

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

MONDAY, 11 DECEMBER 1911

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

MONDAY, 11 DECEMBER, 1911.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. D. Armstrong, *Lockyer*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

QUESTIONS.

SUGAR-MILL ON INKERMAN ESTATE.

Mr. THEODORE (*Woothakata*), for Mr. Ferricks (*Bowen*), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Has his attention been called to a statement alleged by the *North Queensland Register*, of 4th December, to have been made by Mr. John Drysdale, that there is nothing in his agreement with the Government relative to the recently purchased Inkerman Estate compelling him to erect a sugar-mill?

"2. Will he compare that statement with the copy of the agreement, as printed in the report of the Under Secretary for Public Lands under the Closer Settlement Act of 1906?

"3. Does not Mr. Drysdale's statement (if correct) justify the erection by the Government of a central mill at Jarvisfield?

"4. Will he recommend to his colleagues the erection of a central mill at Inkerman to ensure to canegrowers a reasonable price for their cane?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. E. H. Macartney, *Toowong*) replied—

"1. I have read what purports to be a report of evidence given before the Commonwealth Sugar Commission by Mr. John Drysdale in which such a statement appears.

"2. Such statement, if made or intended, is not in accord with the terms of the agreement which provides for the erection by Mr. Drysdale, or his firm, of a mill and for the commencement of the erection thereof before the 1st January, 1912.

"3 and 4. See 1 and 2."

BRANCH RAILWAY TO MOUNT MULLIGAN.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*) asked the Secretary for Railways, without notice—

"Is it the intention of the Government this session to table the plan and specification of a railway to Mount Mulligan?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. T. Paget, *Mackay*) replied—

"It is not the intention of the Government to table any plan this session for the building of a railway from Dimbulah to Mount Mulligan, owing to the absence of satisfactory information with respect to the value of the coal measures at Mount Mulligan."

REPORT OF PRINTING COMMITTEE.

Mr. STODART (*Logan*): On behalf of Mr. Speaker, as chairman, I beg to present the second report of the Printing Committee, and move that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

DAIRY PRODUCE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. Tolmie, *Droyston and Toowoomba*), this Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council, by message in the usual form.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS—COMMITTEE.

Clause 2—"Amendment of section 2"—

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, the Council's amendments, substituting the word "leases" for "lease," in line 3, and inserting the word "of" after the words "Part VIII.," in the same line, were agreed to.

On clause 10—"Amendment of section 20"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that the Council's amendment, inserting the word "pounds" after the word "a-half," in line 40, be agreed to.

Mr. LENNON: It seemed to him that it was hypercritical on the part of the Council to make this amendment. The phrases two and a-half per centum" and "five per centum" were well understood by the general public. But he supposed that the members of the Upper House desired to show their superior knowledge in this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is much easier to accept it than to send it back.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, the amendment of the Council substituting the words "three-quarter pounds" for the words "three quarters," in line 40, was agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that the Council's amendment inserting the word "pounds" after the word "five," in line 41, be agreed to.

Mr. LENNON: If the other Chamber had said, "Two pounds ten shillings per centum; three pounds fifteen shillings per centum; and five pounds per centum," it would have been very much better.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Council's amendments.

The report was adopted; and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Council, by message in the usual form.

RABBIT BOARDS ACTS CONTINUATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. E. H. Macartney, *Toowong*): This Bill is a very short one, and in itself requires very little explanation. It merely continues existing legislation on the question until the end of next year. Although the Bill does not require much explanation, perhaps it is due to the House that I should explain how it is that we are not introducing a comprehensive measure dealing with the subject this session. It will be remembered that my predecessor in office made a statement during the debate on a similar Bill last year that the subject would be comprehensively dealt with during the present session.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The Brands Act, too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are dealing with one thing at a time. He said further that he would see that full

inquiries were made amongst all the parties particularly interested with the view of finding out the best provisions to make under the circumstances to meet the requirements. It is true, as pointed out by the hon. member for Balonne earlier in the session, that the change in the administration of the Lands Department had something to do with the absence of the promised legislation this session, even assuming that there had been ample time to deal with it; but I can assure the House that the department has not been idle in giving consideration to the subject. Inquiries have been made from one end of the State to the other with the view of obtaining information; and while a large number of replies have been received, covering a large amount of information, yet the amount received is very far short of what is required. With very few exceptions the information received is in the direction of pointing out the good work done under existing legislation, and the necessity of continuing such legislation. That is the principal result of the inquiries so far; but the department did not receive as much information as it would like in order to put before the House a Bill in the form which it is considered the fullest treatment of the subject demands. Inquiries are still being prosecuted; and I have no doubt that sufficient information will be obtained to enable some definite attitude to be adopted on the subject next session. The last annual report of the Lands Department will show that good and effectual work has been, and is being, done; and I think it will be generally admitted that whatever defects there are in the Act, the results aimed at are being attained. I am not in a position to say more with respect to the alterations that may hereafter be found advisable; but I think I may ask the House under the circumstances to leave it to the department to continue further inquiries; and I can promise that the matter will be dealt with without a moment's unnecessary delay. I move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. COYNE (*Warrego*): From what the Minister has said, it seems that if we were to have a new Minister in charge of this department next session we would be just in the same position in regard to the Rabbit Boards Act. There would not be time for the new Secretary for Public Lands to settle the question, and we would be no farther forward next year. This thing is becoming a farce. We who live in the districts concerned know the need for a new and comprehensive Bill to deal with the matter. I believe that on account of the want of such an Act there has been a great deal of public money squandered. If a comprehensive Bill were introduced and passed it would be the means of great saving to the taxpayers under the Act, and the State generally. It is too late in the session now to make any opposition to the Bill, but it is a pity and a shame that we should have to continue existing legislation year after year, knowing how badly a new Act is required. It is a great pity that the measure promised last year has not been introduced, notwithstanding that there has been a change in the personnel of the Ministry as regards the Minister at the head of the Lands Department. Notwithstanding that change, it is a pity that a comprehensive Bill was not brought down and dealt with this session.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): I think every session we have been promised a comprehensive measure dealing with this question. I do not think, like some hon. gentlemen, that the rabbits are such an insignificant pest that we need not deal with them. I voted against the introduction of this measure the other night as a protest against different Governments promising to have the subject dealt with in a comprehensive way, and not carrying out the promise. What the hon. member for Warrego says is absolutely correct—there is a great deal of money spent under the existing law which a great many people are of opinion is not well spent. They say they are not getting good results. You can hear it said even that the rabbit fences are not taken care of. I do not think there are rabbits in the Mitchell district, unless it is at the lower end. As a matter of fact, the whole of the money goes to pay inspectors and overseers. There are about a dozen inspectors to be paid; and the man who rides along the fence and does the hard work of repairing hardly gets a living wage. A lot of the larger holders would very much rather that the Government should introduce legislation compelling the holders themselves to keep the fences in repair under the supervision of Government inspectors. Anyhow, it is a shame that we should be promised this comprehensive legislation year after year, and that it should not be introduced. The question requires to be dealt with in a comprehensive way, because the rabbit question is not one that can be cast aside from year to year. If the rabbits get into Queensland and make the havoc they made in New South Wales, the Government will wish they introduced effective legislation a great deal sooner.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*): I am very sorry the Government are so long in bringing forward a comprehensive measure dealing with the rabbits. Speaking for the district I represent, notwithstanding the fact that a great deal of money was spent on check-fences, the rabbits came in, and the leaseholders were compelled to fence their holdings at their own expense. Some of them got an extension of their lease for that purpose, and others fenced their holdings with wire got from the Government at 5 per cent. advance on the cost of the wire. Although

every landholder has been called [4 p.m.] upon for about twenty years to pay rabbit assessment taxes; notwithstanding that fact, they have been compelled to fence in their own holdings in order to keep the rabbits down. Just imagine a selector or leaseholder being called upon to spend the amount of money they have had to spend in fencing in their holdings to keep the rabbits down, and to keep the boards in existence. In numbers of districts of Queensland the landholders are called upon to pay rabbit taxes where there are no rabbits at all, and it might be a great many years before there are any rabbits in those districts; and when they do appear, I can assure you, from my own experience, that the only possible hope the landholders will then have will be to fence in their holdings. I cannot call it any other name than robbery of the people. The Government rob the people of money for which they give no possible value in return. The check-fences, in the first place, were

Mr. Land.]

put up when the rabbits were through. As I pointed out before, there is a check-fence from Tweed Heads to the border—more than half way through Queensland. That check-fence runs east and west, while all the water-courses run north and south, and, consequently, miles and miles of fencing were swept down and left down for months, which allowed the rabbits to get through. In the Central district there is a lot of downs country and sandhills, and that is how they never got to the North; also, owing to their being such a lot of dry country, and the rabbits follow the watercourses. It is not the check-fences that have kept the rabbits down to any extent. I recommended, when I came down here seven years ago, that some action should be taken, and I would like to see the whole of the check-fences, where possible, handed over to the lessees, and allow them to keep the fences in order. Also continue to give rabbit netting, on the same conditions the Government are giving it now, to those who are prepared to fence, and then compel them to keep the rabbits down. The whole of the money collected in rabbit assessments is frittered away in salaries to inspectors, overseers, and chairmen of boards. The only effective work that was ever done in connection with the destruction of rabbits by the boards was by the poison carts, and the men who drove the poison carts got as low as £6 a month. Then there were such a few poison carts that even they were not effective. I would like the Minister to wipe this measure out. It is absolutely useless asking rabbit inspectors to send reports dealing with this question. If an inspector getting £350 a year has to depend on the salary he gets from the rabbit boards, is he going to write a report that will do him out of his living? I remember one instance in connection with the Warrego board. A majority of the members of that board were in favour of abolishing the board, and they held a meeting for that purpose. A particular friend of mine, an old lessee, was a member of the board, and he told me before he went to the meeting that he was in favour of abolishing the board, because it was only wasting money. To my surprise, after the meeting, I found out that the continuation of the board was carried by one vote, and my old friend voted to continue it. I said, "What on earth made you vote for the continuation of the board when you told me you were in favour of abolishing it?" He said, "What would my old pal, Jimmy, have done for a job?" I recommended the late Speaker Bell, when he was Secretary for Public Lands, to get some smart men from the department that he could rely on, and send them out in the West—send horses for them and let them travel over the whole of the rabbit-infested country where the rabbit boards exist, and get the information necessary. That is the only way you can get reliable information. I know the selectors and lessees who are paying the assessment taxes, and they are always grumbling at having to pay those taxes and getting no benefit from them, but they would not say a word against the boards for fear of offending someone. That is an absolute fact. At least, the Government should allow rabbits to be killed for their skins or for the fur, and, in some instances, along the railway lines, their carcasses could be sold. What do we find? It is illegal to be found with

[*Mr. Land.*

a rabbit-skin in your possession. In New South Wales there are numbers of men and women who earn a great deal of money through trapping rabbits and selling their skins. The same applies to New Zealand and the whole of Australia, with the exception of Queensland. Why should this money not be earned? I was told by the Secretary for Public Lands that you can get permits, and I have tried to get permits, but there is only one class of people who can get permits, and that is leaseholders. The Central Rabbit Board issues permits, but people are afraid to get them for fear of offending someone, and consequently workers who have been desirous of following this occupation in the cold seasons of the year and in drought times, have been deprived of the opportunity. Thousands and thousands of pounds could be made every year by selling fur. The argument always used against this is that the trappers would spread the rabbits all over the country. At the present time if a man shoots a rabbit he is liable—he is not liable if he shoots it, but he is liable if he keeps it. Any man who wishes to get a permit from the Central Rabbit Board to trap rabbits for their skins, should be allowed to get a permit. I do not see that there is any difference in giving such a permit than giving a license to trap marsupials of any kind. As for taking them all over the country, why, they can go all over the country now if they like. Rabbits have been up at Charleville a long time. They have been a long time getting there for various reasons. They have also been a long time getting to St. George for various other reasons. There is some scrub country below St. George, and that is one reason. There are also plenty of snakes and iguanas there, which destroy the rabbits. That is one reason why they have not spread so quickly, but go as far as you like to the west, and there are any amount of rabbits. I ask the Minister, if he owned a station, would he allow a board sitting in Brisbane—never mind what experience they had, and their experience does not go for twopence—how he would like to be taxed in this way? A man out back who has been engaged in destroying rabbits for years has more experience than the whole of these men put together. Anyhow, if they had ever so much experience, they are too far away. You are wasting public money by allowing this amount of money to be spent by the Central Rabbit Board, because the public do not get any value for it. I would ask the Minister to take notice of that fact. How can men who know nothing at all about the West do any good? How can they earn their money? The money is given to them, and it is frittered away and the public get absolutely no benefit. The Minister did say that he is securing information, and that he will be able to bring in a comprehensive measure next session. I asked the Minister when the next session would be held, and he could not tell me.

Mr. FORSYTH: You can have it next month if you like.

Mr. LAND: You can have it as early as you like, as far as I am concerned. It always appears to me that this matter is shelved to the end of the session, and then the absolute necessity arises to re-enact the present Act. I am very serious on this matter, because there is such a number of

people in the district that I represent who have been paying rabbit assessments so long and have received no benefit. There is not one station or selection in that district that has contributed to the rabbit board who have not had to fence, and keep poison carts and men continually at work to keep the rabbits down. Some of them have succeeded better than others. Some stations have never been overrun with rabbits for the reason that when the rabbits first came they took action, and, by keeping men continuously employed destroying rabbits and allowing so much each year for rabbit destruction on their runs, they have kept them down, but with the exception of lessees who have got an extension of tenure for fencing in at their own expense, and freeing them from rabbit assessment taxes, they have had to pay the rabbit assessments the whole time.

Mr. HAMILTON: No; they are exempt.

Mr. LAND: I say, with the exception of those lessees, who are very few, the ordinary selector and the ordinary pastoral lessee who did not get an extension of lease for fencing in their holdings with rabbit-proof fences, they have paid assessment the whole time, and they are paying it yet. That is very unfair. Along the New South Wales border there are many men who have waited upon me for years asking me to endeavour to get them permits, so that they might come in here and take the rabbits and carry them into New South Wales, but I have not been successful in getting those permits. I hope the Minister will take these matters into consideration, and endeavour to get information in the way I have suggested, and not from rabbit inspectors or overseers, and when he has got that information, introduce a comprehensive measure dealing with the question.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): As we have continued this Act from year to year, it seems to me that we cannot at this late period of the year do anything but adopt the Minister's proposal and continue the operation of the Act for another year. Nevertheless there is need for an amending Bill, though I am not prepared to say what direction the amendments should take, or what new principle should be introduced into the legislation. But there is one thing that can be done now, and that is to give more attention to the remarks made by the Auditor-General in his reports with regard to the finances of the rabbit boards, the manner in which they levy their assessments, the amount they collect, and the amount which remains uncollected. In some cases the boards have a large credit balance, which the Auditor-General has frequently recommended should be taken over by the Treasury. For instance, the Warrego board has a large credit balance. At page 136 of his report, the Auditor-General refers to the manner in which these boards keep their accounts, and there are only two out of eight boards whose accounts he says are "well kept." The remark against the others is "satisfactory." If two of the boards can keep their accounts well, then the other boards ought to be able to keep theirs well also. The two boards which keep their accounts well are the Mitchell and North Gregory boards. During the financial year 1910-11, the Warrego board received 3 miles of wire netting at a cost of £85 13s. 11d., the

expenses were £23 4s. 4d., making the total cost £108 13s. 3d. At the beginning of the year the board had a credit balance of £4,295 13s. 2d., and the amount received during the year for assessments was £4,561 3s. 1d., and for interest on charges, £312 10s. The superintendent received a salary of £300, the amount for overseers' salaries was £791, and the amount paid for boundary riders' wages was £2,574. There was other expenditure, but with all their outlay they had a balance of £4,749 on the 30th June last. The Auditor-General, speaking of this board, makes the following remarks:—

"106. During the past year £4,883 11s. 8d. was received and placed to the credit of this fund, the expenditure during the same period being £4,433 1s. 4d. On the 30th June, 1911, there remained to the credit of the fund an amount of £4,749 3s. 6d., as compared with £4,295, 13s. 2d. on 30th June, 1910.

	£	s.	d.
The levy for 1910-11 (1st April, 1910, to 31st March, 1911) was ..	4,681	3	9
Arrears from 1909-10 ..	24	19	11
<hr/>			
Total Assessments due for 1910-11 ..	4,706	3	8
Assessments paid 1910-11 ..	4,567	8	7
<hr/>			
Arrears ..	138	15	1
Less written off ..	78	19	2
<hr/>			
Arrears carried forward to 1911-12 —	59	15	11
Levy for year 1911-12 (1st April, 1911, to 31st March, 1912) ..	5,099	10	6
<hr/>			
Total Assessment due, 1911-12 ..	5,159	6	5

"No recommendation has been made to the Treasurer to apply portion of the credit balance of this trust fund in reduction of the arrears of interest and redemption on account of advances made to the late board by way of loan—the same reason existing as mentioned in my report of last year, viz.:—"Large expenditure contemplated for repair to fences, etc." "

That is a matter which should be specially legislated upon in any future Bill, so that the interest of the taxpayers whose moneys are invested in these trust funds shall be properly guarded. The total amount involved in connection with rabbit boards at the present time is something like £204,000—climbing up into £250,000. I know that it is earning 5 per cent. interest. Still, I think there should be some provision made in the law for some other system than that which is adopted at the present time—some system which will keep the pest down and eventually wipe it out altogether. If some better system is not adopted, the present system will go on from year to year, and the only persons who will benefit by it will be those who are engaged in putting up and repairing fences, and the manufacturers of wire netting. It seems to me that the best plan for dealing with this pest is that which promotes closer settlement. But, judging from the enormous value of the rabbit skins and the amount obtained for rabbits in the old country, and the splendid wage earned by rabbit trappers in Victoria, the question arises whether the trapping and exportation of rabbits will not form a valuable industry. As closer settlement extends in Victoria the sheep country will be occupied by small settlers, and the rabbits will disappear.

Mr. Lesina.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member confine his remarks to the question whether the Bill be now read a second time?

Mr. LESINA: Yes. The rabbits may continue in Queensland and may provide a source of income to many persons. I have seen photographs of the plan which Mr. Rodier has in operation, and those photographs show the wonderful success which has been achieved of his system in getting rid of this so-called pest. Unless some system similar to that adopted by Mr. Rodier is introduced in Queensland, it appears to me that the rabbits will continue to increase. Rabbits are just as numerous in Queensland to-day as they ever were—possibly they are more numerous. In some cases lessees instead of fencing the rabbits out have fenced them in. Surely there ought to be some better way of dealing with the pest than that. The Minister will be well employed if during the recess he makes some independent inquiry as to the methods adopted throughout the Australian States for dealing with the rabbit question, and the measure of success that has characterised the efforts of people in the other States. Why not nationalise the rabbits? There is no reason in the world why the Opposition should not put the nationalisation of the rabbit in their platform at the next general election. At any rate, I hope that the Minister will endeavour to get the fullest information on the subject, and bring down, as he has promised, a comprehensive measure next session. In the meantime, I suppose we can do nothing better than accede to the Minister's request and continue the operation of the Rabbits Boards Acts for another twelve months.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): When we had a similar Bill before us last year we were told that it was a revival of the Rabbit Boards Act. This measure is called the Rabbit Boards Acts Continuation Bill. It seems to me that the Government had not yet arrived at a decision as to how to deal with this trouble. Probably that is in some measure due to the fact that there has been so many changes in the office of the Minister for Lands—we have had three different Ministers within the last twelve months—and it is difficult to get continuity of inquiry with regard to this matter. I think it would be well if the Government tried the "Rodier" method. I am a believer in the "Rodier" theory, and I think it will prove effective, more particularly where the rabbits are pretty thick—not perhaps so great a success in the far Western portions of the State. But where the pest can be dealt with in small areas I am satisfied that the "Rodier" treatment would be effective. The Minister stated that he would bring in a much larger measure later on. We were told that on the last occasion when a similar measure to that now before the House was passed, and we have not yet had that more comprehensive measure submitted to Parliament. On each occasion members have regarded the measure as simply a stop-gap measure of a stop-gap Government, and have compassionately allowed the Bill to go through for another twelve months.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

The Bill was passed through its remaining stages without discussion, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

[*Mr. Lesina.*]

MALANDA TOWARDS MILLAA MILLAA RAILWAY.

APPROVAL OF PLAN—COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, in moving—

"1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension from Malanda towards Millaa Millaa, in length 8 miles 77 chains.

"2. That the plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council, for their approval, by message in the usual form"—

said: This is a small extension of the Tolga to Malanda Railway, which is built through the Atherton Scrub, and it is one which I think will meet with the approval of the Committee. The scrub on the Atherton Tableland is very heavy, the soil is very rich, the rainfall very regular and frequent, making it extremely difficult for the selectors to carry their produce and timber to the railway stations on the Tolga line, or from beyond the head of the line to Malanda. It is impossible to expect selectors in such country as this to make their living unless they are given railway communication. I only regret that the building of railways in such country is so expensive. This extension is at a cost per mile greater than any railway I have before introduced. The estimated cost is £3,872 per mile. When I was in the district in April last, the people desired that I should look not only into the extension from Tumoulin to Cedar Creek, but also that I should look into the matter of this extension from Malanda towards Millaa Millaa. I took the opportunity of riding a number of miles from Malanda towards Millaa Millaa, and pointed out to the selectors that, desirous as I was to assist them, I was afraid the extension would be exceedingly expensive: but, in spite of that, I said I would make immediate arrangements for a survey. I made arrangements with Mr. Drew, a surveyor who had done work for the Railway Department, but was then working for the Lands Department, to make a survey from Malanda to Millaa Millaa, a distance of 15 miles, if possible; but, under the circumstances, it was impossible to present a greater number of miles than are provided for in the resolution I am presenting this afternoon, 8 miles 77 chains—practically 9 miles.

Mr. THEODORE: Is it the intention to ultimately connect with the coast?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. Mr. Drew has instructions to survey the line as far as Millaa Millaa. Last year a Mr. Sharpe, who is a resident in the locality—he has lived near Yungaburra a number of years—who is a naturalist and a collector of specimens, and goes into unknown parts of the world—he has a very intimate knowledge of the whole of the scrub country from the tableland down to the coast. He was in Brisbane last year, and interviewed Mr. Thallon and myself, and we arranged that when he was out collecting with his black-boys he should make it his business to examine the country from Malanda down towards the coast. He this year made that examination towards the Tully River. I mention this to show that I think it is highly desirable, where we have such very large areas of extremely fertile soil at present unsettled, we should as far as possible look ahead with railway extension. There is be-

tween Millaa Millaa and the coast—whether it be Johnstone River and Mourilyan, or the Tully River—a magnificent proposition for land settlement and railway building in the future. But where we have the Millaa Millaa Falls 2,500 feet above sea level it is not the easy proposition the settlers think for the Railway Department to overcome the difficulty of building a line there. Even going from Malanda to Millaa Millaa it is an exceedingly expensive proposition, owing to the physical difficulties. But I hope as time goes on we shall be able to extend our railway propositions further into this magnificent tract of splendid country, and that it will be the means of settling thousands of families there. The total estimated cost of this line for 8 miles 77 chains is £79,513. The Deputy Commissioner for Railways reports in connection with the character of the country—

“The route traverses very broken and ridgy country throughout, and considerable difficulty has been experienced in finding a practical line. Several high ridges, with deep gullies intervening, have to be negotiated, the Ithaca River being much lower than the surrounding country, and the only possible descent to it has proved very circuitous. The whole district is covered with dense tropical jungle. For 2 miles or so from Malanda some patches have been cleared, but owing to the country being so steep cultivation will be difficult. After the scrub has been cleared, no doubt artificial grass will be laid down and dairying will become the principal industry.”

In that connection I will say that hon. members may think it is not wise to extend a railway at such a cost; that it is unwise to allow the ratepayers and landowners in the railway district to take such a responsibility; but in my opinion, it would be unwise for us as a Parliament, and for the Government through the Lands Department, to ask the settlers to select such country where it is impossible for them to carry on their occupation profitably unless we gave them a railway. The railway district is about 462 square miles in extent, and hon. members will find, by referring to the Commissioner's report, on page 2, that he says—

“A plan showing the area benefited is practically the same as has already been proclaimed for the line from Tolga to the Johnstone River, but slight amendments have been made to conform with a new map issued by the Lands Department. I intend to treat the whole line from Tolga to 28¼ miles as one section, and to keep one set of accounts.”

The Tolga to Malanda line last year—the whole length was not open—paid £2 8s. per cent. on the capital expended, amounting to £94,505, and I think that that shows exceedingly good work considering that practically the whole of the freight on the line, at any rate, from after you go through the corn-fields nearer Tolga, consisted of timber, and it really takes some time after a railway is built to get the timber sidings and loading facilities constructed, so that the people may use them quickly and well, and also for the settlers to get their tracks cut into their selections so that they may cut their timber and cart it to the railway. I have no idea but that next year that portion of the line will pay its full interest. Timber experts stated that this line would tap millions of feet of timber within a 4-mile radius, which would take fifty years to remove at the rate of 1,500,000 feet per month, which is the quantity now being railed. It is stated that selectors up to the present time have been obliged to destroy millions of feet of valuable

timber to comply with the Land Act, which is a direct loss to the selectors and an indirect loss to the State. After you get beyond what I may call the farming areas of the Toiga to Malanda, I do not think that statement is altogether correct—I stand to be corrected by the hon. member for Cairns—for the reason that when I was there I made very close inspection, and I really did not find that up to that date the selectors had made any great clearings. Of course, some of them had cleared small areas, and necessarily a portion of the timber in those clearings had to be burnt, but there are many tens of millions of feet of the most magnificent timbers there still standing—that the clearings one could see would simply be a thread out of a pocket handkerchief—so that I do not think a very great loss has yet ensued in that direction.

Mr. MANN: The settlers could not afford to go out there unless they had a railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh, no! On the Dirran land there are 292 selections, and at Millaa Millaa 295, equalling a total of 587 selections, 500 of which are priority. That is with 500 of those selections out of 587, the selectors must live on those lands.

Mr. MANN: It is a pity there are some unconditional selections there.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For practically nine months in the year it is impossible to get provisions to that part except by packhorses. It was also claimed that the volume of traffic from the day of opening the line would more than pay interest and redemption. On the Beatrice the Lands Department are designing 10,000 acres, but if this land is held back, and assurance given that the line will be built, an additional £1 per acre could be got for it. It is also contended that this line would open up about 1,000,000 acres of virgin scrub mostly suitable for dairying. The timber I noticed when I was in the district was red cedar, white beech, and Penda or Johnstone River hardwood. Although a very great deal is claimed for Johnstone River hardwood for railway construction, I do not think it is the best timber we can use for that purpose, but it is very good for the construction of wharves. I have had quite a number of communications on what is called Johnstone River hardwood, that is Penda, suggesting that we should take the many tens of millions of feet there, cut it into sleepers so that they may be carted down to the railway and used for the extension from Nelson. But we find that where the Johnstone River hardwood was used on the Cairns Railway it has had to be renewed much more quickly than, say, ironbark or other more suitable timbers. There is also bull oak. I understand this timber somewhat resembles silky oak—a very fine timber indeed. Of course it is not the same timber as what is known as bull oak on the ranges in the South. Some people call belah timber bull oak. It is not that. There is also silky oak, silkwood, crow's foot elm, and a number of beautiful furniture timbers that are now being utilised, owing to the railway having been built, and I am quite confident they will all be utilised as the railway is continued further into the scrub. As I have already stated, the Commissioner intends to treat the whole of the line from Tolga to Malanda as one section, and to keep one set of accounts. I think that is the right thing to do. The extension is being built into the same railway district, and there is no further extension

Hon. W. T. Paget.}

of the railway district, and it does not take away the right of the whole of the people to hold a poll on this extension.

Mr. THEODORE: Supposing the whole of the people rejected it, will you give them a new district for the extension?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That appealed to me when I first saw the report. It is advisable that one set of accounts should be kept, but if the rate-payers between Tolga and Malanda are ungenerous enough and selfish enough to call for a poll and throw out this extension because they say it will not help them, it will be the duty of the Government to take up this question again at as early a date as possible.

Mr. MANN: I do not think they will.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think they will do that, but it is in their power to do it. I say unhesitatingly that if that were done, it would be the duty of the Government to give the people who are to be benefited the opportunity of saying whether they will have this extension or not. The net revenue is estimated by the Commissioner at £1 2s. 8d. per cent. I do not think after the first year there will be any call upon the people at all, in spite of the exceedingly high cost of construction of this line. The Commissioner recommends the construction of the line. Railways running into country such as this, where we run on the top of the range, in exceedingly heavy scrub country, necessarily must be costly in construction, but it is opening up exceedingly rich country in an exceedingly good climate. I think when the beauties of that district become better known we shall have the people who travel up to Kuranda from Victoria and New South Wales during the winter months, extending their tour into that district.

Mr. MANN: In the summer as well. It is cool in summer.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They will probably find it beneficial to visit there in the summer as well, as the hon. member states. There are beautiful lakes there, such as Lake Eacham, Lake Barrine, and the Johnstone River Falls, which cannot be reached at present except at very great trouble, and there are many other beautiful scenes in that district, which in time will attract a very large tourist traffic. I have very great pleasure in asking the Committee to approve of the plans of this railway.

Mr. LENNON: I am very glad indeed that the Minister has even got so far with this line as to come down and propose to construct practically 9 miles of it. The hon. member for Cairns and myself waited on the Minister on several occasions in reference to this railway, particularly in regard to getting the survey started, and we were told the great difficulty was to get a suitable surveyor at the time. We recommended the very man who subsequently did the work, although at first it was said he could not do it, or would not do it, or should not do it; and I am glad that the recommendation of the hon. member for Cairns and myself was finally adopted, and that this man was entrusted with the work. I know it is a costly line, but I think the department is justified in constructing this short piece of railway, even at an apparently high cost, because that is, without exception, the largest area of magni-

ficient scrub and heavily timbered lands, I believe, to be found in the whole of Australia, certainly that could be found in Queensland. There is also a very fine rainfall in that district, which is evenly distributed throughout the year, and consequently it is eminently adapted for agricultural pursuits and dairying. I understand the survey is proposed to be extended as far as Millaa Millaa, as soon as Mr. Drew can find time to go on with the work.

I am pleased that Mr. Sharpe [5 p.m.] has made an examination of this country, and he has submitted a report and a sketch to the Commissioner. Mr. Sharpe recommends with every confidence that a very easy grade could be found right down to the coast, somewhere in the vicinity of the Tully, I understand. But that is a matter which can be decided later on. Still I am glad to know that a start is to be made with the railway, and that it may tap the North Coast line at some suitable point. It will be a splendid means of relieving the congestion which must of necessity take place on the Cairns Railway. The Cairns Railway is doing magnificent work at the present time, but in the near future—in the course of a few years—I think that railway will become so heavily congested that a second line will be necessary to cope with that traffic. The traffic from Chillagoe, Cedar Creek, and other places in that district will be so great that further railway provision will be necessary. This line is not in my electorate, except a small portion beyond Malanda. I am satisfied that there is no railway which it is proposed to construct that will traverse richer country, or develop more magnificent timber land, or provide communication with more magnificent scenery in a beautiful climate than this proposed line; and I congratulate the Minister upon his proposal to construct even 9 miles of this railway.

Mr. MANN (Cairns): I am very pleased that the Minister has brought down a proposal to build this railway, because, as has been stated by the hon. member for Herbert, it is urgently needed. That hon. member and I have waited upon the Minister times without number in our endeavours to induce him to undertake the construction of this railway. Both the hon. member for Herbert and myself pledged ourselves to the settlers of the district to leave no stone unturned to get this railway built, and it is a matter of gratification to know that at least a part of the line is to be built very shortly. I hope that the Minister will not allow the work to stop when this part is completed, but that, while he has the men and implements in that district, he will push on the line as far as it is possible for it to go, so long as it opens up the country and induces settlement. It is probable that this line will ultimately find its way down to some point on the North Coast Railway, but I am not so parochial in my views as to say that the country should not be opened up by railway unless the trade of that country finds its outlet at the port of Cairns. But before any decision is come to with regard to running this railway down to the Tully River, I would remind the Minister that, although it is claimed that there is room for only one line of rails on the Cairns Range, there is another route which may be adopted for railway construction—namely, through the Mulgrave Valley. A railway going up the Mulgrave Valley would run through a large area of sugar lands, and would tap Atherton lands in 40 miles, instead of 70 miles by the

route which has been constructed. I hope soon to see a line from some point on the Tolga Railway pass through the scrub in behind Atherton to junction with the Herberton Railway. Then, if the Cairns line is overtaxed with the carriage of minerals and other products from Chillagoe and Einasleigh which finds its way down to the port of Cairns, timber and maize from Atherton and district could go down by the Mulgrave route to the same port. That is just as feasible as any other route which may be proposed.

Mr. LENNON: The line to Mourilyan is a much better route.

Mr. MANN: I do not blame the hon. member for pressing the claims of a railway to Mourilyan; but, personally, I think the line should go via the Mulgrave Valley. Although I have not been over the country myself, many of my friends have been over it, and they tell me that the route is a feasible one. Mourilyan Harbour is only a little millpond, and will never be large enough to take in the ocean-going steamers which traverse our coast. Even now the "Kuranda" finds it difficult to get in and out of the harbour at certain states of the tide. The last time I was there I was afraid that we should get washed on to the rocks.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The harbour is being improved.

Mr. MANN: It can be improved considerably. There is an extensive tract of fertile country in that district, and if there is a feasible route to Mourilyan from the hinterland I have no objection to a line being built there, because I think the route chosen should be that which is the nearest and cheapest for the settlers who will use the railway. While I naturally desire to see that traffic brought into Cairns, I recognise that some time or other it will be very difficult for one line to cope with the increased traffic that must accrue. But, in the meantime, I am going to battle all I can for Cairns and advocate the Mulgrave Valley route. The port of Cairns has a sufficient expanse of water to accommodate all the vessels which will be necessary to take the trade of the back country for the next century, and the only way to secure interest on the money expended in the construction of the Cairns Railway is to extend the railway and so increase the traffic over the line. I say most emphatically that I will not support a railway to any other port until it is shown clearly and conclusively that there is too much traffic for the Cairns Railway to carry. The late engineer in charge of the line is an economical officer, and he endeavoured to reduce the cost of maintenance by cutting out bridges and substituting culverts which were not of large enough dimensions to carry off the flood waters. That was why so much damage was done during the recent flood. As a matter of fact, where there were openings which allowed the flood waters to get away, there was very little damage done. If a railway were constructed down to Mourilyan or Port Douglas, and there was 70 inches of rain in 70 hours in the country traversed by that railway, as there was on the Cairns Railway recently, the damage from washaways would be very considerable. The Cairns Railway has done good work for the last twenty-five years, and is likely to serve its purpose for a very long time yet. The damage that was done has now been repaired, and I am quite sure that

the line will now stand any normal flood. The lengthsmen have devoted very careful attention to the maintenance of the line, as is shown by the fact that there has not been a single case of accident on the Cairns Railway since it was opened, though for some 15 or 16 miles it traverses very rugged country indeed. I have nothing further to say, except to congratulate the Minister on bringing down this railway. The country which it will traverse is rather rough, but even on the rough country there is some splendid dairying land. I saw a piece of rough country there—country in which there is a good deal of stone—on which a settler has raised a very heavy crop of Rhodes grass. When rough, rocky country will produce such a crop, it is clearly worth while opening up that country by railway construction, especially when it is remembered that it contains enormous quantities of timber, and that the land will run two dairy cows to the acre for nine months in a normal year. Land like that is worth opening up. I hope that during the recess members will pay the district a visit and see what the country is capable of producing. It has a splendid climate, is 3,000 feet above sea level, and has beautiful running streams. It is an ideal place for a summer resort for those people who wish to get away from the hot weather that is experienced in Brisbane and other parts of the State. If the hon. member for Enoggera will take his wife and family up to the Atherton Scrub, he will find that it is an ideal resort, and will be able in the near future to have some good trout fishing in the various streams of the district. I am sure that if he once goes there for a holiday he will be very glad to pay it a second visit. They are most hospitable people, and will receive him with every kindness. He will get as cool a climate as there is at Stanthorpe, lovely scenery, including lakes and waterfalls.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And trout 6 inches long.

Mr. MANN: Yes; and only twelve months old. If he will come up next Christmas I will be pleased to go round with him and see that he gets good fishing for trout. Though I am battling for this railway, it is not in my district, and never was; it goes through the Herbert electorate. Whether the railways goes to the Tully or not, I hope to see that country developed, because it is the finest in Australia for climate, rainfall, and richness of soil.

Mr. THEODORE (*Woothakata*): I have much pleasure in supporting this short extension, which will induce settlement and encourage the settlers already in the district. I recognise that ultimately it will probably be connected with the North Coast Railway and provide another outlet for the vast hinterland of Cairns. But it will not be the best railway as far as serving the mineral country is concerned, because mineral country requires the most direct communication with a deep-water port, and this will be too roundabout. However, it will be an alternative route to the Cairns line in the event of that line being hung up through landslips or other circumstances. But we want a railway which can be used at all times. The confidence of the people of the Chillagoe-Etheridge districts in the Cairns Railway is totally destroyed; and as to the statement that the overburden has been removed into the Barron Valley, there

Mr. Theodore.]

are mountains of it yet to go over. Where one of the most serious slips occurred, as the Minister knows, there were gangs of men working for two years previously removing the overburden. The department recognised the danger, and they had men removing the stuff and dumping it into one of the gullies.

Mr. MANN: Where is that?

Mr. THEODORE: At Camp Oven Creek. It is recognised as a dangerous spot; and the department were trying to make it safe. It is unfortunate, but people have not full confidence in that line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is nothing to prevent them from using it.

Mr. THEODORE: No. And it is at present the most direct means of communication with the coast. But we should not have to depend entirely on the Cairns line; we should have additional means of ingress and egress.

Mr. MANN: I may say that I know the position of the slip to which the hon. member for Woothakata referred. It has been slipping ever since the line was built. The department carried rails up there. I helped to; and it was the hardest work I ever did. They took off the overburden and ran it down the gully; and they do that as often as is required. Most of it has slipped away already; and if the place was sown with grass or something to bind the surface, I do not think it would go any more.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The water got underneath, and the whole place slipped.

Mr. MANN: There is a slippery seam, and it goes off; and if that is all that is wrong there is no danger. Every year the maintenance inspector comes up and sees how far it shifts. The department used to send a gang for a month or six weeks during the dry season, and they ran the stuff on the tramway and tipped it down into the gorge. There is nothing to make a sensational story about, because it has been there ever since the railway was built—slipping to a certain extent, and every year, when required, a little is taken away. The situation of the place is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles distance from Stoney Creek. The reason for the men being camped there so long was not because of this slip, but because they were putting in a deviation to get further away from the side of the gorge. That part of the line is just as safe as any other part of the railway. It has been in that position for the last twenty years, and nothing has happened through that slip.

Question put and passed.

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

CLONCURRY TO MOUNT CUTHBERT RAILWAY.

APPROVAL OF PLAN.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I beg to move that the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

“1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed branch from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert (1st section), in length 42 miles 15 chains.

[Mr. Theodore.

“2. That the plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council, for their approval, by message in the usual form.”

Mr. MURPHY: I call “Not formal” to this motion, because in introducing this railway proposal the Government are breaking a distinct pledge given by the late Chief Secretary, Mr. Kidston, to the people of the Gulf. They are proposing to build a railway which that hon. gentleman said should not be built, and would not be a payable proposition so far as mining companies are concerned. I shall refer to the statement made by Mr. Kidston, in reply to views placed before him by a deputation which waited on him on 8th December, 1909. That deputation consisted of Messrs. Murphy, Nevitt, Mann, May, Theodore, M.M.L.A., Corrie (of Corrie and Company), Hensley (Cloncurry), and Captain Robinson (chairman of the Normanton Chamber of Commerce), who waited on the then Premier (Mr. Kidston) to ask for a railway to be constructed from one of the Gulf ports—Burketown or Normanton—to Mount Cuthbert Proprietary Mines.

“Mr. Kidston, in reply, said he quite recognised how desirable it was to give railway communication to that vast mineral belt, including Mount Cuthbert, Mount Oxide, and other important but undeveloped mines in the district. He quite understood that the mines could not continue to be worked at a profit without reasonable railway facilities. It would not be right to ask the companies to pick out the best of their ores, but that was what they would have to do under present circumstances. He was not in favour of pushing out the Cloncurry line another 100 miles and asking the mineowners to carry their ore 600 miles to Townsville. This cost would be a heavy permanent charge, and in his opinion an unfair one. The expense would be altogether too great. Now, they knew he was desirous of giving railway communication to that corner of Queensland with the Southern districts, and he had been hopeful that if the Lawn Hill proposals for a line from Burketown had eventuated, a continuation of that line would have opened up their district. He was afraid it would take them too far North for a transcontinental line. One thing was evident, the Government must determine upon one or other of the ports. He was strongly in favour of giving them connection with one of the Northern ports, but he did not say that the line should be connected just now with Cloncurry. It would not be good business to run two Government lines in opposition to each other. He did not care whether the connection was with Burketown or Normanton, but to whichever was determined upon the facilities would have to go. If they could get one port and one railway to open up the district, it would be the best thing for them. He was afraid they were too far North to join with the transcontinental line. They must have a system of their own, and if the mines were worth working he thought a system of their own was essential. Of course, he could not give an answer just now. He would submit the matter to the Railway Department, asking them to determine upon a port—either Burketown or Normanton—and asking them to determine upon the route and see what could be done.”

Therefore, we have the late Premier, Mr. Kidston, promising the people of the Gulf that this mineral country in the neighbourhood of the Leichhardt would be opened up by a railway from either Burketown or Normanton. Now, the Government are proposing to build a railway from Cloncurry to do exactly what Mr. Kidston pointed out should not be done—compel these people who are develop-

ing the copper country in that district to carry their material 600 miles to the port of Townsville, whereas from Mount Cuthbert to Normanton or Burketown would be less than a quarter of that distance. So there is good reason why this Committee should give this railway very careful consideration. Not that I have any objection whatever to the State coming to the assistance of the Mount Cuthbert company who have spent something like £70,000 in development work.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And to the assistance of other companies.

Mr. MURPHY: I have not the slightest objection to that at all, but if this mineral country is going to be opened up, and if these people are to be given an opportunity of working their properties at a profit, then the railway should go to one of the Gulf ports, so that they could get their material to and from a port as cheaply as possible. The Secretary for Mines recently pointed out that if our copper country was to be properly opened up cheap transit was essential, yet this Government are introducing a railway proposal which will saddle the copper districts in the Leichhardt with a transit extending over 600 miles. Twenty-five years ago both Houses of Parliament passed the plan, section, and book of reference for a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry, and the sum of £500,000 still stands amongst our unexpended balances.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The sum was voted, but the plan was not passed.

Mr. MURPHY: I will not argue that point. All I know is that the proposal to connect Normanton to Cloncurry was agreed to, a survey was made, and the Government of the day promised to commence the work. Later on, a syndicate line was passed for opening up the Cloncurry mineral district with the port of Normanton, and it seems strange that the Government should now hurriedly introduce a proposal to build a railway from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert. We shall no doubt be told that this is in consequence of a report which has been received concerning the ports of Burketown and Normanton. Recently, when I introduced a deputation to him with regard to a railway from Forsyth to Croydon, the Premier pointed out that the Government could not afford to build two railways at the present time in the Gulf, and he gave that deputation to understand that he proposed to utilise the money at his disposal for a railway to the Leichhardt from Burketown or Normanton. It would be interesting to know what has induced the Cabinet to change their minds in connection with this matter. Is history going to repeat itself? Twenty-five years ago, if Normanton had got the railway which Parliament agreed it should get, instead of being in the state of stagnation it is to-day, it would undoubtedly have been one of the most flourishing in North Queensland. The Gulf country is worthy of the attention of the Government, but it seems to me not only this Government, but almost every Government we have had in Queensland, has done its utmost to try and damage the prospects of the Gulf country. So far as reports are concerned, I could produce quotations from a report by Mr. George Phillips, who was appointed by the Government some time ago to report on proposed railway construction in the Gulf, and also with regard to the two ports.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I appointed him.

Mr. MURPHY: I believe the hon. gentleman was Secretary for Railways at the time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I appointed him.

Mr. MURPHY: I would sooner say the Cabinet appointed him. I give the hon. gentleman the credit for appointing him, and the hon. gentleman should abide by Mr. Phillips's decision. Why does the hon. gentleman desire to get away from Mr. Phillips's report?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not going away from it.

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. gentleman is getting away from Mr Phillips's report. We find in this report, which has been submitted by the Railway Commissioner, that the first section of this railway is but the beginning of a railway to connect with one of the Gulf ports. Why should not the Government select the Gulf port and build a railway from it to Mount Cuthbert? Mr. Kidston distinctly laid it down that there was no necessity for a railway from Mount Cuthbert to Cloncurry at the present time; that the whole of the mineral belt could be developed by a railway to one of the ports in the Gulf. We shall probably be told by the Secretary for Railways, in reply, that my objection to building the railway in this direction is because the reports on the ports of Normanton and Burketown are not quite as satisfactory as he anticipated. As a matter of fact, Mr. Elliott was recently appointed to report on the Gulf ports. What were his instructions? To go to the Gulf and find a natural port; a port that the largest ships could come into without the expenditure of any money at all. That seemed to be the instructions that Mr. Elliott received. Where are those ports in Queensland? The natural ports, such as Bowen and Gladstone, have been neglected by the Government. The population of Townsville and Brisbane has enabled them to spend money on making ports. The Normanton River is quite as fine a river as the Brisbane River. That is shown by Mr. Phillips. Mr. Phillips, in the report which I have referred to, on page 25, points out—

"The estuary of the Norman is unquestionably one of the best of the unimproved rivers of the State. It drains an area of 18,000 square miles, generally very even country, and not of a nature to furnish heavy silt, while the current in the highest floods is too sluggish to carry much silt."

On page 26 of that report, Mr. Phillips continues—

"There are two places on the lower Norman suitable for berthing the largest ships. These are as follow:—

"(a) The Two-mile Ridge, on the right or eastern bank of the river, about 2 miles above Karumba; and

"(b) Port Norman, on the left or western bank, about 7 miles above the mouth of the river."

Referring to the Two-mile Ridge Mr. Phillips said—

"In some respects the site is analogous to that at Pinkenba, but the extent of available wharfage is much greater, and the land is higher and better adapted for every purpose than is the land at Pinkenba."

That does not say that there is no possibility of making a port at Normanton. But, unfortunately for that part of the Gulf country, successive Governments have taken steps to flch from it the trade which should naturally

Mr. Murphy.]

go there, and the result is that population has decreased, and we have not been in a position to undertake the heavy expenditure which harbour improvements naturally entail.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How much has been spent on the port of Normanton?

Mr. MURPHY: The first work done at the port of Normanton was done under the direction of Sir John Cook, and they spent something like £40,000 in making a wrong channel. Then they spent on another channel something like £30,000. I cannot give the exact figures, but I do know that no money has been spent on the port of Normanton for the last five years. The dredges were taken away just when they were doing good work, and unfortunately for the Gulf the Croydon Goldfield has declined. If developments of the deep ground at Croydon had turned out as we anticipated, there would have been a population on that particular goldfield equal perhaps to that of Charters Towers, and with such a population the Government could not possibly have continued to treat the Gulf country as badly as it has for many years past been treated. I regret to say the Secretary for Railways, who has always said he was anxious to assist that part of the country, should now introduce a railway proposal which will assist to make both Normanton and Burketown duller than they are at the present time. On page 31 of his report Mr. Phillips says—

“ Captain T. W. Robinson, than whom there is no better authority on the Norman River and bar, seeing that he has had twenty-two years’ continuous experience of lightering between the anchorage and the town, says— “ With regard to the present cutting, I venture to state that there is no other cutting through an outside bar in Queensland, in fact, in Australia, that showed such splendid results under the circumstances. It is now five years since the dredge left the port; the channel has never been touched since then, and what has made its chances even worse is the fact that it has not been used more than twenty times by the coasting steamers during the past five years, the only other traffic being the ss. “ Dugong” and lighters.”

And with regard to a deep-water port, on page 35, Mr. Phillips says—

“ It may be urged that the Norman River is incapable of such improvements as would place it in the category of first-class ports. This is not quite the case, however, for it is capable of improvement up to 20 feet at l.w.s., which at spring tides would accommodate vessels of from 26 to 31 feet draught, according to monsoons.”

When the Secretary for Railways endeavours to defend this particular railway he will have to deal with these matters which have been brought forward by an engineer appointed by himself to deal with this question. Of course, the hon. gentleman will, no doubt, argue that this railway is being built in order that facilities may be given to the copper propositions on the Leichhardt. I take it if you wanted to assist the mining industry, as the Secretary for Railways pointed out this afternoon, you must give the district communication with the nearest port. That should be the question in dealing with a railway of this nature, and the Normanton district has been shamefully treated by successive Governments in regard to this Cloncurry mineral trade. Normanton or Burketown is undoubtedly the natural port of that district, and they should obtain some consideration from the Government. It seems a remarkable fact that the Secretary for Railways, when introducing railways to this Chamber,

[Mr. Murphy.

should be able to pick the route at his own sweet will. The Secretary for Railways will probably tell us later on that Burketown is unworthy of consideration. What does one of his officers say with regard to Burketown? Mr. Phillips, at page 12 of his report, says this—

“ Ultimately, no doubt, freezing works will be established on the Albert and Norman Rivers for supplying meat to the Eastern markets in India, China, Japan, Philippine Islands, etc. In this connection, it should be borne in mind that there is no portion of Australia more free from long continued and destructive droughts than the Burke district. In 1902, when stock were dying from one end of Queensland to the other, there was no loss of stock in the neighbourhood of the Gulf, whilst many thousands of sheep and cattle were sent there from other districts. One lot of sheep were actually fattened within 20 miles of Burketown.”

At page 23, Mr. Phillips, referring to the Albert River bar, says—

“ With a 16-foot channel over the bar, vessels drawing 17 feet could safely enter at either season during neap tides and 22 feet during springs, whilst the maximum draught during the north-west season might be 25 feet or a little more if entry were made during calm weather. The entrance to the river from the bar is very direct, and does not involve any curves of small radius. In fact, the smallest curve, right up to the ballast ground landing, has a radius of 2,250 feet, on which the least width is 750 feet. Both dimensions compare very favourably with the Brisbane River at Kangaroo Point, where the width is from 550 feet to 700 feet, and the radius is about 1,000 feet.”

Mr. Phillips estimates the cost of providing the channels described at £50,000, and further says—

“ The varied resources of the hinterland must sooner or later demand an improved port on the estuary of the Albert River, so that the question to be considered is not whether the Albert or the Norman is the better river, but whether the vast mineral, pastoral, and agricultural resources of the district behind Burketown are to be adequately developed and accommodated by means of railways and an improved outlet to the sea.”

Mr. Phillips is an engineer of repute, and has a thoroughly practical knowledge of the Gulf country, having first gone there about 1865. The quotations I have given show what is his opinion of the ports in the Gulf. But, leaving that view of the matter out of the question, I would point out that the Government gave a distinct promise to the people of the Gulf district that the Leichhardt copper lands would be opened up by a railway from a Gulf port, and a Government which is not a piecrust Government, when it passes its word with regard to any great public matter, should stick to it, and carry out its promise. When Mr. Kidston made a tour through the North—I think it was after the Cloncurry Railway had been built—he travelled by buggy from Cloncurry to Normanton, and, addressing a public meeting there, he said that if he had traversed the country previous to the passing of the Richmond to Cloncurry railway, that line, as far as he was concerned, would never have been introduced, because he realised that the proper method of developing the mineral country back from Normanton and Burketown was by communication with those ports. The Government, in introducing this line, are distinctly going back on the promise which was given to the people of the Gulf district. They should

have decided to build a railway to one of the two Gulf ports. The people of the Gulf are satisfied to leave to the Government the selection of the port to which the line should be constructed, but they certainly think that, in dealing with this matter, consideration should have been given to the promise which was made to the people by the Government. We are told that the Government are anxious to assist outside places, but it appears to me that this Government, as far as Normanton and Burketown are concerned, are simply like other Governments which have occupied the Treasury benches in Queensland—they give no consideration whatever to the people living in those districts where they are working under great difficulties and disabilities in trying to develop that far away part of Queensland. I sincerely trust that the House will not agree to this railway.

Mr. COLLINS (*Burke*): I wish to endorse the remarks that have fallen from the hon. member for Croydon, who has quoted extensively from a report by Mr. Phillips, which was presented to this House in 1909. We all know that the nearer a copper-mine is brought to a port the better it is for those engaged in that industry, especially where copper-mining is carried on on an extensive scale, as we are told it will be at Mount Cuthbert, Mount Oxide, the Mammoth Mines, and other mines in that locality. The difference between the cost of carrying from Townsville to those places, and from a Gulf port to those places, may be the difference between the mines paying and not paying. I do not intend to delay the House by discussing the matter at length. The hon. member for Croydon has shown that droughts are practically unknown in that part of Queensland. During the great drought of 1902 there was no drought in that district. Mr. Phillips reports that the land in the locality is of excellent quality, and that in the Gregory River there is a flow of 100,000,000 gallons of water per twenty-four hours. It seems to me that it would be a good thing for a railway to be built from the port of either Normanton or Burketown to Mount Cuthbert. The population of that part of the country is not increasing at the present time, and is not likely to increase unless the Government spend more public money in its development. The argument that there is not a deep-water port in the Gulf is hardly worthy of consideration. This House recently passed a vote of £350,000 to make a deep-water port at Mackay.

The PREMIER: The House did not vote £350,000 for that purpose.

Mr. COLLINS: Well, the House gave the harbour board authority to raise £350,000 for the work.

The PREMIER: The people approved of the work.

Mr. COLLINS: No doubt if the people in the Gulf district had an opportunity they would approve of a like proposal for making a port in the Gulf. Without delaying the House any further, I will simply add that I am in accord with what has been said by the hon. member for Croydon.

Mr. MAY: I am going to support this railway. I have been working for this line for the last three years, and have been asked by my constituents to forward its construction as much as possible. If there was no line to Cloncurry I should have supported a proposal

to build a railway from the Gulf, but since we have a line to Cloncurry, I contend that the sooner we get that line extended the sooner shall we get a line to the Gulf. In my opinion the line to Cloncurry should have been carried to Stamford, and then along the ridges to McKinley, thence to Cloncurry. But the line is now built, and it is no use discussing that point. At the present time you can get blister copper carried from Cloncurry to Townsville for £2 a ton, and copper ore £1 6s. 6d. per ton.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is carried at long-distance rates.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member for Croydon referred to a deputation which waited upon the Minister in connection with railway construction in this district, and mentioned my name, as well as that of Mr. Hensley and several others, and stated that we advocated, in the first instance, a line from Cloncurry to the Gulf. The hon. member would lead the Chamber to believe that I am now turning tail on what I advocated at that time, and did not point out that ever since the construction of the Cloncurry railway I have advocated the extension of that railway to one of the ports in the Gulf—whether it went to Burketown or Normanton was immaterial to me. Some time ago we thought that the line from Cloncurry was going to be extended to Lawn Hills, but that proposition fell through. I was told by people up there that they were sure that line would never be built, because they had not sufficient ore there to provide traffic which would make the railway pay. I do not remember the time the hon. member for Croydon referred to when the "three fishers," as we used to call them, went out into that part of the country. I refer to Messrs. Kidston, Airey, and Kerr. The phrase is not disrespectful, but rather complimentary, as they were out fishing for knowledge. That was before the line was built to Cloncurry.

Mr. MURPHY: The railway was passed then.

Mr. MAY: The railway had not been built. But the railway is built to Cloncurry now, and we have to take that fact into consideration in dealing with the proposal now before the House. The owners of Mount Oxide and of Mount Cuthbert and the prospectors in that district say they want to get a railway as soon as they possibly can. Here we have a chance of passing a railway which will do incalculable good to the whole of that district, and I shall support the line. I suppose there will be a bit of opposition to it, but I think we shall manage to carry it, and I hope that before the night is over I shall have the pleasure of sending a telegram out West to say that the line has been passed.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Send it now.

Mr. MANN: Though it is not usual to say much on the proposition to allow the House to go into Committee to deal with a railway, still, as this is almost a national matter, I think the House would be well advised to discuss the proposition thoroughly before allowing it to go into Committee.

[7 p.m.] On carefully reading the Commissioner's report, one can see little to object to except that it means an enormous length of carriage to the port of Townsville. Possibly the Government may justify the proposed extension by the plea that if they started to get connection with a port in the Gulf a much longer time might elapse than would be the case if they were

Mr. Mann.]

to go on with the present proposed extension. I oppose this line, not because I think it is a bad proposition, but because I think each port should have the trade of its own hinterland. This will mean hundreds of miles of railage to Townsville, which is not a better port than could be made at either Normanton or Burketown, and entails 300 miles extra carriage. There is a kind of sugar-coating to the pill in the recommendation of the Commissioner, where he says this is only a link in some future railway to a Gulf port.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why should the Commissioner provide a sugar-coated pill?

The PREMIER: Is it to make it more acceptable?

Mr. MANN: Yes. The representatives of the district would not put up the same fight against this railway if they thought that in the near future the line would be extended to Normanton or Burketown. The member for the district, Mr. May, put up a good fight for the railway, but even he will admit that, given equal facilities in regard to shipping, it must be preferable to take the ores to the nearest port.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Nobody is arguing against that.

Mr. MANN: Then why not take the line to Normanton or Burketown?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The best proposition is not always practicable.

Mr. MANN: Minerals have a fluctuating value. They may stand high railway charges when the value is high, but when the value has become lower, they may not be able to stand the high carriage to Townsville. 300 miles less carriage may make all the difference between profit and loss, and by adopting a shorter route to a port we may preserve the mining industry of that district for Queensland when prices are low. Another thing, a great deal is said about filling up the waste spaces, and we have a vast empty country in the Gulf district. Would it not be better to establish a port there and thus encourage population about Normanton or Burketown than to have everything sent to Townsville, which is apparently the intention of the Government under this Bill? We are putting too heavy an impost on the people who have mining propositions in this district. We should encourage them not only to work their rich ores, but also encourage them to work the low-grade ores; and we can only encourage them to do that by giving them the shortest and easiest route to a port. I was one of a deputation which waited on Mr. Kidston some time ago, and whatever may be said against that gentleman he certainly seemed to have got the hang, geographically speaking, of the position. He painted to the deputation a bright picture of what it would mean to the Gulf country if a railway were made to Normanton or Burketown. Right along the eastern seaboard we have settlement from Cooktown down the coast, and to that extent we are safeguarded from invasion; and considering the empty spaces along the Gulf seaboard the Government would be lacking in patriotism if they were not to take the earliest opportunity of settling that part of Queensland. I think the Minister would be well advised in considering the question of taking the line either to Burketown or Normanton. The people of Townsville already have a big hinterland, and it would be showing consideration for their weaker neigh-

[Mr. Mann.

bours if they were to waive their claim to have this railway and allow it to be made to a Gulf port.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): This line is not being built for the people of Townsville; it is being built for the copper mines between Cloncurry and Mount Cuthbert.

Mr. MURPHY: It is for the Mount Cuthbert Copper Mines.

HON. R. PHILP: The Mount Cuthbert people will have to make up the deficiency if the line does not pay. It is only 60 or 70 miles from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert, and it is nearly three times as far from Normanton to Mount Cuthbert. If this line can be built in two years from Cloncurry, it will take six years to build it from Normanton. But the building of this line will hasten the building of the line to the Gulf; and I hope the Normanton line will start from both ends when it is built. (Hear, hear!) No one would be more glad to pass the line from Normanton to Cloncurry than myself, but I am not prepared to say whether Normanton or Burketown is the better port. There is better land about Burketown, but Normanton has the better river. If I were representing a Gulf electorate I would not object to this line.

Mr. MURPHY: If you lived in the Gulf twenty-five years and knew how the people were taken down you would object.

HON. R. PHILP: There are a number of rich mines north of Cloncurry, and the question is how can we benefit those people best and quickest? By building the line from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert they will have to go only one-third of the distance they would have to go from Mount Cuthbert to Normanton or Burketown. The Government have not yet made up their minds which is the better port, and I could not say which is the better port. You may have the richest mine in the world, but unless you have railway communication you cannot make it pay. I hope the House will pass this line, which will help to make the line to the Gulf more quickly than would be otherwise the case.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*): Though this seems to be rather an expensive line, and the earnings rather doubtful, I believe it will be a good thing to build the line if it is the intention to connect eventually with a port in the Gulf. When we had before us the proposition to build the transcontinental railway I said the scheme would be incomplete until we could make one of the ports in our own territory the terminus of the line—a port in the Gulf. This line is particularly interesting to me because I think it should be a connection of the transcontinental railway. It could fit in splendidly with that system, which will come very much further inside than the at present proposed transcontinental line. I think it will be much better if the line goes to Normanton or Burketown, and I think the Government should connect the lines right through from Cloncurry pretty well to Charleville, going very much inside of where it is already. Such a line would have my hearty support.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Croydon several times stated that the tabling of the plan of the line from Cloncurry towards Mount Cuthbert was a distinct breach of trust, and a distinct breaking of a promise given by the Premier in 1909.

Mr. MURPHY: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Though the hon. member, as a rule, is very genial, and I nearly always listen to him with a great deal of pleasure, I could not altogether agree with him when he was making such charges against the Government. For the reason that the hon. member evidently did not consider that the circumstances are not now what they were in 1909, when the late Premier met the deputation that the hon. member referred to.

Mr. MURPHY: What is the difference?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In 1909 it was thought very much more advisable that the northern portion of the great Cloncurry copper field should be connected directly with the Gulf rather than with Cloncurry, but last year, the then Premier, Mr. Kidston, made the statement that in order to complete that great system of railways in far western Queensland it would be necessary to build the railway from Cloncurry to the Gulf, as that is the desire of the Government in bringing forward this projected first section of that railway. I say it is an entirely different proposition to any proposition that has been brought forward during the last twenty-five years. I claim that the present Government is absolutely keeping faith with the Gulf people in their desire to have railway communication with the Cloncurry copper fields, and with Normanton, for the reason that they sent Mr. Elliott, of the Harbours and Rivers Department, to thoroughly examine the shores of the Gulf to try and find whether it was possible to get a deep-water port without going to the expense of either opening up Normanton or Burketown. There was never any reason to suppose that that promise was not going to be carried out. I could not possibly send an officer belonging to another Minister's department, but Mr. Elliott was sent to the Gulf as soon as ever his other duties would permit, and I regret to say that Mr. Elliott's report was not the report that I wished to see, for the reason that it has been my desire, if possible, to start a railway from the Gulf port—a better port than either of those in existence at the present time. What does Mr. Elliott say? On page 3 of his report he says—

"From the results of my observations on this occasion, and of my survey of Point Parker in 1881, and from the information derived from the Admiralty chart, it may be definitely stated that no natural deep-water harbour exists on the mainland of Queensland in the area under observation."

Mr. MURPHY: We admit that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: On pages 5 and 6 of his report, Mr. Elliott says—

"From the Albert I went across to the Norman River, and examined the cutting dredged in 1904 to a L.W. depth of 10 feet. This channel, some 11,000 feet in length by a width of 200 feet, was made in a N.W. by N. direction from the deep water in the elbow lead (about 4 miles from Kurumba) out to the 12-foot contour, cutting through about 600 feet of a sandbank (dry at L.W.) at a distance of some 4,000 feet from inner end of cutting. Although the depths in this inner 4,000 feet have been well maintained and slightly improved since 1904, the sandbank has to a certain extent reformed 1,000 feet further out than originally, and for a length of 250 feet there is only from 2 feet 6 inches to 3 feet at L.W.S. in the cutting, or about 1 foot 6 inches less than in the old channel, which is still marked by leading beacons for day use if required."

"The outer 6,000 feet of the dredged cutting is practically obliterated, as you will see by plan attached."

That is the Normanton port. The promise made by Mr. Kidston has been fully carried out by the present Premier in sending Mr. Elliott to the Gulf to make another thorough examination, with a view to seeing whether it was possible to start railway construction from there.

Mr. MURPHY: That is not a fair way of putting it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Whether it is a fair way or not, I can assure you it is the truthful way.

Mr. MURPHY: You never instructed Mr. Elliott to ascertain where you could start railway construction in the Gulf.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was instructed to ascertain the best deep-water port, so that we could then take into consideration where we could start railway building from the Gulf. The hon. member for Croydon also referred to the fact that Mr. Phillips was instructed by myself to report as to the best method of opening up the northern part of the Cloncurry copper field by means of a railway to the Gulf. When this report was furnished, the Lawn Hills Company had not forfeited their deposit to the Government to build a railway from Burketown to Lawn Hills. I say without hesitation, if that company had carried out their agreement, the proposition of opening up the Cloncurry copper field would have been a much easier one than it is at the present time, for the reason that it would have been a much easier matter for us to have connected with Lawn Hills than it is for us at the present time to connect with Townsville, which is 600 miles away. On page 37 of his report Mr. Phillips says—

"CLONCURRY TO BURKETOWN.

"The railway which in the first instance would confer the greatest benefit upon the district generally, and which I have no hesitation in recommending, would be from Cloncurry, via Quamby, Coolullah, and Kamileroi, crossing the Leichhardt River about 7 or 8 miles above Lorraine Head Station, and thence in a very direct line to Gregory Downs, and via the eastern bank of the Gregory River and Beames Brook (crossing the latter near the Brook Hotel) to Burketown, and thence to the ballast ground on the Albert River."

Mr. MURPHY: You must not forget that Mr. Phillips recommended the construction of a railway in the Gulf running into millions of money

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Phillips did not recommend the department to build a railway from Burketown to Cloncurry, but he recommends building from Cloncurry to Burketown, and the length of that railway would be 285 miles, and the estimated cost was £735,000. Mr. Phillips, on the same page, recommendation number 7, says—

"For reasons previously given—vide pages 92 to 97 ante—I cannot recommend the extension of the railway from Normanton to Karumba.

"I would advise that the deep-water berth for ships in the Norman River be placed at Port Norman, and that a high-level railway, laid with 42-lb. rails, be constructed from Port Norman to Normanton, a distance of 29½ miles, of which, however, the length to construct would be about 26¼ miles."

And in recommendation No. 8 he goes on to say—

"I would advise that from a point near Kamileroi on the Cloncurry-Burketown Railway—about 105 miles from Cloncurry—a railway of 3 feet 6 inches gauge, laid with 42-lb. rails, be extended to Normanton, via Donor's Hill, crossing the Flinders at Walker's Bend, and joining the Port Norman Branch at a point about 7 miles from Normanton.

"The total length to construct would be about 133 miles, and as the Flinders is the only river that would have to be crossed, and that at low level, I estimate the cost at about £300,000."

That is from Kamileroi to Normanton. He recommends the construction of a railway from Cloncurry to Kamileroi, over the route of this railway which is now being objected to, and the distance from Kamileroi to Cloncurry is 105 miles, and Kamileroi to Normanton is 133 miles. The great object that those copper companies in the Cloncurry district have is to get to work. They have been spending money for many years in developing their property. I am given to understand the Mount Cuthbert Company have spent from £70,000 to £30,000, and they are desirous, having spent that large sum of money, of erecting smelters and placing the proposition on a payable basis, and their proposition to the Government is: If you start from the Gulf, where you eventually intend to go, it will take quite a number of years before you give us railway communication with the nearest seaport, but if you build 70 miles of railway—of which I am proposing 42 miles to-night—we should then be in a position to profitably work our mines and smelt for the public, although we have to pay a very much higher railage to Townsville than we would pay to either Normanton or Burketown. I would point out that until we are in a position, by the development of the Gulf country, to induce oversea ships to steam down the Gulf to a port in the Gulf, although the railage to a port in the Gulf will be appreciably lower than the railage to Townsville, the sea carriage will be very much higher, for the reason that the products must be put on board steamer and carried to Thursday Island, and there transhipped to the oversea boat. Although the Government has not been able to propose that this railway should start from the Gulf port, the Government has gone a very long way towards consummating the wish of the people living in the Gulf, and who are desirous of this railway being constructed.

Mr. NEVITT (*Carpentaria*): Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is following a very unusual course. The question has been debated and the Minister has replied.

Mr. NEVITT: But, Mr. Speaker, surely I have a right to speak.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is quite within his right in speaking, but it is not usual to continue the debate after the Minister has replied.

Mr. NEVITT: I am under a very great disadvantage this evening for more reasons than one. I should not have attempted to follow the Minister had I been able to get to the Chamber earlier in the day. This is a matter of very considerable

[7.30 p.m.] importance to my electorate.

The majority of members in this Chamber know the attitude that I have taken in connection with railway construction

[*Hon. W. T. Paget.*]

in the Gulf country ever since I have been a member of the House, and I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without entering my most emphatic protest against the action of the Government in introducing this railway. It seems to me that the Government are acting towards the particular portion of Queensland which I represent in exactly the same way as other Governments in the past have acted towards it. It appears that this vast Gulf country is to be continually made the Cinderella of the State. If this portion of Queensland had received in the past all that it was entitled to, it would not be suffering as it is suffering to-day. At the present time the Government are receiving from £30,000 to £50,000 per annum in the shape of rents from runs—leasehold and occupation licenses—and yet they are taking away what little trade is left to the district and sending it to the East coast. What is the result?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The trade is now going to Cloncurry.

Mr. NEVITT: A portion of it is, and if you pass this railway the trade which is at present going to Normanton and Burketown will go to Townsville. The railway mileage from Townsville to Cloncurry is 480 miles, and practically goes due west. It is proposed now to continue that railway due south to Mount Cuthbert, a distance of 80 miles, and it is suggested that it should then go due north for another 42 miles. By constructing this railway the distance by railway from Townsville to Mount Cuthbert will be 560 miles, whereas the district could be connected with a Gulf port by a railway not more than 150 miles long. Is that a fair proposal to that particular portion of Queensland. The Minister for Railways says that we cannot get ships to go to the Gulf, and that until ships do go to the Gulf it is no use building a railway for a port there. Why, only twenty-five or thirty years ago we had rails brought oversea and landed at a port in the Gulf; the Minister knows that perfectly well, and yet he says that before we build a railway to Burketown or Normanton we should have ships running into the Gulf. Some twenty-five years ago rails were landed from the "Middlesborough" at 17s. 6d. per ton, so that argument advanced by the Minister has absolutely no weight. If the railway from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert is built, instead of constructing a line to a port in the Gulf, it will be one of the greatest injustices ever inflicted upon that part of the State. The country between Mount Cuthbert and the Gulf is much easier country for railway construction than that between Cloncurry and Mount Cuthbert. Last year I was told, by officials in the Engineer's Department, that on an average they were laying railways with 42-lb. rails, and that it required from 250 to 300 tons per mile. That means that for this 40 miles of railway there will be an increase of £10,000 in the cost, or a total of £20,000 on the capital cost when it reaches its objective at Mount Cuthbert. For all time that railway will be handicapped by an increased outlay of £20,000 compared with what would have been required if the railway had been constructed to the Gulf. It is a shame and disgrace that one particular portion of the State should be given an advantage at the expense of another, as will be the case if this line is constructed. Only the other day

I had a letter from a gentleman in that portion of my electorate known as Lake Nash, which is something like 200 miles from Cloncurry. The letter stated that the Railway Department are offering the people every facility for the carriage of produce from Townsville to Malvern, thence to Lake Nash. Loading for that district has gone from the port of Burketown from the time that Lake Nash was opened up until the present date. During the last few years the population of Burketown and Normanton has decreased very nearly two-thirds. What is the cause of that decrease? When I referred to this matter on a previous occasion—I think it was last year—the Minister said it was owing to the downfall of Croydon. That was certainly one of the factors which brought about a decrease in the population at Normanton. But the principal cause is that the trade which used to go to the port of Normanton now goes to the eastern coast. Townsville has tapped the trade of that district on one side, and Cairns has tapped it on the other. The result is that the trade of that great hinterland, the Etheridge country, that used to go through Normanton, now goes through Townsville and Cairns. If the Government are not very careful in what they do, there will soon be nobody in that country except a few pastoral lessees. That part of the country has come to the rescue of the State on more than one occasion. During the last drought it was the only place where you could get cattle to supply the Southern portion of the State. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I am unable to continue. I sincerely hope that the Government will see their way clear at a very early date to build a railway from a port in the Gulf into that part of the country.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Moreton*): With regard to this railway, I should like to see a line start from a port in the Gulf, because there is no doubt that the Gulf has gone back very much during the last few years. It is perfectly true that the line running from Cairns to Georgetown and the railway from Townsville to Cloncurry have taken to those ports a very large proportion of the business that used to go through Normanton. If a railway was built to Normanton it would pass through absolutely level country, in which there are no engineering difficulties.

Mr. HAMILTON: Do you mean the route which was surveyed some years ago?

Mr. FORSYTH: The country is level all the way.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is flooded country.

Mr. FORSYTH: I grant that, but at the same time I say it is very level country. We have flooded country between Normanton and Croydon, but the floods do not last very long, so that they do not cause much interruption to traffic. With reference to the proposal to run a line below the range, then go to Gregory Downs, and thence to Burketown, I do not think there is any possible hope of such a railway going on. I think the recommendation of Mr. George Phillips with regard to a railway in that district is the best that has been made. As to navigation in the Gulf, I would remind hon. members that as soon as you cross the bar you get into very deep water, and have most magnificent wharfage frontages at Karumba, and the land there is high. Whether you build a line to Burketown or

Normanton, one thing is absolutely certain, and that is that if you want vessels to go alongside a wharf you will have to dredge the bar—either at Burketown or Normanton.

Mr. HAMILTON: There was a dredge there.

Mr. FORSYTH: And I may say that the work done by the dredging is standing remarkably well. If the bar is not dredged, then you will have to employ lighters to take goods to and from the big steamers as they lie outside in deep water. But to make the transit expeditious and cheap there is not the slightest doubt that you will have to take the line either to Karumba or Port Norman and dredge the bar. At one time we expected to get a line built to Lawn Hills, but that proposal fell through; the company forfeited their deposit, and there is not the slightest chance of the line being constructed now. Some people who know a great deal about the country think that the line should go to Karumba, because there you will have high country, splendid wharfage, and very deep water. Port Norman is up the river a good distance, and if a line was taken there a considerable amount of dredging would have to be done, in order to allow ocean-going vessels to get there.

Mr. HAMILTON: You would have to dredge the river.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes. So long as it is understood that the Government mean this line as the starting of the line to the Gulf I would not have so much objection to it, because if that place is to get a start it must be by railway communication. No doubt if the mines in the district do not get railway communication they will be sure to close up. I believe the idea of the Government in starting the line from Cloncurry is to give these mines the benefit of railway communication at the earliest possible time; and from that point of view it is a very good thing. I am certain that if this line goes to Mount Cuthbert and down the Leichhardt a number of mines that are now closed will be reopened and a large number of men employed. As soon as the first section is finished, the people at Mount Cuthbert will build smelters and work will go on vigorously. Other mines will be opened up and there will be great activity in mining in that part of the country.

Mr. MURPHY: The last Government said the line would be started from the Gulf.

Mr. FORSYTH: There was some idea, at the time the Great Western line went through, of running it from Camooweal to Burketown.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And from Cloncurry to the Gulf.

Mr. FORSYTH: Anyone who would run a line from Camooweal to Burketown would be practically a lunatic, because it would never pay. There are only a few stations between Camooweal and the Gulf—only one of them being a sheep station—and some on the other side of Camooweal that would benefit the line, and without the assistance of mineral traffic it would not pay. A great portion of that magnificent Barclay Tableland, however, would be developed by a line to the Gulf. I do not think that a line even from Normanton to Cloncurry would pay without the assistance of big mining centres. Mount Cuthbert has been pretty well developed, and Mount Oxide is a very rich mine, and though the line may not go to Mount Oxide it will bring that much closer to railway communication. They have been sending

Mr. Forsyth.

away their ores under great difficulties up to the present, and it will benefit them greatly to have closer railway communication. If it is the understanding that this is the first section of a line to the Gulf it would be a great mistake to go against it. I would like the line to go from Normanton or Burketown, but if we cannot get that it would be foolish to throw this out. This line will be the means of great development in the mining centres down the Leichhardt; and in addition to the large mines there are also many properties with small shows that will be developed. On these grounds I will certainly support the passing of this railway.

The PREMIER: I think the construction of a line purely to a mineral district is somewhat of a risk. We have information as to the mineral wealth of the locality, and that in itself is a temptation, but to my mind the greatest justification for the construction of the line is that we shall then have control of a line reaching the Gulf seaboard. When the Great Western scheme was introduced last session it was hoped that some time it would connect with Port Darwin. We have no control of the land in the Northern Territory, but we have control of our own territory; and it is desirable, at the earliest convenient date, that we should avail ourselves of a Gulf port. It is quite understandable that the hon. member for Croydon and the hon. member for Carpentaria should enter their protest, though I think it is hardly fair for them to blame the Government as they have done. This is a link in the reaching a Gulf port, inasmuch as it is desirable that the Gulf ports should be reached so as to get connection with the great East and even Europe. Our mails might be delivered much more quickly if they could be put on the line at a Gulf port and carried through to Townsville and to Rockhampton by the Great Western line and also to the Southern States. I do not think the Gulf

[8 p.m.] members should look on this line as inimical to their best interests, but as a step towards the connection of the Gulf country with the trunk line. The immediate purpose is to make possible the profitable utilisation of the mineral areas in the district, but we cannot regard that as the terminus of the line. The hope is that it will terminate at some port in the Gulf. As to the portion of the line introduced to-day, we can diverge either north-east or north-west to Normanton or Burketown, it is not right that the Gulf members look upon this proposal as an unfair deal.

Question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 44.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Lennon
" Appel	" Macartney
" Barber	" Mackintosh
" Barnes, G. P.	" McLachlan
" Barnes, W. H.	" May
" Bouchard	" Mullan
" Brennan	" O'Sullivan
" Breslin	" Paget
" Bridges	" Petrie
" Corser	" Philp
" Coyne	" Ryan
" Crawford	" Stevens
" Denham	" Swayne
" Ferricks	" Theodore
" Foley	" Thorn
" Forrest	" Tolmie
" Forsyth	" Trout
" Fox	" Vowles
" Grant	" Walker
" Hamilton	" Welsby
" Hodge	" Winholt
" Hunter, D.	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Forsyth and Mr. D. Hunter.

[Mr. Forsyth.

NOES, 8.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Murphy
" Collins	" Nevitt
" Mann	" Payne
" Mulcahy	" Ryland
Tellers: Mr. Mulcahy and Mr. Murphy.	

Resolved in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, in moving—

"That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

"1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed branch from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert (1st section), in length 42 miles 15 chains.

"2. That the plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council for their approval, by message in the usual form"—

said: This railway, running northerly from Cloncurry towards the Gulf, is a line which we might term a purely mineral line, and it is not for the purpose of inducing close settlement at the present time, but is one that will be the means of opening up a very rich portion of the great Cloncurry mineral district. The line is 14 miles 15 chains in length, and the estimated cost is £169,657, or £4,022 per mile. The Commissioner estimates that the extra rolling-stock that will be required will cost about £5,300. There have been a number of propositions for connecting the Cloncurry district with the Gulf. Some twenty-five years ago about £500,000 was voted for the purpose of constructing that line. The plan, I understand, was not submitted to Parliament, and the money was allocated to other railways. In 1901 a private company proposed to construct a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry. That company did not carry out its obligations, and its deposit of £10,000 was forfeited. There was another proposition to build a railway to the Gulf by the Lawn Hills Company, but during the last few months that company has finally said they cannot carry out their obligations under the agreement which was ratified by Parliament, and they have forfeited their deposit. I do not think there is the slightest chance of a railway being built in the near future from Burketown to Lawn Hills by any company, so that we may put that proposition out of our minds in considering any proposal for the linking up of the Gulf with the great main northern line from Townsville to Cloncurry. I should have been very much better pleased if in making this connecting link between the Great Western scheme and the Gulf, we could have proposed to start from the Gulf, but it is not possible at the present time. I have already referred to the report sent in by Mr. Elliott, who was sent to the Gulf to try and find a deep-water port on that coast. I thought the next best thing would be to see whether the companies who owned these properties, and who have spent very large sums of money in development work, could not get some quicker means of transit to a port than they would have if the Government had decided to wait until the port in the Gulf country had been finally decided upon, and a railway built from that place. When the Commissioner remarked in his report that this may be considered as the first section of a railway from

Cloncurry to the Gulf, the Commissioner says what is absolutely correct. On page 3 of his report the Commissioner says—

“This section of 42 miles in length, or even to Mount Cuthbert, should not be considered by itself; it is part of a scheme for connecting the Cloncurry district with a port in the Gulf, and this project has been before the public for twenty-five years. It will provide means of development for a district of great wealth, which will be of advantage, not only to the people directly concerned, but to the State as a whole. The burden of making up the shortage in interest will fall mostly upon the mining properties (by reason of the greater value of the land and the enhancement), and they are the persons who will benefit most. I recommend the construction of this railway.”

The properties that will be more immediately benefited by the construction of this Mount Cuthbert Railway are the Mount Cuthbert Mines, Dobbyn, and Mount Oxide, and in order to give members of the Committee the information that has come to my hand, I will first of all quote from the Commissioner's report. He says—

“RESUMPTION OF LAND.—Only about 5 acres of freehold land will require to be resumed, as the remainder of the country is all held under pastoral lease with the exception of one grazing farm, from which about 10 acres will be required. The cost of resumption may therefore be regarded as nominal.”

With respect to the railway district, a difficulty has arisen. The railway district is about 6,048 square miles, and the Commissioner distinctly points out—

“This railway district is almost all at present included in the benefited area D for the Great Western Railway, and I propose to ask you to introduce a Bill during the next session of Parliament to omit from it the district described below, which will then be liable for the railway to Mount Cuthbert only.”

I thought, and still think, it would not be a just or fair thing to ask the people in those 6,048 square miles to be double-banked with respect to the railway district, and if we were to superimpose a railway district for the purpose of constructing this railway, then the pastoral tenants would be liable to have their rentals multiplied by eighty under the Railway Act, in order to value them for rating purposes. We do not take away from the ratepayers in this proposed railway district the right to call for a poll as to whether they will have this railway built or not, but it will be necessary if the railway is constructed to bring a Bill before the House next session omitting this railway district from Area D of the Great Western Railway, so that they will not be double-banked with respect to their rateable values. With regard to the revenue and expenditure, the Commissioner, in his report says—

“REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.—Considerable mining development has taken place around Mount Cuthbert, which is about 70 miles from Cloncurry. Already about 4,000 tons of ore have been despatched from the district by road to Cloncurry, and the Mount Cuthbert No Liability Company has no less than 16,000 tons of ore ready for transport, while a vast quantity of ground has been proved. There are other important mining properties, such as the Dobbyn, Crusader, and Argylla groups. The Mount Cuthbert Company will proceed to erect smelters (which will also be available to the public) when the first section of the railway is completed, so that smelting operations may be proceeded with immediately the line to Mount Cuthbert is ready for traffic. It is estimated that the output will be as great

as from Mount Elliott, which has produced 5,500 tons of smelted copper during the last twelve months.

“Mount Oxide is (as the crow flies) 109 miles north-west of Cloncurry, and 123 miles from Burketown. This mine has already despatched over 1,600 tons of ore, mostly to Burketown, but latterly it is coming to Cloncurry. The mining warden reports that Mount Oxide has 250,000 tons of ore exposed.

“The pastoral outlook for this railway is also bright; the two squares on the map which will be actually touched by the line (between longitudes 140 and 141, and latitudes 19 and 21) contain 126,000 cattle and 76,000 sheep, while further north the number of cattle increases. Drought is unknown, and Mr. George Phillips, C.E., and Mr. Surveyor Stringer, both of whom spent some time in examining the country, speak highly of the possibilities of the district.”

With respect to the development of the Mount Cuthbert No Liability Company, I may state that they have no less than 16,000 tons of ore at grass. Those 16,000 tons of ore have been won from the levels that have been driven to develop the property; there has been no stoping at all done, and this quantity of ore has been actually won while the company were expending the £75,000 of capital that is already invested in the property. The particulars of the work done are as follows:—

“The permanency of the lode is proved by the fact that it is improving at depth, both in size and quality.

“At 150-feet level the ore channel was 75 feet wide; at 250-feet, over 80 feet wide; at 350-feet, nearly 100 feet wide; with the ore coming closer together.”

The value of the ore that has been absolutely proved up to the present time is about £700,000, with copper at £50 per ton. There is available in that one property ready for the smelters some 14,000 tons of copper. The latest report, which I had handed to me only last week, states that the 350-feet level shows 10 per cent. ore on the face. I should like to point out with reference to the mineral line which was built to Mount Elliott, that during the period from November, 1910, to October, 1911, 42,744 tons of ore were treated at Mount Elliott, resulting as follows:—Copper, 5,504 tons 11 cwt.; gold, 10,623 ounces; and silver, 4,821 ounces. I asked the Department of Public Lands whether they could give me some information about the area of country that would be served by a railway running to Mount Cuthbert, and as to whether we could avail ourselves of some of the country for closer settlement. On the 27th October, Mr. W. J. Scott, the Under Secretary for Public Lands, wrote to me as follows:—

“Sir,—Referring to your letter of the 5th instant, No. N. 11-4-7508, desiring information in regard to the land along the route of a possible railway from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert, I have the honour to forward herewith statements of how the land within 30 miles of the route is held, and of the general character of the country so far as the information is available, and also a plan in illustration. There is no prospect of settlement in small areas in the region in question, but all available land would doubtless be readily selected as grazing farms if a railway were constructed.”

“PARTICULARS OF LAND TENURES WITHIN A 30-MILE RADIUS OF A PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM CLONCURRY TO MOUNT CUTHBERT.

“1. Pastoral Holdings—

“Area of land held as pastoral holdings within a 30-mile radius = 2,032 square miles

Hon. W. T. Paget.]

= 1,300,480 acres, of which the Crown has the right of resumption without compensation, except for improvements, of—

271 sq. ms. = 173,440 ac.—at any time
412 " = 263,680 " —after 31-12-1912
105 " = 67,200 " —after 30-6-1914
79 " = 50,560 " —after 31-12-1914.

Total resumable, 867 square miles = 554,880 acres.

"2. Occupation Licenses—

"Area of land held under occupation license within a 30-mile radius = 1,553 square miles = 993,920 acres.

"This land is available for opening for selection at any time.

"3. Vacant Land—

"(a) 166 square miles = 106,240 acres—open for occupation license only.

"(b) 426 square miles = 272,640 acres—open for occupation license or lease.

"Total = 592 square miles = 378,880 acres."

Mr. Scott also furnished me with the following general description of the country:—

"Only the land comprised in the pastoral holdings has been reported on, and consequently the desired information is not available except in regard to the pastoral holdings. These are described generally as under:—

"The country within the 30-mile radius comprises large areas of forest land and ridges, timbered with box, coolibah, gum, bloodwood, beefwood, silver box, etc., and interspersed with stretches of open chocolate soil plains and downs, with clumps of gidya, whitewood, shade bushes, etc. The soil varies from rich dark and chocolate on parts of the river and creek frontages and on the open downs country, to poor reddish (ant hills) soil on the stony ridges and hills. There are also considerable stretches of reddish soil country with sandy flats and quartz gravelly patches. The grasses comprise several varieties of a good nutritious character, such as Mitchell, Flinders, star, summer, and kangaroo grass, with spinifex on the ridges and also in the silver-box and mountainous country."

I know of my own knowledge the list I quoted is not a complete list of all the ore which has been despatched from the locality which will be served by this railway, because there were very large quantities of 40 per cent. ore sent from Kalkadoon. Through the Under Secretary for Mines, I also got the following interesting report from the warden at Cloncurry:—

"12th October, 1911.

"Sir,—Replying to your telegram of 9th instant requesting my opinion as to the mineral value of the country which would be traversed by a railway from Cloncurry to the Gulf, via Mount Cuthbert, and inquiring what inducement the probable mineral product affords for the building of such a line, I have the honour to report as follows:—

"The attached map, which accompanied Mr. Geologist Ball's report (1907) on the Cloncurry copper-mining district, roughly indicates the relative positions of the leases and groups of leases in that section of the field north-west of Cloncurry.

"In the absence of correct data, we will assume that the railway traverses the country in a straight line from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert and thence north-west to a point some 12 miles easterly of Mount Oxide. On either side for a distance of 36 miles the area embraces all the principal mines north-west of Cloncurry—notably Mount Cuthbert, Mount Oxide, Dobbyn, Crusader, Una, Native Companion, Mount Remarkable, Lorgaminidi, Warwick Castle, Mighty Atom, Mount Gordon, Mount Kelly, Kalkadoon, Eclipse, and Orphan, including also the Bower Bird Goldfield.

[Hon. W. T. Paget.]

"The country throughout is more or less cupriferous, and on all the leases mentioned, either as the result of developments or from surface indications, there is evidence of valuable copper deposits. Many of the leases contain gold values, ranging from 3 to 5 dwt. per ton. Owing, however, to their isolated position, the low price of copper, and heavy freight charges, but little work is being done outside Mount Cuthbert, Mount Oxide, and Dobbyn—a position that must necessarily obtain until cheaper and more expeditious transit is available for the carriage of machinery to the mines, and the shipment of ore to the smelters. In illustration of this, we will refer to Mount Oxide, which shows in places 10 to 20 feet of 30 to 40 per cent. ore. Other parts of the lode are much narrower, but as less than 200 feet on the course of the lode has been extended, and as the surface outcrops for a considerable distance, the possibilities of the mine under ordinary conditions would be most favourable. Under existing conditions, however, its isolated position and the want of railway communication to the seaboard, the mine as a paying proposition is all but hopeless. For freight alone (camel or horse teams) it costs 14 units of copper to land ore at Cloncurry, Burketown, or Normanton. Add to this the cost of mining, bagging, and carriage to the smelters, and return charges. Similarly with the Dobbyn—a mine that has despatched over 3,000 tons of 30 per cent. ore to the smelters with little profit. Take also the Mount Cuthbert Mines, which are open up to a depth of 300 feet, and have over 100,000 tons of ore that would pay with railway communication but are unpayable without it. There are also 16,000 tons of ore lying on the surface available for treatment. Obviously, it would be a waste of capital to sink and open up more levels unless first assured of railway communication. It will now be seen that, even with 30 to 40 per cent. ore, mines situated at a considerable distance from a railway are not payable, it being possible only to employ a small number of men, as ore quantities cannot be shipped expeditiously nor at a reasonable cost.

"Unlike auriferous quartz, copper ore requires, even in connection with small mines, an expensive plant of heavy tonnage, also coke fluxes in large quantities, and the finished product (blister copper) runs into large quantities. This remark is exemplified by the Mount Elliott Company, which has paid for the year ending 30th June, 1911, over £40,000 to the Railway Department. Take the tonnage this sum represents in freight from Mount Elliott alone, which, without railway communication, could not have been worked at a profit. So with the Hampden Companies, large revenues have been won by the Railway Department and a considerable saving effected in freight charges by the companies.

"A few years ago both Elliott and Hampden contained but a handful of men, and no mine yielded a profit. To-day we have at Elliott an army of miners receiving the best wages in the State, an organised township of 1,000 inhabitants, and a mine that earns a monthly profit of £15,000, besides distributing £200,000 per annum in wages and other payments. At Hampden, probably the most progressive centre in the district, hundreds of miners are employed at or in connection with the mines, and thousands of pounds are paid monthly in wages. The population is equal to that of Elliott, and the township promises to compare with Cloncurry in its better days. These results are entirely due to railway communication to the seaboard, a factor that has added largely to the wealth of the pastoral industry in the southern section of the field. Similar results—the introduction of population to those "vacant spaces" in the Gulf country—must necessarily follow the proposed railway, traversing, as it would, an enormous belt of great mineral wealth and pastoral possibilities.

"I have etc.,

"Signed. P. M. HISHON."

I would just like to say that what Mr.

Hishon reports respecting Mount Elliott and Hampden will apply equally with [8.30 p.m.] respect to population and output of the mines I have already mentioned. Mr. Linedale, the late warden at Cloncurry, writing on the 12th October, practically says the same as Mr. Hishon. He says—

"Briefly, I am of opinion that any railway line extended from Cloncurry, via Mount Cuthbert, must traverse country of considerable mineral (copper) value; and from Mount Cuthbert gulfwards for a distance of at least 25 miles the country is undoubtedly valuable from a mineral and mining point of view. North of Mount Cuthbert the line would pass reasonably close to the Warwick Castle and the Dobbyn mines, both of which give promise of being important properties.

"From the Dobbyn, or say 5 miles north of the Dobbyn, onwards towards Burketown, the country which a railway would naturally traverse, is not, so far as I am aware, rich in copper deposits, but a few isolated holdings have been applied for in that direction, on both sides of the Leichhardt River, and if the line were directed towards Burketown it would pass within 25 miles or 30 miles of the Mount Oxide group of holdings and somewhat nearer to Mount Gordon mines.

"The mineral wealth deposited along the route which a railway from Cloncurry to the Gulf, via Mount Cuthbert, would naturally follow, would undoubtedly become a very considerable factor in keeping a railway employed; but I would hesitate to say that mining in itself would create sufficient traffic to make such a line pay."

Those are reports from the wardens, the men who have the greatest interest in developing the mineral propositions in their respective districts. With respect to copper and coke, they pay a very low rate of freight. The rate on coke from Townsville to Mount Cuthbert will be approximately £1 8s. 7d. per ton, of which the branch line from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert will only receive 2s. 10d. On the return journey, copper will be charged about £2 2s. 6d. per ton to Townsville, but the Mount Cuthbert branch will only receive 4s. 2d. of this. It will thus be seen that there will need to be an immense traffic to make the line a payable one. On the other hand, the activity in the mining centre will create a fair business in the necessaries of life, which pay a much higher rate, and there should also be some revenue from live stock. As to the net revenue, it is quite understood that the mining properties will have to bear a large proportion of any loss. The estimate of £4,165 per annum for working expenses has been cut down to the bone, one station-master only being provided for, and only a portion of the guard's wages, as the estimate includes running expenditure for only two trains each way per week. Maintenance is set down at £75 per mile, which is little enough considering the high rate of wages in the district. I have given all the information I can in regard to this proposition for the opening up of a portion of the rich Cloncurry district; and in my opinion, as it is my desire, that it is the first section of a railway to a port in the Gulf. When that railway is completed I think it will be the means of opening up other industries than the mining industry. The mining industry is an extremely valuable industry. It has been the means at times of providing a very considerable revenue and a large amount of work for many thousands of men, and for that reason alone I would recommend the adoption of these plans very earnestly to the Committee. It is not always

possible for the Government to bring down syndicate railways, and if I had brought down this proposal as a syndicate railway there would have been much greater opposition than there will be this evening.

Mr. MAY: Undoubtedly. I would have opposed it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I apprehend that the hon. member intends to support this proposal. The hon. member must know whether this is a proposition that presents itself favourably to those people who will have to take the responsibility.

Mr. RYAN: If you say too much they will get suspicious.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Without railway communication these mining propositions are of no value to the people who at the present time lease them, nor are they of any value to the State. I trust that the Committee will see fit to recognise that this is an extremely valuable railway proposition to the State.

Mr. MURPHY: The Secretary for Railways has delivered a very interesting address on mining. He has shown that a few years ago Mount Elliott and Hampden were practically unknown, but now they have a population of something like 1,500. What does the hon. gentleman propose to do for those thousands of men he contemplates will be settled in the neighbourhood of Mount Cuthbert? He proposes to put on them a permanent charge for railway carriage to Townsville over 600 miles of railway. When I challenged the Government this afternoon for having broken a promise to the people of the Gulf, the Secretary for Railways said this was the first section of a railway to the Gulf; and the Premier afterwards said this was the first section of a railway to the Gulf.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What does the Commissioner say?

Mr. MURPHY: The Commissioner said he believed it would be. If it was proposed to build a railway to the Gulf, why does not the resolution say so? I doubt the statement of the Secretary for Railways in connection with this matter; I also doubt the statement of the Premier, because, during the quarter of a century I have lived in the Gulf country, too many such promises have been made to the people living there. The Secretary for Railways referred to the fact that Mr. Elliott had been despatched to the Gulf to find a natural port. He said that if Mr. Elliott's report had been different the idea was to have commenced the construction of this railway from the Gulf. What was there in Mr. Elliott's report to induce the Government to alter their decision? That gentleman declared that there was no natural port anywhere in the Gulf, but he did not condemn either Burketown or Normanton. Then the hon. gentleman said the object of constructing this railway from Cloncurry at the present time was because it was nearer to Mount Cuthbert. What can hon. members believe when the Secretary for Railways in one breath says it is the intention to build this railway from Normanton, and in the next breath says it goes from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert? The hon. gentleman did not understand the position; he anticipated that this railway was going through the same as many other railways, without debate; and it was only when he was put into a corner to explain what the Government intended to do that he started to dodge from one end to

Mr. Murphy.

the other. There is too much dodgery on the part of Governments so far as the Gulf is concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Vote it out if you can.

Mr. MURPHY: I cannot vote it out; and the hon. gentleman knew that when he introduced the line; but does that say that the hon. gentleman is dealing fairly with the people of the Gulf?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. MURPHY: It does not; it only says that God is on the side of the big battalions.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It only shows that you are carrying out your instructions by wire from Normanton.

Mr. MURPHY: Did the hon. gentleman say I am carrying out instructions that I received by wire from Normanton?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. MURPHY: Then let me tell the hon. gentleman that he is only carrying out the instructions of his employers, the Mount Cuthbert Company, to whom he was secretary so long.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is he secretary now?

Mr. MURPHY: I do not know what he is secretary to now. He has a better job. When the hon. gentleman criticises my action—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why should you criticise me?

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. gentleman is paid to be criticised. As far as the Gulf is concerned, the people have a right to oppose this railway. They have a right to take exception to the action of the Government in going back on the promise that Mr. Kidston made to them. They have a right to be doubtful of any proposal to build a railway from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert, and then to be told at the last moment that it is merely the first section of a railway to the Gulf; we have been told that for over twenty-five years, and they tell us about the port. When both Houses of Parliament passed a railway from Croydon to Georgetown, was there any objection to the port of Normanton then? Did the Government, which introduced that railway take any exception to that port, and say that vessels could not be berthed there? Not at all. It was then pointed out in the House that Normanton was a very good port. We know very well that if as much money had been spent on the port of Normanton as has been spent on other ports in Queensland, the largest vessels that travel along our coast to-day would be able to berth at even Normanton or Karumba. I have no hesitation in saying that the people of the Gulf have good grounds for taking exception to this proposal, although the Secretary for Railways says that we have received instructions from the Gulf. We have not received any instructions from the Gulf. Why should I take any instructions from the Gulf? I do not represent any electorate in the Gulf. I received no communication from my own electorate of Croydon, but certainly I received the same telegram from the Normanton Chamber of Commerce which the hon. member for Carpentaria received, and which the Premier also received. Surely to goodness, a man representing an out-of-the-

[Mr. Murphy.]

way district like Croydon—a man who represents the neglected Gulf country, the Cinderella of Queensland, a country which has received more promises from the Government so far as railway construction is concerned than any other part, and which has received less in the matter of having those promises fulfilled—when a representative of that district receives a communication from responsible people, it is his duty to take notice of it, and it is his duty to try and convince the House that the proposal which they are asked to consider with regard to the development of this Mount Cuthbert copper proposition is an absolutely unfair one; and I say if the Government are thoroughly determined that this is to be a railway from Cloncurry to the Gulf, they might just as well have included it in the resolution as to have said, "The first section of a railway from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert." We are told, after there has been some debate, that there is no doubt it will eventually go to some port in the Gulf, either Burketown or Normanton, or some other port which the Government may be able to find.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Does not the Commissioner say so in his report?

Mr. MURPHY: Can the Commissioner build a railway?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Does not the Commissioner say it?

Mr. MURPHY: No; he does not say it definitely. The Commissioner says it is part of a scheme to connect Cloncurry with a port in the Gulf, and this project has been before the public for twenty-five years. Can the Secretary for Railways take any exception to me being a bit doubtful about this promise?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What is the good of being doubtful when we are starting the line?

Mr. MURPHY: Why not start it from the right end? Surely the Government, on the advice of their experts, could make up their minds which port to start from. What do they propose now? They propose to carry all the material to Townsville and then carry it 580 miles along the Cloncurry Railway, and start to build this railway to Mount Cuthbert from there, and they wonder if we are doubtful in the Gulf. I honestly believe if Mr. Kidston had continued as Premier of Queensland the people of the Gulf would have had a railway to one of their Gulf ports. He recognised that they were entitled to that consideration, and I believe the present Premier recognises it, because when we had a deputation to him about the Croydon to Georgetown Railway, he pointed out that he only had a certain amount of money to spend, and he proposed to use that money to the best advantage—that was to build a railway to the Mount Cuthbert Company.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are doing that.

Mr. MURPHY: The Premier only proposed to take one of the Gulf ports and build it from there. We were badly treated in connection with this railway to Georgetown years ago, and we are being badly treated still. The Secretary for Railways can take no exception to the criticism I am offering, because I have lived out in that country for a quarter of a century. I recollect in the early days in Normanton

there used to be some very eloquent speeches—in fact, I have heard the hon. member for Moreton, on more than one occasion, deliver some very eloquent remarks on the future of Normanton, especially at election times, and, of course, the Opposition candidate was equally eloquent. Unfortunately, eloquent speeches do not build railways, or make ports, or develop the country, and the result is both those places are stagnant now. I certainly would have been very pleased indeed if the Premier had carried out the promise made by Mr. Kidston to the goldfield to build that railway to the Gulf. It has been said that the reason this proposal has been introduced was because the Lawn Hill Company did not proceed with the construction of a railway from Burketown to Lawn Hill.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MURPHY: I will take another five minutes, Mr. Chairman. In 1909, when we interviewed Mr. Kidston with regard to this railway, was there any chance of the Lawn Hills tramway being built?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were still negotiating in London.

Mr. MURPHY: They had their concession extended, and Mr. Kidston pointed out to us at the time that he did not think that railway would ever be constructed. He went further, and said, so far as he was concerned, he would have no objection to dealing with the company itself. If they were prepared to find part of the money, he would find the balance to build the railway to one of the Gulf ports. No promise was ever made that this railway would be commenced from Cloncurry. It was promised that it would be started from the Gulf, and the Government have gone back on that promise.

The PREMIER: How many miles is it from a Gulf port to Mount Cuthbert?

Mr. MURPHY: About 120.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: 160 miles.

Mr. MURPHY: What is a mile or two, in the Gulf country? I pointed out that what you are proposing to do in connection with this railway, which will undoubtedly assist in the development of the rich copper country, and I freely admit it will be the means of settling a large population in that centre, but what this proposal will do for the people you are going to settle there is to put a permanent heavy charge upon them for transit. The Secretary for Railways told us blister copper is carried cheaply, coke is also carried cheaply. Are the necessities of life carried cheaply? The miners and the people who settle around Mount Cuthbert will have to pay a higher price to get their goods—their food supplies, and their clothing—won't they have to pay a much higher price than if they got them straight from Burketown or Normanton? It is no good labouring this question. The House has decided that this railway should be constructed. I am not objecting to assisting those copper companies, and every one will give me this credit, that ever since I have been in this House I have always endeavoured to do the best I can for the mining industry. But in building this railway from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert, the Government have gone back on the promise made to the people of the Gulf, and are building a railway which is not going to give the benefit to the copper district which a railway from one of the Gulf ports would have done.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Before any other hon. member takes part in the debate, I think it only right that I should put myself straight in the eyes of the House and in the eyes of the country in respect to my position. The hon. member for Croydon, during the course of his remarks, said I was employed by the Mount Cuthbert Company. I desire to say that when certain deputations waited on the late

Premier, Mr. Kidston, in 1909, I [9 p.m.] was then Queensland Secretary to the Mount Cuthbert No. Liability Company, and the question of railway communication with that mine cropped up. I then resigned my secretaryship, so that I have had absolutely no interest whatever in connection with the building of a railway in that country since last February twelve months. Since that time I have had no connection with the Mount Cuthbert Company; they have not been my employers, and are not my employers at the present moment, and I have no instructions from them.

Mr. MANN: I rise to say a few words on this railway, and have no instructions from anyone. No one has instructed me to battle for or against the railway, and if anyone had given me instructions in that connection I should not have obeyed the instructions unless I believed in what I was asked to battle for. I always believe in battling for what I think is a fair deal and fair play, and I am satisfied that under this proposal the Gulf country is not going to get the fair deal to which it is entitled. I have always a certain amount of sympathy for a deserted port. When one goes through a deserted port, and sees the empty warehouses and dilapidated buildings, one cannot but picture in his own mind what that place would be if the trade went along its natural channel. The Commissioner states that "The burden of making up the shortage in interest will fall mostly upon the mining properties." We are saddling those mining properties with a heavy charge in building this railway, even though, as the Minister says, blister copper and coke will be carried very cheaply.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And the line will give them an opportunity to carry on their business.

Mr. MANN: To carry on their business for the time being. But what will happen when the inevitable pinch comes? The men who will suffer most in making up the deficit on this railway will be, as the hon. member for Croydon has pointed out, the working miners. Those working miners will have to pay a high price for the necessities of life, because they have to be dragged over 500 miles of railway. If they turn round and say to the mining companies, "You are not paying us a living wage," the companies would reply, "How can we pay you a living wage when we have to pay such heavy railway freights?" Those freights would not be so heavy if goods had to be carried a shorter distance to a seaport, and I am now battling for the opening up of more ports in Queensland. Anyone who picks up the Southern papers and reads what is happening at Sydney and Melbourne on account of the congestion of traffic at those ports, will see what difficulties and disabilities such congestion entails. We have not such an object lesson in Queensland, but that is no reason why we should not make some attempt to open up a port on the other side of the State. Suppose these mines happen

Mr. Mann.]

to fail? Suppose that production of copper ceases, or is reduced, because the price of copper has gone down very materially in the market, who will then suffer through the loss on this railway? The Commissioner estimates that the net revenue will equal about 19s. 7d. per cent. on the capital expended. That means that £2.0s. 5d. per cent. must be made up by the settlers along the railway. I admit that it will not be a very heavy burden if the mines are flourishing. But suppose the mines are closed down, are the few pastoralists along the railway to be held responsible for the £2 0s. 5d. per cent.? It will be a very great injustice if they have to bear that burden. I may be told by the Premier that they will have the option of voting this railway out at the poll, but if they are outnumbered, as they probably will be, by the mineowners, and later on the mines fail to work owing to the low price of copper, then those unfortunate persons will have to pay the interest on the cost of building a railway they have not asked for.

The PREMIER: If you base your argument on the failure of the mines to work, the burden will be heavier with the 160 miles of railway than with 50 miles.

Mr. MANN: If the Ministry were at all in earnest about opening up a port in the Gulf, they would start a railway there at once. They would say, "We shall give these people railway communication with a port as soon as possible; we realise that it will take a longer time to build a railway from either Normanton or Burketown to the scene of active operation at the mines than it will to build a line from Cloncurry, but we shall push on the construction by starting work at both ends in order to provide these people with adequate means of transit." I realise that unless we keep up our present rate of railway construction there will be very little hope of building a railway to the port for some time to come, because the people in that district are not numerous and have no great influence with the Government. But a patriotic, far-seeing Government would try, as far as possible, to encourage settlement on the other side of this vast country.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are doing it.

Mr. MANN: You are doing it by building a railway from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert, and giving these people a carriage of 500 miles when they could have their goods brought by a much shorter distance by building a railway to either of two ports which are equally as good as Townsville.

The PREMIER: They may be made so, but they are not so now.

Mr. MANN: Well, they may be made equally as good a port as Townsville. A lot of money has been spent on Townsville in order to make it as good a port as possible, and I do not blame the people for improving their port. They had many difficulties to encounter, and they have overcome them. But I say that if the same amount of money was spent at Burketown, or Normanton, or Cairns, or Bowen, or Gladstone, as has been spent on the Townsville harbour, you would have splendid ports at those places, particularly Bowen, Gladstone, and Cairns. I claim that either Normanton or Burketown

[Mr. Mann.

could be made a good port if the money was spent there that has been spent at Townsville, and I further claim that in advocating the opening up of a port in the Gulf country we are doing something which is eminently desirable in the interests of Queensland as a whole. It is not a local question, although it is a question of settling our country and of giving to a port its own hinterland. I do not believe in dragging away any part of the trade which legitimately belongs to another port.

Mr. LENNON: Except from my district—you would like to take it down to Cairns.

Mr. MANN: If the hon. gentleman can get a feasible track for a railway to Mourilyan I will not offer the least objection to it, but I point out there is no use attempting to build a railway from Mourilyan into the Atherton Scrub unless it is an aerial one.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MANN: I beg pardon; I do not wish to be led off the track. I think we should endeavour to open up a port in the Gulf, and give the settlers and the miners in the Gulf district the cheapest possible carriage for their products and the necessaries of life, and thus enable them to stand the pinch of bad times. But to compel them to have their goods brought over hundreds of miles of railway more than is necessary, and then leave them to stand the bad times, when mines are closed down and persons are thrown out of work, will be an altogether unfair thing to do. The only way to settle properly the country between Mount Cuthbert, Mount Oxide, and Burketown is to establish a good town on the seaboard where the people will use up the produce which is raised on the land.

Mr. LENNON: I am a very strong believer in the principle that every port is morally entitled to the trade of the hinterland of its district, and I was very sorry indeed to see the railway first of all going from Richmond to Cloncurry, because at that time I thought it should have gone from either Normanton or Burketown. But I feel satisfied that even if this House were to decide that the railway shall start from the Gulf, and not from Cloncurry, it would take longer to reach Mount Cuthbert from there than it would by building this line from Cloncurry. I think the estimate of the Commissioner as to the probable earnings of this line is very pessimistic, as I believe the development of the country will be very much greater than he states. The Commissioner says: "This mine has already despatched over 16,000 tons of ore, mostly to Burketown, but latterly it is coming to Cloncurry." That is an extraordinary thing, because Mount Oxide is further north.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Sixty miles.

Mr. LENNON: Yes. It pays to send ore by Cloncurry now, therefore it will pay much better when they have the railway. Speaking from the Burketown or Normanton point of view, when Mount Cuthbert and Mount Oxide will be more powerful factors in the district than they are to-day, the fact of having railway communication and having to pay heavy railway charges to Townsville will make them the strongest advocates for the Gulf connection. That in itself will accelerate the construction of the

line right to the Gulf. If I thought the construction of this railway would deprive the Gulf people of railway communication, I would not be in favour of the line. I consider this is a line the Government ought to construct; and if it is not constructed we are likely to have the trouble of resisting the building of the line by a syndicate later on. The Government should not confine all its railways to agricultural districts, but should now and then extend railway communication to mining districts. I do not think it becomes members to oppose the line on the ground that it will only return 19s. 5d. per cent. at the start. I take it that Cloncurry will be included in the benefited area, and I do not think there is much danger of any loss on this railway. There is no part of Queensland showing more genuine possibilities than the Cloncurry district. I think the Committee are pretty well determined that the line shall be constructed; and though I do not find fault with those hon. gentlemen who are opposing the line, I think it is useless to oppose it further. I have lived many years in North Queensland, and have visited Normanton, and I think it is the duty of the Government to develop the various ports of the State. Normanton, unfortunately, missed its opportunity in the past, but I feel certain that the Gulf will get connection earlier by this means than if the project now before the Committee is defeated.

Mr. THEODORE: I think the arguments used by the members opposing the resolution are probably due to a feeling of indignation at the treatment of the Gulf people in the past, but I am convinced that the Committee will be doing the right thing in authorising the construction of this railway from Cloncurry. Before long I believe it will reach one of the Gulf ports. While one hon. member was speaking the Minister interjected that the freight would not be a very great consideration, as they would only be sending away blister copper and importing coke. The hon. gentleman is mistaken in that. Only two of the mines will be able to send away blister copper. Only those mines that can work on an elaborate plan will be able to send away even matte.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They will treat for the small mines.

Mr. THEODORE: They can only cope with their own ore.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They buy ore on assay.

Mr. THEODORE: These companies have reserves which they can treat for themselves for years to come. They did not start operations with the object of treating ore for the public, but with the object of treating for themselves. I hope the Government are sincere in their desire to get to the Gulf and permit that part of the country to have the use of a Gulf port within a reasonable distance, say 200 miles, instead of having to send their mineral 600 miles; and it is only because I believe that to be the case that I am supporting this resolution.

Mr. COLLINS: In dealing with this question we have to consider something outside Mount Cuthbert and Mount Oxide. I remember reading some years ago reports by Dr. Jack, in which he described this district as one of the biggest belts of copper country in the world. The Minister for Railways has referred to the report of the Mines Depart-

ment as showing the development of the Mount Elliott and Mount Hampden districts. Judging from the report of Mr. Phillips, and what I know of Dr. Jack's report, it is more than likely that when this country gets developed it will be able to support 30,000 or 40,000 people; and that is one of the strongest arguments why it should be connected with a Gulf port, and should commence from a Gulf port. Some years ago, when the late Sir Thomas McLlwraith introduced his Transcontinental Railway scheme, the terminus was to be at this particular port.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Point Parker.

Mr. COLLINS: He said a port could be found there; and we say a port can be found in the Gulf. The Minister said there was ore at Mount Cuthbert that would smelt to 14,000 tons of copper. The distance from Mount Cuthbert to Townsville will be 558 miles; the distance from Mount Cuthbert to a Gulf port is 160 miles. Imagine carrying 14,000 tons of copper 300 odd miles further than there is any need! And imagine people bringing their coke and supplies that extra distance! This will not only affect Mount Cuthbert, because there may be hundreds of Mount Cuthberts. The hon. member for Croydon pointed out that for the past twenty-five years the people there have been told that they are going to be connected with a port in the Gulf.

The PREMIER: This is the first real step towards it.

Mr. COLLINS: It is to be hoped that it will end at the Gulf. Mr. Phillips mentions the fact that when he passed over this rich mineral country he did not see 300 people there. And there is not likely to be many people there. Under the Redistribution Bill two seats have been wiped out. This is a part of Queensland that has been neglected in the past; and it seems that it is going to be neglected now. I do not think there should be a railway from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert but I think one should be built from the Gulf. I suppose you could build a railway from the Gulf to Mount Cuthbert within two years if you wanted to do so—it is only a question of putting on the men. I received a wire from the Etnasleigh Shire Council asking me to do all I can to see that the railway is started from Normanton; and I suppose all they want is fair play.

Mr. FOLEY: I would not have said a word on this railway at all, not being interested in a railway to the Gulf, but the continual reference to Townsville has brought me to my feet. I cannot understand the argument that has been used that Townsville is practically to blame for the [9.30 p.m.] Government starting this railway from Cloncurry instead of from the Gulf. I have had no instructions from any company or anyone else—I simply want to say that the principal argument that has been used why this railway should start from the Gulf is because of the less freight on ore and coke by rail from the Gulf to Mount Cuthbert. In all the arguments that have been adduced by hon. members who have spoken, not one word has been mentioned of the extra sea carriage between Brisbane and the Gulf and Brisbane and Townsville.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; I pointed that out.

Mr. Foley.]

Mr. FOLEY: I want to point out that there is a tremendous distance between Brisbane and the Gulf ports, and freight is charged a very high rate because there is no competition. And, in addition, there would be the railage from the Gulf port to Mount Cuthbert, 160 miles; and taking it altogether I do not think it would be very much less than the railage from Townsville to Mount Cuthbert. It has also been argued that there will be a great difference in carrying coke and copper matte over this long length of railway to Townsville. I would point out that all the coke is brought from the South as, unfortunately, we have no coalmines in the North. It is made down here and it would have to be taken from Brisbane, and the copper matte will have to be sent down here in the same way. Whatever may be said about copper matte being shipped to London, at the present time the whole of it comes down here to Brisbane or to Sydney, as there are smelters in Sydney which treat the copper matte. If the copper matte was shipped to London and the coke brought from London, it would make a difference if it was shipped at the Gulf port, but when we consider that the stuff is carried from here, then there would be no great difference in the price of carriage between Townsville and Mount Cuthbert by rail and sea carriage via the Gulf port. The same argument applies in connection with supplies. Any supplies the miners may require will have to be taken from here and sent up to the Gulf and then transhipped at that port and carried 160 miles over the railway, so that by the time it reaches the miner it will not cost very much less than if it went via Townsville. While I do not want to say a word against the Gulf getting a railway, I certainly think the hon. members who have spoken, if they wish the Mount Cuthbert miners to get a railway, the quickest way is to get it connected with Cloncurry as suggested in this proposal, and for that reason I will support the proposition of the Government, that a railway be constructed from Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert. As hon. members have said, every seaport should get its hinterland trade, but if we are going to give railway communication to Mount Cuthbert and other mines in that locality, the quickest means is to give them connection between Mount Cuthbert and Cloncurry.

Mr. MAY: I think the Secretary for Railways has given a good many reasons why this railway should go from Cloncurry. In the first place, that part of the Cloncurry Copper Field was reported on by Warden Hishon and Warden Linedale, and both reports say that great results might be expected from that district. Then we must take into consideration that it is not only Mount Cuthbert that is to be considered. This first section in all probability will be extended as fast as the Government can reasonably do so to connect with a Gulf port.

Mr. MURPHY: Do you believe that?

Mr. MAY: I do think so. Then, again, the mining companies mostly—of course, there are some pastoral properties in the district, but the deficit on the railway will mostly fall on the owners of those mines. This is only the first section of 42 miles, and I hope next session we will not be asked to sanction another 20 or 25 miles, but that the Government will bring in a proposal to go another 40 or 50 miles. The route can be left in the hands of experts.

Mr. MURPHY: Do you regard Cloncurry as a suitable port?

[Mr. Foley.

Mr. MAY: If we could make the Cloncurry River navigable, it would be the proper port. If this line is extended, as it naturally will, it will run through some good country when you get on to the Gregory, that will be thrown open into agricultural farms. In fact, I believe, there is a farmer up there now who has proved that good crops can be grown there. The hon. member for Gregory can endorse that. Mr. Oliver Smith has proved that it is as good country as can be, and the building of this railway into the mining district will create a big population, and then you will give the farmers a chance to live out there to supply that population. As regards a port, Mr. Elliott stated that he could not find a real good port in that district. He has been all round the Gulf and he did not find a good port.

The PREMIER: He found a good port on an island off the coast.

Mr. MAY: Wherever it is, a certain amount of money will have to be spent. With regard to the sea trade, the hon. member for Townsville took out of my mouth the words I had intended to say. There would be a certain amount of sea carriage to the Gulf, and then you would have to lighter the goods. From Townsville to the Gulf ports is a much greater distance than from Brisbane to Townsville. I think it is about twice the distance, and then the shipping company having a monopoly round there, they could put on excessive rates, so I do not think there will be any great difference in price if the goods are carried from Townsville over the railway. It has been stated that we should begin at both ends. I should be very pleased to see them begin at both ends, but with the amount of railway being constructed at the present time, I do not see how the Government can begin at both ends. I think the Commissioner's report is rather pessimistic. I think the railway will earn considerably more revenue than he estimates. It will not only be pure copper or blister copper that will be sent over the railway, but a quantity of copper ore will be sent away from that district as well, and a large number of "shows" will be opened up. Then, again, independent buyers purchase a large amount of ore in Cloncurry and send it right away. As a matter of fact, this railway will be the means of opening up a large number of shows, and will give a large amount of employment in that district. I was very pleased to see the heavy vote recorded in favour of the railway, and I had the pleasure, a little while ago, of sending a telegram away to say what the vote was, and that the railway was passed.

Mr. MURPHY: The railway is not passed yet. I remember that on one occasion, when there were only a few votes against a railway, it was not passed, so that the hon. member need not crow straight away. "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip." The hon. member for Herbert stated that he was a resident of the Gulf in 1877, and that ever since the people had considered that the district had not had fair play from the Government. I may say that ever since I have been a resident of the Gulf district the people have been agitating to get fair play from the Government, and that when after years of agitation the Government refused to build a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry, a syndicate railway was brought forward in the House. Mr.

George Charles Sim, who then represented Carpentaria, voted for that railway. He had been a resident of the Gulf district for many years, and he knew the disadvantages under which the people laboured. He also saw the impossibility of getting railway communication provided by the Government, and so he voted for that syndicate railway. The supporters of the Labour party at Normanton took a plebiscite on his action in supporting that railway, and the result was a unanimous vote of confidence in Mr. Sim. The Gulf has not been given much chance by any Government. With regard to the statement that this is part of a railway from Cloncurry to the Gulf, I feel perfectly satisfied that a considerable time will elapse before it is taken to a Gulf port.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolutions, which were agreed to.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S

AMENDMENTS—COMMITTEE.

Question stated—That the proposed new subsections (*Mr. Appel's amendment*—vide page 2834) be inserted to follow the word "the" on line 13 of clause 62, now 63.

The HOME SECRETARY said he desired to move that after the word "practitioner," in subclause (3), there be inserted the following:—

"or to any pharmaceutical chemist who, under a permit in writing from the Commissioner (which permit the Commissioner is hereby empowered to grant), prescribes any medicine or drug for any person suffering from such disease."

He understood that this additional amendment had been suggested by hon. members who pointed out that in distant portions of the State, where no medical man was practising, it would be very awkward—in fact, unjust—if a person suffering from such a disease could not obtain treatment from a pharmaceutical chemist. The second paragraph of the amendment provided that a pharmaceutical chemist should only dispense medicine on the prescription of a medical practitioner. The new amendment would allow a pharmaceutical chemist himself to treat such cases in places where there was no medical man in practice.

Mr. RYAN said he had an amendment to move prior to that which the hon. gentleman had just read.

Mr. MANN said he wished to speak on the original amendment, and he claimed that he should be allowed to do so before the Home Secretary moved his amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY: I simply moved it because I thought it would suit the convenience of members of the Committee.

Mr. RYLAND rose to a question of privilege. There were three distinct clauses in the amendment—clauses 142 (b), 132 (c), and 132 (d)—and he claimed that each of them should be put separately.

Mr. MANN rose for the purpose of saying that he had no intention of opposing the amendment submitted by the Government if he could be clearly shown that it was

sufficient to meet the case. He had taken a perfectly open stand on this matter, and whatever he said on the subject was not inspired by any party motive, but was uttered with a desire that they should do the best they possibly could to preserve the health of the people of the State. (Hear, hear!) The Home Secretary and the Premier had both stated that when they suspended the Contagious Diseases Act they had no intention of putting anything else in its place, but they said now that they could make provision whereby they could do all that had been done under the Contagious Diseases Act, and do it in a better form. He could understand a member of the Committee advocating the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act upon purely scientific grounds, but when he heard the hon. member for Bundaberg urge the repeal of the Act merely because it was a plank in the Labour party's platform, he found himself at variance with the hon. member. If the Labour Convention had arrived at the conclusion that the Contagious Diseases Act should be repealed after having weighed all the evidence for and against that course, he could understand the plank appearing in their platform. But though the matter was, he believed, discussed at some length on the second occasion when it came before the convention, he was told that on the first occasion the motion was moved by a woman named Mrs. Willis, and just because a woman happened to be present it was not debated, but was at once placed in the platform.

Mr. BARBER: You have been told what is not correct, for it was discussed for an hour.

Mr. MANN: If he had been told what was not correct, he was told it by a person who was present at the convention. His reading had taught him that such a thing as the Contagious Diseases Act was required, and he found that his conclusion in that respect was borne out by the "Encyclopedia Britannica"—the latest edition. The figures were only given up to 1895, but he claimed that a repetition of the figures bearing upon the increase or decrease of venereal diseases since the repeal of the Act in the old country would not strengthen the case. He had no axe to grind in this matter. Perhaps it would be better for hon. members if the question had not been raised, because those who spoke in favour of the Contagious Diseases Act were likely to incur some unpopularity; but they should try to adopt the best means of preventing people suffering from a terrible disease.

At 10 o'clock p.m.

The CHAIRMAN, under Standing Order 11, called upon the hon. member for Croydon to relieve him in the chair.

Mr. MURPHY took the chair accordingly.

Mr. MANN (continuing): Under the head of "Venereal Diseases" there were three distinct diseases, which had no connection save in the seat of infection; and seeing that innocent persons could have the disease transmitted to them at public sanitary conveniences, they should take the best hygienic means of stamping out the disease. The Premier the other night gave some figures, and claimed that he quoted the opinions of scientific men. He, Mr. Mann, did not lay claim to scientific knowledge, but he thought any sane individual would admit that if they removed one

Mr. Mann.]

source of infection they lessened the risk of contagion. If it was a good thing to do away with the Act in Brisbane, how was it that it was continued at Rockhampton, where the Health Officer was in favour of its retention; and how was it that the Health Officer at Cairns was in favour of the Act?

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know that the hon. member is quite correct. He has made no official report.

Mr. MANN: The Premier said that Dr. Voss objected to the Contagious Diseases Act being wiped out; and if he persisted in that opinion his services might be dispensed with. The Health Officer in Cairns, Dr. Tyrie, made a strong appeal to have the Act proclaimed at Cairns, where a woman had her seventh miscarriage owing to the fact that her husband contracted syphilis from a Japanese prostitute. The Premier made a sort of flappedoodle appeal in asking whether Queensland was to be the only State in the Empire to have this Act on the statute-book; but if they could prove that the mother country was wrong, why seek to follow her mistakes? He would now quote from the article on "Prostitution," in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*—

"No account of the law in the United Kingdom would be complete without some reference to the partial adoption of the system of examination as employed elsewhere in Europe in 1864-1883. In 1864 a Contagious Diseases Prevention Act was passed providing for the compulsory medical examination of prostitutes and detention in hospital of those found diseased in the following garrison towns:—Portsmouth, Plymouth, Woolwich, Chatham, Sheerness, Aldershot, Colchester, Shorncliffe, the Curragh, Cork, and Queenstown. The legal machinery was a justices' order granted on sworn information that the woman named was a common prostitute. "The Act having proved very inefficacious (judge advocate-general in House of Commons, April, 1883), it was amended in 1866 and extended to Windsor. Two years later an important memorial was drawn up by the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in favour of the Acts and their extended application, and in 1869 they were further amended and applied to Canterbury, Dover, Gravesend, Maidstone, Southampton, and Winchester—eighteen places in all. A popular agitation, based on humanitarian and moral grounds, and continuously carried on against the measure led to the appointment of a Royal Commission in 1871 and a Select Committee in 1879. The direct evidence was strongly in favour of the Acts, alike with regard to the diminution of disease among the troops in the protected towns, the absence of complaints, and the good effect on public order to which clergymen and other residents testified. The majority of the committee reported accordingly after three years' inquiry; but in 1883 the House of Commons passed a resolution, by 182 to 110 votes, condemning the compulsory examination of women. As this would have entailed refusal to vote the money required to carry on the system, it was immediately dropped, and the officers of the metropolitan police to whom its execution had been entrusted were recalled. In 1886 the C.D. Acts were repealed."

There was a table showing the admissions per 1,000 in European armies of soldiers suffering from venereal diseases from the year 1876 to the year 1895. In Germany the highest number per 1,000 was 41; France, 65.8; Austria, 81.4; while in Britain it rose from 146.5 in 1876 to 275.4 in 1885, and then went down until 1895, when the number was 173.8 per 1,000.

The PREMIER: What was it in 1907?

[Mr. Mann.

Mr. MANN said he had not the figures for 1907. In British-India since the Act was wiped out the number increased from 372.2 in 1888 to 522.3 per 1,000 in 1895. The average admissions per 1,000 for the three years 1890-1892 were:—Germany, 27.2; France, 43.6; Russia, 43; Austria, 63.5; Italy, 71.3; United States of America, 77.4; Britain (Home), 203.6, (India), 438; and the Dutch Indies, 455.6.

The PREMIER: In 1884, when the Act was in force in Great Britain, the number in the British Army was 271 per 1,000; in 1907 the number was 72 per 1,000. Your figures are utterly wrong.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MANN: He would take his full time.

"All the returns given in the first table show a simultaneous rise for several years, beginning with 1876; and, having reached a maximum, each shows a progressive fall, likewise lasting over several years. This points to another disturbing factor. It is convincingly shown by the figures for the protected districts in the United Kingdom before, during, and after the period of protection. In 1864—that is, just before the first C.D. Act came into operation—the proportional figure was 260; ten years later it had fallen to 126; but in 1883 it had just risen again to 234, in spite of the protection. Then, protection being removed, it rose to 276; but afterwards fell again progressively to 191 in 1895, without any protection. It is therefore evident that in interpreting the statistics allowance must be made for large fluctuations, due to causes quite independent of the protective system. The margin of difference, however, between the British and European returns is so large that, when all allowances have been made, it is impossible to doubt that a considerable degree of real protection is afforded to soldiers by the system. This conclusion is confirmed by the comparatively high returns for the army of the United States, and still more by the Indian statistics. They rose gradually, it is true, during the cantonment system, but when that was dropped disease increased with shocking rapidity. Between 1887 and 1895 the admissions for primary syphilis rose from 75.5 to 174.1 per 1,000, and those for secondary syphilis from 29.4 to 84.9.

"The broad conclusion is that under special conditions, and when rigidly enforced, registration and medical examination do to a considerable extent fulfil the purpose of protecting health. Their failure to do so among the population at large and under the ordinary conditions of life is not surprising when we regard the amount of venereal disease which still occurs even among soldiers protected by the most rigorous measures and under the most favourable conditions."

No one ever claimed that the Contagious Diseases Act had abolished venereal diseases, because there were so many privateers on the market. But, as he had stated earlier in his speech, if they removed only one source of contagion, there must be a corresponding decrease in the amount of venereal disease. The Premier might argue that if they allowed women to go unchecked, and allowed them to poison the youth of Queensland unchecked, in time the disease would die out. How was it that it did not die out before the Contagious Diseases Act came into operation? Did not the Home Government and the Queensland Government see some necessity for the Contagious Diseases Act, otherwise it would not have been placed on the statute-book. Did the Premier seek to wipe off the statute-book the laws relating

to cattle-stealing because cattle-stealing still went on? Or would the hon. gentleman claim that because murder was still done—

The HOME SECRETARY: There is no analogy.

Mr. MANN: There was an analogy, because if they claimed to abolish the law in one set of circumstances because the law did not do all they expected of it, why not wipe it out in other cases?

The PREMIER: In India, under the Contagious Diseases Act, the number of cases went up to 522.3, and when it was abolished it was considerably reduced.

Mr. MANN: The figures he had quoted showed that it went up to 522.3 when the Act was abolished. If the Home Secretary was right in wiping out the Act, well and good, but he should have consulted Parliament first. All he was searching for and aiming at was the truth, and if the amendment moved by the Home Secretary would fulfil all he wanted to see done, it was all right.

The PREMIER: It is what scientists recommend.

Mr. MANN: When the Premier quoted a certain number of doctors, they must ask themselves who were the clients of those doctors. Were they doctors who attended a certain class of people who did not believe in the inspection of prostitutes? He (Mr. Mann) did not think for one moment that prostitutes troubled about being examined at all, unless it was too much trouble to bother, but as far as shocking their sensibility was concerned, he did not think they troubled at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not the question. The question is, Is it a safeguard or not, and the leading scientists say it is not.

Mr. MANN: He claimed that it was a certain amount of safeguard, or why did they find those men who looked after the health of the cities claiming that it was? If they turned up the remarks of Dr. Baxter Tyrie and Dr. Taylor, they would find those gentlemen said it was, and Dr. Voss had been asking for the Act to be kept in force in Rockhampton.

The HOME SECRETARY: We have Dr. Ham's statement, backed up by 700 of the leading medical men in Australia.

Mr. MANN: He did not care what the Government did so long as they protected the health of the people, and he claimed that the figures he had quoted showed that the rescinding of the Contagious Diseases Act had led to an increase of the disease in the British Empire and in India by a very great percentage.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not correct.

The PREMIER: The Sanitary Commissioner of the Government of India says otherwise.

Mr. MANN: It just depended on who was making the report. The hon. member for Clermont, in making his speech, showed that Dr. Dods had spoken with one voice at one time, and with another voice at another time. If the Ministerial head of the department asked him to make a certain report in a certain way and he did so, what evidence was a biased report of that kind? He was searching for the truth, and the

Government should not have rescinded the Contagious Diseases Act without the consent of Parliament, unless they had something else to take its place which would be more effective. If a woman hawked her diseased body all round the town, and if she only got one client a night, it meant that there would be six or seven new cases in Brisbane every week, and if the Home Secretary took a diseased woman like that and put her away where she could do no harm, it would benefit humanity. After all, it was not merely the man who was infected. It was the family which came after.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's full time had expired.

Mr. RYLAND: He had listened very carefully to the hon. member for Cairns, and some of the figures quoted by that hon. member were contradicted by the best authorities they had at the present time. Then in regard to that matter being on the Labour party's platform, it was on the platform, and it received full consideration before it was put there. One of the reasons why it was put there was that it was not beneficial in what it intended to do, and something better was wanted in its place. At the great scientific conference held in Europe, evidence was given to show that the C.D. Act had not the beneficial effect desired, and something more effective was necessary. What the Labour party looked forward to see was something on the lines laid down in the proposition of the Home Secretary, which was founded to a large extent on the resolutions which were carried at the conference in Sydney in 1911. The chief point in its favour was that there should be free treatment and free advice in connection with the disease. He had in his hand some returns, some of which were quoted by the Premier the other night, and they entirely contradicted the figures given by the hon. member for Cairns. Those figures showed the striking decrease of venereal maladies in England since the abolition of the regulation. The English Contagious Diseases Act was suspended in 1833, and repealed in 1836.

There was no regulation from [10.30 p.m.] 1884 onwards. New Zealand abolished the same Act in 1910, and it proved to be very ineffective there. According to the Registrar-General's returns with regard to the civil population of England and Wales, the deaths from venereal maladies, all ages, per million living, was 95 in 1884; ten years later—in 1894—it had decreased to 78, and ten years later—in 1904—it had decreased to 65. In 1907 the number had decreased to 58, just one-half the number that died when they were under the operation of the Act. In the Home Stations of the Navy in the British Isles, the hospital admissions per 1,000 sailors totalled 203 in 1884; 155 in 1894; and 112 in 1904. The recruits in the British Isles who were refused on account of syphilis, per 10,000 offering, totalled 106 in 1884; 51 in 1894; 25 in 1904; and only 18 in 1907. In the home army, British Isles, the hospital admissions for venereal maladies per soldiers totalled 271 in 1884; 182 in 1894; 108 in 1904, and 72 in 1907. The figures relating to the navy and military were taken from the annual army and navy medical reports. The following paragraph appeared attached to the pamphlet giving these tables:—

"During the period represented in these diagrams there have been no special laws in force in England of any kind whatever with

Mr. Ryland.]

regard to venereal maladies; neither "regulation" of prostitution, nor the Continental *delit de contamination*, or punishment for contaminating with these maladies; nor compulsory detention in hospital; nor the compulsory treatment of venereal maladies in force in some parts of the Continent. All such measures are opposed by English abolitionists, who consider that venereal maladies are best stamped out by striking at the root causes. Free treatment of these maladies is given, equally with all other maladies, to men or to women, at the poor law dispensaries and infirmaries throughout England."

That was his (Mr. Ryland's) opinion in connection with the matter. All the restrictions that were imposed, and all the notifications for sending a man to the health officer and other doctors, all went for nothing. As regarded the resolutions carried at the Medical Congress, the particular one about the notification was the only one resolution on which they were not unanimous. This was a paragraph taken from the *Australian Medical Gazette* in connection with the matter.

"Last year the congress appointed a committee of experts to report on syphilis, and that this report was unanimously adopted by the congress that has just concluded its sittings. On the subject of notification the report states:—"The committee were unable to agree on a recommendation of compulsory notification of syphilis. It was, of course, admitted by all that the information so gained would be of the utmost value, but the view was expressed that the fear of publicity consequent on such notification would deter patients from consulting their ordinary medical attendant, and would cause them either to neglect treatment or to seek it from ignorant and irresponsible quacks."

That was one of the chief points in connection with the Bill. The Government did the right thing in doing away with the Contagious Diseases Act, but the Government did a wrong thing in not putting something in its place as soon as possible, and something that would be effective. All that was necessary was to follow on the lines of the report read by the Premier on Friday night, showing the figures in connection with the disease in England. The only thing to do was to have no compulsory notification at all, because men were frightened of publicity, and would not go to doctors if the notification existed. It was best to rely on free treatment and free advice. The congress were unanimous in their opinion that there should be free treatment of the disease, but they were not unanimous in finding that there should be compulsory notification. The resolution relating to notification was only carried by a majority.

The HOME SECRETARY: Notification is the most effective way of stamping out the disease.

Mr. RYLAND: He noticed that there was a penalty of £10 for a doctor failing to notify the disease, and the fine went up to not exceeding £100. He saw that, instead of giving the name, they could give a number, but there was always the fear of publicity, and men would not go to a doctor. Men who were suffering slightly would rather put up with it than go to a doctor if the notification were to be compulsory. There was no hope of doing away with the disease unless they went in for free treatment and no compulsory notification.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

[Mr. Ryland.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I may point out that the question before the Committee is the insertion of the provisions proposed by the Home Secretary. The amendment of the Legislative Council has been disagreed to by the Committee.

Mr. RYLAND: He was speaking on the Home Secretary's provisions, and was telling him that the weakness of them was the compulsory notification.

Mr. COYNE: While he agreed with the Home Secretary's amendment, he did not think it went far enough.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that after the word "practitioner," in subclause 3, the following words be inserted—

"or to any pharmaceutical chemist who, under a permit in writing from the Commissioner (which permit the Commissioner is hereby empowered to grant), prescribes any medicine or drug for any person suffering from such disease."

As he had already explained, this amendment was intended to provide for cases where there was no medical man in practice, and in such cases it empowered the Commissioner to issue permits to pharmaceutical chemists to treat persons suffering from the disease.

Mr. COYNE thought the amendment did not go far enough. There were many places in Queensland which were 400 or 500 miles from a doctor or a chemist, and persons could not travel that distance for treatment, so that if they could not get any drug or medicine to treat the disease in its primary stage they might rot or die from the disease. There were proprietary medicines on the market, such as those prepared by Parke, Davis, and Co., which were recommended by leading medical practitioners. That firm was one of the most reputable in the world, and if they prepared a medicine which would relieve a person suffering from the disease in question, he thought persons other than chemists should be allowed to sell it in remote parts of the State. He moved that the following words be added to the Home Secretary's amendment:—

"Or to any person who, under a permit in writing from the Commissioner (which permit the Commissioner is hereby empowered to grant), sells any proprietary medicine or drug to any person suffering from such disease, provided always that such proprietary medicine or drug is approved of by the Commissioner."

The HOME SECRETARY: I will accept that amendment.

Mr. HAMILTON: There were many places in the outside portions of the State where there were no doctors or chemists, and where there was a great deal of disease among aboriginals.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are trying as far as possible to deal with them.

Mr. HAMILTON: He knew of one case where the blacks were suffering from this complaint, and the late protector, Dr. Roth, when visiting the locality, refused to prescribe for them.

The HOME SECRETARY: We remove them now to one of our stations.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes; but there were any amount of men who had not been removed to any station, and there should be some depôts where medicines could be procured to treat such cases.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are arranging for that.

Mr. HAMILTON: The hon. gentleman was providing that where there were doctors such persons would get free treatment.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; we go beyond that.

Mr. HAMILTON: In outlying districts where there were no chemists or doctors, the medicines could be made under the supervision of the medical officer and forwarded out there. The amendment would go a long way towards meeting the case that the Minister quoted.

Mr. LESINA: No doubt the amendment widened the scope of the Bill immensely. The amendment of the Council would simply apply the provisions of the present Act, which had been proved to work so well, to certain districts. The amendment proposed, in addition to what the Home Secretary proposed in his amendment, to give doctors and pharmaceutical chemists power to do, to give certain private persons power to do so. They got back to the old system of freetrade in prostitution, and freetrade in its treatment. He did not know whether members realised exactly what it meant. The old system was best, after all, as it was based upon hundreds of years of experience, and it was a good thing to see that members realised that the old system was the better system. The only improvement he could suggest was to fix the application of the Act to districts, and reserve to the executive power to apply it to districts outside those which might be fixed in the Act.

Amendment (*Mr. Coyne's*) agreed to.

Amendment (*Hon. J. G. Appel's*), as amended, agreed to.

New provision, as amended, put and passed.

Question—That Council's amendments in clause 63 be agreed to—put and passed.

On clause 64—"Application of 31 Vic. No. 40 to certain cities and towns"—

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY, owing to the acceptance of the amendments proposed by himself and the hon. member for Warrego, the consequential amendment of the Council was disagreed to.

On clause 65—"Regulations"—

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY, the consequential amendment of the Council inserting "is" after "section," on line 45, was agreed to.

On clause 67—"New Part"—

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY, a consequential amendment of the Council, substituting "fifty-one" for "fifty-two," was agreed to.

On clause 73—"Report on application"—

The HOME SECRETARY: The Council had amended the clause by the addition of "and any other officer or officers it may consider necessary" and "or other," so that the clause now read—

"Upon receipt of any application for the registration of a private hospital or the renewal thereof, the local authority shall refer the same to its medical officer of health and any other officer or officers it may consider necessary, and such medical or other officer, after making," etc.

There could be no possible objection to this, because the local authority might not

happen to have a medical officer, or the medical officer might not be available, and this gave them the power to obtain the services of other medical officers. He moved that the amendment of the Council be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 78—"Inspection"—

The HOME SECRETARY: In this clause there was a consequential amendment consequent on the amendment which had just been accepted, for the insertion of the words "or other officer authorised by the local authority." He moved that the amendment of the Council be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 83—"Registration of nurses"—

The HOME SECRETARY: The Council had omitted "Queensland Branch of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association," and substituted therefor "registered nurses," Subclause (b) would now read—

"Two members shall be medical practitioners or qualified nurses, and shall be nominated by the registered nurses in accordance with rules to be approved by the Minister in that behalf."

He understood that this had been accepted by those concerned, that there was no objection to it, and he moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that the Temporary Chairman leave the chair and report that the Committee agreed to some of the Council's amendments, disagreed to others, and agreed to others with amendments.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN asked what date was fixed in the Bill for the registration of nurses—the 1st January or the 30th June. If it was the 1st January, he thought the [11 p.m.] time should be extended to the 30th June, so as to give those people the opportunity of being registered.

The HOME SECRETARY: He could not place the particular clause just now, but he would go into the matter and have the time extended if necessary.

Question put and passed.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

"Mr. President,—

"The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Health Act Amendment Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

"Disagree to the proviso inserted after line 56, clause 10, because it is considered to be unnecessary—the veterinary inspectors holding that a beast which has recovered from pleuropneumonia is not a diseased animal.

"Agree to the amendment on line 24 (now line 21), clause 22, with the following amendment:—

"After the word "water" insert the words "separated or skimmed milk"; in which amendment they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

"Agree to new clause 32, with the following amendments:—

"Line 54—Omit "July" and insert "January."

"Line 55—Omit "twelve" and insert "thirteen."

In which amendments they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council."

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

"Disagree to the new paragraph (132A) in clause 62 (now 63), after the word "The," because the provisions of the Act for the Prevention of Contagious Diseases of 1868 are obsolete and inadequate, but offer for the consideration of the Legislative Council the following sections, which are calculated to deal effectively with the disease."

Mr. Speaker,—Shall I read the subclauses?

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the subclauses be taken as read?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY:

"Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Commissioner, may from time to time, by Order in Council, declare that, in such area or areas as are therein named, any venereal disease in such order shall be a disease to which this section shall apply, and may from time to time alter, revoke, or vary, any such order. Thereupon the following provisions shall apply in respect of every such venereal disease:—

"(2.) Every medical practitioner in every area to which this section applies shall forthwith give notice to the Commissioner in the prescribed form upon becoming aware that any person attended or treated by him is suffering from such venereal disease.

"Any medical practitioner who fails to give any notice prescribed by this section shall be liable to a penalty of not less than ten pounds nor more than one hundred pounds.

"(3.) No person other than a medical practitioner or a person acting under the direct instructions of a medical practitioner shall attend upon or treat any person suffering from such disease. Every person who contravenes this subsection shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds, or to imprisonment for any period not exceeding six months.

"This subsection shall not apply to a registered pharmaceutical chemist who dispenses to the patient of a medical practitioner the prescription of such medical practitioner, or to any pharmaceutical chemist who, under a permit in writing from the Commissioner (which permit the Commissioner is hereby empowered to grant), prescribes any medicine or drug for any person suffering from such disease, or to any person who under a permit in writing from the Commissioner (which permit the Commissioner is hereby empowered to grant) sells any proprietary medicine or drug to any person suffering from such disease: Provided always that such proprietary medicine or drug is approved of by the Commissioner.

"(4.) Every person who acts or assists in the administration of this section shall preserve and aid in preserving secrecy with regard to all matters which come to his knowledge in his official capacity, and shall not communicate such matters to any other person except in the performance of his duties under this section. Any person who contravenes this subsection shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds.

"[132B.] In addition and without prejudice to the provisions of the last preceding section the Governor in Council may from time to time, on the recommendation of the Commissioner, make regulations for the following purposes in respect of any venereal disease:—

"(a) Prescribing the forms of notification to be used in notifying cases of venereal diseases in areas where the last preceding section is in force: Provided that the name and address of the patient shall not be disclosed; but he shall be denoted by a number or other reference in or to the records of the medical practitioner;

"(b) For the gratuitous treatment at hospitals and otherwise of venereal diseases;

[Hon. J. G. Appel.

"(c) For the establishment, management, and control of dispensaries or other places for gratuitous treatment;

"(d) For the examination by clinical and bacteriological methods, and by specified tests of persons suspected of being infected with venereal disease, and for requiring such persons to submit themselves to such examination at specified times and places;

"(e) For prescribing penalties for breaches of the regulations.

"[132C.] When any two medical practitioners certify in writing that any person is suffering from venereal disease and is likely to convey such disease to others, the following provisions shall apply:—

"(a) A police magistrate may order such person to be detained for any period not exceeding two weeks in a hospital or other suitable place for the purpose of bacteriological and other investigations, and it shall be lawful to make such investigations;

"(b) If thereafter such person is found to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to be suffering from venereal disease in an infectious condition, the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Commissioner, may from time to time order that such person shall be detained under such conditions in such place and for such time as may be necessary to ensure that such person shall be no longer infectious, or as may be named in such order, and may extend or vary such order from time to time, or at any time terminate its operation, and thereafter if found necessary renew such order. And every such order shall be sufficient warrant for the apprehension if necessary, and for the removal and detention of the person named therein;

"(c) If such person is actually undergoing imprisonment in any prison within the State, the order under paragraph (a) hereof may be made by the visiting justice of the prison, and any order under paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) hereof shall have effect notwithstanding that it extends beyond the period of such person's imprisonment.

"[132D.] Any person who knowingly infects any other person with any venereal disease shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds, or to imprisonment for any period not exceeding six months.

"[132E.] (1.) Any person who—

"(i.) Being a prostitute—

"(a) Is in any public place, and behaves in a riotous, disorderly, or indecent manner; or

"(b) Solicits or importunes for immoral purposes any person who is in any public place or within the view or hearing of any person therein; or

"Being a male person, knowingly lives wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution;

"(ii.) In any public place, solicits or importunes on behalf of any female for immoral purposes;

"(iii.) Is the occupier of or resides in a house frequented by prostitutes;

shall be deemed to be a vagrant, and shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds or to imprisonment for any period not exceeding six months.

" (2.) Provided that when a female is convicted of any offence included under paragraph (i.) of this subsection the court may—

- " (a) Commit the female to be detained for any period not exceeding twelve months in an institution approved by the Governor in Council, by Order in Council published in the *Gazette*, as a reformatory for the purposes of this section; or
- " (b) Impose imprisonment as aforesaid; or
- " (c) By its sentence impose either of the above punishments, and suspend the execution of such sentence upon such conditions as it thinks fit, which it shall embody in its recorded decision.

" If any female whose sentence has been so suspended fails to observe any of such conditions, she may be arrested by any police officer and brought before a court, and, on proof of such failure on her part being given to its satisfaction, the court may direct that the original sentence shall be put into force, and may give all orders and grant any warrants necessary for such enforcement.

" (3.) For the purposes of this section, "public place" includes every road, and also every place of public resort open to or used by the public as of right; the term also includes—

- " (a) Any vessel, vehicle, building, room, licensed premises, field, ground, park, reserve, garden, wharf, pier, jetty, platform, market, passage, or other place for the time being used for a public purpose or open to access by the public, whether on payment or otherwise, or open to access by the public by the express or tacit consent or sufferance of the owner, and whether the same is or is not at all times so open; and
- " (b) Any place declared by the Governor in Council, by Order in Council, to be a public place for the purposes of this section.

In which sections they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

" *Disagree* to the new clause to follow clause 62 (now 63) for the reasons given in relation to clause 62 (now 63).

" *And Agree* to all other amendments in the Bill.

" Legislative Assembly Chamber,
" Brisbane, 11th December, 1911.

" WM. DRAYTON ARMSTRONG,
" Speaker."

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that this House do now adjourn. The first business to-morrow will be Ways and Means—resumption of Committee; Appropriation Bill; then Ways and Means—resolution to be received; Loan Bill; State Education Acts Amendment Bill; Wages Boards Act Amendment Bill; Government Savings Bank Acts Amendment Bill.

Question put and passed.

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