider this proposition, when it is put before us with such scant courtesy. I contend that it is our legitimate province, as representatives of the country, and as custodians of the

interests of the people—it is quite within our province to dictate terms to this company, and if the company do not like them, then we would be exactly in the position we were in before. We would also be in this position: we could develop our own wealth; we could run the line for our own people, and the profits that would accrue would be for our own people, and would not go into the pockets of a private syndicate. Now, it is very strange that the Government can find plenty of money to build lines in the Southern portion of the colony, while they say they have no money to build lines in the Northern portion of the State. They say that these lines would be risky and they might not pay. How many lines were passed by this House last year which the Commissioner for Railways was not in favour of? Yet last year there was one line passed which was to provide for the wants of the people of New South Wales.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Which was that?

MR. GIVENS: The line from Warwick to Goondiwindi. That was the whole argument then in connection with this line. It was to be built in order to get the New South Wales border trade to come to Brisbane. Why? Because the Brisbane trader and the Brisbane property-owners wished to enormously increase the value of their properties without any exertion on their own part, and they wished the money that was to be found for the building of this line to come out of the pockets of the general taxpayers. And yet the Government say they have not got the money to build lines to meet the wants of our own people. Now, could anything be more illogical—could anything be more unreasonable? And yet the Government coolly tell us that we must accept this proposition, simply because we can't get a better one, and the country is not in a position to do the work itself. The line from Warwick to Goondiwindi was for the purpose of providing facilities for the people of New South Wales to get their produce to Brisbane. Yet this was a line which was strongly reported against by the present Commissioner for Railways; and still the present Government supported it with might and main during its passage through this House last session. And yet they tell us they cannot find money to build lines for our own people! They also say that the country—some parts of it—is practically useless and they are willing to give it away; that it will be devastated by prickly pear, and that all the plagues of Egypt will spring up there. I say that we have fine mineral country which supports a far larger population in proportion to its size than any other country. There are many prosperous communities there, and yet the Government cannot see their way to provide railway communication for them. We do not see miners coming cap in hand and worrying the Minister for Railways for reductions of rates and freights, and I ask is it fair and reasonable treatment to hand these men over to the tender mercies of a private syndicate? It will be remembered that in 1883 it was proposed to give away a large portion of the pastoral lands of this colony to a private syndicate, and that some of the men who were the strongest opponents of that proposition are now occupying seats on the front Treasury bench and favour this proposition before the House, which is infinitely worse than the other proposal. Everyone knows that the present Attorney-General was then the chief lieutenant of Sir Samuel Griffith, who was then the leader of the Opposition, and he, in common with his chief and other members of his party, denounced in very strong terms what they called an iniquitous proposal—that was the handing over of concessions to private railway people.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The land-grant railway.

MR. GIVENS: Yes. Well, let us come to the position. As soon as the squatters saw that there was a proposal to take some of their lands away from them, they rose up in arms against the proposition, but yet the Government propose to take away some of the mineral lands of the colony from the poor miners who are not influential citizens, so to speak—they are quite willing to give away mineral lands, but they would not take away a single acre from the squatters.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not so.

MR. GIVENS: I say that it is absolutely so, beyond the shadow of a doubt. I would point out that 1 acre of the mineral country is now proposed to give away is worth more than 10,000 acres of pastoral land. How much would 1 or 2 acres of land at Mount Morgan be worth—or a few acres at Charters Towers or at Gympie? Yet it is proposed to hand over a greater area of mineral country—particularly good mineral country—than is possessed by Queensland to-day in the shape of payable mines. Thus we see that the common ordinary everyday working miner, the prospector who takes his life in his hand looking for minerals, gets no consideration from this class Government. But directly the interests of the squatters are threatened, all the members on the other side are up in arms in defence of that privileged lord of the soil, and we hear the Attorney-General rolling off platitudes by the yard in that oratorical style of his in favour of that particular privileged class. These class privileges are not at all surprising to me because we know that the Government and their followers exist for nothing else but to maintain class privileges. The junior member for North Brisbane, in speaking the other day, said he represented 600 odd pastoralists: he never said a word about representing the workmen of Brisbane, the shop assistants, or the bank clerks, who are sweated to death. And if we have class representation, is it any wonder that we have class government and class privileges? Members on this side represent the whole community. We ask for no favours and we look for no concessions. All we want is justice and a fair deal for every man in the community, whether rich or poor. I am opposing this Bill because it proposes to give unfair concessions to people who are not even citizens of our own State—who may be persons from France, Germany, Austria, Russia, or anywhere else for all we know. Let me ask again—and I intend to ask inside and outside this House till I get an answer—why we should grant a favour to a wealthy individual or company—much less to a foreigner—which would be refused to the humblest and poorest of our own citizens? If a concession should be granted at all, it should be granted to the poor man who has to struggle for existence, instead of to the rich man with his millions; yet the poor man never gets a concession, never gets fair or honest treatment. He never gets sympathy from the other side; all their concessions and favours are for men with money.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think the poor man has as many friends over here as over there.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: More. Their actions show it.

MR. GIVENS: If they are friends of the poor man they have a most peculiar way of showing their friendship, because there has never been a proposition advanced in the House in favour of the humbler people in the State—the men who do not have capital at their backs, the men who do not have influential society friends—there has never been a proposition for their benefit brought

forward in this House but it has been opposed every time by Ministers and their supporters on the other side. Yet whenever they want a job of this kind done they trot out the working man as being one of the objects they have in view; and the Secretary for Railways did not forget to do so on this occasion. He said that at present there was a large number of men who had been thrown out of employment, and he seemed to presume that the passing of this Bill would give them work on the railway. We passed no less than four private railway Bills last year, yet that did not absorb the unemployed. We started a large number of Government lines also, yet the unemployed are not eliminated; and if we pass this Bill we shall still have the unemployed with us. I am one of those who believe that every unemployed man is a dead loss to the State. I am satisfied that the wealth of this community depends on the wealth extracted from the country by the work of the people; and if a large proportion of the people are idle, that means a less quantity of wealth is being extracted than would be the case if all were in employment, and therefore I contend that the whole of the country suffers from a number of people being unemployed. For that reason it is the duty of the Government to see that some sort of remunerative employment shall be given to every citizen.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is a question of money.

Mr. GIVENS: It is always a question where are we to get the money. When the banks went crash in 1893 some mines on the Towers, which were producing thousands of ounces more gold every week than would be required to pay the workmen, actually proposed to pay them with promissory notes up to three, six, nine, and twelve months. Of course the miners bowled out that little scheme, they said that if they could not get their wages in cash they were willing to be paid in gold taken from the mine.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You cannot pay a man in rails, I suppose.

Mr. GIVENS: The community are never paid out of capital; they have to produce wealth before they get anything at all.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What has that to do with the question?

Mr. GIVENS: I was replying to interjections by the Minister for Agriculture, and he immediately takes exception.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You never do reply; you talk.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. GIVENS: I dare say I am rather foolish in devoting so much attention to such an unimportant individual. Now, I contend that the building of this private railway line will not help to solve the unemployed difficulty. When the railway is built, what are you going to do then with the unemployed? I maintain that it is idle to try and solve the unemployed difficulty by questionable jobs of this sort. The private railways which we passed last year, and which we were told were going to solve the unemployed difficulty, have not done so. Have we any more reason, therefore, to expect that this railway will be any more successful in that direction than the ones which we have previously passed? The Secretary for Railways has told us that the men employed on the construction of these lines always received good treatment from the syndicate. Well, I deny that altogether. It is perfectly true that the present contractor for the Mount Garnet line, Mr. Willcocks, is treating his men fairly well.

Mr. McMASTER: He always did.

Mr. GIVENS: I am giving him credit for that. But there was another line constructed by a large private company which did not pay its

men well, and whose engineer was little better than a tyrant. There is a tramway being constructed in the same district where that line was constructed—the Stannary Hills Tramway—on which the men are much better paid than they are by Mr. Willcocks even, and that is not a private undertaking at all. While the men on the line from Lappa to Mount Garnet are getting 8s. a day, the men on the Stannary Hills Tramline are getting 9s. a day.

Mr. JACKSON: How do you account for that?

Mr. GIVENS: I account for it in this way: These mining people carry on the work themselves, but they do not look forward to making a very large profit out of their tramway. They look forward to the mine paying, and in connection with the mines of the colony generally we know that higher wages are paid in that industry than in any other. We were also told something about the maximum rates that are to be charged upon this line—that they are not to exceed the maximum rates charged upon the other private lines. That is to say, they are not to be greater than 50 per cent. more than the rates charged upon the Government lines at the time of the passing of the Act. Now, it is quite possible that during the currency of the fifty years the Government may reduce their rates by one-half, yet the syndicate will still have power to demand these enormously high rates from the people using the line. I maintain that within the next fifty years it is reasonable to suppose that the railway rates on the Government lines will decrease very much. And yet the lines will pay better than at the present time, because—owing to our resources being continually developed, and the increase in the population—there will be a vast increase in traffic, and the lower rates will pay better than the higher rates pay now. Still the syndicate will have power to continue to charge these extortionate rates for fifty years. Now, to show the effect of a provision of that kind—which I contend should not be in any Bill—I will quote a concrete case in connection with the railway from Mareeba to Chillagoe. At the time of the passing of the Act the Government had certain rates in force on their lines, and the Chillagoe Company were given power to charge 50 per cent. above those rates for the full term of their concession. Since then the Government have reduced their rates on perishable products by one-half, and yet the Chillagoe Company continues to charge one and a-half times the rates charged on the Government line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And the Chillagoe people are carrying some things cheaper than the Government.

Mr. GIVENS: Well, the hon. gentleman will be able to quote a concrete case when he gets up to reply.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They told me so in the department.

Mr. GIVENS: I was at the department to-day and did not get that information though I asked for it. Amongst these perishable goods I notice there are a good many articles of common everyday use. There are such things as meat, fruit, fish, poultry, eggs, dairy produce, vegetables, ice, and other substances and things which either by their nature, or from any other cause, are readily liable to waste, decay, spoil, or otherwise decrease in value. It is well known that there is a large quantity of butcher's meat consumed by men who are congregated in mining camps, and yet these unfortunate men will have to pay three times the rate on the Chillagoe Railway that they would have to pay on the Government railway. If they get a basket of eggs sent up from a farming district they will have to pay three times the Government rate on it. If they get a quantity of butter sent up, exactly the same thing holds good. In a

hot climate like that—which we are told is only fit for blackfellows and Chinamen to work in—ice will be a necessity; and yet that also will be charged three times the rate charged on the Government railways.

The PREMIER: How do you make out three times the rate?

Mr. GIVENS: I will very soon make it out for the hon. gentleman. Supposing at the time of the passing of the Act the rate for carrying a ton of goods on a Government line was £1. The Chillagoe Railway and Mines Company was given power to charge £1 10s. Since the passing of the Act the Government have reduced their rates by one-half. That would mean that they would charge 10s.; whereas the Chillagoe Company are at liberty to charge £1 10s. If the Premier cannot see that that is three times the rate charged upon the Government line, it is useless to bring evidence to bear. It is quite probable that the reductions in rates which will take place on the Government lines during the next fifty years will be enormous. The Secretary for Railways must know that as population increases the amount of traffic will enormously increase, and the lines will pay much better with reduced rates than they did formerly with high rates.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hypothetical.

Mr. GIVENS: Of course everything is hypothetical to the Secretary for Agriculture. When Darwin propounded his theory of evolution it was purely hypothetical, but it has now been accepted by all the intelligent men of the world.

And just in the same way I put a [10 p.m.] hypothetical case, which may be perfectly right and acceptable to all the intelligent men in the world, and yet not be acceptable to the Minister for Agriculture. Mr. Darwin did not propound his theory for the dunderheads in the community; neither do I for the dunderheads of this Assembly.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I suppose you consider that you have established your case now?

Mr. GIVENS: It has been pointed out that it would be hardly fair to ask private railway companies to reduce their fares in proportion to the reduction of the fares on the Government lines, because the Government might—in order to force the syndicates out—reduce their rates far below paying point. That is the only sound argument I have heard put forward against the proposal that the rates on the syndicate lines should be at all times proportionate to the rates on Government lines. I think it is altogether too far fetched an idea that the Government of this State would at any time reduce its fares on, perhaps, 3,000 or 4,000 miles of railway in order to force out a syndicate which had only a couple of hundred miles of railway. It would be simply absurd for a Government to think of doing such a thing, and, therefore, I say that argument is baseless and without foundation. The Premier said it was only proposed to give the company power to build 250 miles of railway to open up their mines. Now, the Premier must know this Bill proposes to give the company a great deal more than that. If that was all the power they wanted, they need not have come here for a special Bill at all, because by a little combination they could have got all that power under the Mining Act. Therefore, I think it is not fair that the Premier—occupying as he does the foremost position in the Government, and holding the position of leader of this House—should try and mislead, not only this House, but the country as well, by making such a statement as that. If you look at the preamble of the Bill you will see that it proposes to give them the pick of the mining district to the

extent of 5,000 acres, without mining conditions, for the next five years. It proposes to give them the power to erect all necessary buildings, works, and appliances requisite for the same, and of constructing, maintaining, and working branch lines of tramways, and generally of transacting the business of railway carriers. They have also the power to construct, erect, and carry on stores, warehouses, labourers' dwellings, freezing, smelting, crushing, and other works, and wharves and wharfage accommodation.

The PREMIER: They could do that without an Act of Parliament at all.

Mr. GIVENS: Then why is the time of this House occupied, or rather wasted, in discussing this Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You answer the question.

Mr. GIVENS: They do not get special concessions of land for doing all these things if they can be done without an Act of Parliament. They do not get mines without reference to labour conditions, or the Mines Regulations, or the provisions of the Mining Act without special legislation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They have the freehold of most of them now.

Mr. GIVENS: They have the freehold of many of them, I admit, and if they work those freehold mines now, they will have to work them in accordance with the Mining Act and regulations. But if this Bill becomes law in its present form, they may snap their fingers at the mining inspector.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Nonsense!

Mr. GIVENS: We will soon see if it is nonsense.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Premier told you that if that was not quite clear, he would make it clear.

Mr. GIVENS: This Act specifically states that this company shall be exempt from the provisions of the Mining Act of 1898 or any amendment or substitution for it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You were told distinctly that they were only exempt from the labour conditions.

Mr. GIVENS: I am speaking about what there is in the Bill, not of what was said last night.

The PREMIER: You are only talking for the sake of talking.

Mr. GIVENS: If the hon. gentleman does not believe me, I will read it for him. Clause 24 says—

Such leases shall not be subject to any of the provisions of the Mining Act of 1898, or any Act amending or in substitution for that Act.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You must read that in connection with the context of the whole of the Bill.

The PREMIER: Your leader referred to it last night much more effectively.

Mr. GIVENS: It does not matter what my leader does. (Government laughter.) I have a perfect right to follow out the same line of argument, and I have as much right to state my reasons as the leader of the Labour party or the leader of the Government. I am now replying to the Premier, who replied to the leader of the Labour party, and I say he has made a statement that is not in accordance with the fact, because I have read the clause which exempts the company from the provisions of the Mining Act of 1898, or any other Act in substitution or amendment of that Act. Now, clause 195 of the Mining Act of 1898 gives power to the inspector under the Act to make—

Such examination and inquiry as are necessary to ascertain whether the provisions of this part of the Act, relating to matters above ground or below ground, are complied with in the case of any mine.

He is empowered to enter, inspect, and examine any mine and every part thereof at all reasonable times by day and night; he has to inquire into the state and condition of a mine and its ventilation, and all matters and things connected with or relating to the safety of the persons employed in or about the mine. He also has to examine boilers and have them tested in his presence, to initiate and conduct prosecutions, to appear at all inquiries respecting mining accidents, and to call and examine and cross-examine witnesses. He has also to see that mines are properly ventilated, that every precaution necessary for the safety of the men working in the mine is taken. From all those conditions it is proposed to exempt this syndicate. They can work their mines as they please; they can make them regular hotbeds of disease, and they need take no precautions for safeguarding the health or the lives of their workmen. It is a most inhumane—I had almost said inhuman—policy to be sanctioned by any Government, that the health and the lives of the miners are not to be taken into consideration at all. Whatever benefits may be derived from the building of this railway, they will not compensate for such a disaster as may very well be brought about by the exemption of those mines from the regulations under the Mining Act of 1898. Again, we find that according to this Bill the companies are to be exempt from the Valuation and Rating Act—that is, they have not to pay rates the same as any ordinary individual. That is a very serious thing. Why should wealthy persons, getting valuable concessions, be exempt from paying rates, when the poorest individual in the State, who happens to possess a bit of freehold or leasehold property, is compelled to do so. If this Bill is passed and the line is built they will derive enormous benefits from the expenditure of money by the local authorities on roads and bridges, which will bring traffic to their railway. Those roads and bridges will serve the syndicates in a hundred ways. Yet they will not be asked to contribute a single farthing towards their construction or maintenance. I ask why should a wealthy syndicate be exempt from the Valuation and Rating Act while the poorest citizen who owns a few acres of freehold has to pay? That is distinctly provided in clause 23, which states—

The area of land occupied by the railway shall not be taken to be ratable land within the meaning of the Valuation and Rating Act of 1890, or any Act amending or in substitution for the same.

Does not that say as plainly as possible that all the freehold land occupied by the railway, which will benefit enormously from the expenditure of local authorities' money, is to be absolutely exempt from the operations of the Valuation and Rating Act?

The PREMIER: That is the narrow strip on which the rails are laid. You may as well tax the air it goes through.

Mr. GIVENS: If I had a little strip of freehold it would not matter how I utilised it, whether as a railway line, or as a residence, or as a camping ground for mosquitoes, I should have to pay rates upon it.

The PREMIER: Not if you built a railway.

Mr. GIVENS: Yes, if I built a railway, unless I came to the House cap in hand and asked for special permission. The Premier said that the company only asked for 10,000 acres of freehold. What was 10,000 acres of land worth forty years ago at Charters Towers or at Gympie? And what may be the value of this land fifty years hence which it is now proposed to give this syndicate? There is no answering that question. It may be worth millions or it may be worth nothing. At any rate we are asked in this Bill to give away an unknown

quantity. We are asked to give away something which may be worth millions of money by and by, and in such a manner that to the mineral lands of the colony, which are always looked upon as the heritage of the miners of the colony, they will have no claim.

The PREMIER: We are giving away no mineral lands at all.

Mr. GIVENS: There are 5,000 acres of mineral land.

The PREMIER: We do not give that away. We lease it for fifty years at £1 a year rental.

Mr. GIVENS: They reckon that they do not give it away. There is no mine in Queensland that we know of which has anything like fifty years' work ahead of it, not even the great Mount Morgan. There is not a single mine in Charters Towers which, when the reef is once tapped, has more than ten or fifteen years ahead of it if it is vigorously worked.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is pure assumption.

Mr. GIVENS: It is not assumption; it is the result of actual experience. If this company takes up those mines, they will get them for fifty years by paying a certain rental. But it is not recognised by this House that although a mine-owner has only a tenure for one year, that is a tenure for all time if he fulfils the conditions. This company, however, will have a special concession, and after fifty years they can hold the land—

The PREMIER: As long as they pay £1 an acre per annum rental.

Mr. GIVENS: No, this Bill only deals with the term of fifty years, and no one can tell what the rental may be after that.

The PREMIER: It may be £2 an acre.

Mr. GIVENS: Yes, it may be £2 an acre. The Premier also said that the population of the United States was induced by land-grant railways. It was nothing of the kind. If the hon. gentleman will read any of the authorities on land-grant railways in America he will find that the consensus of opinion among all historians who have written on the subject is against land-grant railways.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not correct.

Mr. GIVENS: It is correct, and before I sit down I shall read the opinion of one man on the subject.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What about Canada?

Mr. GIVENS: I shall also read an opinion about the Canadian line for the benefit of the hon. gentleman.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In America private railways connect all the great centres.

Mr. GIVENS: I am aware of that, and so much the worse for the country.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is the richest country in the world.

Mr. GIVENS: It is rich, not because of private railways, but in spite of them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Nonsense!

Mr. GIVENS: The Premier also alluded to the Tarrawingie line in New South Wales, and said the State bought it back at a very largely reduced price as compared with the cost of the railway.

The PREMIER: The price of the rails.

Mr. GIVENS: Let us take the Premier's own example, and see what is the result of building railways by this boasted private enterprise. At the time Broken Hill was discovered, or some little time afterwards, it was found that the company had to smelt their ores. They had no first-class fluxes near to Broken Hill, but there was a splendid quarry at Tarrawingie, some 15 miles away. They then got a concession to build a

private railway from Broken Hill to Tarrawingie for the purpose of bringing those fluxes into Broken Hill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Private enterprise?

Mr. GIVENS: They worked the line for all it was worth while it was necessary to bring in the fluxes to Broken Hill, but after a time the company found that it was more profitable to smelt their ores at Port Pirie, in South Australia, than on the works at Broken Hill.

The PREMIER: I told the House all that last night.

Mr. GIVENS: I listened carefully to the hon. gentleman, and he did not tell the House all that. He told the House just as much as suited him, and no more.

The PREMIER: I told the whole truth.

Mr. GIVENS: Then the hon. gentleman can compare what I say now with what he said yesterday; he will find that it is very materially different. As soon as the Broken Hill Company found it was more economical to smelt their ores at Port Pirie, and that they had no more use for the railway from Broken Hill to Tarrawingie, and could no longer work it profitably to themselves, they handed it over to the Government. They did not want to be burdened with it. If the Government of New South Wales had had the line all the time they would have served the company as well as the company served themselves, and they would not have been placed in the position of having to buy back a non-paying line. That shows one of the results of private railway enterprise.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It saved the Government from losing a great deal of money.

Mr. GIVENS: The Premier also said that the shareholders lost a lot of money. The shareholders did nothing of the kind, because they were mainly men associated with the Broken Hill Proprietary, and they built the line for their own convenience, and lost nothing at all. The hon. gentleman further told us that if any loss is made on this proposed Cloncurry Railway, the shareholders will be the only people who will suffer. I disagree with that altogether, because if loss is made on the line, it will have to be met by the people of this State in some way or other. The interest on the money borrowed to build the line will be continually accumulating, and it will come out of this State sooner or later—whether it is paid by a private company or by the Government does not matter much. The interest will be continually dragged out of the people of this State by the company.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. GIVENS: They will have to do it. I explained all that a little while ago.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: To your own satisfaction, and no one else's.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman was not in the Chamber at the time, and it appears that I have to go over all my argument again simply for the benefit of that individual. The Premier also emphasised a statement made by the Secretary for Railways to the effect that we would not be justified in building a line to a mining district. I pointed out before in my remarks in reply to the Secretary for Railways that the average earnings of the mining lines are the best of any lines in the State.

The PREMIER: I was only talking about this Cloncurry line, not about mining lines generally.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman said we were not justified in building lines to mining districts.

The PREMIER: I did not say so.

Mr. GIVENS: If the hon. gentleman did not say so yesterday in speaking on this Bill he said so before when speaking on the private lines

which have been authorised in other mining districts, and it is no use for him to try to get out of the statement now because it is in the records of this House.

The PREMIER: Did I say that it would not pay to build a railway to Chillagoe, or Glassford Creek, or Callide, or Cloncurry?

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman said we would not be justified in going in for lines to mining districts which were of a speculative nature, and he argued that there was nothing certain about a mining district, and that the country would not be justified in taking the risk. I say the mining lines are the best we have in the colony.

The PREMIER: The lines to some of our gold-fields are—to one goldfield especially.

Mr. GIVENS: There is no reason why lines to copper districts and tinmining districts should not pay even better than lines to goldmining districts, because a line to a goldmining district has only carriage one way. It only carries goods to the people who are engaged in mining; there is nothing to bring back. But in the case of a line to a copper district or a tinmining district it not only carries goods to the miners, but it also has the carriage of large quantities of tin and copper back.

The PREMIER: That has not been our experience in Queensland.

Mr. GIVENS: Well, there is only one mining line, so far as I know, which has been what can be called a failure, and that is [10:30 p.m.] the line from Bundaberg to Mount Perry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What about the Cooktown and Croydon lines?

Mr. GIVENS: The line from Cooktown was never built into the mining district. It did not go more than half-way. But look at the Mackay line as an example of a line in an agricultural district. That is one of the greatest failures in the colony. There is another question which has been very exhaustively dealt with by the leader of the Opposition, so I do not propose to go any further into it just now. That is the question of wharfares. This company is entitled to 10 acres of wharfares at the terminus of the line, and they will not be asked to forego the right of selling those wharfares to the Government when the line is constructed, the same as they will with the short piece of railway between Port Norman and Normanton. Therefore, they will have control of the shipping end of the line. The Premier has said that 10 acres is not very much, but if they are given 10 acres in a long narrow strip along the foreshore it might give them a monopoly of all the wharfage which would be of any service. I maintain that it is just as necessary for the Government to have the right to resume the wharves as it is to have the right to resume the short portion of line from Port Norman to Normanton. I am one of those who believe that no national monopoly of this kind, either in the way of wharfares or railways, should be handed over to any private individuals whatever. I believe that it is much better for the people to do these things for themselves than to hand over the right to do them to anybody else, whose sole desire is undoubtedly to make a profit out of the people for performing these services. The people can do these things equally as well for themselves—that is, if they have a competent Government—and it rests with themselves whether they have a competent Government or not. Now, a national monopoly gives the people who hold that monopoly the power over everyone else who is compelled to use that monopoly; and a railway is a national monopoly. For that reason I contend that the company should not be granted such a monopoly as this for fifty years. I know

there are several members on the other side who are opposed to concessions being granted for such a lengthy period, and who have expressed their intention of supporting a reduction of the term. A compromise of that kind would be more acceptable than the present Bill, but it would not satisfy me, although I would prefer half a loaf to no bread. But I maintain that a monopoly should not be granted to any syndicate for any time. Notwithstanding what has been said about the effect of private syndicate railways elsewhere, I contend that the experience of every country has been—not only in Europe, but also in Canada and the United States—that private railways are bad—that they give the holders of these monopolies an enormous power over the people—that they dominate the legislatures of those countries, and that they generate and breed all sorts of corruption and jobbery. That is not my opinion only; it is the opinion of men who have travelled the world, and who have observed these things for themselves; and, in order to prove my contention, I intend to read the opinion of a man who was in Queensland at the time the private syndicate railway proposal was before the country in 1883—that was the famous, or infamous, land grant railway, whichever way you like to look at it. That man was Archibald Forbes, the celebrated war correspondent, who had travelled the world, and who wrote a series of articles regarding Queensland for the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

THE PREMIER: If Forbes only knew this! He is dead and gone. Can't you get a live man, and not bring him out of his grave?

MR. GIVENS: He was a man of world-wide reputation. He was a man who was perfectly dispassionate and unbiassed in this connection, and he was writing about a railway, a portion of which comprised the railway which is now under discussion.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A different thing altogether. That was a land grant railway. This is not.

MR. GIVENS: I spoke of that before. Is there any difference between giving land for the building of a railway, and giving leases of country for building it?

THE PREMIER: Don't lose your temper.

MR. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman is quite mistaken if he thinks I am losing my temper. I never enjoyed myself so much in my life.

THE PREMIER: This is too bad. Poor old Forbes is dead and gone. Don't dig him up.

MR. GIVENS: He is dead and gone, but his acts live after him.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is what you will never do.

MR. GIVENS: I venture to say without the slightest hesitation, and with the fullest confidence—(Government laughter)—that I will be remembered and my name will be revered by the people of this State when the Secretary for Railways is remembered as a fool and forgotten as worse.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have a very high opinion of the member for Cairns, haven't you?

MR. GIVENS: Mr. Forbes stated the case for the advocates and also the case for the opponents of the land-grant railway very fairly, and then he went on in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Thursday, 24th May, 1883, thus—and as it is rather lengthy, I shall crave the forbearance of hon. members while I read it—

If the issues involved were merely one of figures, the subject would have an overwhelming importance. Given the need for a railway—and it is at least certain that, abstractly, a railway cannot well be a bad thing—it does not seem to matter very gravely whether the contractors who are to make it are to lose money on their venture, do fairly well on it, or make a very good thing out of it. In the last supposition, the

colony would not be hurt very materially by having paid through the nose. It would be no novel experience, and the memory of the extravagance would soon be obliterated by the enhanced prosperity the line would cause. But it seems to me that considerations are involved of infinitely greater moment than the mere casual wasteful disposition of a portion of the resources with which the colony stands in doubt. Potentialities, perhaps probabilities, are in the future of this business that may affect the colony to its very vitals. The land is overshadowed by the spreading pinions of a syndicate. Issues suggest themselves to one pondering over the future. The syndicate may be the loser in this "big deal." There are many advocates for a concession who profess to think this possible. The syndicate, these hint, will go to work with zeal. They will import navvies in swarms, so increasing the population of the colony, at half the cost to it of this present immigration system; they will spend their money, and this will cause a stir in general business. They will try to sell their lands and will fail; after expending their capital they will not have completed their undertaking, whereupon forfeiture will ensue, and the colony will have got a railway made so far, at the expense of aliens whose speculation has miscarried, and who may go hang.

How likely how possible is such an outcome I leave with confidence to the decision of those having experience with syndicates. These combinations are occasionally childlike and bland, but when the shaking process begins it is rare that their sleeves are found empty. If such a breakdown were to occur it would be seen that the colony could not enforce the naked forfeiture. The pound of flesh might be the rigorous penalty for default in the bond, but an Australian colony would scarcely care to be stigmatised as a Shylock. But even if it had to pay for what work the defaulting syndicate might have executed, the colony could not well take serious hurt. It would have the work for the money, and for that work, by whomsoever done, the colony would have had to pay. Then comes the opposition contention that the syndicate will make the line, sell the land at a price which will far more than pay them for the construction, and "get out" by the sale of the line to the Government, an operation which the opposition contend is inevitable sooner or later. If the syndicate should succeed in achieving this result, its members will simply deserve congratulation. They will have gone for a "big thing," no little enterprise, and they will have pulled off a very big thing indeed. No one could blame them or asperse them. And how about the colony? Well, it will have paid very dearly, indeed, for its whistle; but then it will have the whistle for its very own, and a very useful, profitable, opportune whistle it will be found to be. The economist will grumble that it has cost the colony three times the cost of its construction, or thereabouts; but colonial backs are growing broader year by year and the colonial heart is light. And if the colony should engage in this compact with the syndicate, and if the purchase asserted to be inevitable, should be the outcome of that transaction, I should be prepared to congratulate it, not certainly on the engagement, but on the happy, if costly, issue. It will have pledged its soul, but will have redeemed the pledge. But there is the third contingency of this proposed handling of this unclean thing. As I write I lay down the pen and imagine myself a syndicate. In parting for the moment with my individuality, I lay aside with it my conscience. A syndicate with a conscience would be a contradiction in terms. Then, *in limine*, I ask myself a few questions. To whom belongs all the Great North-west of British America, from Thunder Bay on Lake Superior to the canon of the Peace River in the Rocky Mountain? Not to Queen Victoria, save nominally; not to worthy Mr. Norquay, the half-breed Premier of Manitoba; Sir John McDonald, the dictator of Canada, is powerless over the "fertile belt," is a cypher between the Sasquecheewan and the Assinaboine. The kings of the Great North-west are the Canadian Pacific Syndicate. George Stevens, the president of that syndicate, has the Parliament in his pocket, and the Ministry are his vassals. Who "runs" the south-west of the United States, is omnipotent on the "iron mountain," can wither Missouri with a frown, make Mississippi dance while he pipes, and owns Texas to the nails in its boots? A swarthy, little Jewish-looking, silent, unpretentious person, whose name is, say, Gould—a syndicate in himself, but with a secondary syndicate at his back. Who "boss" the region between the mouth of the Hudson and Lake Michigan? The successors (forming a syndicate) of an old man who was once a canal bargee, and whose tombstone is the name of Vanderbilt. The United States form of government is a republic, but nevertheless

the Pacific slope is fast-bound in the grip of a four-headed despot, the Central Pacific syndicate, the gigantic combination which took its rise in a bar parlour, where four obscure but determined men (Crocker, Huntington, Leland Stanford, and Hopkins) pooled their little joint pile of 30,000 dollars wherewith to build another "Transcontinental," now is omnipotent from Ogden to San Diego, from El Paso del Norte to San Rafael.

This Boston syndicate (its head appropriately named Strong), to whom belong the Acheson, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway, so sway Kansas and New Mexico that their Governors are mere syndicate nominees, their Houses of Representatives scarcely playing the farce of independence. And I look at England, with her class of men, independent by hereditary fortune—ideal legislators, therefore, so far as freedom from "influences" can give the attribute. I note how scrupulous are her public men in cutting loose from business ties when they take office—how Mr. Goschen, when he became a Minister, terminated his partnership in the firm that bore his name; how Lord Salisbury resigned the chairmanship of a great railway company when he became a Secretary of State. And yet I know how weighty in the British Parliament is the influence of the great railway companies, which are virtually syndicates. Now, when all the forces unite, as in the matter of the tax on passengers, the Ministry have to yield, as Mr. Childers has illustrated in his recent Budget.

Encouraged and enlightened by these notable illustrations of syndicate omnipotence, I, passing for the nonce by the name of the Australian Transcontinental Syndicate, having had my little agreement ratified by the colonial authorities, proceed with calm skill to make Brisbane my washpot, and to cast my shoe over Queensland. *Festina lente* will be my motto; pearls ripen best when hanging on the tree. I take care at the start to have all the railway contractors enrolled under my banner. Their hostility would be bothersome, because they would be out of business; they have a great undercurrent of interest and influence; a man like Mr. Gargett can influence probably half the Yorkshire votes in a community. I would contract for my supplies locally, as far as might be, even at a loss. The twopence in the shilling would be a trifle in comparison with the advantage of gaining the goodwill of the big spirit and provision houses, who know where to find their subordinates who would be true to them and to me. I would betoken myself that, to-day, the colony of New Zealand suffers or prospers under the dominant influence of the Bank of New Zealand and its affiliated Loan and Investment Company; and I would give my attention to discovering and propitiating any kindred financial reticulation that may exist in Queensland, if, in fact, such organisations were not with me at the outset. If the colony has a Minister for Lands, it would, of course, be in accordance with the eternal fitness of things that this functionary should be made to belong to me. Indeed, I should consider it all but indispensable that he should have been with me from the outset. As he would be the official guardian of the colonial rights, I should regard it as a disagreeable incongruity were he not also the unofficial promoter of my interests. I would essay by means of debentures so to finance that I should be spared from parting with my land grants as the blocks fell into my hands, but be able to hold them for eventualities, leasing them meanwhile to the adjacent squatters, so as not to have them wholly dormant. As towns showed symptoms of formation, I would naturally make them wholly my own—each alternate lot would be mine already—by the simple process of buying up the Government lots, either directly or indirectly as the situation seemed to prescribe. In particular, I would concentrate every energy on Point Parker. It would be strange, were I not omnipotent there at least. Then would come my wharves, my docks, my stores, my harbour board, my tariff of charges. On such mineral lands as should reveal themselves on the country within my grant I should naturally have the commanding monopoly. About this time perhaps a grumbling section of politicians—in every community there are impracticable sort of creatures whom no argument can influence—may begin to azitate that Government exercise its powers and buy me out. This is what the present opposition to the scheme regard as inevitable, and vilipend vehemently. I am a syndicate, however, and I don't see the amusement of being bought out of a thing to stay in which is so much better than to go out of. The colony will have to borrow money for this object, but money could not be had just then.

It would be a poor syndicate indeed if I and my friendly allies, the colonial financial institutions, could not bring it about that Capel Court would shake its head when the Colonial Office spoke about a big loan. When it hinted at even a little one for current purposes

—and a colony is always wanting money somehow—we could contrive, I think, that the answer should be unpropitious; and then would be the time for me to come forward with an offer to purchase the alternate blocks belonging to the Government, which at the beginning, I astutely stipulated, was not to be put on the market for ten years. This transaction carried through to my satisfaction, I should own a double belt of land from Charleville to the Gulf. What I should do with it would depend on circumstances. With this freehold land in hand to commence with, I might become the most colossal squatter in the world, or I might sell to the squatters at the enhanced price the railway, and my attitude of standing mence might make exigible.

By and by, having abolished the "irreconcilables," or at least reduced them to a minority—by this time, remember, I would have constituencies of my own, and a commanding influence almost everywhere—I would set about enlarging my borders. My truck line would be none the worse, and the flanking portions of the colony would be greatly the better of feeders. These I would, of course, construct, and be paid in land grants for what would be bringing grist to my own mill. Meanwhile I would have quietly been sapping the traffic of the existing Government lines. Mr. Goodechap might give me some advice on this branch of the subject based on the experience of the rates which bar the urrumbdee wool from going to Melbourne and entice it to Sydney. Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville would naturally resent this alienation of their natural inheritance, and would clamour to the Government for amelioration of their condition somehow. Then would be the time for some notoriously independent man in Parliament to come forward with the suggestion that since the colony could not do the obviously best thing—buy out the syndicate and get possession of the Transcontinental line—it should do the next best thing, and secure uniformity in railway matters by selling or leasing the Government lines to me. I should naturally be surprised at this suggestion, refuse at first to entertain it, and finally be persuaded into the arrangement, stipulating, of course, for sale or lease on the basis of the "previous three years" traffic, which I should have been cutting down with all my might. So shall I bind to my chariot wheels the east coast towns, and "mak siccar" my virtual omnipotence.

I might prolong the sketch of my career as a railway syndicate, but it would be a waste of your space. It is an absorption, a subjugation, of such a kind that Queensland has to dread as a possible sequel to permitting the entrance of this "Trojan horse," within its walls, far more than the comparatively petty detail of paying twice over for 1,000 miles of railway. Marry a limpet on a rock to the daughter of the horse-leech, and the progeny of the union is a railway syndicate. You will hear people exclaim against the squatter régime. There may come to any country that lets an alien railway syndicate get a grip of its heart, the melancholy time when the patriots left among its inhabitants shall mournfully look back on the days when "Our tyrants then were still at least our countrymen."

That is the opinion of an independent, unbiassed man.

MR. J. HAMILTON: One man!

MR. GIVENS: And his opinion is endorsed by hundreds of other historians who have observed the working of private railways in other countries. And every word he wrote then is applicable to the present case, with the proviso that where he mentioned "squattling land" you substitute "mining land." He pointed out that Parliament becomes the vassal of the syndicate; he pointed out the evils going on in connection with private railways. And seeing the evils of these things in other countries, and knowing the benefits of State railways, I say we should have nothing to do with private railways, but stick to the system of State ownership, which has pulled Queensland out of many difficulties before now. Look at the benefit our State railways were last year, especially to the pastoralists, during the drought, when they were able to save thousands of their stock which would otherwise have died. By reason of the railways being in the hands of the State they were enabled, by means of exceptionally cheap carriage, to bring their stock to grass country on the coast; but those rates would never have been granted by a private syndicate. For the reasons I have

enumerated I am opposed to this Bill becoming law, and I am especially opposed to it becoming law until such time as the country has an opportunity to express an opinion upon it. So far, we have not had an expression of opinion from the country on the question of private railways; and only this year the Government had to accept candidates as their supporters who were totally opposed to the principle of private railway construction. They accepted a candidate in Too-woomba who openly opposed private railways, and who said in this House that he would vote against them. They accepted a candidate also in Gympie who was opposed to private railways. That candidate was defeated, but I say that in accepting a candidate who denounced private railways they practically relinquished their policy.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: On every platform the Government advocated private railways.

Mr. GIVENS: If they did not relinquish their policy, they were most inconsistent in supporting as nominees for election men who denounced their policy.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We prefer them to impostors—that's all.

Mr. GIVENS: My opinion about those gentlemen is this: They did not care whether they were impostors, or thieves, or rogues, or swindlers, as long as they would support the Government. They were prepared to go into the highways and byways and ditches and pick up nondescripts who had no principle—

The PREMIER: Better men than you are.

Mr. GIVENS: I would like to know where you would find better men, or men fit to be compared with anybody if they are willing at one time to accept of one set of principles, and afterwards vote against them. Yet the Minister for Railways has the effrontery to say that we are impostors on this side.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I was not speaking of members on that side of the House; I made an abstract interjection.

Mr. GIVENS: Then we will let it go at that. The position is this: The Government have accepted candidates who are opposed to their policy in regard to private railways, who have denounced that policy in the country and on the floor of this House. The question has never been decided at a general election or at a by-election; and I say that this change in our railway policy should not be made without first consulting the people. I thank hon. members for the patient hearing they have given me. I have tried to give my reasons for opposing this Bill, and I shall certainly vote against the second reading.

Mr. CAMERON (*Brisbane North*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

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