

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 31 JULY 1912

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WEDNESDAY, 31 JULY, 1912.

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

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—

Report by the Under Secretary for Public Lands under the Closer Settlement Act of 1906.

QUESTIONS.

LABOUR AVAILABLE FOR RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Has his attention been called to the report of the Agent-General's speech at the Queensland dinner in London appearing in the *Daily Mail* of Saturday last, wherein he is reported to have said—'Railway construction was going on as fast as the general scarcity of labour permitted, and the competition for labour available would perhaps be better understood when he told them that of the 1,800 navvies sent out last year only about 300 remained at work upon the new railway lines when he left Queensland at the beginning of the year?'"

"2. Is the Premier correctly reported in an interview published in this morning's *Daily Mail*, wherein it is stated: 'Asked whether he knew of any shortage of labour, Mr. Denham said he was not aware of it?'"

"3. Does the Chief Secretary intend to take any measures to place the actual facts before the Agent-General in regard to the large amount of labour available here for the purposes of railway construction?"

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes.

"3. Yes."

ALLEGED DECLARATION BY EMPLOYEES OF BRISBANE TRAMWAYS COMPANY.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*) asked the Chief Secretary, for the Attorney-General—

"1. Did the employees of the Brisbane Tramways Company, Limited, take an oath or make a solemn declaration before Mr. Neilson, J.P., or any other J.P., on Monday, 29th July?"

"2. If so, where, and what was the nature of the oath or declaration, and for what purpose?"

"3. Was not the inquiry court closed to the public while the said oaths were being administered or declarations made?"

"4. How many employees of the Brisbane Tramways Company, Limited, took the oaths or made the declarations referred to?"

"5. Was the said Mr. Neilson, J.P., authorised by the Government to administer the said oaths or to take the said declarations?"

The PREMIER replied—

"The Department of Justice has no knowledge whatever of this matter. If the hon. member will ask the question to-morrow, I may have some information then."

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT *RE* RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*): By permission of the House, I desire to make a brief statement of importance concerning railway construction.

The SPEAKER: Is it the wish of the House that the Chief Secretary be allowed to make the statement?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I think it desirable, with the permission of the House, that the following information should be given to the Parliament and the country respecting the situation in regard to the railway construction works now in progress:—On the last day of the last financial year nineteen different railways were in course of construction, representing a total of 524 miles, at an estimated cost of £1,968,547, of which £1,242,651 had already been expended. Since that date, one of those lines, that from Allora to Goomburra, has been completed and opened, and the first section of another, that from Malbon to Sulliman's Creek, brought so near to completion that large quantities of goods are carried by railway between Malbon and the Duchess. £725,896 will be needed to complete the eighteen lines now in course of construction. These eighteen lines, on which about 3,500 men are employed, are—

	Length.	Estimated Total Cost.	
		Estimated Cost per Mile.	
	Miles.	£	£
Benarkin to Yarraman ...	15	83,098	5,615
Thallon to Dirranbandi ...	40	87,900	3,470
Oakey to Cooyar ...	38	147,266	4,373
Miles to Taroom (first section)	44	136,590	3,131
Woodford to Kilcoy ...	17	91,790	5,480
Keetton to Imbil ...	24	161,560	6,627
Gayndah to Mundubbera	23	116,982	5,018
Cordalba to Dallarnil ...	31	124,345	4,029
Mount Morgan to Dawson	67	241,315	3,593
	299	1,220,848	4,083
<i>Great Western Railway Scheme.</i>			
Wailall to Tobermory ...	40	100,000	2,500
Blackall to Windorah ...	45	112,500	2,500
Malbon to Sulliman's Creek	36	108,000	3,000
	121	320,500	2,649
<i>North Coast Railway Scheme.</i>			
Rockhampton, northward	22	99,814	4,537
Mackay, southward ...	21	95,335	4,600
Bobawaba to Burdekin ...	17	61,830	3,600
Burdekin to AYR ...	5	18,360	3,600
Townsville to near Cardwell	25	102,000	4,000
Babinda, southward ...	5	30,000	6,000
	95	407,339	4,265
Grand Total ...	515	1,945,685	3,784

It is proposed to concentrate our efforts on

the lines of railways just enumerated, completing and turning them into revenue-producing concerns before we commence the construction of any of the ten lines authorised by Parliament last year. Those ten lines are—

	Length.	Estimated	Estimated
		Total Cost.	Cost per Mile.
	Miles.	£	£
Logan Village to Cabungra...	21	89,654	4,335
Munbilla to Mount Edwards	16	85,425	5,228
Kingaroy to Tarong ...	19	61,975	3,209
Daly to Jandowae ...	29	79,007	2,784
Oakey to Mount Russell ...	19	57,824	2,984
Roma to Orallo ...	29	85,759	2,935
Plalba to Urangan ...	5	20,600	3,990
Cloncurry to Mount Cuthbert	42	165,947	3,933
Malanda towards Millaa Millaa	9	78,223	8,730
Tumoulin to Cedar Creek ...	5	37,104	8,131
	194	761,518	3,922

I have also to state that the Winton to Springvale section of the Great Western Railway has not yet been commenced. In the matter of the opening up of the Upper Burnett lands, by means of railway construction, which has been the subject of investigation during the past two years, and is a subject to which the Minister for Railways and the department's officers have given much earnest attention, the balance of evidence as to relative economy of construction and proportion of land made available is in favour of a line from Mundubbera to Dalgangal and not that projected from Wolca to Dalgangal, the Government, after long and most anxious consideration, have decided that the Upper Burnett lands shall be reached by the extension of the railway from Mundubbera. There is no possibility of tabling plans this year, but this decision will enable the Lands Department to proceed to make surveys, and generally get ready to open areas of rich agricultural land on the Upper Burnett, in anticipation of railway communication. When speaking on the Address in Reply during last session, I indicated that it was considered, in the interests of the producing and travelling public, and also to the advantage of the Railway Department, that the *via recta*, the connection between North and South Brisbane, and the Tinana and Drayton deviations be constructed. On the occasion of the opening of the Warwick to Maryvale line—a section of the *via recta*—I announced that the plans of the *via recta* would be tabled during the “next session”; at the same time, the Minister for Railways informed those interested that it would be necessary to have a resurvey made of a considerable portion of the route between the foot of the Range and Maryvale. A preliminary report in that direction has been made, but owing to the surveying staff being more than fully engaged upon the working surveys of lines already passed by Parliament, it has been impossible to have the necessary survey made in time for the tabling of said plans this session. Further, it is not practicable to table the plans of any railways this session, the surveyors and drafting staff being fully occupied in getting

ready the working plans of railways now in hand. The point I most wish to emphasise is that the Commissioner, according as any of these eighteen lines now in course of construction are completed, will employ on those lines still unfinished such of his staff and men as are thus set free for other work, in order to make every one of those railways as soon as possible a going and revenue-producing concern. He will then proceed with the construction of the ten lines passed by Parliament last year. I hope that this work may be so far forward by next session as to warrant the tabling of other very desirable connections, deviations, and extensions. I think the communication is of such importance that it should be first made to Parliament rather than given, as ordinarily, through the Press.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of a report, dated 18th July, on the public debt reduction fund. Ordered to be printed.

INDUSTRIAL PEACE BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*), who, on rising, was received with Government “Hear, hears!” said: I fear that in introducing this very important measure I may have to claim the indulgence of the House, because I can readily understand that, while I am not permitted to refer to the Bill clause by clause when moving the second reading, still it will be expected of me to give a general summary of the Bill. After having given a general summary of a measure, which I believe will be entirely in the interests of the community generally—(Opposition laughter)—I shall then endeavour to show how very necessary it is that the House as a whole should throw itself into the measure with a view to making better conditions in the community. One of the objects of a measure of this nature is to make the conditions of work for the worker more satisfactory, and, in addition, to make it possible for those engaged in commerce to feel some sense of security in connection with their operations. It will have been noticed by those who have gone through the Bill that the definitions in the interpretation clause are considerably widened. In some cases the definitions in the present Wages Boards Acts have been amplified. That is the result of experience gained in connection with the administration of those Acts, and experience gained in administration of an Act is always a factor which should help in the introduction of a measure of this particular kind. The name of the Bill—Industrial Peace Bill—by the way, in indicative of its real character. (Opposition laughter.) I say that the title is indicative of the real nature of the measure, and its wider provisions make it necessary that the definitions of some of the extra powers should be very clearly set forth in the interpretation clause. Special steps have been taken to make the definitions as wide as the altered conditions require. The Wages Boards Acts are repealed by the Bill, but under Schedule I.

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the existing wages boards will be continued, and they will continue the work which they are at present engaged in carrying out in connection with the various industries of the State. The application of the measure is very clearly set forth in Schedule II., and hon. members will notice, in looking through that schedule, that it embraces pretty well all the industries. There are one or two which are not included.

Mr. BOWMAN: Except rural.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I said that it included nearly all the industries, and I was about to remark that there are certain industries which have been omitted from the schedule; and I think it will be admitted at once that it is very important that those industries should not be included.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Why?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Any hon. member who knows anything about farming and dairying knows how impossible it is to bring the workers engaged in those industries under hard and set rules. It must never be forgotten that in dairy products, and other agricultural products which form articles of export, we have to compete with the outside markets, and I want to emphasise the point that it is highly important that nothing should be done to damage in any way the exports of the community.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It would be a boomerang, coming back upon every worker in the community, if anything were done to damage such important industries as those to which I allude. It would have a reflex influence on the community as a whole and upon the workers in particular, and for that reason it would be very unwise to include those industries in the schedule. But apart from those industries, nearly every other industry in the State is included in the schedule, and very properly so. I feel certain that hon. members will agree with me that a very proper stand has been taken by the Government in not including farming, dairying, horticultural, and agricultural pursuits for the reasons I have briefly referred to.

Mr. McCORMACK: How do you propose to prevent strikes in those industries?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We will deal with strikes when they come along. This Bill is going to be a measure that will practically prevent strikes by reason of its liberal provisions, and by reason of the fact that we shall be able to bring people together so as to avoid strikes. And I ask, is it not very much better to avoid strikes and take action to help to avoid strikes than to have strikes? What is the position of the House generally? I listened to the debate that has just closed, and I do not think I heard one member on either side who really believed in strikes; but, if he did believe in them, it was only as a last resort. I think I am doing justice to both sides when I say that is the expression of opinion. It will be noticed that an industrial court is to be established, and a judge is to be appointed; and I feel certain every member will agree with me that it is important—not because I think there have been abuses—though hon. members opposite may not agree with me—I think the administra-

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tion in that regard should be taken out of the hands of the Minister and placed in the hands of a judge.

Mr. MAY: And an unbiassed judge.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: All our judges are unbiassed.

Mr. MAY: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Generally speaking, the appointment of a judge to deal with these matters will be very much more satisfactory to those concerned than if the position were left as it is at present. At least, there will be competence; and the feeling which is sometimes abroad—that a Minister may be influenced by political bias—cannot apply to a judge, who is largely an officer of Parliament, and can only be dealt with by Parliament. I think hon. members will agree with me that this is an improved position as far as this measure is concerned; indeed, in a Bill of this kind it is absolutely necessary. The judge will have to be a Supreme Court judge, a District Court judge, or a barrister or solicitor who has been practising not less than five years; and the term of the appointment will be for seven years. Should it happen that any particular case is under consideration at the end of his term, provision is made by which the judge can continue in office until he has brought in his finding. It will be noticed that the jurisdiction of the court will extend to all matters submitted to it. That is exceedingly wise, as it is almost impossible to provide in an Act of Parliament for everything that may crop up; and the powers are made wide, so that difficulties as they arise may be dealt with. Industrial matters and disputes may be submitted to the court by the Minister or the Registrar, by an employer or employers employing or usually employing not less than twenty employees, and by not less than twenty employees in any calling. It will further be seen that both employers and employees will have equal opportunities of bringing their matters before the judge. An award may be dealt with by the court, who may call upon the board to show cause why the court should not exercise the functions and jurisdiction of the board. There have been cases in the past in connection with boards where there has been delay.

Mr. FOLEY: The Clothing Board, for instance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There may have been some reason for the delay in connection with the Clothing Board. Those who know anything about that industry will know that the number of matters to be dealt with was very great.

Mr. BOWMAN: They took a long time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I agree with the hon. member that it took too long; and we have here a provision whereby, if a finding has been delayed, it will be possible for the judge to step in and make them show cause why action should not be taken. I may say that in another part of the Bill we deal with another phase of delays that have taken place. Those delays have not been caused by one side or the other altogether, but sometimes by the employers and sometimes by the employees. It has frequently happened that when an award has been pretty nearly ready for bringing in, it has been delayed by some-

one resigning from the board, and this has had a disastrous effect on the findings of the board, and has caused delay. This Bill provides that if a man chooses to drop out from either side it will be his funeral, and the work of the board can go on just the same. I think that will have a most desirable effect in leading to speedy findings, which are so necessary. It will also be noticed that an appeal may be made to the court against an award by any person bound by the award, by any industrial association interested, and also by the Crown. There is ample power for those concerned to take action if they think they are not having a fair deal. It will be further noticed that the judge may act as mediator in any industrial matter or industrial dispute; and I think the House will agree with me that any man—whether he be a judge or an ordinary individual—who can by his action as mediator settle an industrial dispute, will be doing a good thing in the interests of the community generally. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: What your Premier refused to do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Premier never refused. I was so impressed with the importance of this measure that, if I make any reference to strikes this afternoon, it is not because I want to do anything to irritate any hon. member; but now we have got to solid business, I think every member should give of his best to make the measure a success.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The judge has power to convene a compulsory conference for the purpose of preventing or settling an industrial dispute, and may summon any person whose presence he thinks is likely to be of service in that connection; and any person so summoned is to be paid such expenses as are certified by the judge. It is considered that if men are taken from their ordinary work or callings it is only fair that provision should be made whereby they may be recompensed for their loss of time. It will be noticed that the conference may be held either wholly or partly in public or in private. There may be cases where a matter can be settled very much more quickly and satisfactorily through perhaps even closing the doors. Speaking generally, I think it is highly important that the Press should be admitted to most meetings, but I can conceive of a

[4 p.m.] case in which the finishing touches might be given to a dispute very much better if a reporter is not present than would otherwise be the case.

Mr. COYNE: Or any other time either.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Every member of this Chamber is entitled to his opinion, and I do not quarrel with the hon. member for Warrego for having an opinion of his own. The court of conciliation will make suggestions and do what it thinks well to help to bring about an amicable settlement of a dispute, and every facility—I should like to emphasise this point—will be given for people to settle their disputes. May I say—and I never was more impressed with the importance of the fact than now—that it seems to me that if members will look around generally they will find that the tendency is to widen the differences between employers and employed. I do not say that all the blame is on one

side, but I say the tendency is to widen differences which exist. I should like to ask if the time has not come when, instead of widening disputes, the best thought and the aim of those who occupy public positions should be, not to widen disputes, but to bring men together with the view of settling their disputes in an amicable manner? The award of the court will be binding upon all parties who appear before it, upon all industrial associations and the members of industrial associations—upon employers and employees. The decision of the court will be final and binding upon all parties. We do not think it is fair that, after men on either side have sought the aid of the court, there should be any appeal from the finding of the court. The decision of the court, therefore, will be final and binding upon all parties, and cannot be challenged.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Will that decision be a rule within the industry?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The decision cannot be appealed against or reviewed in any other court. What has happened in the past, and what may happen again in connection with the power of appeal, if it is given by this Bill? The provision I am referring to is entirely in the interest of the worker. If an appeal is made against an award, is it not generally made by the man who has money, or influence, behind him? Is such a person not more likely to make an appeal than the worker? I am sure that members will see that this particular provision is entirely in the interest of the worker.

Mr. FOLEY: It will not suit your friend Badger.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am afraid the hon. member who interjects has got Badger on the brain.

Mr. HUNTER: You had him on the brain a little while ago.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the House that the Secretary for Public Works is at the present moment introducing a very important measure in which both sides take an intense interest. The Minister is the first speaker, and hon. members on both sides will have the fullest opportunity afterwards of refuting any statements he may make or replying to any arguments he may advance. I, therefore, ask that the Secretary for Public Works should be allowed to make his speech without interruption.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: An industrial registrar will be appointed, and a deputy will have to be appointed to act during the absence on leave or otherwise of the registrar. It is felt that there should be someone appointed who will be able to undertake the duties of that office. Members will see that if a judge is to occupy the position which we say he shall occupy under this measure, it is necessary that there should be a registrar to assist him in his work. The third schedule deals with the power and procedure of the court, and indicates very clearly and fully what the powers of the court are. There can be no mistaking what the powers of the court really are under this Bill, and they are exceedingly wide. This schedule also specifies what the powers of the judge are, and there can be no mistaking what is meant by the measure in that particular regard. The

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powers of the court have to do with the securing of evidence and the methods of securing evidence. There have been times when, as hon. members will know from their experience, it has been difficult to get evidence. Provision is made in this measure by which it will be comparatively easy to get evidence. Contempt of court by witnesses is also dealt with, and penalties prescribed for such contempt. I suppose very few of us care to talk about penalties, but even in connection with witnesses there may be circumstances in which it will be absolutely necessary to compel them by something in the nature of a penalty to give evidence.

Mr. HUNTER: Your are very generous with your penalties.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Some of the powers and duties of the registrar as defined in this Bill were conferred on the registrar by the amending Wages Boards Bill, which was passed by this House last session. I may refer particularly to the power in connection with aged, slow, and infirm workers. The registrar may grant a permit to such workers for twelve months. Having in view what has happened under the Wages Boards Amending Act, to which I have just alluded, I feel sure that members will admit that there has been no abuse of that power of the chief inspector to issue permits. One of the chief difficulties in connection with this matter in the past has been that there has been delay in issuing permits, and that men who needed work and could get it promptly with the consent of their fellow workers, were almost reduced to starvation, owing to the difficulty of getting the board together. Our experience in connection with boards is that the nearer they get to the completion of their work the less often they meet, and consequently there have been cases of extreme hardship when men have not been able to get the board together, so that they could get a permit and obtain employment. The registrar, under this Bill, will be to a great extent an officer of this House, and he may reasonably be entrusted with the issuing of permits for twelve months.

Mr. HUNTER: Why not let Coyne issue them?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No doubt the hon. member for Warrego would see that justice was done to everybody. Provision is made for the creation of new boards. Boards may be created upon the recommendation of the court, and application for such boards is to be made to the registrar. Such application may be made by either employers or employees. The practice to-day with regard to that matter is very much the same. The practice of the department in creating new boards has always been that if either side apply for a board, provided they represent the majority of such side, a board has been given them—that is, where the industry has been sufficiently large to warrant the creation of a new board. The feeling is that these boards are just a way between the masters and the employees when men can get together and confer and have the privileges of conferring. In the past that has been the practice. The court has ample powers to extend, rearrange, and regroup all the callings of existing boards. It may be that in connection with a particular industry there has become associated with it an industry

which has no connection with it, and it can be managed better, perchance, by some other board, so provision has been made in this Act whereby anything that creates friction or anything that is irritable can be taken away, and be rearranged in the interests of the board. I am sure that that particular clause will meet with the full appreciation of the House. It will be noticed that the board shall consist of not less than four nor more than twelve members. That is the present Act. A board may be appointed for the whole State or for specified localities. Hon. members will see that in some cases where the industries are not large it may be wiser to include the whole State, but in other cases, owing to various reasons, such as climatic conditions and other things, it might be found necessary to have boards for specified districts. Take the Central boards, for instance. At one time Mackay was associated with Rockhampton. It will be observed at once that it would be altogether impossible for a person to go from Mackay to Rockhampton, more especially a worker, to attend a sitting of the board, simply because it would be too costly and the payments which he would receive would not be sufficient to warrant him attempting such task. Frequently it has been found necessary, instead of including Mackay and Rockhampton under the one board, to alter the boundaries so that each district will be able to have its board in its own town. Members of boards shall be bonâ fide representatives of the industry concerned. There have been abuses in the past in connection with that matter. I have known cases where men have sat on boards, and if they had any previous connection with that particular industry it must have been years and years ago, and not only have these men sat on one board, but on two or three. I hold that while a man, say, ten years ago might have been a particularly good representative of his particular trade, in the interval conditions have so changed that that man would not be so good a representative as a man engaged in that calling to-day.

Mr. COYNE: Would you apply that to the chairman.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: So far as the chairman is concerned, it must be borne in mind that they are to be appointed by the boards; and, if they do not appoint a chairman, then the judge of the court will appoint him. I may say in connection with nearly all of the appointments of chairman made recently that those appointments have been made unanimously by the representatives on the boards. Two or three have gone through quite recently, and they were the unanimous selection of both employers and employees. The judge of the court has the power to appoint chairmen. That is a much more satisfactory way of doing it if they cannot agree amongst themselves as to who shall be the chairman. I think it is highly important that the men engaged on these boards should be men who are actually engaged in the industry which they represent. I am quite certain that they will be able to do good work, because the men engaged in the industry will be much better than the men, however excellent they may be, whose experience goes back for years.

Mr. FOLBY: A man in the business might not be allowed to attend the board.

Mr. THEODORE: He might get the sack.

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not think that any hon. member can point out where men have been debarred from attending. The trouble has been that some men have tried to get on to two or three boards and make a living for themselves irrespective of their qualifications.

Mr. BARBER: Some of them have been sacked for attending on wages boards.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I was referring to the appointment of chairman when an interjection from an hon. member opposite led me off the track. The appointment of chairman is to be made, as at present, by the members of the board. I hope that the spirit of "sweet reasonableness" which apparently exists to-day in connection with members of boards will continue, and that the judge, whoever he might be, will not have the responsibility thrown upon him of appointing the chairman.

Mr. BOWMAN: Who is likely to be the judge?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. gentleman asks a question which I cannot answer; I do not know. The hon. member, at any rate, will be pleased to know that it will be taken from the hands of the Minister—that the Minister will have nothing to do with the appointment of the chairman of the board, because that duty will devolve on the judge.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: Thank goodness for that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Both the chairman and members of the board will have to take an oath of office. When men accept important positions, such as legislating for their fellows, they should not be averse to taking an oath of office. Part IV. deals with the penalties, and has to do with industrial associations or any person who commits a breach or non-observance of the award. In the case of an association committing a breach it is liable to a fine of £500, and in the case of an employer a fine of £250. An injunction may also be obtained restraining any association or person from committing any further breach or non-observance of the award, but if the person or association disobeys that injunction, then in the case of the person he is liable to be imprisoned for three months, or in the case of an association to a penalty not exceeding £500.

Mr. THEODORE: Would you put a man in prison for that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I think we are all out to do the best we can for the State we live in. Might I remind hon. members, in answer to the interjection that comes across the Chamber, that in another State where they have not got a Liberal Government in office, but where they have a Labour Government in office, provisions not unlike these have been put into their Bill.

Mr. BOWMAN: You copied a good deal of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Then I will be able to claim the leader of the Opposition as a supporter of this measure, if that is true.

Mr. BOWMAN: I promise you that you will not.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: You copied the worst provision of the other Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No dismissal is to be allowed of anyone who is a member of an association. It is unfortunate that in the past there have been cases where victimisation has taken place.

Mr. FOLEY: How are you going to stop it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There have been cases in which it has taken place. A man should not be engaged merely because he is or is not a member of an association. I say emphatically that people have no more right to put questions of that kind to an individual than I have the right to quarrel with any person because he may not have the same religious views as myself.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It seems to me highly inconsistent to say that because a man is of a certain brand—I am not speaking in any way disrespectfully of such people—but because a man has such a brand that he only is fit to be employed. I say that is against all the very best instincts of our life. I ask, would any hon. member on the opposite side, much less on this side—if a man came to him hard up and hungry, would he turn round and ask him whether he was a unionist or a non-unionist? I am quite sure they would not, and that their higher impulses would prevail in connection with that matter. And therefore I claim that there should be no discrimination, and that a man should be judged by his merits and by his capabilities, and not by any particular brand. Might I point out to hon. members opposite, if that feeling is carried out, as it might be carried out—I say I hope the day is far distant when it will be carried out—then you will have the very worst kind of American rule in Queensland, because it would be quite reasonable for this side to turn round and say: "We will only employ one brand of people—namely, our own political supporters," and the other side, when they got into power, would turn round and do the same. I ask, would that be in the interests of the community generally? I have here a very pertinent cutting, and if I am in order, I will take the opportunity of reading what Sir Walter Runciman had to say in connection with this matter. He says—

"Some employers are at their wits' ends as to how disputes may be avoided, and so they fix on co-partnery. In one or two instances this has worked well, but in many others the trial has failed. Profit sharing or any other form of remuneration will only work with harmony if the men are satisfied, and they are just as likely to become dissatisfied by this plan of payment as any other. Once the imagination is seized with the idea of a personal attack being made on workmen's interests it is all up, and the panacea is as abortive as the Miners' Eight Hours Act or the Minimum Wage Act. The men asked for these changes, got them, and there has been trouble ever since."

Hon. members will agree that that is a statement brimful of common sense.

Mr. COYNE: What is he?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I think he is the head of a large shipping firm. At any rate, whatever he is, he is a sensible man who has not failed to express:

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himself in an entirely intelligent way. I wish now to deal with those provisions in the Bill which relate to lockouts and strikes. Hon. members will notice that this is a very important part of the Bill. First of all, it deals with lockouts and strikes as far as public utilities are concerned, and it will be further noticed that no strike can take place, as far as those particular commodities are concerned, without first of all there has been a compulsory conference, and then, after the compulsory conference, there must be notice of fourteen days to strike.

Mr. BOWMAN: That is a splendid idea.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is a splendid idea when one considers that very often the reasons for striking are brought about by men who do not think very much. In the height of excitement they perhaps want to be loyal to their fellows; I have nothing to say against the man who wants to be loyal to his fellows, but it is a good provision to let men have the opportunity of realising what the result of their act is likely to be. And I think it will be agreed generally that it is a good thing, not only to let them have an opportunity of doing that, but also to allow a secret ballot to be taken before they strike, and men will feel, just as when they go to the poll to vote for a member of Parliament, that they can record their vote without feeling there is any intimidation whatever—that they are quite free to discuss the matter with their wives and families, and will know what the nature of their act means. So I say this provision is one which I am quite certain the public generally will agree with. What are public utilities? "Public utilities" are held to mean: The manufacture or supply of coal gas for any purpose; the production or supply of electricity for light or power; the supply of water for domestic purposes; the supply of milk, flour, or bread for domestic consumption; the slaughter or supply of meat for domestic consumption; the getting, sale, or delivery of coal or other fuel for any purpose. I am sure that hon. members will agree that it is not right that there should be any interference in connection with those matters if it can possibly be avoided. In connection with most things, which are not public utilities, the Bill says that there shall be no provision for striking until a ballot has been taken and fourteen days' notice must be given. I am quite certain again that this is altogether in the interests of the community. Now as to penalties. Any person or industrial association who takes part in a lockout is liable to a penalty not exceeding £1,000.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Make it £5,000.

Mr. BARBER: Make it a million.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not think it would be desirable. I say this provision is identical, at any rate as far as the penalty is concerned, with Mr. Beeby's Bill, to which reference has been made this afternoon, and that Bill was introduced by a Labour Government. Any person who does any act or thing in the nature of a strike is liable to a penalty not exceeding £50. And let me say the penalty is to be a first charge on wages.

Mr. MURPHY: That is hardly fair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member would be the very first man.

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I am sure, if he were concerned in this matter, to say, "Well, I have broken the law, and you can take my wages."

Mr. MURPHY: I will show you where it is not fair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member will have an opportunity of showing to the House how he regards it as unfair. The association may be called upon to contribute to the penalty. We say it is only right, if there are men behind who are urging others, perhaps to strike, or towards a dislocation—it is only a fair thing, whether they are employers or employees, that they should contribute to the penalty, and it is one of those penalties which, I assume, will be useful in helping to keep the law. Hon. members will observe that the penalties are all of such a nature that, whilst they are not unusually severe, still they should have a very restrictive influence upon those who are desirous of going out on strike or are desirous of creating a lockout. A man who is disposed to encourage a lockout deserves to be punished, and the man who goes out on strike without reasonable cause deserves to be punished. Part VI., hon. members will notice, is miscellaneous. It deals with holidays, and perhaps I might be allowed to refer to some of those holidays. I know I must not take the Bill clause by clause, but clause 42 deals with holidays, and I may be allowed to read what holidays are brought under the Bill. They are as follows:—New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, the first Monday in May, the twenty-fourth day of May, Christmas day, and Boxing Day, or on any day proclaimed to be kept in the place of any such holiday, shall be deemed overtime work, and shall be paid for at the rate of time and a-half. If there are any defects in the Bill in regard to matters of that kind, they can be dealt with in Committee. I have referred to the matter just now to show the particular days which are included specifically in the Bill. It may be asked: Why have we taken authority in the Bill for outlining the holidays? The answer is very simple, and yet the answer is one which will show at once how important it is that there should be no doubt as to the holidays which are being observed. If hon. members will take the opportunity of going through the various wages boards' findings they will realise this: That there are many awards differing very much as far as the holidays are concerned; and so you may have in one establishment men employed who are engaged in one particular industry [4.30 p.m.] try who, if they work, get time and a-half. You may have others who are not affected at all, and altogether things have grown to such a condition that it has been almost impossible to work the holidays satisfactorily; so we have included what we conceive to be the holidays—not the whole of the holidays, let me say, but the holidays as far as this particular Bill is concerned. My colleague, the Home Secretary, has a Bill, as hon. members are aware, dealing with and setting beyond any doubt other holidays; but we say that this Bill should be perfectly clear as to the holidays upon which time and a half should be paid, and so as to remove some of the present difficulties which exist. Another feature of the Bill is that there should be no representation at court by certain people, and I would like to say that that may be a question with regard to representation by a solicitor

or barrister in the court, which may require some consideration. The idea naturally is to reduce the expense, but I do not know whether the working out of the Federal High Court in that particular direction has, after all, produced economy—it may or may not—but it seems to me that if you have an ordinary layman conducting matters that are very largely technical he has to be—if I may use the term—propped up from behind by a member of the legal profession.

Mr. BOWMAN: That is not so in New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I can only say that my great desire is to see a Bill which will be highly satisfactory.

Mr. BOWMAN: Will you explain the second sub-clause in clause 42?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If my colleagues will turn it up for me, I will do what I can to explain it in a moment. Now, as to other features, it will be found that the Bill says that no party shall be represented by counsel or solicitor or salaried officer of an industrial association or member of Parliament. I take it that we shall be sufficiently loyal, at any rate, to see that that particular phase of the question is looked at fairly and squarely, and that we shall be prepared to exclude ourselves from the representation at court, and I think it is highly proper that no member of Parliament should be included in defence, or otherwise—(hear, hear!)—because it frequently happens that he, in another form, has to do with some of the matters which may arise.

Mr. COYNE: What about the secretary of the union?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: For the very same reason the secretary of the union—I am not saying anything disrespectful to secretaries of unions—but the secretary of the union may be precisely in the same position, and it is highly important that he should not occupy the position. (Opposition laughter.) The leader of the Opposition asked me to explain clause 42. I can do so. The position is briefly this: In the past it has been found in administration that perhaps a man has been put on to do two or three things—every workman has not one class of work. Under ordinary conditions it would be 10s. a day, and another class of work would be 8s. a day. Now the Bill says—

Mr. BOWMAN: That is not what I wanted at all—it is subclause (2) of clause 42.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am answering 42, as it was put to me; and so we say that when a man is engaged in doing two classes of work he must be paid for the day at the higher rate, and not the lower rate. I think hon. members will agree with me that that is quite fair and eminently satisfactory. In the Bill we also have repeated the amendment which took place in the Act last year with regard to furniture workers. I think I have already explained to the House that with regard to furniture workers we find it quite impossible to prevent aliens from working at night-time, by reasons of the statement that they were partners. Whenever a man was brought into court he was able to prove by some means that he was a partner. We are repeating what we had in the former measure, that no two partners can work at the same

time after hours, and by this means we are dealing with that matter. It will also be noticed that there is a general penalty against an industrial association of £100, and against a person, of £10. I have tried to deal fully with the Bill, and I admit that, on such an important Bill, after all I may only have touched the very fringe of these important matters; and I want now to deal with the details somewhat in a different light to the Bill. The object of the Bill is really to prevent strikes. I do not say that it is possible to bring in any measure that really will prevent strikes, but I say the object of the measure is, at least, to prevent strikes, and to assist to make the conditions of life more satisfactory. I want every hon. member, with me, to look fairly and squarely into the question of what strikes really mean—whether they be Brisbane strikes or any other strikes—and I think I am right in saying that, in the first place, they certainly mean very considerable loss to the community as a whole. What was the loss in connection with the last Brisbane strike? I say that the loss in connection with that strike must have been very great indeed.

Mr. FOLEY: £24,000 was spent on special constables.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I took steps to get some information from some of those who are engaged in looking after the industries of the State, and I want to say in that particular connection how much loss there really was to some of the workers even in Brisbane. For obvious reasons, perhaps I had better not mention names—still, it will be all the same, I will name them, because otherwise it may be considered that I have perhaps something fictitious here in connection with this particular statement. The first is Mrs. Charlton, one of the lady inspectors, who may be known to hon. members.

“Mrs. Charlton: An occupier in the boot trade told me that the firm lost over £2,000 in one month, which was a total loss to their employees. During the half-year ending 30th June, the firm’s output was 30,000 pairs of boots less than during the previous corresponding period.

“While the breadwinners went out on strike many of the wives had to go out and wash, or do daily charing, and never before were there so many special applications for young children to go to work.

“Miss Dempsey: The increase in the number of home workers for the half-year ended 30th April was very marked, and a great portion of this may be attributed to the strike.

“Miss Robinson: There were a good many parents calling at this office for special permits for children, the reason given in many instances being that the fathers and others helping to support the family had been out of employment since the strike, and that the money earned by the children would be something to help over a very trying time. Other parents said that they had not intended taking the children from school for a while, but they found it difficult to make ends meet since the wage-earners had been out of employment on account of the strike.

“Mr. Thiel: With very few exceptions in the baking trade the workers

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have got behind with their accounts, and they are paying off in instalments, ranging from 1s. to 2s. 6d. per week.

"The strike delayed the starting of operations at the meatworks for about three weeks. This threw the works back considerably with their oversea contracts. One retail butcher told me that he had to boil down for tallow 150 sheep and seventy bodies of beef.

"In the furniture warehouses, employers say that during February and March their receipts dropped to one-half, through 'time payments' not being made, and there was no fresh business doing.

"*Mr. Martin*: One employer informed me that his loss in trade during strike time was £15,000, but more wages were paid during that time owing to double rates being paid. Seven hundred men are employed at this place.

"A leading carrier told me that during the strike his firm paid £700 less in wages than would otherwise have been the case.

"At a large printing office during the month of February the business done was £600 below the average. At another smaller firm, where thirty-five hands are employed, the wages sheet during strike time was £120 less than would have been the case otherwise.

"*Mr. Cowap*: In the boot trade, from investigation, I estimate the following loss of wages in eleven factories through the strike, £4,356; loss of output, £19,816.

"In the iron trade, five firms' figures show loss in wages £5,448, and in output £13,255.

"*Mr. Raftery*: I was told that at least three grocers either went insolvent or went into liquidation through not being able to meet their liabilities to the larger businesses on account of small customers not being able to make their weekly payments for goods through the wage-earners of the families being out of employment."

Mr. COYNE: Are you including the Lowood factory?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have not a word to say in favour of that particular factory. I am dealing for the moment with a matter which was much wider in its influence than even that which the hon. member for Warrego mentions—very much wider, indeed, because it affected, as I shall show later on, not only the workers, but women and children; and anything that is done in the direction of affecting women and children, and making their lot harder—every member in this House should feel called upon to give of his very best to try and prevent that kind of thing, and I am sure that hon. members will try and rise to the occasion in that regard. May I draw the attention of the House to the other losses which must have occurred? What about our railways? Will it not be conceded that on our railways, under the conditions on which they were run—despite the loyalty of the staff—a loyalty which should be recorded in red letters in the history of the State—there must have been a very considerable loss? Then, again, take our Government Printing Office. How many

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men went out on strike there? No doubt they believed they were doing the right thing in going out; but they sustained a very serious loss in wages.

Mr. COYNE: Why, you are keeping some of them out yet.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I believe that those men would not have gone out if they had been given the opportunity of taking a secret ballot, such as is provided for in this Bill.

Mr. HUNTER: Are you sorry they went out?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am always sorry when a man goes out on strike when he has really no cause to go out.

Mr. HUNTER: Then why are you keeping some of them out now?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: As far as I know, no men have been kept out of the Government Printing Office, and there certainly was no victimisation of the men there.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I know different to that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What has been the loss to the country? I have asked farmers to favour me with some particulars, and in the memorandum I hold in my hand reference is made to certain factors which were operating at that time, which, happily, have since passed away. The weather conditions then prevailing made it very difficult in some ways to deal with the situation in which they found themselves. The rural industries were handicapped by dry weather, which amounted almost to a drought, and then, when they got their products by rail to Brisbane—I refer particularly to butter—they were not able to export it to the home market.

Mr. HUNTER: You bought some of it, didn't you?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I always leave the buying to the hon. member for Maranoa. (Government laughter.) I know he is an excellent hand at a speculation of that kind. This memorandum says—

"As a consequence of the interference with the interstate and oversea shipping, there were at one period some 40,000 boxes of butter held up in the cold stores in Brisbane for which there was no outlet. At a very low estimate this butter can be valued at £120,000, and when the depreciation that takes place in butter when it is being stored is remembered, the loss to the industry will be readily understood."

Mr. FOLEY: Has the butter been thrown away?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am very glad of that interjection. The market for our butter at home only exists for a certain portion of the year, and if the butter misses the market, the loss is a very serious one to the exporters. The memorandum goes on—

"In addition to this there must of course be added the loss resulting from the limitation of the output at the factories at that time, and at most of these cold storage accommodation is very limited."

If that butter had to be sold on the Brisbane market, it would mean a very serious loss, because the local market is only capable of taking a certain quantity. Butter being a

perishable product, it has to be dealt with very quickly, and as the cold storage accommodation here is not intended to store butter during a strike, but only during the interval between the time it reaches the port and its shipment, it was taxed to its utmost capacity. The very essence of success in the butter business is prompt despatch. The memorandum continues—

“During February, 1911, the exports of fruit for the month numbered 26,325 packages, and for this year only 1,365 were successfully sent away. The figures relate to Brisbane only, but Townsville, Cairns, Innisfail, Cooktown, Maryborough, and other ports suffered proportionately also. In a like manner the imports to Brisbane were reduced. In February, 1911, we received 33,397 packages of Southern fruits, but in the same month this year only 6,716 packages were landed. So much did the farmers feel the strike that many of them came to Brisbane and volunteered to load and unload the ships until work in the ordinary sense was resumed.”

That shows very clearly that there was a considerable loss to the rural industries of the State. It may be asked why I intrude this. I do not intrude it for the purpose of reviving the strike question, but to show how necessary it is to see if we cannot devise some means for making strikes extremely difficult. Now, what about the misery produced? I think every hon. member must admit that there was misery caused by the strike and that many innocent persons suffered. Just let me read what happened in connection with some of those who should not have been called upon to bear the burden of getting bread for the home. One lady, reporting, says—

“While the breadwinners went out on strike, many of the wives had to go out and wash or do daily charring, and never before were there so many special applications for young children to go to work.”

Miss Dempsey reports—

“The increase in the number of home or outside workers for the half-year ending 30th April, 1912, was very marked, a great portion of which can be attributed to the strike.”

In the face of that I ask: Should we not try to devise some means by which we can get over that difficulty? This is what Miss Robinson, another inspector, writes—

“Following on the strike, however, there were a good many parents calling at the office *re* “special permits for children to work in factories,” the reason given in many instances being that the fathers and others helping to support the family had been out of employment since the strike, and that the money earned by the child would do something to help tide matters over a very trying time.

“Other parents, calling for ‘certificates for young persons,’ said that they had not intended taking the child from school for a while, only that they had found it difficult to make ends meet since the wage-earners had been out of employment on account of the late strike.”

I think those extracts show that there was

distinct hardship inflicted even upon the children in the community.

Mr. HUNTER: We all felt it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no doubt we all felt it. I am very glad the hon. member for Maranoa admits that he felt it, and I am quite sure he will help us with this Bill.

Mr. HUNTER: What a Christian spirit you show.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I think I am showing the essence of the Christian spirit.

Mr. HUNTER: In rejoicing at my troubles?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It will be admitted that you cannot have an upheaval such as we had in which there is only loss on one side. You cannot have a strike without the men losing, but is it not equally true that the employers also lose considerably? Not only were the products that were available and that could only be supplied with the greatest difficulty made dearer, but, unfortunately, men had not the wherewithal to buy the necessaries of life, and I am quite certain that, if the loss to the community generally could be reckoned up, it would run into thousands and thousands of pounds. But is that all? We can readily dismiss that from consideration; but there is another loss that comes into the question and is a very big matter indeed. What is the effect upon the workers themselves? Now, I am speaking as a man to men, and I venture to say that those listening to me will agree that many a man who has gone out on strike—whether the strike was just or otherwise—has drifted from pillar to post, and has perhaps gone back a less worthy man than before.

Mr. COYNE: And many a man who has stopped in has been very sorry for it afterwards.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not say that every striker has gone down—that would be a reflection upon hon. members on the front bench opposite—but I have known men, as the result of being dislocated for the time being from their employment, who have drifted, and the moral effect on the community is not a good one. Do not strikes bring about strained relationships on the part of the men and on the part of the masters? And I hold that we shall never be able to successfully deal with some of these difficulties until there is a kinder feeling amongst those who are so necessary to one another. I say, all honour to the men in the ranks who are trying to get to the top; but I urge that in the interests of the community generally it is wise not to tear apart employer and employee, but to see that the conditions are of such a character that the employee will get a fair deal, and the employer will feel that there is some sense of security. And any Bill going in that direction will be helping the community generally. Is it not the duty of the Government to try to bring about better conditions? I say distinctly that it is: and in this connection—though it may seem strange for me to do so—I will quote what was said in the old country by Sir John Dewar, when addressing a number of people

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engaged in the wine and spirit business. This is what he said—and the remarks are exceedingly appropriate—

“It is the fundamental business of all Governments to see that trade in the country is prosperous, to secure peace and public order, to make life, capital, and property safe, and to see that the laws which they make are obeyed.

“The only way in which you can do good to the poor is to promote the prosperity of the whole community.”

Those words have an important bearing on the position. There are other things besides the accumulation of money. Money can do many things, but it cannot produce good feeling between employers and employees, which is of greater importance than even money. The object of the Bill, briefly, is to bring men together and enable them to settle their difficulties as they crop up. I intimated in my opening remarks that the House has expressed itself against strikes. Even those who tried to justify the late strike said that strikes are about the last weapon that should be used. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. RYAN: This Bill is about the last weapon, I think.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: This Bill opens wide the door to bring people together, so that they may discuss their differences with a view to amicable settlement. I believe that in 90 per cent. of the troubles that arise, if the men concerned could only be brought together, no strike would take place, because deep down in the hearts of both employers and employees there is a feeling of justice one towards the other; and we should cultivate that feeling to the fullest extent.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: May I say, in conclusion, that I hope the day may be speedy when injustice and tyranny shall give way to the consideration of matters in such a way as to produce a beneficial result. In a matter of this kind it is our duty to get away from party turmoil, and join hand in hand to make the measure one that will conduce to the peace, happiness, and prosperity of Queensland, a land which—whatever our politics are—we all love and are seeking to serve.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*): I desire to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

DRAINAGE OF MINES BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*): This small measure, the second reading of which I propose to move this afternoon, involves no question of policy, but is necessary owing to certain circumstances that have arisen in connection with the mining industry. The existing law on the subject originated in the Gympie Gold-field, where, owing to floods, the mines were subject to inundation, which caused very considerable loss to the owners and shareholders of those particular mines. It became apparent to those mineowners and to

others interested in the mines that it was absolutely necessary that some concerted action should be taken whereby provision

might be made to prevent a recurrence of such floodings. Such action was taken, and it led to the enactment of the Gold Mines Drainage Act of 1891, amended in the year 1896, and incorporated in the Mining Act of 1898 and the Act of 1902, which at the present time constitutes the legislation on this particular subject. Application has been made recently by other goldfields for drainage areas to be proclaimed on those particular fields. The conditions on those fields, however, differ from those which led to the legislation I have indicated, and which was originated by the mineowners of Gympie. Up to the present time, the application of existing legislation has been confined solely to Gympie. But even on Gympie the conditions have altered, and not alone are the mines subject to flooding overhead, but, as in the case of the mines at Charters Towers, which have made application for the constitution of a drainage area, are liable to inundation with water which has drained from abandoned workings or workings not in actual operation. The present measure proposes to make such an amendment in the law as will include all mining fields within the ambit of our legislation. I may mention that, although application has not yet been received from Croydon, the conditions there are similar to those which exist at Charters Towers. The scheme of the Bill is a simple one. If hon. members will look at its provisions, they will find that the first four clauses provide for the repeal of the present enactments, and contain certain machinery provisions. Clause 5 provides for the constitution of drainage areas. Clause 6 makes provision for the election of drainage boards. Owners of mines are to have a vote in connection with the election of members of the boards. The voting has been confined to mines, not to leases, so that no mine, whether it consists of one or more leases, shall have any more voice in the election of a board than the owner of a single lease. The object of this provision is to place each mine, whether it is a large or a small one, upon the same footing as far as representation on the drainage board is concerned. Clause 7 is a new provision; it enables the Governor in Council to appoint a board in the event of mineowners failing to elect one within a certain time. Clause 8, which constitutes a drainage board a body corporate, is also new. Under the present law, the board may require owners of mines within a drainage area to construct and maintain upon their mines drainage works which the board consider necessary for the purpose of preventing the flooding of the mines within the area. By clause 9, the board is empowered to require the owner of a mine to raise or drain water from his mine with any machinery already erected, or which may be erected, on such mine, and to use such machinery for raising or draining water in such manner as the board considers necessary. Hon. members who are acquainted with the legislation on this subject will realise that this is a very important provision, because it will enable the drainage board to make use of machinery which is already in existence for the purpose of discharging water from mines for the common benefit. It further provides for conditions which exist, and which may

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constantly occur, on such fields as Charters Towers and Croydon, and enables the board to carry out its operations in many instances at a comparatively small cost. Clause 10 provides for the cost of raising or draining water from mines, and for the construction, maintenance, and repair of drainage works. The contribution of each owner is to be in proportion to the benefit received. That is a matter which the board will, of course, define when considering the whole question of the contributions to be paid by the several owners. Then, there is a new addition to our present legislation, and that is, that each owner shall receive credit for the value of any water which he shall raise at the instance or under the direction of the board; but any water so raised which he uses for his own purposes, or which he sells, is to be deducted from such credit. Clause 11 provides for appeal to the warden by any person who thinks himself aggrieved by the board's assessment, and the decision of the warden with respect to any contribution is to be final and conclusive. Clause 12 provides for the recovery of contributions. These may be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction, provided that any prior encumbrance which may exist in connection with any lease shall have precedence of any charge that may be imposed on the leaseholder by the drainage board. The failure to pay contributions also renders a lease liable to forfeiture. The Bill generally, as I have already indicated, involves no policy. It is a measure which practically consists of nothing but details. I confess that I was infringing when, for the information of hon. members, I was simply giving the gist of each particular clause. Speaking generally, the Bill gives all the necessary powers and authority to the board constituted in any drainage area to do all that is necessary to carry out the works which they decide shall be carried out for the effective drainage of these mines, whether the water which they have to deal with comes from overhead by the flooding of the surface, or whether it is water that drains into the mines from old abandoned workings, or from other workings which are at present being worked. Power is given, the same as in the existing Act, to the local authority to levy a special drainage rate, which may be handed over to the drainage board for the purpose of enabling them to carry out the necessary drainage operations. This is an alternative which is put into the Bill, and which is the law at the present time, so as to enable the full effect of the present measure to be taken advantage of. The Bill also makes the necessary provision in cases where no drainage board has been proclaimed. It makes provision that if the owner of a mine suffers from the drainage of water he may claim from the adjoining mineowners a contribution to free the water that is drained into his mine from the mines which surround him. The power is also given in the Bill to make all the necessary regulations that are requisite for the proper carrying out of this measure. In conclusion, I may say that, although it is a small measure which involves no particular policy, it is one which I venture to say, from the experience which I have gained in the administration of the Mines Department, is necessary. It is a measure that has been asked for, and it is required under the altered conditions at the present time in the mining industry, and which circumstances are likely

to increase owing to the greater depth at which minerals are being worked at the present time, and the equitable necessity—I will put it that way—which exists, that all persons who are interested in a field should be required to contribute for the purpose of freeing their own and other mines of the water which drains in either from the top or below. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. THEODORE (*Chillagoe*): In perusing the Bill, I find that there is very little departure from the provisions now on the statute-book. The only additions in the Bill that I can find that are not already provided in the principal Act are those which provide for the incorporation of drainage boards, which provide for the appeal against assessments by the board, and for the collection of contributions levied by the drainage board. These are not very serious items.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: And contributions for the use of machinery.

Mr. THEODORE: That is a very important and necessary provision. These amendments are not important departures from the present law governing these matters. After all, it is necessary to give the added power and increased usefulness which is asked for by this measure. I should like to point out to the Minister for Mines that the Bill evidently does not take into cognisance the possible responsibility of tributers. I am aware, of course, of the position of tributers in past legislation upon this matter, but as there is only one drainage board in existence—

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: As a matter of fact, there are two, although both are in Gympie.

Mr. THEODORE: At any rate, there is only one drainage area, and as that is the case, the possibility of what I am going to touch upon being an evil has not yet been demonstrated. I should like to point out to the Minister that under the principal Act tributers, under certain circumstances, might be taken to be owners of mines, and under the provisions of this Bill they might be held responsible as owners of the property, and might be compelled to carry out the obligations devolving upon owners. The interpretation of "Owner" in the principal Act is given in this way—

"The holder of any mining tenement or any sub-lessee of any such tenement, or any person in possession of such tenement, with the consent of such holder."

Well, tributers are occasionally in full possession of mining tenements with the consent of the holder of the lease, and in that case they will be put down as the owner of the mine and would be liable for all the responsibilities mentioned in this measure. In ordinary practice a party of tributers might be working entirely above the water zone and the drainage of a particular mine might not benefit them in any degree whatever. Yet they may be liable for a contribution to assist the larger companies in the immediate vicinity, who will have a majority on the drainage board.

Mr. MURPHY: Would not the mine be responsible for paying?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The mine is responsible.

Mr. THEODORE: In this case a party of tributers would be considered actual

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bonâ fide owners for the purpose of this Bill. It may happen, perhaps, in the interests of the owner of the lease that if the contribution is a heavy one they would abandon a mine. There might be certain areas of stone or ore left behind, close to the surface, and it might be possible to work that area profitably by tributers without using the low levels at all. If these obligations are imposed upon a party of tributers taking up such an area, then there is a probability that the actual leaseholder will abandon it altogether rather than undertake such a responsibility. That is a possibility that should be considered. I admit that the board would be actuated by common sense in these matters, and would not levy a heavy tax on a party of tributers which would prohibit them from carrying out their ordinary work in the mine if the tributers were deriving no benefit from the drainage provisions.

Mr. MURPHY: The contributions are according to the benefit received.

Mr. THEODORE: That is so; but seeing that the board are the sole arbiters of the benefit received there is a possibility that they might consider the tributers receive a benefit. I ask the Minister to consider the matter and protect the tributers from being considered as the owners of a mine for this purpose. No mineowner should be allowed to escape his responsibility, and no tributer should be responsible for carrying out work that is of no benefit to him. I might point out that the tributers in almost every instance will have no representative whatever on the drainage board, because that board will be appointed by the Governor in Council and elected by the mineowners in the particular area, and the tributers will not be represented on that particular board except indirectly through some of the mineowners. I think there is a possibility of the small mines being probably victimised to a certain extent by the wealthy mineowners, who will dominate the board.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They have the same voting power.

Mr. THEODORE: They have the same voting power, but if the small mineowners are in a minority they may be out-voted, and unless the representatives of the wealthy mines are charitable enough not to impose anything in the nature of a hardship, the small mines will be penalised. I know some companies would not have the slightest scruple about imposing heavy contributions on the mines in certain localities for the purpose of lessening their own cost for the drainage of their mines. Of course, we must agree that the majority of the representatives on the boards would take up a reasonable attitude in carrying out their duties on such boards, but we must safeguard the small mines against possible penalisation on the part of wealthy companies. When we get to the Committee stages, there are a couple of clauses on which the Minister might give more information regarding matters of detail, particularly in connection with this matter of safeguarding small mineowners and tributers, who, I think, are worthy of consideration.

Mr. WALKER (Cooroora): This is a matter with which I am fully conversant, as we have had a drainage area on Gympie for some time. I think the first Act was brought in in 1893, and the late Mr. Frank

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Power was one who took a very active part in the question, and is one to whom the whole of Queensland is indebted on account of his legal training, his large mining experience, and the keen interest he took in mining. We have had, up to the present time, on Gympie, practically no difficulty in working the present Act. It has given universal satisfaction. Of course, Gympie is a peculiarly worked field. In other words, it is easily worked, and the drainage has been easily traced on account of the strata, or slate beds, which usually carry the water, dipping east, and we can locate the mines which should be drained. We have collected fees from all those mines constituted under the drainage area of Gympie; and, as the Minister just stated, we have two boards on Gympie on account of developments which have recently taken place. As far as the objection raised by the hon. member for Chillagoe, with regard to tributers, is concerned, I would like to point out there has been no question of the small man paying more than his right share on Gympie. It has never been disputed in any shape or form. There is one matter which the hon. member might have made clear. He asked if tributers were working at a certain level, would they be responsible for drainage below that level? If they have the tribute from a certain level to the surface, the land below them would be retained by the original company. The point is this: If they had the tribute of the whole mine down to unknown depths, then they should be responsible for the drainage of that mine, and it would not affect the tributers in any shape or form, because when leasing that mine for tribute the question of water would be taken into consideration. Of course, tenders might be called or a royalty paid. Personally, I think the Bill in its present form is almost perfect. It has given universal satisfaction, and the Mines Department, under the administration of the Minister, has gone carefully into amendments suggested by those who have had experience on Gympie, and they have been embodied in this Bill. As far as Gympie is concerned, it is a good Bill, and I can assure the hon. member for Chillagoe that it will not affect tributers at all. There are any amount of tributers in Gympie, and they have no grievance at all. It may affect Croydon or Charters Towers, but as far as Gympie is concerned, it is a good Bill, and one that should pass practically without debate.

Mr. MURPHY (Burke): I desire to congratulate the Mines Department upon introducing this Bill, and I am sure it will be welcomed by the mining community throughout Queensland. Speaking for Croydon, I might point out that years ago we endeavoured to obtain the establishment of a drainage board at that place, but somehow—principally, I suppose, through defects in the Act—we were unable to get that board established, and the result has been that a few people have now to bear the whole expense of dealing with the heavy water on the Golden Gate line of reef, which has been the premier line of reef on Croydon. One end of that line has been abandoned in many places in consequence of the heavy expense of dealing with the water. All this Bill provides is that the mineowners on a given reef shall be compelled to co-operate and assist each other to deal with the water question. If the Governor in Council can

compel the mineowners to form a drainage board, they will be able to deal more effectively and more cheaply with the water than can be done by individual effort. It will go further than that. The board will be enabled to carry out, by their own employees, or compel mineowners to concrete the tops of their shafts to prevent surface water getting down. In Croydon, surface water has run down abandoned mines, and it has cost adjacent mineowners a considerable amount of money to carry out the drainage of their mines. We have had very expensive law-suits in Croydon in connection with bailing disputes. Recently certain mines on Golden Gate have joined together for the purpose of dealing with the water question, as they have discovered, although rather late in the day, that that is a much better way to deal with it. We know the establishment of a drainage board has done a wonderful amount of good in Gympie, and other goldfields, having seen the good effect there, naturally desire an opportunity to establish such a board on their own field. In its prosperous days we tried to get a drainage board established on Croydon, but were unsuccessful, and not very long ago we had to go to the Government for assistance to put down machinery on Morgan's Block, otherwise that line of reef, the majority of the mines on which were held by working parties, would have had to be practically abandoned. Now, years ago, when the place was booming, had we had the power to get a board established, things would have been quite different. In the good days when money is plentiful you can find the money to put up the necessary machinery to cope with water, and the passage of this Bill will enable this to be done. It goes further. It will enable the Mines Department to compel mineowners to establish such a board. We know occasions arise when these things are brought up and discussed at meetings of mineowners; but, through selfishness on the part of some of the mineowners, the formation of such a board is prevented. Now, under this Bill, where the Mines Department consider it advisable that such a board should be established, they have the right, by Order in Council, to order that such a board be established, and I am sure that this Bill will be of considerable assistance to most of the mining fields. The Minister for Mines stated that the real object of the Bill was practically to enable a drainage board to be established on Charters Towers. Of course, there are members for Charters Towers here, and they will deal with that question, but I am quite certain that the Bill is a good one and that it will be welcome to most of the mining fields. The hon. member for Chillagoe referred to the fact that it may interfere to some extent with tributers or small miners, but we have to recollect that there have been many instances [5.30 p.m.] on mining fields, especially in dealing with water questions, where the small miners and the tributers have interfered considerably with the progress of the field. They have come along and objected to the establishment of such a board, and have been in a position—as they were in Croydon in those days—to make such effective opposition that the drainage board was never established, and the result is that many men who might have been able to continue working mines on the Golden Gate line of reef have lately been compelled

to abandon them because they could not deal with the water. I think the Bill is a very good one, and I am sure that, so far as members who take any interest in mining are concerned, they will be very pleased that the Government have introduced it.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): As the Minister for Mines has remarked, there is nothing very contentious in this Bill, and I am of opinion that it is a Bill which will do good. It must be admitted on all hands that concerted action in a case like this is better than individual action. The one thing which has not benefited, but injured, many of our goldfields, has been the selfishness shown, where co-operative effort would have done a great deal of good. I suppose the events which took place on Charters Towers last year have had something to do with bringing about the measure. What defects were revealed in the provisions of the principal Act I am not prepared to state. It seems to me there has been a need for a drainage board on Charters Towers for a long time past, and this board, it is to be hoped, will do something to allot the burden fairly and equitably on those who receive benefit. There was an opinion expressed by the hon. member for Chillagoe that it might injure some small mineowners, as they might not get adequate representation, and might be out-voted, and their interests not be conserved. As far as tributers are concerned, I might say, in emphasis of the point made by the hon. member for Chillagoe, that I know one contributing party who recently abandoned a mine, simply because they were under agreement to pay £5 a week to another company for hauling water. Those were the conditions under which they took the mine up, and they found it would not stand that with all the other expenses, and they abandoned the mine to the State, and it has not been worked since, and is not likely to be worked now. Most of the matters can probably be dealt with more effectively in Committee, but I think it would have been an advantage if there had been a better idea given in the Bill, or by the Minister, as to the constitution of the board. An area will be proclaimed by the Governor in Council, and the board shall consist of as many members as may be directed by the Governor in Council by proclamation; but as to how many members it is going to consist of—whether each mining area will have one representative and only one vote, or two or three representatives, all remains to be seen. A great deal of the benefit which ought to accrue from a board of this kind will depend entirely on the action of the board after it is constituted. If each individual mine returned a representative to the board to look after its interests, one might reasonably expect the interests of all would be conserved; but in a great many instances that is not the case. There are, perhaps, two or three in the whole of the field, who dominate not merely one or two, but the bulk of the mines, and the result is that sometimes their influence is for their own interest rather than for the interest of the people altogether. But there is this good point: if the board gives a decision that is not satisfactory, then there may be an appeal to the warden, and I think in the majority of instances the warden can be relied upon to give a decision which will be acted on, and which will give satisfaction to all. I do not know whether the

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conditions which prevail at Gympie prevail at other places. There may be a difficulty in finding how the water drains, and where it comes from, and it will not be an easy task to allot to each mine the benefit which it derives, and the liability which it ought to bear, but that will simply depend on the good sense, honesty, and integrity of the board itself. I think this is a step in the right direction, and something which has been needed for a long time past. It is well known that serious consequences have accrued in times gone by, and expensive litigation has taken place over this matter. It has been pointed out that amendments will be made in Committee, and I would like to express the hope that we are not going into Committee to-night. Some opportunity should be given to those who are most interested to convey their ideas and express their opinions on this Bill, which I hope will be made to be for the benefit and advantage of all concerned. Then with regard to drainage areas, we are really in the dark as to what they will be like—whether they will embrace the whole field, or whether there will be half a dozen drainage areas. The machinery of the Bill is a step in the right direction, and I hope that the measure will be beneficial, not only to Charters Towers, but to all fields which have this difficulty to contend with. I suppose that if the Bill, when it is put into operation, does not do all that is expected, amendments and improvements will be made in it.

Mr. WILLIAMS (*Charters Towers*): I am in favour of the introduction of this Bill, and I think the hon. member who has introduced it is to be congratulated on having brought it in. It has been said by the hon. member for Crocyden that the Bill is brought in as particularly affecting Charters Towers. I think it was brought in on account of the need of Charters Towers, but it will apply right through all the mines of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILLIAMS: The trouble has been to get from the people their proper contribution. There are mines which have been pumping large quantities of water, and we find it impossible to get the contribution, but I think the Bill, as designed, will secure that contribution, and it will be an excellent measure. I am pleased to learn that a drainage board, which is very much the same as this, has been in operation in Gympie for a number of years, with great success. We all look on it in Charters Towers with very great interest, as we really have no experience in the matter. When the Bill comes into Committee, there will be some amendments moved, and I propose to move some myself. With regard to what the hon. member for Chillagoe has said about tributers, I think the Bill is not designed to affect tributers; I think it is simply designed to affect the owners. That is my opinion from the wording of the Bill. In any case, that is a subject for Committee. It is always quite easy for the owners in letting to tributers to arrange for placing a share of the burden of contribution on them in respect to water.

Mr. MACKAY (*Gympie*): I would likewise congratulate the Minister for Mines on having introduced this Bill. I am very pleased to say that during the last few years we have had a drainage board at

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Gympie, and it has been of immense service to us. We found at the early stages that we suffered greatly from surface flood water. We have constructed floodgates which have made our mines proof against flood waters, but as we got deeper down our mines suffered greatly from the inflow underneath. Hon. members will have some idea of the amount of water that is dealt with when I mention that during the last seven months something like 10,000,000 gallons have been bailed out of one mine alone. The only defect that I see in the Bill is in clause 9, and I intend to move an amendment in Committee to remedy it. The clause provides that the board may call upon the owner of any mine to do certain work, and, failing them, the board can undertake the work itself. On the Gympie Goldfield—and I dare say the same thing applies on other fields—there is quite a considerable area of forfeited ground in which there is a large number of abandoned shafts. My idea is that the clause to which I have referred should be amended to give the board power, on its own initiative, to erect the necessary machinery on one of those abandoned shafts, and thereby probably drain quite a number of surrounding claims. On Gympie we have found it quite impossible for any one mine to bail to any extent and at the same time carry on its mining operations.

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

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES said: This likewise is a small measure, but in some respects it is an important one, as I shall endeavour to make obvious to hon. members before I have concluded; but, like in the preceding Bill, there is really no question of policy involved. It seeks to place under the control of the Mines Department the issue of those certificates which are required to be held by persons who have charge of winding engines which raise and lower either men or material into and from mines. The Mines Department are of opinion that they are the best authority as to what the qualifications of the holders of such certificates should be. At the present time the examination for these certificates is under the control of the board operating under the Machinery and Scaffolding Act. The Mines Department have a board which will prescribe the necessary qualifications which they consider should be possessed by the holders of these certificates, and will hold the necessary examinations. The greater portion of the Bill simply provides the machinery for carrying out this object; but the last clause of the Bill contains an important provision dealing with mining under roads and watercourses. That clause will bring our mining law into line with the precautions the Railway Department take with respect to their lines. At present, it is possible for the lessee of a mine to mine under a watercourse and leave such a small amount of earth between the mining operations and the watercourse that immediately the mine is abandoned—and in some cases before it is abandoned—the roof caves in, and all the mines

at a lower level are subject to flooding. This provision—which we consider a very good one indeed—will enable the Mines Department to make such regulations as will place this particular matter under control, and will prevent the recurrence of such things in the future. Though the measure is only a short one, it will have a very important effect upon the mining industry of the State. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

HOLIDAYS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*): This is a small measure which proposes to deal with bank holidays. The Bank Holidays Acts are to be repealed, and the provisions of those Acts with respect to the date of payment of bills of exchange are not to be re-enacted, as the Commonwealth law now provides for these matters. The days to be kept as holidays in Queensland are set forth in the schedule to the Bill. Four days have been omitted, and two have been added, making altogether two holidays less; but I propose when the Bill is in Committee to move an amendment adding the Saturday after Good Friday to the number of bank holidays, that day having been inadvertently omitted when the Bill was drafted. The days that have been omitted are:—The day after Good Friday—which will be added when the Bill is in Committee—the birthday of His Majesty or his successor, the 1st August—generally known as Lammas Day, and the 10th December—Separation Day. And the days that have been added are:—The 23rd April—St. George's Day, and the 30th November—St. Andrew's Day. There will be power, as before, to appoint special holidays.

Mr. BOWMAN: Why not St. David's Day?

The HOME SECRETARY: I think the holidays enumerated will be sufficient to put into the schedule. There will also be power, on seven days' notice, to alter the day appointed for a holiday; and provision is made to remove any misunderstanding that may exist with regard to overtime work under our industrial laws. The schedule of holidays in this Bill is substituted for the schedule in the Public Service Act, so as to bring public service holidays into line with bank holidays. The provision with regard to closing banks on an afternoon of the week—for instance, Saturday afternoon—has been re-enacted; and the holidays under this Bill are to be deemed to be bank holidays within the meaning of the Commonwealth Bills of Exchange Act of 1909. Although another day may be substituted for St. George's Day or St. Andrew's Day, that does not apply to St. Patrick's Day, which is regarded as a holy day, and is observed on the day on which it falls, not only by demonstration, but also by religious services. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. BOWMAN: I think this Bill needs very little comment. I notice that Easter Saturday was dropped from the schedule; but the hon. gentleman says he intends to include it in the Bill, which I think is only fair. The Bill simply defines clearly what

are bank holidays; and there will be a clear understanding in future. With reference to St. Patrick's Day, I take it that if it falls on a Sunday the holiday will be kept on the following Monday.

Question put and passed; and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

MINING FOR COAL AND MINERAL OIL BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The measure which I am now submitting to the House is one that does not affect any policy.

It is brought in simply for extending the administrative scope of the department in connection with the coalmining industry in certain particulars in respect of which the department does not at present possess the necessary powers. The greater portion of our coalmining operations have up to the present been carried out on freehold land, and, save as regards the safety of those who are employed in the industry, the department has no power or authority in connection with those operations under our mining legislation. During recent years considerable development has taken place in that industry in the Central district and other parts of the State where the presence of coal has been discovered on Crown land. It is, therefore, desirable that the present mining legislation, so far as it concerns the coalmining industry, should be repealed, and that further legislation should be enacted by Parliament to deal with the altered conditions which exist to-day. The measure now before the House amends the Mining Act so far as it relates to coal. All existing rights are preserved. A license may be granted to prospect for coal and for mineral oil. At present we have no legislation which provides for prospecting for mineral oil or for operations in connection with mineral oil. I do not for one moment say that mineral oil exists within the boundaries of the State. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that geological investigations lead to the belief that mineral oil may exist in Queensland, and though it has been determined that it shall be part of the policy of the department that the State itself in the first stages shall undertake the prospecting for mineral oil, yet it is considered necessary that legislation should be passed to deal with mineral oil should it be discovered within the boundaries of the State. The maximum area for which a license to prospect for coal or mineral oil may be granted is 2,560 acres. This area may seem to be comparatively large, but those who have a knowledge of the conditions which exist will realise that in prospecting for coal many bores may have to be put down, and a large area of country may have to be examined before payable coal is discovered. The license may be issued for a term of twelve months at a rental of 1d. per acre, and at the discretion of the Minister may be renewed for a further twelve months. There is a provision to the effect that within ninety days of the issue of a license operations must be commenced. It has been found in the past that persons applying for a prospecting area, which at present is limited to 640 acres, may apply for a license for more than one

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area, and may, in fact, apply for any number of licenses, without engaging in any operations for prospecting for coal. As a matter of fact, it appears to be the object in some case for persons, who know that prospecting operations are actually taking place, to secure a number of licenses, and simply hold them for the purpose of benefiting by any discovery which may be made by those who are prospecting.

Mr. HAMILTON: Shepherding them.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Quite so. We consider that such a state of affairs should not be allowed to exist, and have therefore provided in this Bill that operations must be commenced within ninety days of the date on which the license is granted; and, furthermore, that if the Minister has reason to believe that the licensee is not prospecting with reasonable assiduity, he may order the warden to call upon him to show cause why his license should not be cancelled. The purpose of that provision is to prevent a person who is simply "shepherding" an area, as the hon. member for Gregory says, from benefiting by the labours of the person who is bonâ fide carrying on prospecting operations.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: But you have given him four times the area he can get now.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is so; but, as I have pointed out, it is possible for a person to secure any number of areas under the present law. By this measure we limit him to one area, and the maximum area allowed is not as great as the maximum allowed in some of the other States of the Commonwealth. The Department of Mines, after careful consideration and investigation, consider that it is a fair area—such an area as may be utilised for prospecting purposes under the safeguards which I have specified. Now, coal having been discovered, it is in the power of the Department to compel the prospector to take out a lease before his license has expired, so that the full amount of royalty the State should receive may be payable immediately after payable coal has been discovered. Under the present law, it is provided that a lease may be granted for twenty-one years, with the right to renew it for another twenty-one years, but the department considered that that was an excessive period, and that it was not right to tie up a lease for forty-two years.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. THEODORE: I think so, too.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We think that twenty years is ample time to grant a lease for those who desire to mine for coal, and, as I have already indicated, the Act provides that the maximum which may be leased for that purpose is an area of 640 acres, and in connection with a lease for oil an area of 60 acres. Provision is made that leases which are the property of the same lessee may be amalgamated, the amalgamation extending only to the concentration of labour to any one of the amalgamated leases. In connection with the lease of 640 acres actually covering the coal which is under the surface, it is not intended that the lessee shall have the control of the whole of the surface of that 640 acres. The

area which he is allowed to use on the surface is a maximum of 100 acres, which is considered a sufficient area to carry out his operations in connection with coalmining. He has, of course, the use of any timber which may be necessary for mining purposes upon the area and to depasture the cattle and stock necessary to carry out his operations, and to make use of any water in any creek or in any pool which may be necessary for the purpose of carrying out mining operations. But that 100 acres must be fenced in and kept clear of prickly pear.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Why not give them the same right as the goldfields homesteads?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They have. That is provided for under the principal Act. At the present time the surface of the leases is left entirely in the hands of the lessees; noxious weeds may be permitted to grow on them and there is no power on the part of the department to require them to be kept clean; and, in addition to that, in many instances they are unfenced. But under the provisions of this Bill that area of 100 acres must be fenced in and kept clear of prickly pear. (Hear, hear!) At the present time, so long as it does not interfere with coal operations, mining for other minerals may be permitted to be carried on by the department within the area of the 640-acre lease. That is only a proper provision to be made. The Bill requires that it shall not interfere with coalmining operations. The Bill fixes the royalty which is to be paid. Distinction is made between coalmining properties over 100 miles from a seaport and coalmines within 100 miles of a seaport. In the case of coalmines beyond 100 miles from a seaport the royalty is 2d. per ton for the first ten years, and 4d. per ton for the balance of the term. In connection with those mines within 100 miles of a seaport, the royalty is 3d. per ton for the first ten years and 6d. per ton for the balance of the lease. In connection with oil, the royalty is 5 per cent. on the value of the oil won. A new provision is included in this measure. It provides that where a certain amount of expenditure has been incurred for the purpose of constructing tramways, roads, races, dams, and the erection of the necessary machinery, that may be a substitute for the labour conditions. The labour conditions provide that for a certain time the ground must be manned by one man to 40 acres, and after the initial period that one man must be employed for every 20 acres. However, a provision has been inserted that, in place of manning, where certain improvements are effected of the character which I have just indicated, that that improvement may be taken as a substitute for the manning condition which otherwise must be carried out. Furthermore, the Bill contains a provision that under certain conditions—that is, where the lease has not been worked at a profit for six months, and that during that time the leaseholder has expended more money in connection with the land than the amount prescribed in the covenant—as a matter of right an exemption may be granted to the holder of the lease for six months. The matter of substituting the expenditure of money for the manning conditions is not a new principle, as it is contained in the Tasmanian Act of 1900 and in the Victorian Act of 1904. When speak-

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ing on the Victorian Bill when it was before the Victorian Legislature, Mr. Irvine, the then Premier of Victoria, said—

“The Minister for Mines proposes to introduce a system already introduced into Tasmania, and found to work well there. Instead of having labour covenants, and compelling the employment of a certain number of men, the lease should contain covenants whereby a fixed sum per acre per annum should be expended year by year during the tenure of the lease”——

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: No wonder that Tasmania has gone down in population.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: When the hon. member suggests that it is owing to that, he must know that that is a most fallacious suggestion, for the very reason that where there is an expenditure of many thousands of pounds we know that is better than under the manning conditions, which might only mean an expenditure of a few hundred pounds; and it is well worthy the consideration of the House that such a substitute should be made.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: That is a fallacious statement, there is no mistake.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That may be so, but the hon. gentleman must admit that had it not been for that expenditure the goldfield which he represents would be nowhere. However, to proceed with Mr. Irvine's remarks—

“so that, if the mineowner finds that it is impossible at a particular stage of the development of the mine to spend as much money as he would otherwise wish to do, he may take credit for the surplus amount that he has spent previously. He might balance the amount standing to his credit, and relax his efforts during the period of dead work when the mine is unprofitable.”

The expenditure is incurred in works which are absolutely necessary to conduct and carry out such mining operations.

“Mr. Gregory, the late Minister for Mines in Western Australia, commenting upon the necessity for amendment of the law in the direction indicated, has not hesitated to declare the law that gives to a Minister power to forfeit a lease upon which £1,000, or it may be \$100,000, has been expended, when from negligence or misfortune the lessee has omitted or has been unable to comply with the conditions of his lease, to be a bad law.”

Undoubtedly, not alone in those States to which I have been referring, but likewise in Queensland, the Minister exercises the necessary discretion in determining whether a property on which there has been a large expenditure of capital should be forfeited or not, and by placing such a substitution in this measure it will, undoubtedly, tend to give confidence to those persons who are, in many instances, many thousands of miles away from the scene of operations, but who are readily finding the necessary funds for the purpose of developing those properties. They have some assurance that the large amount of money they have so expended will not be forfeited at the caprice or through some neglect on the part of those who happen

to have control of the mining property for the time being. However, it is a matter for consideration by the House. Undoubtedly, this is purely a Committee Bill, and it is a matter for the consideration of the House whether they will adopt that substitution. I may mention, by the way, that we have already in this State in a certain way recognised it in connection with the Burketown to Lilydale Tramway Act of 1898, under which the company are not compelled to employ a certain number of men, but have to spend a certain fixed sum of money on incidental works. That is really the principle involved in the substitution which I have indicated as being new in connection with the Bill which is now before you. The Bill further provides that monthly returns shall be made to enable the State to obtain what is due to it in the way of royalty, and all proper books and accounts must be kept, and must be produced whenever called upon by the officers of the department. The necessary powers are given for the making of all regulations and doing all that is necessary to give effect to the Bill. As I have already indicated, there is no question of policy involved in this measure. It is merely a machinery and an administrative Bill to enable the department to cope with the altered conditions in connection with this particular industry. As on other occasions, I will be willing to consider any amendments which may be suggested in Committee for the purpose of making this Bill as perfect as possible, because undoubtedly it deals with a very great matter indeed—that is, the future coal industry of this State. The State may do without gold. It is well if it has gold, but undoubtedly, if it is to become a manufacturing country, it cannot do without its coal deposits.

Mr. BOWMAN: Oil is very useful, too.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Undoubtedly, and if we have a combination of oil and coal we may look to a considerable amount of prosperity in the future. But we know we possess the coal deposits, and it is the duty of the department to place before the House the necessary legislation to enable us to deal with it; and in placing that legislation before you, I have simply indicated that it is our policy to restrict to a reasonable area the amount of leasehold, so that only those who bona fide desire to operate for the benefit of the community shall be enabled to obtain the necessary leases for that purpose. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: While, to some extent, this is a Bill that can be better dealt with in Committee than on the second reading, at the same time there are some principles involved and some considerable changes from what has been the law in the past. In so far as it relates to prospecting for coal and mineral oil, it is certainly welcome on this side of the House. As regards the grant of 2,560 acres for a prospecting area, to anyone who wants to prospect, that is a splendid opportunity as far as the area is concerned. We have no objection to that, so long as it is clearly understood that, although they have that amount of land to roam over to try and find coal or oil, they are restricted to a lesser area when they have found it. The Minister pointed out that the area has been practically doubled, but he gave no reason why that change has taken place, or what

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necessity has arisen to double the area which may be taken up. In addition to that, there is a clause in the Bill dealing with the aggregation of large areas and the amalgamation of leases. I think it would be wise—it certainly is not made clear in this Bill—that when coal is found in any district it should be proclaimed a mineral area in the same sense as a goldfield is proclaimed, and the miners who work the coal would then have an opportunity of securing homes for themselves on the leasehold without having to buy freehold or live in rented cottages.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: If there is any doubt about it we will make it perfectly clear in Committee.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: If it is made clear so that the men working this coal will have an opportunity of acquiring a bit of land and acquiring a home for themselves it will be one of the greatest benefits that could be conferred on the workers. As regards mineral oil, we are dealing with something of which we have practically no experience whatever, or very little at any rate. We have managed to get the gas, but we never get oil. Some day, in the very near future, oil may be discovered, not in one place only, but, like artesian water, in a number of places in different parts of the State, and it is one of those things which it seems to me would be better dealt with by the State than by private individuals. It would be a splendid thing if oil were looked for by the State and made a national proposition, rather than hand it over to private individuals, and give them an opportunity of exploiting the rest of the community for their own benefit. Probably, in the near future, if the State does not do this thing, the Commonwealth Government will step in and do it. There are indications in the Roma district that oil may be found, and it would be a good thing if the State stepped in and dealt with the question. As regards the labour conditions, I think they are exceptionally easy. One man to 40 acres, I think, is just about as easy as any man could expect. That is equal to fifteen men to 640 acres. I am one of those who do not think it is anything like a fair equivalent to substitute the capital expended in other directions, such as for machinery, for the labour. When the Mining Act was going through this House in 1898, the Government thought to insert a similar provision, but there was strenuous opposition to anything of the kind, and eventually it was dropped. It has not worked out anything like so well in other places where it has been tried. Is it not a fact that the majority of the mineral freeholds that are held in the State at the present time to the detriment of the State and to the detriment of the community in which they exist, were all acquired through this self-same pernicious principle, by which companies were allowed to take up land on condition that they spent a certain amount of money? They said they spent it, and were allowed to get the freeholds.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: But they won't get these freeholds.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They won't get these freeholds, but they get the conditions which accrue to those who fulfil the labour conditions. If they make improvements on the

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surface they will not have to fulfil the labour conditions; that is, if they fulfil [7.30 p.m.] more conditions than the labour conditions apply to they will get exemption. Let me say that on a dozen occasions in Queensland the money has been spent on the surface instead of down below, and the consequence has been that it has been detrimental to the community—to those who have invested money in the mines, and, in fact, all round. I think that is one of the blots on the Bill. It is well known that when people go in for properties of this kind they like to make a big show on the surface, and they take photographs of it to send to other countries. They perhaps spend £10,000 or £20,000 on the surface, with the result that they have not anything like the money they should have to spend down below. It would not be difficult to give glaring examples of where that has taken place, to the detriment of the country. I hope that provision will be struck out before the Bill gets through Committee. When these people take up this land they will take it up for the express purpose of finding coal. There are no mines in Queensland which require very expensive machinery on the surface, but the money is to be spent in sinking shafts, and trying to find out whether the coal is worth working or not. The Minister himself recognises that there is a possibility that the dealings may not be straightforward, by the fact that he has had to make provision.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is a safeguard.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Yes; a safeguard, which, in a great many instances does not work out, and so he has to make provision that neither machinery nor anything else shall be removed from a lease without his consent. It is just within reasonable probability that people might take "French leave," and not ask his permission, if they have no intention of doing what is right. I think that is one of the blots on the Bill, and it will be better to insist on the labour conditions. They are not heavy when you compare them with gold-mining leases, for instance. You must have one man to every 4 acres.

THE HOME SECRETARY: This is a minimum.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I know it is a minimum. Here you have to have one man to 40 acres.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is only for a time; thereafter it is one man to every 20 acres.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Even after that time the conditions are by no means arduous. From that point of view, I think that the conditions are being made quite easy. Then with regard to the royalty, I would like the Minister to explain why they differentiate between the first term and the second term. It is easy to fix the first half of the lease, but not the second half.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The mine has been completely developed then.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It may not be. I do not think the State is getting what it is entitled to, even at the higher rate that is being charged in the shape of royalty. There are several little things which will be pointed out, in regard to which I hope some amendments will be made when the Bill is going through Committee. I have pointed out those matters which appear to

me to need amendment, and we will do our best to secure such amendments in Committee.

Mr. HUNTER (*Maranoa*): I am very pleased to see that the Government have at last decided to do something in connection with mineral oil deposits which are believed to exist in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: "At last!" They have been doing it all the time.

Mr. HUNTER: I think there is something in the statement of the Minister—that the Government have been doing something of the sort all the while—still, it is not very much. It is something like two years since the Government first proposed to have a special boring plant made to try some experiments in the Roma district. It is, I think, a matter of common knowledge to most members that some seven years ago a very large flow of gas was struck in a bore at Roma which was being put down by the Government at that time for artesian water. An attempt was then made to bore deeper than was required for water purposes, but unfortunately the casing was found to be defective, and they were unable to continue. The gas continued for quite a number of years, and later on the town council endeavoured to use it for lighting and heating purposes in the town. That effort failed, but there was a strong belief that alongside of that gas, or not far away, oil was to be found. A company was formed, but it met with the same misfortune that had befallen a previous bore. The company did not think that they received justice at the hands of their contractor in the matter; and, as the Premier will recollect, during the time he occupied the position of Minister for Lands, he allowed one of the boring plants of the Lands Department to be placed over the first bore where the gas was struck, with a view of trying to recover the gas. But all these attempts failed. It is not surprising that the last one failed, because they had a very hard job to start with, because of the faulty condition of the casing. However, all the efforts were made under a belief which is very general throughout the Maranoa, that there is oil at no great distance from where the gas was struck, and I think that the department would be wise in prosecuting the search. A good deal of money has been spent in New South Wales in trying to establish the industry from shale deposits; but, as is well known, to manufacture oil from shale is much more expensive than by simply boring and finding it in the earth, and getting a flow to the surface in almost a superfine state. Of course, some oils are very much better than others as they come to the surface, but all require more or less treatment. The Government, I believe, have the intention of making some further experiments, and I understand that something will shortly come before the House in that direction. But that is one reason why I look somewhat askance at this Bill, because it seems to me that the Government are, on the one hand, about to take a step towards the nationalisation of oil, and, at the same time, by the passage of this Bill, to leave an opening for other competitors to come in and establish themselves alongside the same industry. Of course, we will be told that if the Government find oil they will be able to compete more successfully in the market, but I think the Government should take absolute control of this industry. We have seen the evils that have come to

other countries where large monopolies have been created which really, I believe, control the Governments of those countries. I refer, of course, to the Standard Oil Company. I should like to see in the initial stages of this industry the Government securing the sole control and running it themselves. It would not take a great deal of money to manufacture this oil when they get it, and the profits are so large that, as the trade grows, I believe they would produce more than sufficient capital to meet our increased expenditure. I understand that the Commonwealth Government are proposing to bore for oil in New Guinea, their reason for doing so being to supply the vessels at their naval station at Thursday Island with oil fuel. I think that it will be a very good thing if they do so, because I understand that there are strong indications that oil exists there. If they find it, then it will be a very good thing for the Government. I was also informed, on very good authority, recently in Melbourne, that the Federal Government are going to offer a reward of £10,000 for the discovery of petroleum in Australia. There is every inducement for the Queensland Government to avail themselves of whatever advantages they have in the experiments already made by private individuals—with the assistance of the Government, it may be said, because the Government subsidised the Roma bore to the extent of £1 for £1. There is also a great inducement in the fact that they would find the Commonwealth Government sympathetic, and, if successful in this venture, would obtain the £10,000 reward offered. They would foster the industry, and give it the protection that would be necessary for it to attain the success that is desired. In that case there would be nothing to fear from outside competition, and they would completely control the whole industry. I know it will be said that the Government can control the oil trade and make a profit, without soiling their fingers with the business, by imposing a royalty. Now, I do not look upon royalties as anything in the shape of a profit so far as the State is concerned. I look upon them as another form of taxation. The proprietors of mines, whether coal or oil, simply pass the royalty on to the consuming public in the shape of an increased price. In fact, what happens is that, instead of the Government raising the taxation themselves, the proprietors of the mines collect the money for them and pay it into the Treasury. It is quite possible that, if we should discover large deposits of oil in Queensland, as the trade develops we may have to enter into competition with oil produced in other countries, and then, if the companies were paying a high royalty, they could not succeed. That is one objection to a royalty. For that reason I consider the better course would be for the Government to retain all oil deposits for the State. The Commonwealth are doing it in New Guinea, and I see no reason why this State should not do the same. I know that both the Premier and the Secretary for Mines are enthusiastic in regard to this mineral oil. They believe, as I believe, that oil exists in the Roma district, and it is only a question of what is the best way of dealing with the question. In New Zealand large sums of money have been spent in trying to discover oil, and they have failed. There has not been a great deal of money spent in the Roma district, but I feel quite sure that there is oil

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in the district, and the latest report that I have received from an expert in California is most encouraging. I would like to give the House one or two short extracts from that report. It was written by a Mr. Ernest H. Wilcox, civil hydraulic engineer and surveyor, of Los Angeles, California, after perusing the whole of the reports on the two bores put down at Roma. He was also supplied with a diagram of the bore itself, showing the various strata through which the bore passed, their thickness, and so forth, and various particulars regarding the general character of the country. He says—

"In answer to your letter, I have had the matter under consideration all this time, and have talked to some of my friends, whose judgment I rely on, and we are entirely agreed that everything in the brief outline of conditions indicates the close proximity of a large body of oil.

"We find gas areas of greater or lesser extent in many places, but I have yet to learn of one that is not in more or less close proximity to the oil.

"It does, however, frequently happen that the first well put down in such a field gives, at least in the first period of its history, gas rather than oil. This is due to the heavy pressure under which the gas exists, and which keeps back the fluid. You have, in my judgment—and this is concurred in by all with whom I have spoken—tapped a gas pocket, which is fed from a large body of oil, which may be either in a loose sand, in a shale, or in a fissured rock, lying at not a great distance from it, and in all probability actually underlying the well."

My reading on the question goes to show that the nature of the country passed through is a great indication of whether oil is likely to exist there or not. It is generally in country where marine shells and other deposits of that nature are found that oil has been discovered. Throughout the whole of our Western country you will find marine shells and different kinds of marine fossils. In California, where some of the biggest oil wells—in fact, gushes—have been found, they have been found in marine country. I believe even the strata passed through in the Roma bore are not dissimilar from the strata in which oil is found in California. All this is most encouraging, and I think that the Government would be well advised if, instead of grafting on to this Coal Bill provisions for the leasing of oil deposits to large companies which will ultimately control not only the oilfields but other large industries, they adhere to the determination they came to a year or two ago to test the fields for themselves. It does not require a great deal of money, and the discovery of one oil well in Queensland would repay us over and over again, and it would probably lead to the discovery of a good many others. There are in the Bill provisions which I think are greatly in need of alteration, as far as oil is concerned. I think the areas and the term of the lease are too big and too long. I think no attempt should be made in this Bill to include our oil deposits, which are far too valuable to part with on the terms proposed here. Of course, the Minister can refuse to grant a license or give a lease; but it would be better for the Government to start boring themselves, and

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offer rewards for any discovery of oil that may be made. That would have this effect: Where station-owners and others boring for water strike the strata indicative of the presence of oil, they would be encouraged to go to greater depths in the hope of receiving the reward. The opinion of this gentleman from Los Angeles with regard to tools becoming fixed is that the rush of gas carried the fine sand into the hole and caused the whole thing to be shored up, making it impossible to remove the tools. The right thing to do would have been to put a powerful pump to work, force the water down, and stir up the sand, bringing up the casing with the water. The same thing happened to the tools in both cases, showing the great force underneath. And the greater the force, the greater the promise of oil, and the larger the quantity. Seeing that the Government have two bores within 150 yards of each other, in which large bodies of gas have been struck—87 per cent. of which has been proved by analysis to be petroleum—there is a strong indication that oil will be found in the vicinity. We know that petroleum gas bears the same relationship to oil that steam bears to water—it is simply vaporised oil, as steam is vaporised water. I hope the Minister will be induced to drop from this Bill everything in connection with granting leases to any company prospecting for oil. One company made an attempt, but failed; and although I was a member of that company I shall not be sorry for its failure if it means that the Government are going to take possession of our oilfields and work them profitably for the people of the State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUNTER: It will mean no great loan expenditure—no great financial assistance; and I believe the profits will be sufficient to pay for the development. As far as coal is concerned in the Maranoa district, the Minister sent Mr. Cameron there, but his investigations were of a very formal nature and did not extend to any degree. It is proposed shortly, however, to have another investigation made, and I know the Commissioner for Railways is anxious to have the field tested, because a supply of good coal there would mean a saving in the carriage of coal for railway purposes of a distance of 200 miles. There is coal there as good, for steaming purposes, as the Gowrie coal; the only question is as to the quantity. But I am a great deal more interested in the oil than in the coal, and I am convinced that it would be a great mistake if we were to part with this great asset which I believe exists without question, and which would be the means of relieving us of a great deal of taxation. Let the Government offer a reward, and do a certain amount of testing themselves each year, and they will be doing the wisest thing for Queensland. (Hear, hear!)

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN (*Burrum*): I hail with a good deal of delight the introduction of this measure dealing with the coal industry, which is bound to play a very important part in the industrial development of Queensland in the near future. We have only to look at what has been done by the coalmining industry in other parts of the Commonwealth and in other countries to see what a great factor it is in the financial and industrial life of any country. The Bill contains many excellent provisions, which will go a long way to stimulate

the development of our marvellous coal resources. We have ample evidence that such resources exist, because coal deposits have been discovered from the Southern part of the State to the Northern portion as far as Cooktown. Some of them have been proved to be of a profitable thickness; others have not been sufficiently explored to show whether they are payable or not; and I think that, by placing greater facilities in the way of prospecting, we are taking a step in the direction of progress. Something has been said in regard to the areas, but I do not think the areas mentioned are at all excessive. First of all, the prospecting area of 2,560 acres is not a large area, seeing that, if payable coal or oil is discovered, the area will be considerably reduced. If a man is going to carry out exploration work, he cannot do much good if you limit him to a very small area. I do not think that the four square miles offered in this Bill is anything too large. On this point I join issue with the hon. member for Charters Towers, who

seemed to have a feeling that [8 p.m.] we are giving too large an area, even in granting a lease for 640 acres. I admit that the area is double that which is specified in the the 1898 Act, but it seems to me that anybody who has been closely associated with goldmining for, perhaps, all his life, is apt to become narrow-minded when he comes to deal with coalmining. The two industries are entirely dissimilar. If coalmining is to be carried on in anything like a satisfactory way, it can only be by giving those engaged in the industry a large area. It would be ridiculous for a man to go to a large expense in sinking a shaft and erecting expensive machinery if he could only operate over a few acres of ground. Nobody would care to do that kind of thing.

MR. THEODORE: You have to do it now.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN: That may be the reason why our coal resources have not been developed as they should have been. Hon. members will find, if they look at the coalmines in the old country and in New South Wales, that most of the important collieries have a considerable area of land under lease or as freehold. The hon. member for Maranoa took exception to the provision contained in the Bill with regard to royalties, and said that the amount would be passed on by the proprietor to the consumer—that is, from the mineowner to the person using the coal; but I do not agree with the hon. member. The minerals belong to the State, just as timber belongs to the State, and the State should receive something for those minerals. No member would get up here and advocate that the timber on our timber reserves should be given for nothing. We receive a royalty on all timber that is sold, and I think the State should receive a royalty on all coal obtained from these leases.

MR. FOLEY: We say the State should hold the lot.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN: The hon. member would go to the other extreme. Dealing with the question of the rent which is to be payable on coal leases, I would ask what is a rent of 6d. per acre per annum? It only amounts to £16 a year on a lease of 640 acres. It is generally provided in a coal lease that a royalty shall be

paid on all coal produced or sold, in addition to a fixed minimum annual rental, and the object of that is to insure that the lessee shall work the property, to a certain extent, at all events. I should like to see some provision of that kind embodied in this Bill. We do not want to see a person taking up an area of 640 acres, and merely paying 6d. an acre per annum rental. Even if a lessee does comply with the labour conditions, we do not want to have a large area of valuable country locked up without the Crown receiving something for it. There are only two conditions or covenants in this lease, so far as the lessee is concerned. One is that he shall pay an annual rental of 6d. per acre, and the second is that he shall either employ sixteen men during the first two years, and thirty-two during the remaining period of the lease, or shall expend £1,600 per annum during the first two years, and £3,200 per annum during the remainder of the term. Suppose he elects the latter alternative, or even suppose he chooses the former, although the Government will receive 6d. per acre per annum, which is not sufficient, I think it would be a wiser thing to safeguard the State by provisions which will secure the working of the property; and that, as in the case of most leases of this kind, it should be made a condition that a royalty and a fixed annual royalty should be paid to the Crown. With regard to the question of royalty, I think the provisions in the Bill may be taken as fairly liberal. The royalty is 2d. per ton during the first ten years of the lease, if the land is more than 100 miles from a seaport, and 3d. per ton if the land is not more than 100 miles from a seaport. I scarcely see the reason for this differentiation. It is only 1d. per ton, certainly, as far as the royalty is concerned; but the result of this differentiation is that a man who discovers coal 99 miles from a seaport will have to pay only 3d. per ton royalty, while a man who discovers coal 200 miles away will have to pay 2d. per ton, and after the first ten years both will have to pay at the same rate.

MR. THEODORE: Oh, no; 4d. and 6d. respectively.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN: Yes, that is so; the one will have to pay 4d. and the other 6d. per ton. But, having regard to the cost of land carriage, which is a very heavy item, I do not think that is quite fair. With respect to the labour conditions, I think they are quite reasonable and fair to everybody. If sixteen men were employed at coalmining during the first two years, they would probably be occupied in sinking shafts and in the early development work, and I do not see any great objection in that respect. I do not see any provision in the Bill—I may have overlooked it—but I do not see any provision whereby, after a lease has been entered into between the lessee and the Government, and the proposition proves unpayable, the lease may be broken or terminated. Most of us who have any knowledge of coalmining at all know that it sometimes happens that by meeting with a fault or a dyke the whole scam may be thrown off a particular property. It would be unfair if, in the event of an individual entering into a lease for twenty-one years, he should find after five or ten years that it was no longer a payable venture, that he should be compelled to continue to

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pay for the remainder of the term the rent covenanted in the lease. There is a provision in the latter part of the Bill where exemption may be granted in the event of spending more money in the first half-year than is prescribed under the covenant, but that can be inquired into later on. I do not see anything in the Bill that will enable any company to terminate the lease in the event of the coal petering out altogether.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The conditions of the present Mining Act will apply then.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN: With these few suggestions which I have made I think that the Bill generally is a good one and will go a long way to give that stimulus to the coal industry for which we have been crying out for so long. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. THEODORE: The suggestion made by the hon. member for Queenton, and supported and elaborated by the hon. member for Maranoa, regarding the nationalisation of the mineral oil industry, is one which I think should weigh with the Government. Just at present we have nothing in the nature of a mineral oil industry in Queensland. There were some prospects of it a year or two ago in connection with the operations for mineral oil at Roma, but unfortunately they were not realised. It seems to me that if we are likely to have a substantial industry of that sort it would be much better if it were entirely in the hands, and under the control, of the Government. The experience of other countries in connection with the exploitation of mineral oil has, I think, been most unhappy; and if we can avoid the evil of allowing this oil industry to get into the hands of monopolists who have already exploited many countries, we should take such steps as we can to avoid it. (Hear, hear!) It is an entirely different industry to the mining industry. The prospecting for mineral oil is not such a business that the ordinary mining prospector can go with his pick over his shoulder and, with little other equipment, go out to prospect for oil. It requires a very extensive plant to search for oil, and it is such a business in which the Government itself should engage. The encouragement which is apparently offered in the Bill to prospectors to discover mineral oil will not have any effect, because the general prospector for minerals cannot engage in the discovery of mineral oil at all. It would be far better in a measure such as this if the State declared its absolute right to all the mineral oil in the State, and then carried on a vigorous prospecting policy in likely parts of the country in order that the industry may be established if we have the oil within the boundaries of the State. (Hear, hear!) That is an idea which may be followed up, and which should be undertaken by the Government. No one can gainsay the value of a mineral oil industry. The Government should adopt the suggestion which was made by the hon. member for Maranoa. If the Government have any intention in the future of controlling the industry, it is unfair to encourage prospectors to engage in it and use their resources in establishing an industry and then deprive them of the profits of it. It would be much better if the Government stepped in before any private interests were acquired in the business. With regard to the alteration of the conditions

[*Lieut.-Colonel Rankin.*]

concerning the coalmining leases, I have a word or two to say on that. I do not agree with the hon. member for Burrum in the matter of the increased areas granted for coalmining leases or the reduced labour covenant. I think it is a bad principle to allow monopolists to engage in any business if that business can be carried on equally as well by a much larger number of persons, or by the State itself. I cannot see any advantage at all in allowing large companies to accumulate large areas in a coalmining business in preference to small companies with small areas. It is different to metalliferous mining, where the companies sink many thousands of feet, and where in some circumstances it is a distinct advantage to have large companies and a large area of leases in order to carry on the business. In this case coal is usually found at a shallow depth—

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: Not necessarily.

Mr. THEODORE: I know that coal is being mined in the Balmain Colliery of New South Wales at a depth of 2,000 feet, but, generally speaking, it is a fact that the coal is found at shallow depths, and the depth does not increase, as the seams are usually flat and there is no extra cost for development.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: There are exceptions.

Mr. THEODORE: There are exceptions, I admit, but in coalmining there is no distinct advantage to be gained by having large companies with large areas of leases. It would, I think, be far better to have the small companies with the smaller areas. It is only encouraging monopolists to operate in such a way that they can become a bigger evil to the community, as they did in New South Wales when they increased the areas and gave extra facilities for amalgamation purposes. There is no necessity for it, and it should not be done in Queensland, where it does not require an aggregation of capital more than the ordinary proprietor has in order to develop these seams of coal. The Hon. the Secretary for Mines is making a serious departure in increasing the area of the leases and in reducing the labour obligations. In that matter he has not justified the departure he is making. In the principal Act, in the sections dealing with coalmining, the labour conditions involve the employment of one man for every 10 acres of lease taken up, but under this measure it is proposed to reduce the number of men employed in respect to coal leases and make it one man for every 40 acres in respect to the first two years, and after that one man for every 20 acres.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: You could not employ more than that in the first two years.

Mr. THEODORE: That is not an accurate statement.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: There is very little coal land held.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I pointed out that the operations were mostly on freehold land, and the only control we have is for the safety of the miners.

Mr. THEODORE: If actual coalmining is to be carried on they will employ more than one man to every 10 acres of leasehold.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is the minimum.

Mr. THEODORE: It is too small. It enables a company or the proprietor of a lease to put on the minimum number of men he must employ.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If they have a good seam they will soon put on the maximum number.

Mr. THEODORE: They may hold the land for the purpose of getting a better market for their coal, or while waiting for railway development, or until they get better prices; and you are permitting them to hold it under these conditions to the detriment of the industry and of the whole State. It is an unreasonable thing, and I do not see why the Minister should make this departure. The Minister says that more men will be employed if they strike a rich seam, but the possibility is that the rich seam will be shepherded by the minimum number of men. The very fact that he gives an alternative covenant in connection with the labour conditions is another thing which supports my argument that there is an opportunity for monopolists to tie up areas of country which should be worked. The alternative covenant will not impose such harsh conditions on the employer as the labour conditions. Under the labour conditions one man must be employed for every 20 acres after the second year, and the other condition is that £100 in respect of every 20 acres will be spent during the first six months in every year. If he imposes only the one covenant—the covenant prescribing the labour conditions—it will necessarily involve the expenditure of at least £100 for every 20 acres. Therefore, it might as well have said the compliance with the labour conditions for six months in every year will entitle the lessee to exemption for six months in every year. Every mineowner will necessarily avail himself, if possible, of the second alternative, and I do not see that it should be permitted. I could quite understand if it imposed an obligation to expend a greater sum of money, but to limit it to only £100 for every 20 acres means that in every twelve months the mineowners can get a six months' exemption if they take advantage of that covenant. The thing is pernicious and certainly should not be encouraged. Coalmines have hitherto been worked on very much more stringent and drastic conditions, and I may point out that there are coalmines at present worked under lease from the Government, and, as far as I know, the labour conditions have not been complained about. The labour conditions are fair, and the Minister should not depart from the principle of making the conditions sufficiently drastic to ensure the proper development of the mine. I do not know on what principle the Minister lays down that he requires double royalty after the first ten years. I know he stated, by way of interjection, when the hon. member for Queenton was speaking, that the reason was that after ten years the mine would be sufficiently developed and the proprietor could afford to pay extra royalty. I do not think that argument has very much weight, because whatever development is necessary can be carried out in a couple of years, and I think that will be borne out by the hon. member for Burrum. Therefore, I say to ask for a nominal royalty for the first

ten years and a fair royalty after that time—there is no principle laid down to justify it.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: It will take more than two years to open up a mine properly.

Mr. THEODORE: It certainly will not take ten years. Again, the discrimination the Minister makes in the situation of the mines is not one of any real importance. Anyhow, it is only 1d. per ton after the 100-mile limit is passed. One penny per ton would not be a consideration towards the extra freight. Once the coal is carried more than 10 or 12 miles the freight is so great that the remission of 1d. per ton royalty is a mere bagatelle. Under the old Act there was a common royalty of 3d. per ton, and I think it would work just as well as this. It is right enough in principle to make a distinction between mines close to a seaport and those distant inland in order to encourage the latter, but 1d. per ton is a mere bagatelle. A question was raised by the hon. member for Queenton which should be seriously considered by the Minister; that is, the question of what would be the position of employees regarding their right to take up mining homesteads within close proximity to these coalmining leases. I do not know whether the finding of coal at present at a place like Bundamba would necessarily mean that the place would be gazetted as a mineral field.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They are all freehold, but I made it abundantly clear that if there was any doubt in the matter it could be altered in Committee.

Mr. THEODORE: It is also necessary to make arrangements for the miners to get a fair area for residential purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There will be no difficulty about that.

Mr. THEODORE: If there will be no difficulty on that point, I will not labour the question. There is one other matter on which I desire information. Under this Bill leases may be taken up for the purpose of mining for coal, and it necessarily involves the payment of 6d. per acre rent and certain royalty on all coal found. But in the event of the discovery of other minerals on the same lease, would they be permitted to mine for other minerals on the same lease without paying extra rent? Under the principal Act mining for other minerals than coal will involve the payment of 10s. per acre rent. Will it be made perfectly clear that, if a company takes up a lease for the purpose of mining for coal and working other minerals, they will have to pay the increased rent.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is no question about that. It is a different thing, and they would have to get a lease for that particular purpose.

Mr. THEODORE: The Bill does not make that clear. It merely makes it clear that a lease may be applied for and that it will be a mineral lease.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It will be distinct from a coal lease.

Mr. THEODORE: If it is necessary to make a further application and there is an obligation to pay the increased rent, I am quite satisfied. There are other provisions in the Bill with regard to which we may ask for further information in Committee, and I hope the Minister will be in a reasonable enough spirit to accept amendments. I

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should like an opportunity to have a discussion and get a declaration in favour of the nationalisation of the oil industry, and I hope that the Secretary for Mines will be found to be in favour of such a proposition.

Mr. WILLIAMS: It appears to me members on the other side of the House are entirely opposed to this Bill.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. WILLIAMS: If one can judge from their arguments they are opposed to the Bill. They have put it this way: Because a poor man cannot go out with his pick and dig for coal, a man who has capital should not be allowed to do so. The hon. member for Chillagoe has talked about nationalisation. This is a subject I am burning for information on. I have heard this term of nationalisation so very often that I would like hon. members opposite to give a definition, and I would ask them how would they nationalise a place like Charters Towers?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: That is not an oilfield.

Mr. WILLIAMS: It is a goldfield. I understand the hon. member for Chillagoe asked the Government to allow the country to gamble in oil measures. I say it would be impossible to bring in a scheme to nationalise all these things. In the case of the mines on Charters Towers, there is a mine there called the Brilliant Deeps, which has been worked for twenty-five years, and £40,000 or £50,000 has been spent on it. If that place had been nationalised [8.30 p.m.] ten years ago, and had other mines been nationalised ten years ago, I can safely say that Charters Towers would now be a cattle station. I hope hon. members on the other side will drop this mania for nationalisation, or show us some sensible way of providing for it.

The PREMIER: It is very interesting to note the way in which this Bill has been discussed in the Chamber. Hon. members have appreciated the importance of coal and oil to the State, and I think the hon. member who has just resumed his seat has slightly misconstrued the attitude of the Opposition in respect to the Bill.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I think it has received rather a generous handling. We all know what an important element coal is in the development of any country. I suppose Britain to-day is largely the power that it is as a manufacturing country by reason of its cheap coal. It may be said that we have sufficient coal dug out every year to meet our requirements for this State. Possibly that is so, but it is well known that large seams of coal exist in our State, yet, unfortunately, very large quantities of coke are being brought to-day from the Southern States to our smelting works. I think the object of the department in providing for differential rates from the seaboard is not that 1d. a ton makes much difference in encouraging people to prospect for coal for export, but rather that there may be prospecting done to provide coal in the vicinity of many of the rich auriferous beds inland in Queensland. Take Cloncurry, for instance. The large quantity of coke that is going up that line adds very materially to the cost of the output of the copper mines in that vicinity, and it is quite likely that some mines are unable to operate because

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the cost of smelting is too great. One object which may be attained by the introduction of this Bill will be in encouraging prospecting, say, in the neighbourhood of Cloncurry, Chillagoe, or Mount Morgan. We learned quite recently from a report that even that world-renowned mountain, Mount Morgan, has practically ceased to be a goldmine, and is now a copper proposition, and it is highly desirable that they should have a cheap fuel. If the outcome of this measure is to encourage prospecting, so that a fuel may be produced for Mount Morgan, or for Chillagoe or Cloncurry, a great good will accrue. (Hear, hear!) I was not long ago up at Chillagoe. That is a most wonderful mineral country, but it appeared to me that one important thing required there was a cheap fuel, in order that many propositions might be worked profitably. So that the purpose of the Bill is in regard to coal to encourage prospecting, with a hope that it may assist in the development of our inland industries; and not only so, but also to provide for an increased export trade. There was a time, and not many years ago, when the boats along the coast were able to get coal very much cheaper than they can now, and at that time they stated that our Queensland coals, with the exception of one or two mines, were not equal to their requirements. But that kind of talk has disappeared, because, owing to the coming of so many wool boats and oversea boats, our coal has been much more freely used, prices have gone up, employment is much more constant, and shipping companies are recognising the value of our coals. We are given to understand that some of our coals are quite equal to the best that can be obtained anywhere, and there is no knowing what may come to us when the Panama Canal is opened in a few years' time. We know quite well that in the United States, in regard to many of their food products, they are saying the day is not far distant when they will cease to export. Fuel is at a very high rate there, and it is not by any means a wild stretch of imagination that coal may, when the Panama Canal is opened, go from Queensland even to the United States. The only thing may be that the cheaper labour of the East, in regard to China, may, in that respect, cut us out. It is pleasing to see the manner in which the Bill is being received. The details are subject to close investigation, and I do not think the Minister has brought this Bill before the House with any firm determination in regard to the details.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That is a matter on which opinions can be exchanged, and alterations effected. I was much interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Maranoa, because, as a layman, and one who does not profess to have the least knowledge of mineral development, I have, since first going up to Roma, and on subsequent occasions, had the conviction that oil can be obtained in that neighbourhood. The hon. member has urged that there should be no leases granted. Let me tell the House that quite recently application has been made for leases, and they have been refused, because the department have had many reports made by their own officers, none of whom are specialists in oil matters—they are good geologists, but they are not oil specialists—and the course we pursue is to

submit these reports to the Agent-General, who will call in the best advice and opinions possible upon these reports. (Hear, hear!) Some people may say: "What is the use of making investigations in London?" But there are those in England who have had to do very largely with the oil wells of the East, and also in Russia, and we can get the very highest class of opinion; but the Agent-General is being advised that, if it is thought desirable to have the opinion checked or supplemented, we should seek such an opinion from the United States. Not only are we asking him to get an opinion as to the reports which our officers have from time to time been able to make, and the information obtained in the boring on former occasions, but we are also asking him to recommend to us a capable expert borer.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The impression prevails in the Maranoa district that there were some very peculiar accidents in relation to recent boring, and we do not intend, if it is by any means possible, that accidents of that nature, or suspected nature, shall arise; consequently, we want the most expert man we can get. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member was perfectly right in saying that some time ago a plant had been prepared with the idea of sending it there. The matter—if I may use a word which has been employed this session—has been "side-tracked." The Lands Department were very pressed for boring for water, and it got side-tracked; but perhaps it was as well, because we really had no party who could be regarded as a thorough expert in this matter. All the evidences, such as can be gathered here, go to show that there is an oil-bearing area, and I think that has been demonstrated, and we are taking active steps to further investigate, and, if warranted, explore. As far as the Crown can control it, no leases will be granted under this proposition until we have realised what the situation is. It is quite likely that oil may be in many more areas besides the one to which our eyes for a long time have been turning, and we are merely asking in this Bill for power, in case the Crown eventually turns it down, if somebody else chooses to have a look in at the proposition, there may be some such opportunity given. (Hear, hear!) As to the question of nationalisation, it cannot be said that in this matter we are trenching on the business of anyone else. We have a perfectly clear field, and it is a matter in which the State is so vitally interested that, whatever may be the subsequent determination regarding the control of the output, the immediate course of action which commends itself to the Government is, that the Crown should prosecute a diligent and vigilant inquiry.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: If there be a few thousands of pounds lost, well ventures more questionable than that have before now been the means of losing money. We are not in the least disturbed, but, on the contrary, are encouraged to get the best expert opinion we can; and, if the verdict should be favourable, the Agent-General has been asked to get the expert to give us details as to the machinery required. With the least possible delay we shall determine this big thing. (Hear, hear!) We know what it means to our settlers in the West.

At present the freights they have to pay on oils are pretty high, and, if oil can be obtained out here, it will assist very much in lessening the cost of household maintenance. Then again, oils are being used so increasingly as a motive power that it means a very big thing in that direction also. I can assure the House that the purpose of the Bill, so far as regards coal, is to encourage prospecting. If the royalties are considered too low, well, it is not often a Government is against increasing royalties. (Laughter.) If the area is too large, and it can be shown that it is too large, there is no reason why it should not be reduced. But we do not want to pretend to give with the one hand and take back with the other. We want to give thorough encouragement for the prospecting of coal—not around Brisbane, because there are no Crown lands in this neighbourhood; but there are the big areas to which I have referred in which, if coal can be discovered from which coke can be made, it means a great deal. It is not long since the people of Charters Towers, owing to the surrounding country for miles around being pretty well denuded of timber, considered it a matter of great moment that they should be connected by rail with the Blair Athol Coalfield, so that they might be able to get cheaper fuel to work their mines. I do not suppose the quantity of coal used by a goldmine is at all comparable with the quantity used by smelting works; consequently, if it is important to a goldfield to have cheaper fuel, we can see how much more important it is to a copper field; and the object of a low royalty is, if possible, to encourage the finding of coal in the inside districts, and also on the coast, in the hope of building up an export trade. I do not intend to delay the passage of the Bill, because the House has been in such a good working humour to-day that I think we might release you, Sir, from the chair at a relatively early hour, but I felt it my business to assure the House that, so far as the Crown can, it is going to keep the oil industry in its own hands.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*): I must congratulate the Premier on coming a step towards this side of the House, so far as his remarks regarding the control of oil by the Crown are concerned. I was rather surprised at the hon. member for Charters Towers thinking that members on this side who have spoken were opposed to the Bill. I think the hon. member misunderstood them, and the hon. member for Maranoa had a tribute paid to him by the Premier for his dissertation on the oil deposits in the Maranoa district. There is just one point I would like to deal with. The Premier said that we have practically no competition in regard to oil, and therefore the Crown was justified in preserving what, we hope, will be a splendid supply of oil in this State. I do not think that the hon. gentleman need trouble himself about competition. In Victoria, where it is not a Labour Government which is in power, they are working a State coalmine successfully. In New South Wales, the Secretary for Mines stated some little time ago that he purposed instituting a State coalmine. New Zealand has had a couple of State coalmines for some considerable time; and, if we have this prospecting carried out, as indicated in the Bill, I think there is a possibility of the Government here

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having a coalmine established. I do not suggest that it should be confined to any particular district, but I think it would be a decided advantage to the State. The experience of America, as indicated by the hon. member for Maranoa, should be a warning to Australia. Anyone who has read the history of the Standard Oil Company knows how that tremendous monopoly or trust controls the trade, not only in the States and in Great Britain, but almost over the whole world. We know the difficulty they had in putting out the fire in the Roma Bore, and I heard quite a number of people express the opinion that that was an evidence of the existence of oil. We have heard one of the best opinions in support of that belief in the quotation read to-night by the hon. member for Maranoa. That was the opinion of an American gentleman who has had a very wide experience in connection with oil wells in that country. I am delighted that the Premier is going to take the course he has outlined, and is going to get the best expert obtainable. I am delighted to think that, if the possibility that there is oil in the State turns out to be a reality, the industry is to be controlled by the State, and that it will be our own, to be treasured for those who come after us. It is an excellent idea, and I hope that the Government will be firm. Of course, we have the assurance of the Premier that that will be so, and I have no reason to doubt his word. The hon. gentleman gave us the best proof of his intention to carry out that intention when he told us that the Government had recently declined to grant leases.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have refused some this week.

Mr. BOWMAN: That shows that the Government realise that there is a treasure there, if they can only find it, which will be of material benefit to the State. I sincerely trust that they will not confine themselves to the oil, but will establish a State coalmine, which, I think, will be profitable to the State, and particularly to those districts where they have to treat ores requiring large quantities of coal and coke.

Mr. DOUGLAS (*Cook*): I fully agree with the passing of a measure of this kind, which, I think, will tend to the development of some of the great mineral wealth we have in Queensland. Some hon. members seem to think that the area has been laid down on too large a scale; but it must be remembered that the coal industry gives employment to a large number of people, and involves the investment and expenditure of a large sum of money, not only in the opening up of mines, but also in finding markets and developing an export trade. It may be that in the past the inducements held out to people to invest in coalmining here have not been sufficiently attractive, owing to the areas being somewhat small and the conditions as to manning the ground somewhat severe. With regard to the question of royalty on coal which is mined more than 100 miles from the coast, I think that when such coal is exported there should be a rebate of the royalty, because in order to get that coal to a seaport it will have to pass over Government railways and increase their earnings. This applies particularly to such a line as the Cairns line, because there is a large amount of traffic to Chillagoe in connection with the smelting, and many of the trucks go back empty, and the rolling-

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stock might be used for the purpose of taking coal and coke to the coast for export purposes. In the district I represent, in the far North, there is undoubtedly a large store of coal wealth; and I shall at all times be a strong advocate of legislation that will help to develop our coal resources.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*): After listening to the speeches on both sides, it seems to me that the consensus of opinion is that the State should not part with its resources in oil and coal. That is a policy which, I understand, has always been the policy of this party; and it is also part of our policy that these public utilities should be worked by the State, or, in other words, that they should be nationalised. But while there is this consensus of opinion, I cannot get away from the fact, in reading the Bill, that it provides the machinery—it even provides machinery that does not at present exist—for letting these mineral oilfields pass into the hands of companies. The hon. member for Maranoa delivered a very able speech on the question; and I understand that two companies have already applied for licenses in the Roma district to bore for mineral oils, but so far the Government have refused to grant those licenses. I understand that they have not power to grant leases for the purpose of boring for oil. Though a company may get a lease for coalmining, there is no power to take possession of any oil and use it for their profit; but if we pass this Bill, we shall be placing in the hands of the Minister the machinery for handing over these mineral fields to such companies—to companies that are really the pups—if I may so term them—of the Standard Oil Trust of America. I think there ought to be in the Bill provisions empowering or directing the Executive to carry on prospecting for coal and mineral oil.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is not necessary; the power is inherent.

Mr. RYAN: I think it is necessary; and it would be a good thing to put into the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have to come to Parliament and ask for an appropriation. That is what we did in connection with the exploration of the Dawson field.

Mr. RYAN: I understand that; but I say they should be directed by Parliament to carry on this work.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is another matter.

Mr. RYAN: While I say we ought to give direction to the Government to carry on coalmines or prospect for mineral oils, as far as I am at present advised, I am open to hear argument.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Suppose the Committee of Supply refused to vote the necessary amount for the work, where would you be then?

Mr. RYAN: If Parliament gave such a direction to the Government, the Committee of Supply, which is constituted from the same Parliament, would vote the necessary funds.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It would not necessarily be the same Parliament.

Mr. RYAN: If there is no dissension amongst members on the other side, I think we shall go on for three years, and the works

I am suggesting can be in full swing before the end of that time. I hope some member representing a mining district—or, perhaps, the hon. member for Maranoa, who seems to have a grasp of the whole matter—will move an amendment in the nature of an instruction to the Committee to insert in the Bill provisions for prospecting and mining for coal and oil by the Government. I think that, instead of empowering the Government to give away these great sources of wealth, these things which have made [9 p.m.] millionaires in the United States of America, Parliament should give them a direction to carry on prospecting for coal and mineral oil themselves, and I hope that something of that kind will be done.

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

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at four minutes past 9 o'clock.
