

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 1917

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"2. Why did the Government s.s. 'Excelsior' not take any lime as part of her cargo on her recent trip to Mackay, seeing that lime was required for the sugar industry quite as urgently as sacks?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. The Government had no connection with the despatch of the s.s. 'Porpoise' other than to announce for the information of the public the fact that she had been chartered to take a load of lime and sugar bags to Mackay (see 'Courier' of 20th September).

"2. The 'Excelsior' had a full cargo, and in any case she is not adapted for the carrying of lime tanks."

FEES PAID TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

Mr. PETRIE asked the Assistant Minister for Justice, without notice—

"Will the hon. member tell the House when the return asked for by me in reference to the fees paid to barristers and solicitors will be ready, seeing that he told me a day or two ago that the return was being expedited?"

HON. J. A. FIELLY replied—

"The Crown Solicitor informed me a few days back that he was waiting for some outstanding account, probably in connection with an overcharge."

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER, 1917.

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

PAPER.

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

Second annual report of the Commissioner for Taxes under section 6 of the Land Tax Act.

QUESTIONS.

COST OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REFERENDUM.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Home Secretary or Minister acting for him—

"Referring to the answer given to my question on 18th July last, regarding the cost of the referendum on the question of abolishing the Upper House, can he now state the total cost of the said referendum?"

HON. J. A. FIELLY (*Paddington*), on behalf of the Home Secretary (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*), replied—

"To date, £13,785 10s. 7d."

GOVERNMENT DESPATCH OF VESSELS TO MACKAY.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*), in the absence of Mr. Hodge, asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Will he explain to what extent, if any, he or the Government was connected with the despatch of the s.s. 'Porpoise' to Mackay?

[*Hon. A. J. Jones.*

STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS BILL. INITIATION.

The PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*), in moving—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to authorise the establishment, continuance, and carrying on of State iron and steel works and other industries, and for other purposes,"

said: The leader of the Opposition has called "Not formal" to this motion, but I presume he does not desire me to go fully into the exact contents of the Bill that the Government propose to introduce, as we will have an opportunity when the House gets into Committee and on the second-reading stage of dealing with the principles contained in the Bill. I need only say that we are carrying out the programme that was laid down in the policy speech delivered at Barcaldine in March, 1915, where it stated—

"We will ascertain the practicability of establishing in proximity to our rich iron and coal deposits works for the production of iron and steel."

It was also stated in the Governor's Speech at the opening of this session that a Bill would be introduced to authorise the establishment of State iron and steel works. As hon. members are aware, a commission has been appointed to deal with the construction of railways, and a commission was issued asking them to inquire into the practicability of establishing State iron and steel works. They have furnished a progress report, the main purport of which is to the effect that—

"Sufficient evidence, however, has now been placed before your commission to justify them in coming to the following conclusions, namely:—

1. That all the essentials are in this State for the successful manufacture of pig iron;

2. That a complete plant for the manufacture of pig iron can be established at a cost not exceeding £5,000;

3. That such a plant could be utilised for the testing in bulk of iron ore from different parts of the State, thus deciding whether the various deposits are suitable for smelting and converting into steel;

4. That, taking present prices, and rates that must obtain for at least a considerable time after the war, the making of pig iron would be a profitable undertaking for the State;

5. That the site chosen for such works would not in any way affect the selection of a site for central iron and steel works if finally decided upon by the commission."

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: What about the supply of copper?

THE PREMIER: At present we are dealing with the establishment of State iron and steel works. When copper has to be dealt with, I shall take the opportunity of addressing the House on that matter. The Bill is to authorise the establishment, continuance, and carrying on of State iron and steel works and other industries. The Bill will authorise the Minister (who will be defined as being the Secretary for Mines or other Minister of the Crown to whom any powers and duties are assigned by the Governor in Council) to establish, undertake, maintain, and carry on the business of searching for, mining, smelting iron and iron ores, and any metal, mineral or product used or for the use in such business, and the manufacture and production of iron and steel, and the manufacture of chattels, articles, and things composed wholly or in part of iron or steel, and the sale, supply, or other disposal of the ores, metals, and manufactured products of such business so carried on by him. Wide powers will be given to the Minister, e.g.—

(i.) He shall have and may exercise the powers and privileges, etc., of the Crown.

(ii.) In his official name he may sue and be sued: He may take, purchase or otherwise acquire, lease, etc., and hold land, works, etc.

(iii.) He may construct and erect buildings, smelters, warehouses, tramways, etc.

(iv.) Where land is resumed such power shall be exercised under the Public Works Land Resumption Acts.

(v.) He may appoint managers, engineers, workmen.

(vi.) He may open and work mines and generally carry on the business of mining in all its branches.

Unalienated Crown lands may be set apart for the purposes of the measure. There will be provision for the creation of the necessary funds at the Treasury and for the audit thereof by the Auditor-General.

HON. J. G. APPEL: What about mud?

THE PREMIER: I do not know if the hon member for Albert wishes to listen to me.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am listening all the time.

THE PREMIER: Power will also be given for the extension of the operations of the measure for the carrying on of the business designated by proclamation in such proclamation. Power will also be given for the making of regulations to give effect to the measure. I think that fairly covers the proposed measure, and I move the motion accordingly.

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): I called "Not formal" to this motion for the purpose of getting an explanation from the Chief Secretary as to what were the principal contents of the Bill. He has to some extent elaborated the measure, and told us what he proposes to do. I do not think there is any necessity for the measure. I do not know that the population of Queensland is sufficient at the present time to go on with speculative works of this kind. It would be much better if the Premier were to give notice of the introduction of a measure to encourage private enterprise in this direction. I am afraid that this is one of those measures which the Government have been in the habit of introducing since they took office interfering with private enterprise.

THE PREMIER: Private enterprise has not entered upon it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We are quite aware that we have to look for pitfalls in all the legislation introduced by hon. members on the front Treasury bench.

THE PREMIER: All you have succeeded in doing is falling into the pit, as a rule.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I candidly admit that we have succeeded in falling into the pit on more than one occasion, because we thought we were dealing with honourable men.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: We did not look for any pit. Here is one of those measures which does not deal merely with the iron industry. I know that hon. members opposite are interested in the establishment of the iron and steel industry, but this motion gives power to deal with other industries. We hope, when we come to deal with the measure, that we will be able to get from the Minister in charge some information as to what these other industries are that they propose to deal with. We will then have an opportunity of knowing what sort of legislation it is, and whether it is for the benefit of the country. If the Government are passing it merely because it is on the Government programme—well, they have got a majority behind them to do it. If it is for development purposes, then I fail to see how they are going to achieve anything of much significance for Queensland. At present there are iron and steel works established in the Commonwealth, and if the men are allowed to work and carry on the industry, then the output of these works is more than sufficient for all the supplies of material for the requirements of the population we have.

MR. PAYNE: That is absolutely incorrect.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Queensland is short of material.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We know that the hon. gentleman who interjected that it was

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absolutely incorrect was one of the hon. gentlemen who signed the report just read by the Chief Secretary. I ask the hon. gentleman is he an expert in regard to these matters? Do you think that anyone would employ the hon. gentleman for the purpose of giving an expert opinion upon either iron or steel, or any works of a similar character? The hon. gentleman belongs to a commission who have been roving about the country for the purpose of earning their salaries, and he comes here and, in the way he has demonstrated this afternoon, tries to force down our throats that we know nothing at all about the industry unless we obtain the information from the hon. gentleman himself. Surely, he does not for one moment think he is going to dictate to us what we shall do. I hope that when the hon. member recovers his wonted good temper we shall not have any exhibition of this kind in the future. But, apart from that, I wish to emphasise the fact that we have at the present time sufficient power in the Commonwealth for the purpose of producing all the steel and iron that can be utilised here.

The PREMIER: That is nonsense; we cannot get all the rails we want.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And if the hon. gentleman starts these works, he cannot get all the rails he wants, because the congestion is so great at the present time, that the demand is greater than the supply. The measure foreshadowed by the hon. gentleman is introduced merely for the purpose of misleading the electors as to the capacity of the Government. Notwithstanding the protestations of the Premier, it is evident that a measure of this kind is only going to add to the burdens that thousands of persons who are not interested in this matter are called upon to bear. The loss that is likely to accrue from hon. members opposite endeavouring to put into operation what is called the Barcaldine policy speech will have to be borne by the taxpayers. Surely there has been enough loss to the State from Government enterprises, without entering upon another State enterprise. Surely the Government must recognise that the public are quite cognisant of their ineptitude in these matters, and that the people will see that this measure is brought forward for the purpose of trying to induce the electors to believe that the Government are capable of establishing and developing iron and steel works. But the people are not going to be gulled in that way. There is no substantial business for the State in this measure. If it is passed and the Government attempt to put the legislation into operation, it will only place more burdens on the people who are overburdened at the present time.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I somewhat differ from what has fallen from the leader of the Opposition. I consider that this is probably a more important piece of legislation than any other legislation that has been introduced by the Government up to the present.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no legislation at present before the Chamber.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am simply referring to the importance of the proposed measure. I consider it of more importance than any other legislation that has been introduced by the Government up to the present time. Although it may seem an anomaly, yet it is a fact that the basest of metals has always

been found as a matter of experience of the greatest importance and the greatest value to any country where such base metals exist. In Queensland we have vast deposits of first-class iron ores, and we have all the necessary fluxes, such as lime and coal. In fact, we have everything here that Nature can provide as far as the production of iron is concerned, and if we can only—by the introduction of any measure—induce the manufacture of iron from our natural products, I venture to say that if it becomes a success, as I hope it will, it will do more good to Queensland than any of our more valuable ore deposits.

The PREMIER: You are quite right in that.

HON. J. G. APPEL: We know that as far as economics are concerned, if we can only build up an iron-ore industry, the future of Queensland will then be assured.

The PREMIER: Exactly; you are quite right.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Because to-day, more than ever, the manufacture of iron and steel will put any country which has the necessary ore and fluxes in the forefront of the nations of the world.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition will yet regret that he did not make a speech like that which you are making. (Hear, hear!)

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am speaking from my own standpoint. Every member on this side of the House speaks from his own standpoint. And just as I encouraged the establishment of the cement industry in Queensland when I was Minister for Mines—an industry which I venture to say will prove a success—so I support any effort on the part of the State, because it will be for the State to show what is possible in connection with this particular industry, to establish iron and steel works. I can only hope, though, that the hon. gentleman, in the measure which he proposes to introduce, will make such provision as will ensure that nothing will interfere with the industry in the way of strikes. I trust that the necessary provision will be made as far as that is concerned, because, whatever our national products may be, and however accessible they may be, we must remember that we shall have to compete with the world in this industry.

Mr. COOPER: So we can.

HON. J. G. APPEL: So we can, if the industry is not interfered with by the strikes which continually occur. I am referring now, not merely to strikes in connection with this particular industry, but to sympathetic strikes which may interfere with the industry. However, that is only by the way, and I am simply offering this as a suggestion to the Government. The Premier was good enough to give us a full exposition of the proposed measure, and I must say that, as a native of this great State who has some knowledge of the natural wealth that we possess in connection with this matter, I hope to see Queensland become a great iron-producing country, and not only producing iron and steel from that iron, but also a great manufacturing country. As private enterprise has not taken the matter up, this is, to my mind, essentially a matter which may be taken up by the Government of the State to prove that it is possible to produce an article which can compete in the world's market. It may have the effect of inducing

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private enterprise to enter into the matter, and to engage, not alone in the manufacture of iron and steel articles, but also in the shipbuilding industry, which will be a great necessity after the conclusion of the present war. I do not propose to occupy the attention of the House any longer. I hope to give this matter my hearty support, because it is a matter that I was much interested in when acting as Minister for Mines. I took a great interest in acquiring evidence as to the deposits of iron ore which exist in the different portions of the State. I hope this proposal will be brought to a successful issue by the legislation that it is intended to introduce, and that that legislation will be of such a nature as to induce private enterprise to enter into this industry, which will be of more benefit to the State than our gold production or the production of all our most valuable metals.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I think we are indebted to the Premier for his explanation of the proposed measure, and that we can congratulate him on adopting the constitutional method in this case in placing the matter before Parliament and asking the authority of Parliament for the establishment of the proposed works. Certainly, it is an improvement upon the action of the Government in regard to other State enterprises. I should also like to say that if it can be shown that the iron industry can be established in Queensland with benefit to the State, the hon. gentleman is to be congratulated on his endeavour to establish that industry. It will not be in competition with existing enterprises, and the establishment of the industry apparently is not contemplated at the present moment by private enterprise. Members on this side of the House would prefer that encouragement should be given to private enterprise to undertake the risks incidental to such an industry. Generally speaking, the people of Queensland view with some concern the establishment of State enterprises, as they fear it will enable a certain class to take the people by the throat more effectively than they have done in the past. At any rate, there is a certain amount of fear in connection with legislation of this sort. So far it has not been shown that the successful establishment of the iron industry in Queensland is reasonably possible, or that it is actually desired. Certainly, we have a report from the Public Works Commission on the subject, but when we look at the personnel of that commission we do not see the names of any great authority or experts in the business amongst them. It is also a partisan commission—that is, the members of it are all taken from one side of the House—the side of the House which is supporting what is called the Barcaldine policy. That being the case, we have to take their report with some hesitation. The point I wish to make is that the State is gradually getting into a condition of financial chaos under the present Government, not only in regard to the consolidated revenue account, but also in regard to loan moneys and trust funds. It seems to me that this Bill will

[4 p.m.] only operate in the direction of increased taxation; it will involve further expenditure, and that money will have to be found somewhere. It will lead to a piling up of the deficit, and to the necessity for further taxation. It will therefore be a block on private enterprise. This

disregard of prudence in financial management on the part of the Government is causing anxiety throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, not only in the minds of the so-called capitalistic class, but in the minds of the workers, many of whom wonder where the work on which they live to-day is to come from when the industries of this State have practically been destroyed by the action of the Government. The consideration of the existing state of matters only leads us to the conclusion that this is another of those proposals that ought not to receive consideration at this period of financial stress and strain.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): The idea of establishing iron and steel works is a good one, but we have to bear in mind the fact that other companies which have started these works have engaged the greatest experts from the old country before doing so. I think that we should wait until we get more information in regard to the matter. I believe that the Broken Hill Proprietary Company which has established iron and steel works at Newcastle has lost in connection with the works, something in the vicinity of £200,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is mostly because of the shipping hold-up.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yet in the face of a terrific loss like that, borne by a private company, the Government purpose to start iron and steel works in Queensland. While the Government could easily sell the iron now and make a profit on the manufacture of it, they must bear in mind that under normal conditions they will have a very hard row to hoe. We know that steel rails can be produced more cheaply in other parts of the world than we can make them here.

The PREMIER: We must not forget to learn the lessons of the war.

Mr. FORSYTH: I can remember a few years ago, before the war started, we could get pig iron brought out here at 15s. or £1 a ton.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That applies to German subsidised boats that you used to be agents for.

Mr. FORSYTH: I am speaking of the old country; we got it from the old country as well. If you get the right men to tackle this proposition, and make sure that it is going to be payable, then there can be no objection to it; but it would be very much better for the Government before they enter into this important undertaking to make sure that it is going to be payable. If the company at Broken Hill, composed of able men, who have employed the best experts they can get to render it a paying concern—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the motion. I do not want to interrupt him, but it is not usual to have a debate at this stage.

Mr. FORSYTH: When the Bill comes before us we shall have full particulars, no doubt, but I would advise the Government to be very careful and not go into this matter before they are sure that it will pay. After the war is over and normal conditions are resumed, there will be some difficulty in making iron ore here for the price at which you can get it landed from the old country.

The PREMIER: Would you say that even if that were a fact, we should not have our own works?

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Mr. FORSYTH: Unless you can make it a paying proposition, it would be very much better to leave it alone.

The PREMIER: In the one case your money goes out of the country, and in the other case it is spent in the country. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. FORSYTH: But, even if it is going to be spent in the country, if there is going to be a heavy liability imposed on the people the country is better without it. If there is a great loss the people in Queensland will have to bear the burden.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are very timorous.

The PREMIER: Your argument would lead to the conclusion that we should not have a duty on sugar.

Mr. FORSYTH: I know that we could land this stuff at exceptionally low prices before the war, and it will be cheap after the war.

The PREMIER: Could you not land sugar cheaper than you can grow it?

Mr. FORSYTH: The establishment of these works will involve a huge amount of money, and then after they are started, the hon. gentleman will not be able to compete with people elsewhere who can send the pig iron here. The Government should be thoroughly satisfied that it will be a paying proposition, not only now, but when things come back to normal conditions.

The PREMIER: You are simply arguing in favour of free-trade.

Mr. FORSYTH: These are things that are worth considering, and I sincerely trust that the Government will make full inquiries into the matter before going into a large amount of expenditure which may ultimately end in a very heavy liability to the people of Queensland.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): I was very sorry indeed to see the leader of the Opposition, who, I understand, is Queensland born, stand up in his place and oppose any proposal to start secondary industries in Queensland. I do not know how this country is going to carry a big population unless it starts secondary industries. (Hear, hear!) I would like the leader of the Opposition, or any other hon. member opposite, to tell the House how this country is going to carry a big population unless we start secondary industries.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: There is one way.

Mr. PAYNE: I happen to be a member of the commission which compiled the report which the Premier tabled. The commission has got expert evidence that we have the finest iron ore in the world in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And the richest.

Mr. PAYNE: And the richest. We have the finest quality and large bodies of iron ore adjacent to railways, and not too far away from coke supplies. The proposal of the commission to spend £5,000 will save an enormous amount of money in one year alone. To-day, pig iron is in the vicinity of £12 per ton, and it has been proved that pig iron could be produced here at £4 per ton. There are numbers of factories languishing in Queensland for pig iron, and they are on the verge of closing down. The Government Departments use over 700 tons of pig iron, and it would pay the Government to start

producing pig iron to-morrow. The hon. member for Toowong made a cheap sneer—I do not know that there is much business in that kind of thing—that there are no experts on this commission. The commission is composed of commonsense men.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAYNE: They have taken sworn expert evidence, and are quite satisfied as far as they have gone, that this country is going to lose nothing by spending £5,000 at the present time in starting the pig iron industry. I am one of those who agree with the hon. member for Albert, that the iron industry in this country is going to play a bigger part in the development of the State than anything else. (Hear, hear!) What plays a bigger part in settling the people on the land? Look at the price of wire and galvanised iron to-day and of every article that is necessary to settle people on the land. It is nearly impossible to procure them to-day. We have the leader of the Opposition—Queensland born, too, and that is the sorry thing to me—objecting to the Government starting secondary industries in this State.

Mr. VOWLES: When would you be ready to start it. In twenty years' time.

Mr. PAYNE: Inside six months I expect to see pig iron produced in this State, from what I can gather, and that will relieve the situation to a great extent. I have it on the best authority that there are firms in Queensland on the point of closing down. The sample of pig iron that has been produced from the Biggenden mines is second to none in the world. It is claimed, by the experts, to be the best that has been made, that that pig iron is of such a fine quality that it can be run into the finest moulds. Nothing ever landed in Australia can compete with the sample of pig iron that has been produced at Biggenden. I hope the leader of the Opposition will think the matter over as a Queensland, and that with a desire to see the country prosperous, he will not oppose any legislation to start secondary industries which will have a tendency to settle this country with a great many more people than what we have got.

Mr. JONES (*Oxley*): The motion has met with a mixed reception from hon. members opposite. The leader of the Opposition seemed to condemn the proposal from Dan to Beersheba. The hon. member for Albert went to the other extreme and highly approved of it, whereas the hon. member for Toowong led off with a certain amount of commendation and concluded with his usual note of condemnation. That is practically the characteristic of the Opposition; they are generally in divided councils and rarely sound the same note.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: No; we give expression to our independent opinions. We are not bound like you.

Mr. JONES: I do not think it matters a great deal as to the expressions of opinion from the other side, because I am quite confident that the people in the country will view the action which the Government propose to take with commendation. I am quite certain that it is interpreting the wishes of the community when the Government sets out on an important undertaking of this kind. I have to disagree with the hon. member for Albert in one of his remarks where he spoke of the enterprise

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of the State as leading on to the encouragement of private enterprise. I do not think it is the correct track at all, nor do I think it is a possible track at the present stage of industrial development. It is a choice, in regard to large industries of this kind—and they must be on a very large scale—between either trust control or State control.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. JONES: It is not a question of whether we are going to have a large number of these industrial establishments turning out different forms of manufactured iron; but unquestionably it is a choice between either one very large undertaking holding a monopoly or a State undertaking also holding what practically amounts to a monopoly; but a monopoly differing from the other, because it is a monopoly for the public good. Now, the hon. member for Murrumbidgee views the proposal in rather a gloomy tone; but it is not new to hear such pessimistic utterances from many citizens in the State when they are contemplating the establishment of new enterprises. We have only to go back to the early stages of the establishment of, say, the dairying industry and many other industries of that kind that are now our most flourishing and most beneficial industries. We have only to go back to their initiation to recollect that a very great many people held the gloomiest view as to the possible success of those enterprises. I can remember the time when it was quite a commonly accepted idea that Queensland could not produce cheese, and it was quite a commonplace remark that the Darling Downs could not grow a cabbage.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: How many generations ago?

Mr. JONES: I am not many generations old. I will let the hon. member speak for himself. (Government laughter.) I say it is within my own recollection when there was not an ounce of cheese produced in Queensland, and it was a commonly accepted idea that it could not be produced. Much the same thing applies to butter.

Mr. FORSYTH: It is being produced in Maryborough now, at Walkers.

Mr. JONES: What is?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Cheese? (Loud laughter.)

Mr. JONES: I have heard of cheese walking, but I have never heard of Walkers' cheese.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: I have heard of it jumping, too.

Mr. JONES: And I think the hon. gentleman would jump after it. (Renewed laughter.) The hon. member for Murrumbidgee expresses the view that there would be a difficulty, if this industry were established, of its surviving, because of the possible dumping after the war. I am not prepared to accept the dictum that we may approve of enterprises purely by the mercantile theory. Enterprises may be established purely on a pounds, shillings, and pence basis and may show a loss, and yet be of so great a benefit to the community in other directions that it pays better for the community to support that industry because of its subsidiary benefits rather than to continue the policy of importation. I am not arguing that this must be the case in regard to this enterprise; but, even if it were so,

there may yet be a case made out for the establishment and continuance of this industry. It is a matter for inquiry; for the community to consider whether the additional benefits which arise by the maintenance of the industry are balanced against the cost of its maintenance. The old free-trade theory is dead.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. JONES: It is no longer a standard by which any progressive community is going to judge its enterprises and industries; and it is too late in the day for the hon. member for Murrumbidgee to propound it here, and expect this Chamber to accept it.

Mr. PETERSON: It is only the importers' dictum.

Mr. JONES: Mr. Macartney, the hon. member for Toowoomba, viewed this measure with some fear as to its possible effect upon the commercial and manufacturing community generally. I venture to express the opinion that the hon. gentleman is wrong when he stated that the community already engaged in enterprises are likely to be uneasy or be dissatisfied in any way with their prospects because of the establishment of an industry of this kind, which is far more likely to benefit the commercial community.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I spoke of the general financial position, which this will accentuate.

Mr. JONES: Well, I think the way to recover from the disabilities of the financial position is to embark on enterprises of this kind and stimulate industry. This is the time when the Government should step into the breach and give a lead to enterprise, which is at a standstill as the result of the war. This is the time for a bold policy of a progressive Government; and, because of that, I think the Government are to be congratulated in that they are going to introduce this measure. The result will not be uneasiness or fear of any kind among the present manufacturers of the community. On the contrary, I think they will view it with satisfaction and comfort, because they will know that it will give a stimulus to enterprise. Consider the subsidiary industries that might follow in the wake of the establishment of iron. We at present import enormously such things as tin plate. I don't say it is possible that that enterprise could be entered upon at once, but it is within view of the establishment if you have the pig iron base. Then, practically anything is possible provided we have a progressive administration to carry it on, and the desire to do so.

The PREMIER: We are blazing the track.

Mr. JONES: In view of the arguments I have put forward, I think the Government are entitled to the support of this Chamber and leave should be granted to introduce this Bill. I understand the enterprise is to be based in its earlier stages upon the report of the Public Works Commission, which has already been circulated. In the early stages it will be of an experimental nature. From that I hope to see a very large undertaking built up to the great benefit and advantage of every citizen of this community.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: It is my intention to support the motion moved by the Premier.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIRWAN: Another State socialist coming along.

Mr. CORSER: Considering that private enterprise has not, up to the present, done anything with regard to the development of the iron industry in Queensland, the time is opportune for the Government to step in and do something; it is opportune because they are determined to spend an amount of money. I think that that money that is to be spent could not be better spent in State industries than in the production and the building up of an iron industry in the State. A country's development depends upon the development of its agricultural industry, and a country's progress may be gauged when the plough-share of the farmer is produced in the country where that farmer is using it. Now, it has been said that after this war probably iron may not be required; but when we have substituted ships that have been sunk—when that has all been fulfilled and that programme has been accomplished, then we can turn our attention to the development and the building of our cities—the use of iron in our great buildings and in everything that we may require. Every progressive community in the world has required iron and steel in the building up of nations. What has America to thank more than its iron and steel industry? (Hear, hear!) To-day we are in the position of importing our pig iron, I think, from China; when we have, in my own electorate, some of the vastest and richest iron deposits that are to be found in Australia. I am only sorry that the Bill is as broad as it is; not from the fact that probably we might develop our steel industry, but because I would like to see a very early start made in the direction of the production of pig iron from the Biggenden mine—which is not going to cost very much money.

The PREMIER: We are doing that.

Mr. CORSER: In my opinion it is a certain and a good asset to the State. Now, I hope sincerely that, whatever is done, the Government will be guided by the advice of practical and professional men. I notice by the report of their own Public Works Committee that they suggest they should visit the Southern States. Now, I don't know that very much good is going to come of that. Far better would it be for us to employ the knowledge and the brains of those people from the Southern States, who can direct the Government after fully weighing their practical and political experience of the industrial troubles that we have had in the past in the South. To-day, the most satisfactory production of steel is brought about by electrical application in the greatest degree, and it is from the most scientific and expert men that we can be guided in that direction, so that we can do away with the possibility—or minimise the possibility—of destruction and loss by industrial strife. Now, I sincerely hope that the Government will be anxious to produce pig iron at an early date, and that there is more in this Bill than steel works and other industries. We have occasionally, by these dragnet clauses referred to, the stealing of works and of other industries, and I hope that the words as they appear there will not apply in that sense, and that, in giving the Government the confidence in passing this Bill, they are not intending to steal works or other industries.

The PREMIER: Not steal works; but to establish steel works.

[Mr. Corser.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in putting that construction on the motion.

Mr. CORSER: Well, the other gentleman put some very curious constructions on the remarks from this side, and I don't know that you chastised them very severely.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the hon. member that, when I call him to order he treat the chair with due respect. He has lately adopted the practice of questioning my call to order, and if he continued to do so, I shall have to take the only course which is open to me, to see that the Chair secures respect from this House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: I will take every consideration, Mr. Speaker, and I will have to deal with the Chair, of course, by the utmost means that the Standing Orders permit me. Now, Sir, I sincerely hope that the Premier and the Government will be sincere in their establishment of State steel works and will not try to accomplish it by the crushing of other industries and works that have done so much up to the present, towards the advancement of the State.

Question put and passed.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON WANDO VALE PURCHASE.

PRINTING OF REPORT IN "HANSARD."

The PREMIER, in moving—

"That the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire and report upon the truth or otherwise of certain allegations made by William John Vowles, member of the Legislative Assembly (for Dalby), in the course of a speech made in the Legislative Assembly on 12th September, 1917, and upon certain other matters relating to the purchase of Wando Vale Station by the Government of Queensland, together with Minutes of Evidence and Documentary Exhibits, be printed in 'Hansard,'"

said: I have no need to elaborate the reasons for taking this course. I think they must be obvious to everybody.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Will you include the evidence?

The PREMIER: I think it is quite sufficient to put in the report.

Mr. VOWLES: All that suits you.

The PREMIER: No, the report is the conclusion of the Royal Commission. The leader of the Opposition, I suppose, wants to incur thousands of pounds expense in printing.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You did that in your case.

The PREMIER: The judge was appointed, he was asked for a report, he makes that report—a fairly lengthy report—and I think it is quite sufficient to incur the expenditure of having that report printed in "Hansard."

I do not think I need add any [4.30 p.m.] thing further. The speech was made in this House, and the persons who have an opportunity of reading that speech in "Hansard," should also have an opportunity of reading the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the truth or otherwise of that statement.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I called "Not formal" to this motion for the purpose of ascertaining from the Premier whether it was proposed to print the evidence with the report.

The PREMIER: The evidence is printed. It has been laid on the table of the House.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I was anxious to know whether the hon. gentleman intended to have the evidence printed in "Hansard" along with the report.

The PREMIER: Have you any idea of the cost?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The feeling of the Premier towards the hon. member for Dalby is well known throughout Queensland at the present time, and one is anxious to know if he is willing to carry it to the extent of depriving the hon. member for Dalby of showing the justification he may have had for his statements. The public are not bound to accept the verdict of the judge on the matter.

The PREMIER: Are you questioning the integrity of the Commissioner, who was Attorney-General in your own Government?

Mr. MACARTNEY: We will come to that directly.

The PREMIER: It will be difficult to appoint somebody you would not take exception to. We appointed one of your own colleagues as a Royal Commission.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The attitude adopted by the Chief Secretary is amusing in his endeavour to bluff us.

The PREMIER: You are like a big loblolly-bob. (Loud laughter.)

HON. J. TOLMIE: On more than one occasion I have called attention to the language used by the Chief Secretary in regard to his utterances to opponents—

The PREMIER: I will withdraw the statement.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And to the excellence of his remarks in the best police court style of the hon. gentleman.

The PREMIER: You cannot damage my professional reputation.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We must remember that the hon. gentleman says that his position in the House at the present time is to raise the standard of debate and elevate the tone of the House. Is it not excellent to hear the expression fall from the hon. gentleman? We all want to see justice done to the hon. member for Dalby in regard to this matter.

The PREMIER: Do you say that the report does not do justice?

Mr. VOWLES: I do.

HON. J. TOLMIE: People who read the evidence may not draw the same conclusion as the judge, and there cannot be any reflection on the conduct of the Commissioner, whether he happened to be Attorney-General of the Government I was associated with or not, or whether he happened to be a justice of one of our courts. There cannot be any reflection on the judge if someone else draws quite a different conclusion.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member suggest that he draws a different conclusion? That is a fair question.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am addressing you, Mr. Speaker, and I am not replying to any questions from the Premier.

The PREMIER: It is only fair that you should say if you draw a different conclusion.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman cannot keep quiet for five seconds at a time. I am not angry with the hon. gentleman, but he made a bitter complaint against an hon. member on this side who happened to interject, and he said that we were depriving him of the opportunity of placing his views before the House. It is not the hon. gentleman's association with the hon. members on this side that has caused him to take up the attitude that he is adopting at the present time. Perhaps he would like to infer that it has been communicated to him from us, and he has formed such a low opinion of hon. members on this side that he thinks evil communications corrupt good manners. Whether it is his association with caucus that has brought it about we do not know. Notwithstanding that, the hon. member is not treating members on this side with the courtesy that is necessary, and he endeavours to prevent a continuance of the debate by his persistent interjections. The desire is that the hon. member for Dalby should receive the fullest amount of justice, and the reading public who peruse "Hansard," be they a great or small number, will have an opportunity of reading that evidence and drawing their own conclusion. Does it not appear that there is an attempt on the part of the Chief Secretary to glorify his own case, and to prevent from appearing in "Hansard" the evidence contained in the report which was so derogatory to the administration of hon. gentlemen on the other side? They want to shield themselves from the national condemnation that will follow from the reading of that evidence by persons who may peruse "Hansard," and at the same time they want to throw as much obloquy as possible on the hon. member for Dalby. That is not in keeping with the instincts of fair play. It is not in keeping with the traditions of British justice, which, at any rate, gives both sides of the position. Unless the general public see, when they peruse "Hansard," what are the reasons which led the Commissioner to come to the finding he did, it is not fair to the hon. member for Dalby. If we put the finding in "Hansard" without giving the reasons adduced for the finding, it is something that savours of tyranny, and it is not that disposition for British fair play of which we are so proud. I think the hon. gentleman will be acting only fairly to the hon. member for Dalby, and reflecting to some extent a certain amount of credit upon himself, if he endeavours to be fair and just in regard to this motion, and sees that everything in connection with the inquiry shall be placed in "Hansard," so that people may draw their own conclusions therefrom.

Mr. KIRWAN: Deliver that speech to your own supporters.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I think the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition that the evidence should be included in "Hansard" in extenso is a perfectly justifiable one, and the necessity arises for it from the fact that the Premier wishes to put the report by itself into "Hansard," simply for

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the purpose of the glorification of the Government.

The PREMIER: And a refutation of his statements.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There is a special reason why the report is in a form that is not altogether fair to the hon. member for Dalby. That reason is this: that the Premier dictated the questions which that Commission investigated, and the questions are so carefully framed that there is not a possible loophole for any paragraph in the report showing the case from the point of view of the hon. member for Dalby. (Hear, hear!) That is a point that wants to be concisely set out in connection with the commission that was given to His Honour District Court Judge O'Sullivan, and it may be well just to look at it. The first point on which the Commissioner was asked to inquire into and report was—

"(1) The truth, or otherwise, of the following allegations made by William John Vowles, Esquire, the member of the Legislative Assembly of the said State, in the course of a speech in the said Legislative Assembly on the twelfth day of September, 1917, in regard to the purchase by the Government of Queensland of Wando Vale station, in the State of Queensland."

Naturally, the Commissioner limits himself to the mere question of arriving at the truth, or otherwise. He reports that in his opinion the statement was not true. He does not enter into the evidence the reason which the hon. member for Dalby said justified him in coming to the conclusion he did and in making the utterances which he made.

The PREMIER: He does give reasons. He said they were not justified.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Then, the second point which the Commissioner had to consider was—

"(a) That the said William John Vowles was then in a position to prove that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, could have been bought for £45,000 and less on the same day that it was purchased by the Government."

The Commissioner was simply limited to the question of that statement. Mr. Vowles said he was in a position to prove it, and the Commissioner's finding was limited, naturally, to that one point. So that it goes on—with regard to the other points—right to the end. Anyone who takes up this report and reads the finding of the judge in conjunction with the questions submitted to him will see that the questions are purely for the exoneration of the Government, and no opportunity whatever was given for the exoneration of Mr. Vowles, or rather for showing if his statements were made bona fide in an honest belief that the information which he received was true. If there had been a question such as would be put by a judge to a jury in a defamation suit, for instance: "Did the hon. member, when making such a statement, conscientiously believe it to be true and that it could be proved, and had he any grounds for making it?" then it might have been different.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in going into that matter on this motion.

[Mr. Macartney.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Mr. Speaker, I will show you the application of my remarks to the question before the House.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the report be printed in "Hansard."

Mr. MACARTNEY: I want to show that the report, by itself, should not be inserted in "Hansard" unless it is accompanied by the evidence which was given before the Royal Commission.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman can put himself in order by moving an amendment to enlarge the scope of the motion by including the printing of the evidence as well.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am prepared to move that amendment in order to put myself in order. The questions were put to the commission in the way I have indicated, and the report is furnished without all the pros and cons. If the report contained all that information, then it would be a perfectly fair thing for the Premier to move the motion which he has moved to-day.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. gentleman moves his amendment that the scope of the motion be enlarged to include the printing of the evidence, he will then be quite in order in touching on that aspect of it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not propose to do any more than elaborate my point, and I think I am entitled to do that. I am prepared to do what you suggest in order to put myself right according to your suggestion. This is a matter which concerns the privileges of members on both sides of the House whether they support the Government, or whether they are sitting in opposition. The Government have a big majority at the present time, and we represent only one-third of the House, but that is no reason why fair play should not be extended to members sitting on this side, and it is no reason why a man should be browbeaten for endeavouring to do his duty.

The PREMIER: Do you consider it to be the duty of any man to tell lies in this House?

Mr. VOWLES: I rise to a point of order. Is the Chief Secretary in order in stating that I told lies in this House?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Does the cap fit?

The SPEAKER: Order! I can assure the hon. member that if I heard the Chief Secretary say that any member told a lie, I would ask him to withdraw the statement.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am quite satisfied that if the issue had been put to the court in a different way and the facts adduced in support of that issue had been included in the report, then, in my opinion, the hon. member for Dalby would have been thoroughly exonerated. If the evidence upon which the statement was made, and which turned out afterwards to be available, had been summarised by his Honour in connection with the issue, such as I have suggested, then the statements made by the hon. member for Dalby would have been regarded as having been made in good faith and reasonable under the circumstances.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will be more in order in discussing that aspect of the question on the next motion.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Premier has the right to interject, and I was only replying to him.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has not the right to interject.

Mr. MACARTNEY: But he is always doing it.

The SPEAKER: I do my best to prevent hon. members from interjecting, but there is no rule to prevent any member from interjecting. Interjections are out of order, but there is no way of taking physical action against any member who interjects.

Mr. MACARTNEY: With all due respect to you, the Premier interjected and you did not call him to order. I replied to the interjections and I am called to order. I cannot follow the hon. gentleman.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in replying to interjections. He was discussing a matter which is entirely out of order, and which he knows is out of order on the motion now before the House.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not propose to break the Standing Orders if I can help it.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will not be allowed.

Mr. MACARTNEY: As long as I think I am within the Standing Orders I propose to exercise my rights.

The SPEAKER: Order! On a previous occasion I called the hon. member to order for making a certain statement. The hon. member said he did not make the statement, though he did make it, and if I am rather severe in dealing with him it is his own fault.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I think I am perfectly within my rights—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to resume his seat.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I rise to a point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may ask the House now to allow him to continue his speech.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not intend to do that. I submit that I have the right to speak.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to resume his seat, and he knows the course to adopt if he wishes to continue his speech.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If you will point out to me the authority under which I am asked to resume my seat—

The SPEAKER: Order! I take the responsibility of my action, and I shall insist upon obedience to the Chair and respect to the Chair.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: I respectfully submit that—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman has been out of order all through his speech. Will the hon. gentleman be seated? The hon. gentleman has been out of order, and he knows quite well that the matter he is now discussing is not in order on this motion. It will be in order on the next motion. The motion now before the House

is that a certain report be printed in "Hansard," and the hon. member is proceeding to discuss the merits of that report. The hon. member knows that is not correct. At any rate, the House knows that such procedure is not correct. The hon. member was proceeding to state that certain questions should not have been submitted to the judge. I have nothing to do with the question as to whether these matters should have been submitted to the judge. I have called the hon. member to order on two or three occasions because he was out of order, and I have now asked him to resume his seat. If he desires to continue his speech, and the House wishes that he should continue his speech, he may do so, but I will maintain order.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: I maintain my right to continue my speech—

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. gentleman be seated?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I have my own opinion on the matter of your ruling.

The SPEAKER: Well, I happen to be in the chair. If the hon. member looks up the Standing Orders he will find that I am quite within my rights in the action I have taken.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I think it is only right to myself and to other members that I should insist upon my rights.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman can find out exactly what are his rights.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I insist upon my rights.

The PREMIER: Surely the hon. member will not persist in the attitude he is taking up!

Mr. MACARTNEY: I insist upon my rights.

The PREMIER: I have certain powers here.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member is not in order, I am quite capable of dealing with him.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I submit that I am perfectly in order.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to look at Standing Order No. 139, which reads—

"Mr. Speaker, or, in a Committee of the Whole House, the Chairman, may call the attention of the House or the Committee, as the case may be, to continued irrelevance or tedious repetition on the part of a member, either of his own argument or the arguments used by other members, and may after such warning direct the member to discontinue his speech."

The hon. gentleman was continually called to order for being out of order.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I deny it.

The SPEAKER: The Standing Order continues—

"Provided that the member so directed may require Mr. Speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be, to put the question that he be further heard, and such question, if so required to be put, shall be put without debate."

The hon. member knows now exactly where he is. He has continually reflected upon the

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Chair, or I would not have taken the course I have taken. I hope the House will stand behind me in the action that I have taken.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MACARTNEY: I have no desire whatever to reflect on the Chair. I have not been guilty of either irrelevance or tedious repetition, and I think it only fair to claim the rights that I hold as a member of this House.

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. member desire to continue his speech?

MR. MACARTNEY: I do.

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. member desire me to ask the House to allow him to continue his speech?

MR. MACARTNEY: I desire to enter my protest—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member knows that the action which he is taking is not in order. If he desires to continue his speech, and says so, I will ask if it is the pleasure of the House that he be further heard.

MR. MACARTNEY: I desire to continue my speech.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for Toowong be allowed to continue his speech?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

The SPEAKER: I think the "Noes" have it.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Divide.

Question—That the hon. member for Toowong be allowed to continue his speech—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 14.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Morgan
" Barnes	" Murphy
" Bebbington	" Petrie
" Corser	" Somerset
" Forsyth	" Stevens
" Gunn	" Tolmie
" Hodge	" Vowles
Tellers: Mr. Corser and Mr. Morgan.	

NOES, 28.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. May
" Barber	" McPhail
" Carter	" O'Sullivan
" Collins	" Payne
" Cooper	" Peterson
" Coyne	" Pollock
" Fihelly	" Ryan, D.
" Foley	" Ryan, H. J.
" Forde	" Ryan, T. J.
" Gledson	" Smith
" Hardacre	" Stopford
" Hartley, H. L.	" Weir
" Jones	" Wellington
" Kirwan	" Winstanley
Tellers: Mr. McPhail and Mr. Weir.	

PATRS.

Ayes—Mr. Bayley and Mr. Walker.

Noes—Mr. Huxham and Mr. W. Hartley.

Resolved in the negative.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I understand that the motion of the Premier is that the report of the commission in connection with the inquiry with reference to certain allegations re Wando Vale should be embodied and printed in "Hansard."

The PREMIER: That is so.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is the report of the judge.

MR. MAY: The summing-up.

[Mr. Macartney.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, the summing-up. That is the motion. The suggestion has been made that in addition to that, the evidence which was taken should likewise be embodied in "Hansard." I did not intend to speak at all upon this question, but after what has happened, I thought that perhaps I might pour a little oil on the troubled waters. Who reads "Hansard"?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The intelligent electors of Queensland.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Members of the Legislature and, I venture to say, the Minister for Railways never peruse "Hansard" from one year's end to the other, except where a member reads the proof of his own speech. Who, then, reads "Hansard"? The electors of the State of Queensland are the persons who read "Hansard." Why is it considered necessary that a report with minutes of evidence taken before

[5 p.m.] a Royal Commission should be furnished to members of this Assembly? What is the object of issuing the minutes of evidence to the members of this Assembly? We have heard the debates that took place here in connection with this matter. We do not read "Hansard," save our own speeches, I venture to say, and for the purpose of correcting them, and probably no member of this Assembly will read these notes of evidence. As we propose to give the electors of Queensland who read "Hansard" the benefit of the report, why should we not give them the whole of the evidence which is furnished for the benefit of hon. members—not alone the report of the judge, but the evidence taken at the inquiry?

MR. MORGAN: Hear, hear! That is the most important.

HON. J. G. APPEL: What objection can there be to that? The judge has exonerated the member referred to in connection with this matter. Why not let the electors of Queensland have the evidence as well as the report?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: They are afraid.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I appeal to the Premier. Why should they not have the chance of perusing this evidence in "Hansard"? I simply rose for the purpose of calming the excitement which appeared to have been caused by the suggestion which was made.

The PREMIER: How much do you think it would cost to print all that evidence? (Opposition interruption.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: I think that where the honour of public men is concerned, no cost is too great to enable the public to see by the evidence that they have been exonerated.

The PREMIER: Do you doubt the judge's finding? It shows that.

HON. J. G. APPEL: No, it does not.

The PREMIER: Of course, it does. You are reflecting on the judge. (Opposition dissent.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have never indulged in any personalities or reflections, and I am not doing so to-day, but the hon. gentleman should realise that if he refuses to permit the public to peruse this evidence in "Hansard," he is inflicting an injustice upon his colleagues who were said to have benefited by the transactions. My sole object in rising is to see that the honour of members of this Legislature—I do not care on what side they

sit—is protected. It is a sorry thing if any member of this Legislature is charged with an act of dishonour—which charge is shown to be absolutely incorrect—and to my mind no greater indication of that can be given than by throwing open to the electors of the State, not only the evidence taken at the inquiry, but also the report of the judge.

The PREMIER: It is thrown open. It is laid on the table of this House. It is available to the Press and everybody else.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not open to the public.

HON. J. G. APPEL: There are something like 280,000 electors on the rolls of the State, and what percentage of those electors can read the evidence which is laid upon the table of the House? Where the honour of any member of this Legislature—I do not care whether he sits on the Treasury benches, behind the Treasury benches, or on this side of the House—has been impugned in any way, however slightly, the whole of the evidence and the finding of the judge should be made available to the electors of Queensland, whatever the cost may be, and that can only be done through the columns of "Hansard."

The PREMIER: I hope my colleague will take other steps.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Up to the present time no charge has been proved against any member of the Legislature of Queensland, and that is something we should be proud of; we do not want to see any charge proved against any member of the Legislature.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is dealing with the motion that the report be printed.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes. I simply rose because, apparently, a little heat had arisen in the matter. It was suggested, and I understand that the hon. member for Toowong moved as an amendment, that the evidence, as well as the report, be printed in "Hansard."

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Toowong outlined an amendment. If he will hand it in I will accept it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: No, thanks. (Government laughter). I leave the whole business to one member of the House.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am proud to be a member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, and proud of the fact that every man on whatever side of the House he has sat, and whether he has been a member of the Executive or not, has been honest.

Mr. GLEDSON: I hope you are not proud of some of the statements made on that side of the House.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am not proud of some of the statements from the opposite side of the House, and I have said so. I think it is most regrettable that any personalities should ever be indulged in on the floor of this House. We have more important matters to deal with. My only concern, as a member of this Legislature who has been proud of the purity of this Assembly, is that the public of Queensland should have the opportunity of seeing that it continues to be pure. The Premier is pursuing a wrong course in deciding that he will not permit the evidence to be printed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why? What do you want it included for?

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman does not look at the matter from my point of view. The public are entitled to see everything that has transpired. They are entitled to see the evidence and the judgment of His Honour Judge O'Sullivan. I venture to say that there is no one who occupies a higher place in the respect and estimation of the electors than Judge O'Sullivan.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you not expressing some doubt as to the finding?

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman knows that if you conceal portion of anything the public will always think there is something concealed. I say there is nothing to be concealed. Let everything be open and aboveboard. Let the public judge. Let them see, in connection with those hon. gentleman against whom there may have been a suspicion, that that suspicion is absolutely unfounded. But if the Premier endeavours to conceal a portion of these proceedings from the electors of the State, a suspicion is bound to arise that there is something to conceal. I say there is nothing to conceal. We should be proud of the honour of members of this Legislature and of the fact that the honour of the Ministers of the Crown cannot be impeached, and the only way to show that to the electors of the State is to permit them to see the whole of the proceedings. It does not matter what the price of printing the evidence is, the honour of members of the Executive is concerned, and that should be above price. I urge the Premier to reconsider his decision and permit the evidence to be printed, and the people will be able to come to the conclusion, as Judge O'Sullivan did, that the purity and honour of the members of this Assembly and of the Executive have been maintained.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): We have invited the Premier to make known to the people of Queensland, through "Hansard," the whole of the evidence in this case, which he has made so much of and which he has spent so much money to collect—this evidence that is costing the country so much in the effort to try to whitewash the political souls of the gentlemen who occupy the front Treasury benches. If the Premier claims that there is nothing in the evidence, and if the statement of the hon. member for Albert, that there is nothing to conceal, is correct then we challenge the Premier to make known to the people all the evidence, so that they can see for themselves what has taken place. The whole of the matter of the inquiry was not covered by the questions which the Premier asked the commission to solve. The questions were not broad enough, and if they have the report and evidence, the public will be able to see for themselves.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have an opportunity of discussing that question later on.

Mr. CORSER: The report—if the Premier will allow it to be printed—will enable the people of the State to see the whole position as we claim it is. Now, Mr. Speaker, you will agree that the Premier up to the present time has not saved the purse strings of Queensland in attempting to bring about this whitewashing that is done in a report designed by the question that he asked this commission to adjudicate upon. In that

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evidence we claim there is sufficient for the people of Queensland to see, so that they themselves might by their intelligence arrive at a decision as to whether the Premier and the other Ministers did the right thing in concealing something that a member of the Opposition has brought about.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is more important whether they should judge whether the judge's findings are right.

Mr. CORSER: That is not the point. The judge's findings are brought about in something that is very narrow; the limits of the judge's powers in his findings were too narrow for this side. If there is nothing to conceal—if the Government have been whitewashed, and if the judge's adjudication has been so correct—why is it that the Premier is so determined that the people of the State are not to see the evidence, are not to see the questions that were asked, and are not to see for themselves what has been concealed by the Government?

The PREMIER: I am most anxious for the people to see the questions that were asked, and to see all the evidence, too.

Mr. CORSER: If the Government and the Premier are prepared to put in "Hansard" these questions, he will find that the end of this Wando Vale inquiry had not come about when he brought before the public the report that he looked for and was so anxious to obtain.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A false accusation by a member of your side.

Mr. CORSER: An accusation by a member of our side, and known to the hon. gentlemen themselves. We will have an opportunity of dealing with this phase very shortly, perhaps. But if the Premier is afraid to allow the electors of the State, through "Hansard," to receive the full information in regard to this thing that has cost the country so much money from his own side, I say that he is doing something that is unjust to the State, unjust to the gentleman who is concerned, and unjust to those electors who have blindly followed the Government in the past.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I rise to oppose the amendment moved by the Opposition.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: No amendment has been moved.

Mr. PETERSON: Well, the suggestion—if you want to play with words—that the Government should have in "Hansard" a full report as presented to Parliament. We know—on this side of the House at any rate—the reason why hon. members are so anxious to get that in "Hansard"; it is because they are so ashamed of their efforts, as the result of the judge's findings, that they want to try and show the public what good boys they are—how white they are. If the whole of this bulky volume is placed into "Hansard" it will mean a considerable cost to the State. Now, how many "Hansards" are circulated in the State?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How many do you circulate?

Mr. PETERSON: Unfortunately, I circulate too many of the hon. gentleman's speeches.

[*Mr. Corser.*

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing a matter that is not before the House.

Mr. PETERSON: Very well, I will speak against the remarks emanating from the other side. I was trying to point out the reason why they were so anxious, all of a sudden, to get further publicity on this very important subject. Now, already they have the machinery at their disposal throughout the State, which we on this side have not got. Practically the whole of the Press is under their control; and the hon. the leader of the Opposition himself commands a very influential paper on the Darling Downs. If they are so keen on getting this matter before the public, seeing that they practically control the Press of this State, let them ask their friends the Press—if they are not satisfied with the judge's report and the report which appeared in the Press—to print it for them, instead of having the whole of it put into "Hansard." How many people are going to read that report in "Hansard"?

The SPEAKER: Order! I have already informed the hon. member that he is not in order in discussing a matter that is not before the House.

Mr. PETERSON: Well, all I can say is that I hope the Government will not give way to the suggestion which has been made by the Opposition to get this into "Hansard."

Mr. MORGAN: The Government evidently are adopting very questionable tactics in suppressing certain information in connection with the commission which recently has been held. The Premier is looking, at the present moment, at the expense that it will be to the country to have the whole of this printed in "Hansard."

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member wishes to discuss that question, he must move an amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: I intend to move an amendment, Mr. Speaker. I move that after the word "speech," the words "with minutes of evidence, etc." be inserted. In moving that amendment, I do so recognising the fact that the Government thought it advisable to hold the commission in order to whitewash themselves in connection with certain rumours which were circulating throughout the length and breadth of Queensland; and they thought it was of so much importance that they engaged two of the most brilliant barristers we have in Queensland for the purpose of defending them in connection with this particular matter. Costs were not taken into consideration at all. Had the Government been desirous of holding a commission, and costs were taken into consideration, I say there was no necessity in the first instance to brief two barristers to conduct the case on their behalf. The Premier has told us that between £600 and £700 has been spent in the holding of the commission for the purpose of whitewashing the Government. Then, I say, if the Government already have thought it advisable to spend between £600 and £700 in the holding of this particular commission, a few more pounds will not matter one way or the other. It is the public—the people of Queensland—who are paying this £600 or £700. Here we have the evidence furnished to that particular commission, and the Premier is not going to give the people an

opportunity of knowing exactly what has taken place during the whole of the proceedings. One member said that the Press should be asked to publish it, if we so much desire to get the public the information. We know perfectly well that the Press has not the space available. But even if that was a good argument, the Press also has a right to report the proceedings of this House; but they do not think it desirable to report it fully; and for that purpose we have "Hansard." I would like to ask the Premier why is it necessary to place any portion of this commission's findings in "Hansard."

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A full report of the findings.

MR. MORGAN: Yes, a full report of the findings. Why is it done; for what purpose?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The reason is to prevent you from making false accusations.

MR. MORGAN: The reason is to give to the people only one particular portion of what the commission was formed to bring about—the commission was appointed for the purpose of hearing evidence. I say that, as far as the evidence is concerned, and as far as the judge is concerned in respect of his finding, the people have a right to read the evidence for themselves, and to decide—if they so desire—whether the judge has given a true and correct finding.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you doubtful?

MR. MORGAN: It is for the people to decide. It is not for me, as an individual—it is not for the Minister for Railways, it is not for the Premier, it is not for this House to decide. The people are "paying the piper," which, up to the present time, is between £600 and £700, and they have a right to know what they are paying their money for. Unless the whole of this evidence is published—unless everything that this particular document contains is given to the public so that they can see and peruse it, the Premier is not doing justice to the people of Queensland whom he compelled—whether they liked it or not—to pay for the production of that voluminous document. The member for Dalby, and the Opposition gentlemen as a party, are desirous that this information should go broadcast to every person in the State, if possible; or, at any rate, they should be given an opportunity of obtaining a copy so that they can see, read, and inwardly digest the evidence for themselves. Yet they are being prevented by men who are supposed to be democrats, who are supposed to give opportunities for enlightenment to the people in connection with matters of importance and of public interest. There, perhaps, never has been a more important matter in the interests of the public dealt with by a commission in Queensland. It was thought necessary to appoint a commission to deal with public men, and with the doings and actions of public men. When a man is a public man, his public life belongs to the people; when he enters this House as a politician he has no right to conceal from the people of Queensland anything he does in the course of his public life. They have a right to know everything that occurs. Yet here we have the Premier—simply because the finding suits his own political purpose—desirous of having

the findings of the commission placed in "Hansard"; but he refuses the people the right to know what the finding of the judge was based upon. How can the people judge for themselves unless they know the evidence? Here is the finding of a commission that is going to be sent broadcast to the taxpayers of Queensland; and, whether they like it or not, they have to take the finding of the commission without being able to judge for themselves. Now, I am quite sure that the hon. member for Bowen, or any other independent member opposite—it did not matter what judge it was in this State, in Australia, or in any part of the world—if he gave a decision which the hon. member for Bowen, after reading the evidence, did not agree with, he would say so and stick to his own opinion; it would not matter what any judge, or any jury, or anyone else might decide a verdict upon. That is what we want the people of Queensland to be able to do in this connection. We want them to have placed in their hands the whole of this evidence as cheaply as possible—without cost, really, because they have already paid for it—so that they can read for themselves and decide who is in the right and who is in the wrong, and whether the hon. member for Dalby was justified in making the statements he did. I think it is only due to the hon. member for Dalby that this evidence should be spread broadcast, so that he should have an opportunity of having it read by every man and woman in this State. But the Premier is evidently afraid to have this evidence sent right throughout the length and breadth of the State.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why?

MR. MORGAN: Why? I would like the Premier to answer that question. The only reason the Premier gave this afternoon for not having the whole of the evidence printed is that of cost. Well, we know that up to the present moment the Premier has not studied cost in any instance when it was a matter of spending hundreds or thousands of pounds in connection with matters in which he himself was interested or in which the Government were interested. We had an illustration of that recently, as the hon. member for Dalby has just informed me, when he even went so far as to have placed in the pages of "Hansard" court decisions in which he himself was interested, so that they could be seen by the people of Queensland. If the people of Queensland don't care to read those decisions, it is the people's fault. The reason why I have moved this amendment is to give the people of Queensland an opportunity of being able to peruse the whole of the evidence in the people's paper—that is, the paper for which the people pay, "Hansard." That is supposed to be a popular journal. Whether it is read by a great number of people or not is not a matter that concerns me. It is there for the people to obtain if they so desire. The people already have had to pay for the setting up of all this evidence; it has all been set up in type and printed by the Government Printer. I suppose the total cost of printing it in "Hansard" would not amount to £50; it might be a great deal less.

THE PREMIER: Nonsense!

MR. MORGAN: The total cost of resetting it would not amount to £50. Everything is there. The type will have to be altered, I

Mr. Morgan.]

admit, as it is not set up in the same space as is necessary for it to appear in the columns of "Hansard," but, in my opinion, it could be placed in "Hansard" at a cost of £50. At any rate, if the Premier was desirous of ascertaining the cost, he could have done so, and could have had the information here to place before the House. But, independently of the cost, whether it is £50 or £100, the people have already paid between £600 and £700 for something for which they did not ask; and now all that the people desire is to know what they are paying for. They are entitled to know; and unless this evidence appears in "Hansard" they will not know. There must be some motive on the part of the Premier for suppressing it and keeping it from the people, otherwise he would allow the evidence to go forth to the people, so that they could judge for themselves independently of what the commission's finding was.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I rise to support the amendment for this reason, that whilst I disagree with the judge, [5.30 p.m.] I do so without wishing to cast any reflection on him whatsoever. There are two opinions outside in connection with this matter, and some people outside consider that there were matters left out of the inquiry which should have been included.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you disagree with the judge?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There are two opinions on the question outside. There are things which should have been included in the questions submitted to the judge which were left out altogether. I have not read the whole of the report, but I would like to know from the Premier if there is anything in the proceedings of the Royal Commission with reference to the Minister for Lands reading only part of a letter.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Not a word.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Is there any reference made to the fact that although it was stated the station could not be bought for £45,000 the owner himself would not go into the box and deny that it could be bought a short time before for £45,000.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Not a word.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Then, the public have a right to hear both sides. The Premier confined the judge within certain limits, and asked him to make his report within those limits, but there was plenty of evidence outside those limits altogether which the judge did not refer to. The public have a right to know the whole of the proceedings and the whole of the evidence. After all, the judge is only human, and there are other people who would like to read the whole of the evidence. Why should the Premier confine the judge within certain limits?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The judge only answered the questions that were put to him.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The judge only had a right to answer the questions that were put to him by the Premier, but there are a good many questions which could have been put, and which leave a nasty taste in the mouth of the people. Why did the Minister for Lands leave out part of that letter in this House?

THE SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not discussing the motion, he is discussing another question altogether.

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am quite in order in speaking in support of the amendment, and I have a right to mention all these things.

THE SPEAKER: I must point out that there is no amendment before the House, because the hon. member who moved it has not brought it up to me. The hon. member, however, may proceed with his speech.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am giving reasons—and very good reasons—why the public should have the whole of the evidence, because the Premier limited the judge to certain questions to be inquired into.

THE PREMIER: I hope we will not spend much more time in talking on this question. I must confess that during the whole of my time in Parliament I have never listened with more regret than I listened this afternoon to the speeches that have fallen from some hon. gentlemen opposite. I feel certain, as time goes by, that in their calmer moments they will regret having given expression to some of the statements made this afternoon. Let us examine what the situation is calmly, quietly, and coolly, as befits members of the Legislature representing the people of Queensland. I moved this afternoon that the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the truth or otherwise of certain statements made by the hon. member for Dalby, and other matters connected therewith, should be incorporated in "Hansard." The Royal Commission took certain evidence which occupies many pages of printing. The evidence has been printed and a copy laid on the table of this House. It is only right, therefore, that the report at least should be made available to the people to whom the speech made by the hon. member was made available. So far as I am concerned, I think that the publication of the evidence would be a splendid thing for the Government.

Mr. VOWLES: Then, put it into "Hansard."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Publish it.

Mr. MORGAN: Put it in.

THE PREMIER: Let me say that the expense of printing all that evidence in "Hansard" would be very considerable.

Mr. MACARTNEY: How much?

THE PREMIER: Let me say that I undertake here and now to supply to every elector in Queensland who asks for it, free of cost, a full copy of the report and all the evidence.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: What will it cost?

THE PREMIER: Whatever it costs, the whole cost will be borne by the Government. Any elector who asks for a copy of the report which has been tabled, including both the evidence and the report, can have it free of cost on applying to me. But I am not going to have a tremendous expense incurred which, to my mind, is entirely unnecessary. Any elector who likes to make application for the report will be supplied with a free copy; but I think it is right that the people should be able to see the report of the commissioner in "Hansard." If we have the report in "Hansard," then any elector can get a printed copy of the evidence from me free of cost. That dispenses of the suggestion that there is any

desire on the part of the Government to conceal anything from the electors. On the other hand, I think the Government has everything to gain by having the whole of that evidence made available to every elector in Queensland.

Mr. MORGAN: Let it go into "Hansard."

The PREMIER: There is no need to, because any elector who asks for a copy of the report will be supplied with one free of cost. In my opinion, the moving of the amendment and the speeches made by hon. gentlemen opposite this afternoon have been made to cloud the real issue and to wrap up the situation in such a way as to endeavour to convey to the public that the judge's report is not a true and correct report upon the evidence submitted to him.

Mr. VOWLES: It is the opinion of one man; that is all.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Dalby says it is the opinion of one man. It is the opinion of the Attorney-General of the late Government—the Denham Government—and a colleague of the leader of the Opposition, and he was supported by the hon. member for Dalby. In choosing that commissioner, I thought we were choosing a commissioner to whom no exception could be taken, because the party to which he belonged was defeated at the last election, and he lost his portfolio through the fact of this party coming into power. He was a colleague of hon. members opposite, and was supported by the hon. member for Dalby when he sat on this side of the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You confined the commissioner within certain limits.

The PREMIER: What was referred to the Royal Commission? The judge was asked to make inquiry with regard to the truth or otherwise of certain very substantial statements made by the hon. member for Dalby in this House.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member would be more in order in discussing that aspect on the next motion.

The PREMIER: I am endeavouring to show that this amendment should not be carried. I want to show that the questions submitted to the tribunal were such as to give the judge full scope to inquire into the whole matter.

Mr. VOWLES: I will go into that on the next question.

The PREMIER: The hon. member can go into it on the next matter, but in the meantime I am showing reasons why the report should be printed in "Hansard," while, at the same time, I say that the whole of the evidence will be given to any elector who asks for it, free of cost to the elector, and at Government expense.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Dalby, in speaking in this House last month, made a specific statement. He said—

"In regard to the purchase of Wando Vale in the northern Gulf country, beyond Hughenden, that is regarded as a smelly transaction, to put the least expression on it. It is notorious that it was in the hands of an agent at Hughenden at a very much less sum than the Government purchased it for. I believe an hon. member said here this afternoon that there was only a difference of

£5,000. I would like to know what the Government paid. I understand they paid £83,000. I am in a position to say that it could have been bought on the same day, with all the stock on it, for £45,000, and less.

"The Premier: You are prepared to say anything.

"Mr. VOWLES: I am not only prepared to say it; I am prepared to prove it."

Mr. VOWLES: Read on further.

The PREMIER: Very well, I will go on. The hon. gentleman continued—

"I can give the Premier the names of the agent in whose hands it was on the day it was purchased by the Government, and he had instructions to sell it for £45,000 and not to refuse offers.

"The Premier: That is absolute rubbish.

"Mr. VOWLES: And that very property was purchased by the Government for £83,000.

"Mr. Pollock: Who was the agent?

"Mr. VOWLES: I will give the Premier the agent's name.

"Government Members: Give the House the name.

"Mr. VOWLES: Well, I will give the House the name; it was Mr. Gannan.

"Mr. Pollock: Well, I asked Mr. Gannan, and he told me he knew nothing about it. (Government laughter.)"

Now, there was a specific statement made in "Hansard," and it was suggested by other hon. members opposite that an inquiry should be held into the matter.

Mr. VOWLES: No, not into this, but only into Mount Hutton.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Murilla specifically suggested that an inquiry should be held into the matter, and I will be able to show that when I am dealing with the next motion. He suggested that an inquiry should be held into Wando Vale.

Mr. VOWLES: He spoke before I did.

The PREMIER: Yes, but he asked for an inquiry with regard to Wando Vale. Then the hon. member for Dalby got up and said that it could have been bought for £45,000 or less, and that he could prove it. It is not often that we have an opportunity of getting so specific a charge made as that. Hon. members opposite are in the habit—or some of them are, because really I do not wish to include every hon. member opposite—but some members opposite have been in the habit of making charges against the Government of a very vague kind. They make them by innuendo. It is not often that they are so specific as to say that they can prove it. We appointed a Royal Commission on their suggestion and at their request to inquire into—

"(1) The truth or otherwise of the following allegations made by William John Vowles, Esquire, a member of the Legislative Assembly of the said State, in the course of a speech in the said Legislative Assembly on the twelfth day of September, one thousand nine hundred and seventeen, in regard to the purchase by the Government of Queensland of Wando Vale Station, in the State of Queensland, to wit:—

(a) That the said William John Vowles was then in a position to prove

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that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, could have been bought for forty-five thousand pounds and less on the same day that it was purchased by the Government;

(b) That on the same day that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, was purchased by the Government it was in the hands of an agent, to wit, Mr. Gannan, and that Mr. Gannan had instructions to sell it for forty-five thousand pounds, and not to refuse offers,

"(2) The amount of the purchase price paid by the Government for the said Wando Vale Station and stock thereon:

"(3) The person or persons to whom the said purchase price for Wando Vale Station and stock was so paid by the Government, and how such purchase price was applied:

"(4) Whether the purchase price paid by the Government as aforesaid was a fair and reasonable price for the said Wando Vale Station and stock."

I cannot imagine a commission including a wider scope than that commission included.

Mr. VOWLES: Didn't I ask you to include Mount Hutton, and you refused to do it?

The PREMIER: The scope of the commission in this case was ample.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the matter the hon. member is now discussing is more a matter for the next motion than for the motion now before the House.

The PREMIER: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I am endeavouring to show why it is sufficient to print in "Hansard" the judge's report. The judge made a full inquiry, and on the evidence that was brought before him he came to a specific decision and conclusion. He found that those statements were not true, and that the hon. member was not justified in making them.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not say that.

The PREMIER: That is his finding. He found that the base insinuation made against the Treasurer of Queensland was without any foundation.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who made that insinuation?

The PREMIER: That insinuation and charge was not made by any member on this side of the House.

Mr. VOWLES: Who made it, then?

The PREMIER: The statement was made by someone in North Queensland—a friend of hon. gentlemen opposite, and it was retailed here as if it were a fact.

Mr. MORGAN: It was not retailed here; it was not mentioned.

The PREMIER: Hon. members opposite hear these wild rumours outside, and they come here and say they are facts, and that they can prove them.

Mr. MORGAN: That was never mentioned in the House.

The PREMIER: What would the public have thought if we had not had an inquiry into that matter? They might have been inclined to think that the hon. member was able to prove his statement. But an opportunity was given to have the thing fully investigated by an impartial tribunal, and I think it is most regrettable now that hon.

members of the Opposition should be taking up an attitude which suggests that the judge did not come to a fair conclusion—that his report was not justified by the evidence.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Who said that?

The PREMIER: Well, I can come to no other conclusion from the suggestions made by hon. members opposite when they propose that the evidence should be printed with the judge's report. Why, every Royal Commission that sits takes reams and reams of evidence, and are we to understand that members opposite expect that those reams and reams of evidence will be printed at the public expense and distributed to everybody in the State? That is not the manner in which the reports of Royal Commissions are dealt with. Their reports are fair.

Mr. MORGAN: But they are not printed in "Hansard."

The PREMIER: But in order to remove any suggestion whatever with regard to the evidence, I may say that if members can show me where the evidence is included in any other "Hansard," the evidence shall be printed in this case.

Mr. VOWLES: Can you show where the report is printed in "Hansard" in any other case?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. VOWLES: Where?

The PREMIER: In "Hansard." I am not going to be drawn off the track by the hon. member. The only construction that can be placed upon the attitude of hon. gentlemen opposite is that they are reflecting upon the judge's finding. The judge has given a finding after hearing both sides.

Mr. MORGAN: Why don't you get it all in "Hansard"?

The PREMIER: I hope that my colleague the Treasurer will take some action outside this House that will have the effect of effectively stopping such base charges and insinuations as have been made in connection with Wando Vale.

Mr. VOWLES: Against whom will he take his action?

The PREMIER: He cannot take it against the hon. member for Dalby, because he made his statement under the cover of the privileges of Parliament, and he is not liable.

Mr. VOWLES: I rise to a point of order. The Premier has accused me of having made a statement against the Treasurer under the cover of the privileges of this House. If you look through "Hansard" you will find that I never mentioned the Treasurer's name, or made any charge of corruption.

The SPEAKER: I do not think the Premier attributed that statement to the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, he did.

The SPEAKER: If he did attribute the statement to the hon. member for Dalby, I would ask him to withdraw it. What I understood the Premier to say was that the hon. member for Dalby made a certain statement.

Mr. VOWLES: Under cover of the privileges of this House.

The PREMIER: I say again that the hon. member made his statement under the cover of the privileges of Parliament.

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The SPEAKER: Order. I understood the Premier to say that under the cover of the privileges of Parliament the hon. member for Dalby made some statement.

Mr. VOWLES: That he made this statement.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is probably prepared to restate what he said.

The PREMIER: What I said, as far as the hon. member for Dalby is concerned, is that the statement in his speech was made under the cover of the privileges of Parliament. With regard to the other rumour, which was started in North Queensland, I say it has been suggested in this House by one hon. member.

Mr. MORGAN: No, not in this House.

The PREMIER: In this House by one hon. member. I do not suggest that it was by the hon. member for Dalby, but I say it was by one hon. member. I also said that I hoped the Treasurer will take such action in connection with the gentleman who made the statement outside the House, as will have the effect of preventing a repetition of such malicious slanders, as they undoubtedly are. I hope the motion will be allowed to pass, and that any further discussion of this matter will be confined to the motion which appears next on the business-sheet.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I desire to say a few words on the amendment. The Premier said that he is willing to supply a copy of the evidence to the electors of Queensland. That would mean the expenditure of a large sum of money, and I suggest that the proposal contained in the amendment is a more reasonable proposal, because there will be no difficulty in having the evidence printed in "Hansard."

The PREMIER: It would have to be set up again.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I had a look at the evidence, and I am inclined to the opinion that the type is already set up, and that the evidence could be printed in "Hansard" without any resetting. If it goes into "Hansard," it will rapidly come into the hands of the people who get "Hansard," and people would get it without having to go to the trouble of writing officially to the Premier for a copy. The hon. gentleman stated that this commission cost something like £600. As a matter of fact, I happen to know that is more than six times the amount spent in employing the same quantum of legal advice as the Government obtained for the other side.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What was that money spent on?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am not going to be drawn off the track. Mr. Speaker desires that the debate should be confined within something like reasonable limits, and I wish to say what I have to say, and do not want to be drawn off the track by the Minister for Lands. In fairness to the hon. member for Dalby, this information should be printed, in order that the public may see if there was, in their opinion, any justification for the statement made by the hon. member for Dalby. It may be said that this matter can be discussed on the next motion on the business-paper, but the question of the fairness of doing what is proposed to be done is

a matter for discussion now, and once this motion is passed, there will be no further opportunity of discussing that aspect of the question.

The PREMIER: I have gone further than the motion proposes. I offered to give the evidence to every elector in Queensland.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That only proves that there is no reasonable objection to be offered to the amendment. If the electors get a copy of the evidence, they will be able to see for themselves whether a fair thing has been done by the hon. member for Dalby, and whether the hon. member had reasonable grounds for making the statement he did. If the evidence appears in "Hansard," it will show that Mr. Gannan is regarded as a man of the highest integrity, reliable, and trustworthy; and it will show that even to this very day Wando Vale is on Mr. Gannan's books at £45,000. The electors will also be able to consider the information placed in possession of the hon. member for Dalby by Mr. Suter, Mr. Cox, and other witnesses who gave evidence in the matter. Anyone who reads the evidence of Mr. Pym will honestly believe that Mr. Pym believed in the statements he made. I am not going into details, but I say that the hon. member for Dalby, having received the information which he did receive, would not be worthy of the position that he holds if he had not called public attention to it.

The PREMIER: Without inquiring into it?

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman in making that interjection gives a proof of the foolishness of refusing the information when it was asked for from time to time by members on this side of the House.

The PREMIER: Does that justify him in using slander?

Mr. MACARTNEY: "Hansard" will show that that information was refused from time to time.

The PREMIER: No; absolutely no.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You got that information in July last.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the Government had been frank and fair, and had answered the questions which members on this side of the House put to them, in all probability this unfortunate trouble would not have arisen. The amendment is on fair lines, and every member of the House, on whatever side he sits, should be fair; and I submit that if the evidence is published in "Hansard," along with the report, a fairer thing will be done to the hon. member for Dalby. The printing of the judge's report in "Hansard" is being done for purely political purposes, just in the same way as the High Court judgment was published in "Hansard," without the judgment of the Full Court of Queensland.

The PREMIER: Those are things the public ought to know.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Exactly; and I say the judgment of the Full Court should also be published in order that the public might see both sides of the question.

The PREMIER: You might just as well say that the arguments used in the High Court should be published.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I say the hon. gentleman is using "Hansard" for the political

Mr. Macartney. }

advantage of the Government. I might ask the hon. gentleman in charge of [7 p.m.] the motion whether it is proposed to put in "Hansard" the extract of the speech of the hon. member for Dalby, included in Exhibit 1, or whether it is to be limited to the extracts from the judge's summing up.

The PREMIER: I do not care which one. I am quite agreeable to either.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I only wish to point out that the extract from Exhibit 1 is the full text of the hon. member's remarks.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to that.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If that is the object, I have nothing more to say on the subject; it is a fair thing. One reason why I support the amendment is because it ensures that.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to the whole of the speech from Exhibit 1.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is all I wish to say about that. I wish to conclude my remarks by saying that, notwithstanding the assertion of the Premier that we should reflect on his honour the judge, I can only say that there is neither any intention nor any desire to reflect on his honour in any respect.

The PREMIER: Of course, you are speaking for yourself.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am speaking entirely for myself, but I think that in saying that I am speaking generally for this side of the House. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Merthyr*): I had not intended to say anything on this question but for the remarks of the hon. member who has resumed his seat. I have only risen for the purpose of correcting the wrong impression which might get abroad as to the possibility of using the type as it appears in this document for "Hansard." The hon. member knows a great deal of law, but I am rather inclined to think that his acquaintance with the printing trade is very limited.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am quite prepared to admit all that.

Mr. McLACHLAN: He stated that, in his opinion, it was possible to use the document that appears here for "Hansard." The position, as far as the printing of this document is concerned, will be that if it is going to be printed in "Hansard" it would need to be reset in a different type altogether. For the information of the hon. member, I may say that this work is all done with the linotype, and there is no such thing as being able to split a line in two in a page of 36 ems wide, as this is now.

Hon. J. TOLMIE interjected.

Mr. McLACHLAN: The hon. member must know that by splitting a page in two you could not put it into "Hansard." If the hon. gentleman suggests that it should be a printed pamphlet, with two or three photographs on the outer cover, and made into an artistic production, that, of course, could be done. We could have the hon. member for Dalby on the outside—it would be a great attraction. (Laughter.) In so far as using the document as it appears at the present time, the leader of the Opposition will know that it could not be done. If the document was printed in "Hansard," it would be a costly affair. I think it runs

into something like 130 pages, as it is, and it would take two lines of "Hansard" to a line of this document. As there are about 150 lines in a page of "Hansard," you can see how bulky it would be. The hon. member for Toowong will readily understand that it would be impossible to use the type as it appears in this document for the purposes of "Hansard," as it would mean resetting the whole thing up, and the expense would be very heavy indeed. I rose for the purpose of explaining the matter, in case somebody should get a wrong impression from what the hon. member for Toowong has said.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): I am against the motion altogether, because I do not see that there is any necessity for either the evidence or the report and findings of the judge to be put into "Hansard." It has already been pretty well circulated through the daily Press throughout Queensland, and I think that most people are now well acquainted with it. I believe the hon. member for Dalby would be one of the most noted men in Queensland if it was inserted in "Hansard."

The PREMIER: Notorious. (Laughter.)

Mr. PETRIE: I would rather support the amendment, because if it is fair to put the findings in, the other part of the proceedings should also be included in "Hansard." During the twenty-four years I have been in this House I have never heard of a report of a Royal Commission or their findings being printed in "Hansard." I think it is a waste of money to print this at all, and it can only be done for political purposes.

The PREMIER: The amendment would increase the expense twenty-five fold.

Mr. PETRIE: There are certain things put in "Hansard" which would be far better left out. I listened very attentively to the Premier, but he did not convince me that there was any necessity for having the report and findings of the judge put into "Hansard." I am not casting any reflection on the judge or any one else. This is a political move, and may be considered good propaganda work for the coming election, but, beyond that, I see no earthly reason why the report and findings of the judge should be printed in "Hansard."

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I want to have a few words on the amendment. The Premier falls back on the question of expense in this matter. I might say that at present no expense is being spared by the Premier to bring about his object. When it is the object of this side of the House—and it is my desire too—that the whole of this evidence should be put into "Hansard," the Premier immediately finds it is going to cost a lot of money. He told us last night that the Commission cost £500 or £600. My part did not cost anything like that; it did not cost £100. I want the electors in my district not to have merely the bare findings of the Commission—I want them to have the evidence, and analyse it as sane men, as the judge did, and come to their own conclusions. If they have not got the exhibits they cannot possibly analyse and understand the references that are made in the judge's summing up. Unless the general public can see those exhibits, they cannot understand the contents. I suppose that every elector in my district will want a copy of

[*Mr. Macartney.*]

the evidence, seeing that the Premier has promised to give it. I want them to get it and judge for themselves. I have said nothing that I am ashamed of, I am not ashamed of the evidence that has come out; in fact, I rather glory in the result, because I have proved my case as far as I am concerned, as I propose to show later on. (Hear, hear!) The general public in country electorates frequent Schools of Arts, and "Hansards" are filed there, and if this matter is omitted from "Hansard," they will not be able to get it. When the people see the findings of the Commission in this case, they will naturally look to the evidence on which the findings were made, and if the evidence is not there, what is the good of putting the report and findings in "Hansard," except for the glorification of the Premier and for electioneering purposes? If the hon. gentleman thinks he is going to do me any harm in that way in my electorate, he is making a great mistake, because all this advertisement he is giving me is getting me votes every day. (Government laughter.) If the hon. gentleman thinks otherwise, I will issue a challenge to him. He represents a very safe electorate—the Barcoo. Let him come up at the next election and contest the Dalby electorate.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: I will show him who is the better man, and we will rid the House of something which the people have been wanting to get rid of for a long time. (Opposition laughter.)

The PREMIER: When are you going to resign? Are you going to resign straight away?

Mr. VOWLES: You come and contest the Dalby electorate with me at the general election and see how you get on.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GUNN (Carnarvon): I think that "Hansard" is already too expensive and that we made a mistake the other day when the Premier was allowed to put into "Hansard" the judgment given with reference to the Legislative Council. I have never noticed before any findings of a Royal Commission getting into "Hansard." All the papers, even the "Standard," in their report of this Wando Vale case, have given the evidence, and later on, the judge's findings, and if one part of the proceedings is in the evidence should also be in. Why should there be a difference? If we are going to have anything at all in "Hansard," we should have the whole of it. If we are going to have this patchwork in, and to get little bits into "Hansard" from this and the other judgment, we are filling "Hansard" up with a lot of trash which would be far better out of it. It is all very well to talk about the expense to the country. Did the hon. gentleman who asked for the inquiry think about the expense to the country the other night? All the Premier needed to do was to lay the papers on the table of the House, so that members could see what was in them, and he could have asked them for an apology, and have saved the country £600 or £700. He had no thought the other night about the expense to the country, but now he is all concerned with it. I think we ought to vote against the motion altogether, but if one part is put in, the whole thing should be in.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted (*Mr. Morgan's amendment*) be so inserted—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 17.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Macartney
" Armstrong	" Moore
" Barnes	" Morgan
" Bebbington	" Murphy
" Bridges	" Peire
" Corser	" Stevens
" Forsyth	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Vowles
" Hodge	

Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Moore.

NOES, 28.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lloyd
" Barber	" May
" Carter	" McLachlan
" Collins	" McPhail
" Coyne	" O'Sullivan
" Fihelly	" Payne
" Foley	" Pollock
" Forde	" Ryan, D.
" Gledson	" Ryan, H. J.
" Hardacre	" Ryan, T. J.
" Hartley, H. L.	" Smith
" Hunter	" Weir
" Jones	" Wellington
" Kirwan	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Gledson and Mr. Lloyd.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Bayley and Mr. Walker.

Noes—Mr. Huxham and Mr. W. Hartley.

Resolved in the negative.

Original question put and passed.

[DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN ABOVE MOTION.]

ROYAL COMMISSION APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT UPON CERTAIN MATTERS RELATING TO THE PURCHASE OF WANDO VALE STATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEENSLAND.

COMMISSION.

"GEORGE THE FIFTH, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, and Emperor of India:—

"To the Honourable THOMAS O'SULLIVAN, Esquire, K.C., a Judge of District Courts of Our State of Queensland and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

"Greeting:

"WHEREAS it is expedient in the public interest that full and careful inquiry should be made with respect to the following matters:—

(1) The truth or otherwise of the following allegations made by William John Vowles, Esquire, a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the said State, in the course of a speech in the said Legislative Assembly on the twelfth day of September, one thousand nine hundred and seventeen, in regard to the purchase by the Government of Queensland of Wando Vale Station, in the State of Queensland, to wit:—

(a) That the said William John Vowles was then in a position to prove that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, could have been bought for forty-five thousand pounds and less on the same day that it was purchased by the Government;

- (b) That on the same day that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, was purchased by the Government it was in the hands of an agent, to wit, Mr. Gannan, and that Mr. Gannan had instructions to sell it for forty-five thousand pounds, and not to refuse offers.
- (2) The amount of the purchase price paid by the Government for the said Wando Vale Station and stock thereon:
- (3) The person or persons to whom the said purchase price for Wando Vale Station and stock was so paid by the Government, and how such purchase price was applied:
- (4) Whether the purchase price paid by the Government as aforesaid was a fair and reasonable price for the said Wando Vale Station and stock:

Now, therefore, know ye that We, reposing especial trust and confidence in your zeal, knowledge, learning, industry, discretion, and ability, do by these presents, by and with the advice of Our Executive Council of Our said State, constitute and appoint you the said The Honourable THOMAS O'SULLIVAN to be our Commissioner for the purpose of inquiring into the matters hereinbefore mentioned: And We do hereby require and enjoin you to make diligent inquiry into the matters aforesaid, and for that purpose to exercise all the powers conferred upon a Commission by the Official Inquiries Evidence Act of 1910: And We do furthermore command and enjoin you to summon before you and to examine all such persons as may appear to you able to inform you concerning the premises, and to cause to be taken down and reduced in writing the evidence of the several witnesses that may appear before you, and such evidence, together with a full and faithful report touching the matters aforesaid, to transmit to the Honourable the Chief Secretary of Our said State.

"In testimony whereof We have caused the Public Seal of Our said State to be hereunto affixed.

Witness Our Trusty and Well-beloved His Excellency Sir HAMILTON JOHN GOULD-ADAMS, Major on the Retired List of Our Army, Knight Grand Cross of Our Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Companion of Our Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor of Our State of Queensland and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia, at Government House, Brisbane, this twenty-first day of September, in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventeen, and in the eighth year of Our Reign.

"HAMILTON GOULD-ADAMS.

"By His Excellency's Command,
"T. J. RYAN."

"Entered on Record by me in the Register of Patents, No. 13, page 262, this twenty-first day of September, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and seventeen.

"(Signed) P. J. McDERMOTT,

"Under Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department."

"Commissioner:

"The Honourable THOMAS O'SULLIVAN, Esquire, K.C., a judge of District Courts of the State of Queensland and its Dependencies.

"Counsel:

"Mr. A. H. H. M. FREEZ, K.C., with him Mr. H. D. MACROSSAN (instructed by Mr. W. F. WEBB, Crown Solicitor), appeared for the Crown and to assist the Commission;

"Mr. P. B. MACGREGOR, with him Mr. A. D. MCGILL (instructed by Mr. A. H. PACE), appeared for Mr. W. J. VOWLES, M.L.A.

"Secretary: J. D. O'HAGAN.

"REPORT.

"Judges' Chambers,

"District Court, Brisbane,

"13th October, 1917.

"To His Excellency Sir Hamilton John GOULD-ADAMS, Major on the Retired List of His Majesty's Army, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, and Governor of the State of Queensland and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia.

"May it Please Your Excellency,—

"On the 21st day of September, 1917, I was appointed Royal Commissioner to inquire into and report upon the undermentioned matters:—

- (1) The truth or otherwise of the following allegations made by William John Vowles, Esquire, a member of the Legislative Assembly of the said State, in the course of a speech in the said Legislative Assembly on the twelfth day of September, one thousand nine hundred and seventeen, in regard to the purchase by the Government of Queensland of Wando Vale Station, in the State of Queensland, to wit:—
 - (a) That the said William John Vowles was then in a position to prove that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, could have been bought for forty-five thousand pounds and less on the same day that it was purchased by the Government;
 - (b) That on the same day that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, was purchased by the Government it was in the hands of an agent, to wit, Mr. Gannan, and that Mr. Gannan had instructions to sell it for forty-five thousand pounds, and not to refuse offers.
- (2) The amount of the purchase price paid by the Government for the said Wando Vale Station and stock thereon;
- (3) The person or persons to whom the said purchase price for Wando Vale Station and stock was so paid by the Government, and how such purchase price was applied;
- (4) Whether the purchase price paid by the Government as aforesaid was a

fair and reasonable price for the said Wando Vale Station and stock.

"The inquiry was opened at the District Court, Brisbane, on the 22nd day of September, 1917, and was continued at the Land Court, Brisbane, on the 25th and 27th days of September, 1917. In order to meet the convenience of Mr. Vowles, the actual taking of evidence did not proceed until the 1st day of October, 1917, when a sitting was held at Parliament House, Brisbane. The inquiry was continued at Parliament House on the 2nd and 3rd days of October, 1917, and at the Land Court, Brisbane, on the 4th and 11th days of October, 1917, when it was concluded.

"Mr. Arthur Feez, K.C., and Mr. H. D. Macrossan (instructed by Mr. W. F. Webb, Crown Solicitor) appeared for the Crown, and to assist the Commission; Mr. P. B. Macgregor and Mr. A. D. McGill (instructed by Mr. A. H. Pace) appeared for Mr. W. J. Vowles, M.L.A.

"Fourteen witnesses were examined, and the shorthand transcript of their evidence, together with seventy-seven documentary Exhibits (a list of which is appended) accompanies my report. The following witnesses were called by Mr. Macgregor:—

1. Mr. W. J. Vowles, M.L.A. for Dalby;
2. Mr. Edward Pym, station manager, Clune, via Beaudesert;
3. Mr. John May, M.L.A. for Flinders;
4. Mr. T. F. Connor, selector, Emerald;
5. Mr. J. V. Suter, stock and station agent, Hughenden; and
6. Mr. Edmund Cox, stock and station agent, Hughenden.

The following witnesses were called by Mr. Feez:—

1. Mr. J. H. S. Barnes, grazier, Canning Downs (the vendor of Wando Vale Station);
2. Mr. Alexander McGugan, State stations manager, Brisbane;
3. Mr. F. E. Bennett, managing director of the Pastoral Estates, Limited, Toowoomba;
4. Mr. H. W. Byram, manager, Union Trustee Company of Australia, Limited, Brisbane;
5. Mr. W. Gordon Graham, Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, Brisbane;
6. The Hon. E. G. Theodore, M.L.A., Treasurer of Queensland and Secretary for Public Works;
7. The Hon. J. M. Hunter, M.L.A., Secretary for Public Lands, Brisbane; and
8. Mr. Stanley H. L. Ferry, manager of Dotswood Station.

"Owing to the serious illness of Mr. Gannan, of Hughenden, his evidence could not be obtained either at Brisbane or Hughenden.

"Paragraph (1).

"Mr. Vowles's Allegations.

"Sub-paragraph (a):—

"That the said William John Vowles was then in a position to prove that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, could have been bought for forty-five thousand

pounds and less on the same day that it was purchased by the Government."

"This allegation was made by Mr. Vowles on the strength of a conversation between him and the witness Edward Pym, then a cattle-buyer and now a station manager. The conversation took place some time between August and the early part of November, 1916, in the presence of Mr. Godfrey Morgan, M.L.A. for Murilla, at the Albert Hotel, Brisbane, where these three gentlemen were then staying. Mr. Pym alleged he had been told by Mr. P. T. Gannan, a stock and station agent at Hughenden, shortly before that at the time the Government had purchased the property, he (Mr. Gannan) had it on his books for £45,000, with all the stock on it, and that he had instructions to submit less offers. The conversation with Mr. Pym was a casual conversation and no importance was apparently attached to it at that time by either Mr. Vowles or Mr. Morgan. Mr. Vowles took no action in the matter till 12th September, 1917, and did not communicate with Mr. Gannan or obtain confirmation from him of Mr. Pym's statement.

"The matter was revived after the commencement of the 1917 session of Parliament by certain rumours becoming current in the smokers room of Parliament House to the effect that the witness T. F. Connor, then inspector of cattle properties for an intending investor, had told Mr. John May, M.L.A. for Flinders, at Cloncurry in May, 1917, that Wando Vale Station was in the market for £47,000 a fortnight previously to the Government paying £82,000 for it, and that the State Treasurer (Mr. Theodore) got £5,000 out of the deal. This statement was made in the presence of several other persons. The rumours appear to have created or revived suspicion in the mind of Mr. Vowles as to the circumstances connected with the purchase of Wando Vale. On the 12th September, 1917, Mr. Morgan in a speech in Parliament referred to the purchase of Wando Vale Station, and stated that it was listed by the auctioneers in the district at £5,000 less than the Government paid for it, and that the Government paid £5,000 more than the auctioneer was prepared to sell it for to any private individual. He further said that it was the general topic amongst the people of the district as to what had become of the £5,000 in question, and as to this sum suggested corruption on the part of the Government—or, at any rate, was understood so to do by Mr. Vowles. Mr. Vowles spoke later the same day. He did not intend to refer to Wando Vale further than to correct Mr. Morgan's statement as to the difference in the two prices being £5,000 instead of £37,000—as Mr. Pym had informed them. However, he went further than he intended, and made the allegations which are the principal subject-matter of this inquiry.

"I find that the information then in Mr. Vowles's possession was not sufficient to justify him in making the allegation in subparagraph (a), because (1) of the casual nature of the conversation and the length of time that had elapsed; (2) Mr. Gannan's evidence was necessary to prove the allegation, and he had not been communicated with; and (3) Mr. Pym's statement that Mr. Gannan had the property on his books for £45,000—even if correct—would not prove

that the property could have been bought for £45,000, as the agent's authority would only extend to obtaining and submitting offers.

"Sub-paragraph (b):—

"That on the same day that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, was purchased by the Government, it was in the hands of an agent, to wit, Mr. Gannan, and that Mr. Gannan had instructions to sell it for forty-five thousand pounds, and not to refuse offers."

"This allegation was also founded on the conversation with Mr. Pym. The evidence shows that Wando Vale Station and stock belonged to Mrs. Sara Barnes, wife of Mr. J. H. S. Barnes, who acted as agent for his wife in connection with the property since she had acquired it in 1903. In 1912 he placed it in the hands of Messrs. Dalgety and Co., Limited, for sale at £45,000. In June, 1913, he placed the property with Messrs. F. A. Brodie and Co., of Sydney, for sale at £55,000 with 18,000 cattle. In November, 1913, Mr. Barnes refused an offer of £55,000 from Messrs. Brodie and Co., and decided to hold the property, on which he afterwards made considerable improvements. In March, 1915, the property was not for sale (Exhibit 5).

"Some question has arisen as to whether Mr. Barnes placed the property in Mr. Suter's hands in February or March, 1916. Mr. Barnes has no recollection of having done so, but Mr. Suter thinks he did, although he had no personal recollection and no written record of the matter. His belief is founded on a statement made to his clerk by Mr. Peel to the effect that he (Mr. Peel) remembered Mr. Suter's firm offering him Wando Vale in May, 1916, at £65,000—which meant that Mr. Suter could get him a firm offer at that price. I am of opinion that Mr. Barnes did inform Mr. Suter of his willingness to sell at the price stated (that is, to consider a 'firm' offer) probably in conversation, but did not formally place the property in his hands in the ordinary business way, as he did in the case of Lyndhurst, of which he gave the usual written particulars in June, 1916 (Exhibit 76).

"However, cattle properties increased in value so much in the first half of 1916 that I am satisfied the property could not have been bought in August, 1916, under approximately the price agreed to by the Government.

"Mr. E. Cox (Mr. Gannan's partner up to March, 1916) gave evidence that he searched amongst Mr. Gannan's papers, and found that the property was put in Mr. Gannan's hands in 1912, at £45,000, by Messrs. Brodie and Co., but could find no later record of the property being in Mr. Gannan's hands.

"I find that in 1916 the property was not in Mr. Gannan's hands at £45,000, and that he had not instructions to sell it for that or any other sum.

"It is necessary to point out that in 1915 severe losses were caused on Wando Vale Station by drought, and the number of cattle on the station at the time negotiations with the Government commenced had been reduced to 10,000—according to Mr. Barnes's estimate—a large proportion of which were male cattle. However, the price of cattle

had appreciated so much since 1913 that the appreciation had more than counterbalanced the losses by drought.

"Paragraph (2):—

"The amount of the purchase price paid by the Government for the said Wando Vale Station and stock thereon."

"I find that the amount of the purchase price was £82,000, of which £10,000 was paid in cash and the balance was paid in Queensland Government Debentures, with interest at the rate of £4 10s. per centum, free of State and Federal income tax.

"Paragraph (3):—

"The person or persons to whom the said purchase price for Wando Vale Station and stock was so paid by the Government, and how such purchase price was applied."

"I find that the purchase price was paid to Union Trustee Company of Australia, Limited, Brisbane, who were acting under a power-of-attorney for Mrs. Sara Barnes. The method of payment was as follows:—

CASH—

Paid to Union Trustee Company of Australia, Ltd., Brisbane	£1,000
Paid to the credit of Mrs. Sara Barnes in the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney	9,000
	<hr/> £10,000

DEBENTURES—

These were all handed to Union Trustee Company of Australia, Ltd., Brisbane, on behalf of Mrs. Sara Barnes:—

1. Series issued in the name of Mrs. Sara Barnes	£38,600
2. Series issued in the name of Union Trustee Company of Australia, Ltd.	25,600
3. Series issued in the name of Louise Carruthers King	1,300
4. Series issued in the name of Esther Jane Counsell	£6,500
	<hr/> £72,000
Total Cash and Debentures	£82,000

"Of the sum of £1,000 cash, £850 was paid by Union Trustee Company of Australia, Limited, to the Pastoral Estates, Limited, Toowoomba, for commission on the sale of the station. The balance is held by the company on behalf of Mrs. Barnes.

"All the debentures are now held by the company on behalf of Mrs. Barnes, except series 3 and 4, issued in the name of Louise Carruthers King and Esther Jane Counsell. The lastnamed debentures were issued to the persons named under instructions from Mrs. Barnes, in payment of purchase money for land. Apart from the payment of commission to the Pastoral Estates, Limited, no payment of commission fees or outgoings of any kind has been made from the purchase price.

"As to the rumour that £5,000 was paid to the Hon. E. G. Theodore (the State Treasurer), Mr. Theodore gave evidence absolutely denying the rumour, and said there was not the slightest shadow of justification for any allegation of the kind. The rumour was disproved by the evidence of Mr. Byram (manager of Union Trustee Company of Australia, Ltd., Brisbane), Mr. Gordon Graham (Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands), Mr. McGugan (State Stations Manager), Mr. J. H. S. Barnes (the vendor of Wando Vale Station). Mr. Vowles himself stated in his evidence that he did not give any credence to this rumour.

"The witness T. F. Connor stated that he did not remember Mr. Theodore's name being mentioned nor that he said "Theodore got £5,000 out of it," and further that if he did say it, it must have been a pure invention.

"I find that the rumour was entirely without foundation.

"Paragraph (4): 'Whether the purchase price paid by the Government as aforesaid was a fair and reasonable price for the said Wando Vale Station and stock.'

"I find that the property was brought under the notice of Mr. McGugan by the Pastoral Estates, Limited, Toowoomba, in July, 1916. The Wando Vale herd was at first the subject of negotiation (Exhibit 38). Mr. McGugan succeeded later in obtaining an offer of the station and stock as a going concern for £85,000, with 10,000 head of cattle (Exhibit 48). He instructed Mr. Stanley H. L. Ferry to make an inspection of Wando Vale Station. Mr. Ferry made a thorough inspection of the station and stock, commencing early in August, 1916. The inspection lasted over fourteen days, and finished on the 17th August. Mr. Ferry then met Mr. McGugan at Pentland on 19th August, 1916, by appointment, and made a verbal recommendation for the purchase. On this verbal report, Mr. McGugan made a written report to the Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands (Exhibit 53) recommending the purchase at £85,000. Mr. Ferry followed up his verbal report with a written report (Exhibit 54) giving an estimate of the cattle at 12,000, and referring to the proposed purchase of the station and stock (which he knew were under offer at £85,000) as a good proposition.

"After the receipt of Mr. McGugan's recommendation (Exhibit 53) the Under Secretary decided to recommend the purchase. The Secretary for Public Lands (Hon. J. M. Hunter, M.L.A.), having discussed the matter with the Under Secretary and Mr. McGugan, submitted a recommendation to Cabinet and obtained Cabinet approval for the purchase at £85,000. He then instructed the Under Secretary to try to get the property for £80,000, and the Under Secretary, after some further discussion with Mr. Barnes and Mr. Bennett, the Managing Director of the Pastoral Estates, Limited, Toowoomba, on 29th August, 1916, succeeded in getting the vendor (Mr. Barnes) to reduce his price to £82,000 and close the bargain.

"The Secretary for Public Lands, in recommending the purchase for Cabinet approval, relied on the recommendation of Mr. McGugan, adopting the recommendation of Mr. Ferry. These gentlemen are official experts of the Department in the State

Stations business, and their probity and ability are not questioned. The recommendation of the Under Secretary for Lands was also of importance on account of his special departmental knowledge of the value of pastoral properties throughout the State.

"I see no reason for doubting the recommendation of these gentlemen, and I am of opinion that the purchase, when made, was a good bargain for the State, at £85,000, on the vendor's estimate of 10,000 cattle. As the stock exceeded the vendor's estimate by nearly 3,000 head and the vendor accepted £3,000 less than the price he asked, I am of opinion that it was an excellent bargain for the State on the 29th August, 1916.

"Mr. Barnes stated that he considered he had made a bad bargain for himself, and is willing to repurchase at £94,000, and to inspect at a much higher figure; but of course some of the enhanced price is attributable to the continued increase in the value of cattle and the natural increase of the herd.

"Mr. Macgregor referred to the absence of independent evidence as to the value of the property in August, 1916. This would probably have been desirable if I had been directed to make a valuation of the property as it stood on that date, but as I was satisfied on the evidence given that the value was not less than the agreed price, I did not think it necessary to prolong the inquiry for the purpose of ascertaining the excess value (if any), which is irrelevant to the inquiry.

"I find that the purchase price paid by the Government was a fair and reasonable price for Wando Vale Station and stock.

"I have the honour to be,

"Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

"T. O'SULLIVAN."

LIST OF DOCUMENTARY EXHIBITS.

1. Hansard report of speech by Mr. W. J. Vowles, M.L.A., in Legislative Assembly, on 12th September, 1917.
2. Letter, dated 21st June, 1913, from Mr. John H. S. Barnes to Messrs. F. A. Brodie and Coy., Sydney, offering Wando Vale at £55,000, walk in walk out.
3. Copy telegram, dated 9th March, 1915, from Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, re inspection of Wando Vale.
4. Copy letter, dated 9th March, 1915, confirming above telegram.
5. Telegram, dated 15th March, 1915, from Mr. Barnes to Pastoral Estates Limited, advising Wando Vale was not for sale.
6. Telegram, dated 10th July, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Pastoral Estates Limited, offering Wando Vale herd.
7. Copy telegram, dated 12th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, advising they were waiting reply from Mr. McGugan.
8. Copy letter, dated 13th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, acknowledging and confirming above telegrams.
9. Letter, dated 16th July, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Manager, Pastoral Estates Limited, confirming his telegraphic offer of whole Wando Vale herd.

10. Copy letter, dated 17th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, relative to interview with Mr. McGugan.
11. Copy telegram, dated 20th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, *re* Mr. McGugan's application for offer respecting Wando Vale herd.
12. Copy letter, dated 20th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, confirming above.
13. Telegram, dated 20th July, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Pastoral Estates Limited, asking leave matter in abeyance pending his arrival in Brisbane.
14. Telegram, dated 21st July, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Pastoral Estates Limited, granting offer Wando Vale cattle.
15. Copy telegram, dated 21st July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, advising offer of cattle phoned to Mr. McGugan.
16. Letter, dated 24th July, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to the Manager, Pastoral Estates Limited, acknowledging above telegram and confirming offer of Wando Vale at £85,000.
17. Telegram, dated — July, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Pastoral Estates Limited, offering Wando Vale at £85,000.
18. Letter, dated 24th July, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to the Manager, Pastoral Estates Limited, acknowledging telegram (Exhibit 11) and confirming reply (Exhibit 14).
19. Copy letter, dated 24th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, Wando Vale, *re* offer of Wando Vale herd.
20. Copy letter, dated 25th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, Lyndhurst, *re* offer of Wando Vale herd.
21. Copy letter, dated 29th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, confirming telegram *re* inspection of Wando Vale by Government inspector.
22. Copy telegram, dated 29th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited, *re* abovenamed inspection.
23. Telegram, dated 3rd August, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Pastoral Estates Limited, notifying Brisbane address.
24. Copy letter, dated 8th August, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, at Brisbane, *re* proposed interview with Mr. McGugan.
25. Letter, dated 19th August, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to the Manager, Pastoral Estates Limited, advising that Mr. McGugan had not communicated with him.
26. Urgent telegram, dated 21st August, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Pastoral Estates Limited, *re* request by Mr. McGugan, extension of offer.
27. Copy telegram, dated 21st August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, *re* above request.
28. Letter, dated 21st August, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Manager Pastoral Estates Limited, *re* above request.
29. Copy letter, dated 21st August, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, confirming above telegrams.
30. Copy letter, dated 22nd August, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, *re* further communication with Mr. McGugan.
31. Letter, dated 23rd August, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Manager, Pastoral Estates Limited, acknowledging above letter.
32. Letter, dated 26th August, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to the Under Secretary for Lands, advising his departure for Warwick.
33. Letter, dated 30th August, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Mr. W. Gordon Graham, acknowledging receipt of draft agreement.
34. Letter, dated 30th August, 1916, from Mr. Barnes to Pastoral Estates Limited, offering £850 commission.
35. Letter, dated 26th June, 1917, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. Barnes, *re* alleged statement by Northern agent as to offer of Wando Vale at £40,000.
36. Letter, dated 9th July, 1917, from Mr. Barnes to Manager, Pastoral Estates Limited, in reply to above.
37. Copy telegram, dated 8th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited to Mr. McGugan, *re* class of cattle desired.
38. Copy telegram, dated 10th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, *re* offer of Wando Vale herd.
39. Copy letter, dated 10th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, confirming above.
40. Copy letter, dated 10th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to General Manager, State Stations, confirming above (Exhibit 38).
41. Telegram, dated 15th July, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Pastoral Estates Limited, acknowledging telegrams and letters.
42. Letter, dated 15th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, *re* purchase of Wando Vale herd.
43. Copy letter, dated 20th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, *re* proposed interview with Mr. Bennett.
44. Telegram, dated 28th July, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Pastoral Estates Limited, advising inspector would reach Wando Vale 1st August.
45. Copy letter, dated 24th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, *re* offer of Wando Vale herd.
46. Copy letter, dated 25th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, *re* Wando Vale herd.
47. Copy telegram, dated 26th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited to Mr. McGugan, Rockhampton, *re* offer of Wando Vale at £85,000.
48. Letter, dated 27th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, confirming above offer.

49. Letter, dated 29th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, confirming above offer (Exhibit 47).
50. Copy telegram, dated 29th July, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, Marlborough, *re* offer of Wando Vale at £85,000.
51. Copy letter, dated 2nd August, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, *re* proposed interview with Mr. Barnes.
52. Letter, dated 10th August, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to General Manager, State Stations, *re* the payment of purchase money (£85,000).
53. Letter, dated 19th August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Under Secretary for Lands, recommending purchase at £85,000.
54. Letter, dated 21st August, 1916, from Mr. Stanley H. Ferry to Mr. McGugan, reporting result his inspection of Wando Vale, and stating purchase good proposition.
55. Telegram, dated 19th August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Pastoral Estates Limited, asking fortnight's extension offer.
56. Copy urgent telegram, dated 19th August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited to Mr. McGugan, Ravenswood, *re* request extension.
57. Copy urgent telegram, dated 21st August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates Limited to Mr. McGugan, Ravenswood, *re* request extension.
58. Urgent telegram, dated 19th August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan, Charters Towers, to Pastoral Estates Limited, asking for longest extension possible.
59. Letter, dated 21st August, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, acknowledging and confirming above telegrams.
60. Copy telegram, dated 22nd August, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, Mr. McGugan, Townsville, *re* request for extension of offer.
61. Urgent telegram, dated 23rd August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Pastoral Estates Limited, as to date of taking delivery.
62. Copy letter, dated 24th August, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, *re* alleged failure in delivery of Ravenswood telegrams.
63. Copy letter, dated 28th August, 1916, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, to Mr. McGugan, *re* date of taking delivery (Exhibit 61).
64. Copy urgent telegram, dated 29th August, 1916, from Under Secretary for Lands to Mr. McGugan, advising proposed purchase at £82,000, and asking earliest date for delivery.
65. Urgent telegram, dated 30th August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Under Secretary for Lands, advising Mr. Bowman would take delivery 7th September, 1916, and asking for guarantee of number of stock.
66. Letter, dated 31st August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Under Secretary for Lands, confirming above.
67. Letter, dated 23rd June, 1917, from Messrs. J. V. Suter and Coy, to Mr. McGugan, advising main particulars of Wando Vale they held were £65,000 with 10,000 head of cattle, walk in walk out.
68. Letter, dated 19th July, 1917, from Managing Director, Pastoral Estates Limited, *re* alleged statement as to price of Wando Vale.
69. Notice of Question by Mr. Vowles in Legislative Assembly, 13th September, 1917.
70. Notice of Questions by Mr. Vowles and Mr. Winstanley in Legislative Assembly, 18th September, 1917.
71. Answer given in Legislative Assembly on 19th September, 1917, by The Hon. The Secretary for Public Lands, to Mr. Winstanley's Question *re* stock on Wando Vale.
72. Answer given in Legislative Assembly, on 20th September, 1917, by The Hon. The Secretary for Public Lands, to Mr. Corser's Question *re* the purchase of Wando Vale.
73. Telegram, dated 8th October, 1917, from Mr. Livingstone to Mr. Suter, Queen's Hotel, Townsville, *re* alleged offer to Mr. Peel in May, 1916, at £65,000.
74. Urgent telegram, dated 27th September, 1917, from Mr. Suter to Mr. Barnes, Hotel Cecil, Brisbane, as to alleged offer of £65,000 in June or July, 1916.
75. Telegram, dated 2nd October, 1917, from Mr. Suter to Mr. "Fowles," Parliament House, Brisbane, as to alleged offer of £65,000 in June or July, 1916.
76. Letter, dated 26th June, 1916, from Mr. J. H. S. Barnes to Messrs. J. V. Suter and Coy., Hughenden, *re* offer of Lyndhurst.
77. Circular from Messrs. F. A. Brodie and Co. to Messrs. P. T. Gannan and Co., *re* offer of Wando Vale at £45,000 in 1912 (with annexure).

ALPHABETICAL INDEX TO WITNESSES.

NAME.	PAGE.
BARNES, J. H. S.	1944
BENNETT, F. E.	1965
BYRAM, H. W.	1968
CONNOR, T. F.	1970
COX, E.	2000
FERRY, S. H. L.	1988
GRAHAM, W. GORDON	1968
HUNTER, HON. J. M. (M.L.A.)	1982
MAY, JOHN (M.L.A.)	1942
MCGUGAN, A.	1957
PYM, E.	1939
SUTER, J. V.	1993
THEODORE, HON. E. G. (M.L.A.)	1981
VOWLES, W. J. (M.L.A.)	1930

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN
BEFORE THE ROYAL COMMISSION
APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO
AND REPORT UPON THE PUR-
CHASE OF WANDO VALE STATION.

Commissioner :

The HONOURABLE THOMAS O'SULLIVAN,
Esquire, K.C., a judge of District Courts
of the State of Queensland and its De-
pendencies.

Counsel :

Mr. A. H. H. M. FEEZ, K.C., with him
Mr. H. D. MACROSSAN (instructed by
Mr. W. F. Webb, Crown Solicitor),
appeared for the Crown and to assist the
Commission.

Mr. P. B. MACGREGOR, with him Mr. A. D.
MCGILL (instructed by Mr. A. H. PACE),
appeared for Mr. W. J. VOWLES, M.L.A.

Secretary : J. D. O'HAGAN.

(DISTRICT COURT, BRISBANE.)

SATURDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER, 1917.

FIRST DAY.

The Secretary read the Commission. Com-
mission recorded.

Mr. Feez : I understand that Mr. Vowles, the gentleman who made the allegations, part of which this inquiry relates to, is not in Brisbane at the present time; and the Crown, though extremely anxious to have this matter elucidated and the truth brought out at the earliest possible moment, are also desirous that Mr. Vowles should have every opportunity of attending and of bringing any evidence which he may have or feel inclined to bring; and, therefore, we don't want to hurry—that is to say, don't want to rush it on—this morning, much as we would like to. As a matter of fact, we could go on with a certain amount of evidence this morning; but under the circumstances, and simply out of pure fairness, the Crown think that Mr. Vowles should be given an opportunity of attending and putting whatever he wishes to put before the Court—

The Commissioner : And hear the evidence also?

Mr. Feez : And hearing the evidence, cross-examining witnesses, and so forth. Under these circumstances, it is only a question of when the matter should be heard. As Mr. Vowles is out of town, I understand, perhaps it would be convenient to adjourn to a day to be fixed, so that Mr. Vowles might have an opportunity of saying what he would like.

The Commissioner : Monday, probably, would not suit?

Mr. Feez : Monday is rather short, I am afraid. The Crown want to give Mr. Vowles every opportunity—

The Commissioner : I quite understand that.

Mr. Feez : Of establishing what the Crown allege are absolute misstatements; and, in order to give him that opportunity, they think it right that the matter should not be hurried on in any way.

The Commissioner : Well, will you suggest a date, Mr. Feez?

Mr. Feez : Well, if Your Honour would leave it rather in this way—that when we have communicated with Mr. Vowles, and have found out what his wishes are in the matter, we should let Your Honour know?

The Commissioner : Very well. adjourn it on the understanding that it will be brought on at the earliest date that will suit Mr. Vowles.

Mr. Feez : Of course, by "the earliest possible moment that will suit Mr. Vowles," I understand it to be within a reasonable time. The Crown could not consent to adjourn the matter to any indefinite time.

The Commissioner : Perhaps it might be as well to adjourn the matter to Tuesday, and let Mr. Vowles know that it is adjourned to Tuesday.

Mr. Feez : Very well, Your Honour. Would you say 11 o'clock on Tuesday?

The Commissioner : Very well. I am not quite sure yet whether the Land Court is available. I will adjourn it until Tuesday, at 11 o'clock, at the Land Court; that is, on the understanding that the Land Court is available; otherwise we will have to adjourn it to a room in Parliament Buildings.

Mr. Feez : I desire to say that the Crown are desirous that the matter should be heard, and that Your Honour should determine the matter, at the earliest possible moment; and this adjournment is only in the interests of Mr. Vowles.

The Commissioner : You wish Mr. Vowles to be present when the evidence is given?

Mr. Feez : Yes, to have the opportunity of being present. I may state that a summons will be served on Mr. Vowles to-day, containing a statement of the full scope of Your Honour's Commission: so that he should have plenty of opportunity.

The Commissioner : I think that should be done. Very well, the inquiry will be adjourned until Tuesday, the 25th instant, at 11 o'clock, at the Land Court.

[The official shorthand reporters (Messrs. H. J. Bannister and B. A. Goode) were sworn by the Commissioner.]

[The Commission adjourned at 10.50 a.m. until 25th September, 1917.]

(LAND COURT, BRISBANE.)

TUESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER, 1917.

SECOND DAY.

Mr. Webb : It appears, Your Honour, it will be necessary to again adjourn this Commission. I was in communication with Mr. Vowles last night, and it appears that, on account of his business engagements, it is not reasonably possible for him to attend before Thursday morning.

The Commissioner : That is another way of saying that Mr. Vowles wishes for an adjournment for Thursday morning?

Mr. Webb : Yes.

The Commissioner : The further hearing will be adjourned until Thursday morning, at 10.30.

[The Commission adjourned at 11.3 a.m. until 27th September, 1917.]

(LAND COURT, BRISBANE.)

THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER, 1917.

THIRD DAY.

The Commissioner: Do you appear, Mr. Feez?

Mr. Feez: I appear, if Your Honour pleases, with my learned friend Mr. Macrossan, for the Crown. I notice that Mr. Vowles is not present. I know that he is in town; when I say "I know," I am informed by the Crown Solicitor that he saw him in town.

The Commissioner: You can go on with the evidence?

Mr. Feez: The position is this: Mr. Vowles is the gentleman who has made these accusations; and I would suggest—with Your Honour's consent, of course—that the proper course would be for Mr. Vowles to state upon oath what he has to say; and tell us how he proposes—if he does propose—to try and substantiate any of these charges that he has made. He is in the position of the accuser. The Crown, of course, have evidence ready to go on with, absolutely to disprove the charges. Of course, we are here to assist you, as far as possible.

The Commissioner: My duty is to make the inquiry.

Mr. Feez: Yes; to elucidate the absolute facts and truth; and for that reason we have a number of witnesses here to prove that the insinuations and the allegations are absolutely without any foundation in fact.

The Commissioner: In the absence of Mr. Vowles, what do you suggest?

Mr. Feez: Well, I suggest that he should be brought here; he has been subpoenaed to appear. The questions which Your Honour is asked to inquire into are: The truth or otherwise of the following allegations:—“(a) That the said William John Vowles was then in a position to prove that Wando Vale Station, with all the stock on it, could have been bought for forty-five thousand pounds and less on the same day that it was purchased by the Government.” That is the first and most material of the allegations. The accusation involves directly a charge of the grossest incompetence and negligence on the part of the Government; and undoubtedly involves an insinuation of something worse. [At this stage, Mr. Vowles entered the Court Room.] Oh! here is Mr. Vowles now.

The Commissioner: We were wondering whether to go on without you, Mr. Vowles.

Mr. Vowles: I have been up at the District Court, in accordance with the summons which I received, waiting for the Court. We have had no notification that it was here.

The Commissioner: That explains the whole matter, Mr. Vowles. Very well; this is an inquiry into the truth or otherwise of certain allegations made by you, Mr. Vowles. It seems that we must get some evidence from you on the matter. You are the person who made these allegations, and it would be rather difficult to inquire into them without evidence from you.

Mr. Vowles: Before you proceed with the inquiry, Your Honour, I should like to make a few remarks about it. I see that counsel are appearing in this case—a formidable bar—and I understand that they are appearing

in the interests of the Crown. Now, in these proceedings I am joined, practically, as a party—in the recital that I have here—and the statements that I have made are made in the public interest; and I think that it is only a right thing that the public interest should be protected by counsel. It seems to be a most remarkable thing that the Crown, who have been charged, should have men to protect them, and the Crown Law Office has not assigned counsel to the public interest, altogether distinct from the Crown interest in this case.

The Commissioner: Have you made an application to the Crown Law Office for counsel to be assigned?

Mr. Vowles: I have made no application. I only arrived in Brisbane this morning at 8 o'clock. I mentioned it to Mr. Webb, and told him it was my intention to bring this matter forward and to ask you—if the Crown does not assign counsel—for an adjournment of the case. As regards my own position, I should also like to tell you that I was subpoenaed at 10 o'clock on Saturday night last, at Dalby, to appear on Monday in Brisbane. That was an absolute impossibility; there was no train service, and it was impossible to get a motor down to Toowoomba in order to catch the mail there.

The Commissioner: The Commission of Inquiry was adjourned to Tuesday, wasn't it, Mr. Vowles? The subpoena should have been Tuesday.

Mr. Vowles: No; the subpoena is to appear on Monday.

The Commissioner: Well, the adjournment was granted from Saturday to Tuesday.

Mr. Vowles: To appear on Monday, the 24th September. That was an impossibility. I understand that Mr. Feez made an application for an adjournment to suit my convenience. It suits my convenience to be here to-day, but not to go on with any evidence until such time as counsel are either assigned by the Crown, or else I have counsel at this table to defend the public interests. I may say that I have something like ten witnesses whom I want subpoenaed—I have had no opportunity of asking you to do that—witnesses who live at long distances—several of them in the North of Queensland. One, I understand, Mr. Gannan (who is one of my chief witnesses in this matter)—is very, very ill; and I think it highly desirable that his evidence should be taken on commission because, from what I can gather, he is not likely to live; and I think that should be done straight away. Another witness that I have—a very important witness—is Mr. Connor. He is in the North of Queensland; he is a well-known gentleman.

The Commissioner: Well, we could go on with any evidence that is available in the South—your own evidence and any other evidence that is available here—as soon as you get the result of your application to the Crown Law Office.

Mr. Vowles: Exactly. I want to know what attitude the Crown are adopting. The Crown are charged, and they are defending themselves, and the public interest is not being defended; and I am here to give that evidence—which is highly desirable. Not only should that be done, but we should have all the copies of the correspondence which, in the House, I asked to be tabled, and which

the Minister refused to table. I think that my counsel, or I, should be supplied with copies for the purposes of this case.

The Commissioner: As to any matter like that, you ought to apply to the Crown Law Office.

Mr. Vowles: Yes. I have looked through the Official Inquiries Evidence Act, and I did not see anything which would enable you to have them supplied.

The Commissioner: Under the circumstances, Mr. Feez, it seems reasonable to give Mr. Vowles a further adjournment in order that he can make an application.

Mr. Feez: The position I take up in this matter is one of acting simply in the interests of justice and the interests of the public. I cannot dissociate the interests of the Crown from the interests of the public, and it seems to me that the two are one; and we are here as counsel, not as advocates for any particular person, but to elucidate the truth. We don't, of course, in any way wish to put Mr. Vowles in the slightest difficulty, but to give him every assistance we can; that is to say, the Crown, naturally, want this inquiry got through as early as possible; they want Your Honour's finding on these very serious allegations without delay; and, therefore, I could not consent, on behalf of the Crown, to an indefinite adjournment—as I said before; but we are perfectly prepared to assist Mr. Vowles in every way in connection with getting witnesses—if, of course, they can be got within a reasonable time. I may say, with regard to the Crown supplying counsel, of course, I am not in a position to say anything about that; only it does seem to be a most extraordinary request.

Mr. Vowles: Why?

Mr. Feez: That a man who has made a charge against the administrative body of the Crown—the Ministers of the Crown—should ask that they should supply him with counsel to establish that charge, seems to me a very extraordinary position; and it must be remembered that the principal statement into which Your Honour is asked to inquire is, that Mr. Vowles is in a position to prove—and when he made the statement in the House he was in a position to prove—that this station—at the time it was sold to the Government—could have been bought by them for the sum of £45,000. He said that he was in a position to prove it. Well, under those circumstances it would be a most extraordinary thing that a request should be made to the Crown to supply him with counsel to do a thing which he was then in a position to do himself. Mr. Vowles must now be in exactly the same position as he was at that time. But, anyhow, that has nothing to do with Your Honour or with me. I can only suggest that this is a request which seems to me to be, to put it mildly, somewhat unusual.

Then with regard to the witnesses. First of all, of course, I say that we will help Mr. Vowles to get any witnesses he requires.

Mr. Vowles: I submit that that is your function, Your Honour.

Mr. Feez: I say merely that the Crown will assist you. The Commissioner has the power to issue subpoenas, of course. The issuing of those is entirely in his discretion. I say the Crown will assist, in every possible

way, to get any witnesses we can. For instance, Mr. Vowles mentioned Mr. Gannan. We know, in issuing the Commission—we have information that Mr. Gannan at the present time is practically dying; he is in such a condition that it is hopeless at the present time to ask him anything about the thing; he is in a state of delirium and is not expected to live—well, his death, unfortunately, is expected at any time; he is in a very parlous state indeed, and certainly is not in a condition to give evidence at the present time. We don't, of course, know anything about Mr. Connor. With regard to the correspondence—that is a matter which is entirely for the Crown. There is nothing to keep back; there is only the ordinary correspondence that takes place in connection with the sale of a station, passing between the agent and the principal, and the person who was acting on behalf of the Crown (Mr. McGugan—manager of the Government stations). There is nothing which the Crown have any objection to Mr. Vowles seeing. I am quite sure he probably will be supplied with any correspondence he wants. With regard to adjourning, we think that the proper course would be for Mr. Vowles—who has made these charges—to proceed at all events so far as his own evidence is concerned, so that we will know exactly where we stand and know in what way he proposes to use the witnesses—what relevancy the witnesses would have on the inquiry; and it might also be necessary, under these circumstances, for the Crown to call other witnesses to elucidate further the facts—not that I think it would be, but at the same time it might be. It seems to me that the proper procedure would be for Mr. Vowles now to give his evidence; and after that—if he required further evidence or we required further evidence—to adjourn the matter to enable that evidence to be given within a reasonable time.

The Commissioner: Mr. Vowles, do you want the adjournment before you give your own evidence?

Mr. Vowles: If I am not going to have counsel assigned to me, I want to consider the position.

The Commissioner: You want to consult with counsel who is assigned to you?

Mr. Vowles: Yes, before I proceed with it at all. As far as Mr. Feez's remarks are concerned, I should like to point out that he has a copy of what I said in the House; and I distinctly stated in the House that Mr. Gannan was the agent; so they cannot be taken by any surprise. There is another thing, too. I should like to comment on. Mr. Feez says he cannot dissociate the Crown and the public interest in this. Well, there is a charge that the Crown are not protecting the public interest; and to my mind it would be altogether wrong—

The Commissioner: Yes, I am disposed to agree with your view of that. I think that this is a charge against certain members of the Administration, that they have not done their public duty; and I think, myself, that you should be allowed to be in a position to approach the Crown and ask the Crown whether, in the public interest, they are willing to afford you the assistance of counsel. I propose to give you the necessary time to make that application to the Crown. My

duty is to inquire into the matter, whether you get the assistance of counsel or whether you do not.

Mr. Vowles: I quite admit that.

The Commissioner: Well, an adjournment to to-morrow would enable you to confer with the Crown Law Officers, would not it?

Mr. Vowles: Yes, that would suit me very well. I suppose they would let me know this morning. Of course, if they don't I will have to make another application to-morrow.

The Commissioner: Any witnesses you want subpoenaed, you can hand their names in to the secretary of this Commission.

Mr. Feez: I don't know what the procedure is. Does Your Honour propose to sit while the House is sitting? There is no objection to that?

The Commissioner: Unless somebody raises some point about it.

Mr. Feez: I don't know of any.

The Commissioner: Do you object to the tribunal sitting while the House is sitting?

Mr. Vowles: No. I don't want to be here next Thursday, if I can possibly help it.

The Commissioner: It will be arranged to suit the parties.

Mr. Feez: If the matter is going to be adjourned until to-morrow, it would be more convenient to adjourn it until Monday and go straight on.

The Commissioner: It might be better. Well, would it be more suitable to adjourn it until Monday, Mr. Vowles?

Mr. Vowles: Just as well.

The Commissioner: You would have time, then, to have counsel assigned, consult with counsel, and go on.

Mr. Vowles: It would be better; because I have had no opportunity of doing anything. I only got here this morning at 8 o'clock.

The Commissioner: Well, I expect you to go on, as far as you are able to go on, on Monday.

Mr. Vowles: Yes, Your Honour; I will give my own evidence.

The Commissioner: Meantime, you will approach the Crown; and if the Crown assign you counsel, well and good; but whether you are assigned counsel or not, I want to go on with the matter on Monday.

Mr. Feez: May we settle the procedure before we adjourn?

The Commissioner: Yes.

Mr. Feez: I think that, as Mr. Vowles is the accuser in this matter, he is in the nature of the prosecutor; and he, at all events, will be the first person to be called in the case. Of course, the matter is entirely in Your Honour's hands; you have the direction of the whole procedure.

The Commissioner: Yes, the matter of the inquiry is an allegation made by Mr. Vowles. I take it, therefore, that Mr. Vowles will either commence by giving his own evidence, or by calling witnesses.

Mr. Vowles: Of course there are several other matters to be inquired into.

The Commissioner: Yes; they are incidental to the main thing.

Mr. Feez: They arise out of the main charge.

Mr. Vowles: I am quite prepared to start, Your Honour.

The Commissioner: Very well, then. It is understood that Mr. Vowles will start on Monday. We will adjourn until Monday morning at half-past 10 o'clock.

[The Commission adjourned until 10.30 a.m. on Monday, 1st October, 1917.]

(PARLIAMENT HOUSE, BRISBANE.)

MONDAY, 1 OCTOBER, 1917.

FOURTH DAY.

COMMISSIONER:

THE HONOURABLE THOMAS O'SULLIVAN, Esquire, K.C., a Judge of District Courts of Queensland and its Dependencies.

COUNSEL:

Mr. A. H. H. M. FEEZ, K.C., with him Mr. H. D. MACROSSAN (instructed by Mr. Webb, Crown Solicitor), appeared for the Crown, and to assist the Commission.

Mr. P. B. MACGREGOR, with him Mr. A. D. MCGILL (instructed by Mr. A. H. Pace), appeared for Mr. W. J. Vowles, M.L.A.

Mr. Macgregor: I noticed that this Commission adjourned in order to allow Mr. Vowles to make application to the Crown for counsel. That application has been unsuccessful, and I ask Your Honour's leave that Mr. McGill and I be allowed to appear for Mr. Vowles.

The Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Macgregor.

Mr. Macgregor: Mr. Feez has dealt with the question of procedure. May I say that the only issue which really touches Mr. Vowles is the first one, "(a)," as to (2), (3) and (4)—these are issues which the Crown has set for themselves.

The Commissioner: "(1) (a)"?

Mr. Macgregor: Yes "(1) (a)" and "(b)" are supposed to touch us. On that, if we were the prosecutors or the accusers, we would be entitled to the final reply on that. As to "(2)," "(3)" and "(4)" we would be here simply by Your Honour's permission, and would take such part in the proceedings as Your Honour thought would be likely to assist you.

The Commissioner: I take it that you are in the position of plaintiff as regards "(1) (a)".

Mr. Macgregor: I think it is the position of accused. This is a charge against Mr. Vowles of telling stories; he is called upon to show that he is not telling lies, so he is the accused in that aspect of it.

The Commissioner: I look upon it as an allegation made by Mr. Vowles and I am appointed to inquire into that. If Mr. Vowles does not call evidence, I will have to take it that there is no evidence to support the allegation.

Mr. Macgregor: I am prepared to offer evidence on that, Your Honour, but we have not all the evidence available at the present time. Mr. Gannan is not available, but Mr. Vowles can give you the foundation upon which he made the statement, and the man who gave the statement upon which he made his statement.

Mr. Feez: As I said before, we are here absolutely to assist the Court, in common with other reasons, in arriving at an absolutely proper finding in regard to this charge that has been made by Mr. Vowles.

The Commissioner: Do you appear to assist the Commission, or for the Crown?

Mr. Feez: For the Crown and to assist the Commission. I appear in the same way as the usual practice of Royal Commissions; the Crown usually appoint counsel to assist the Commission as they did in the big Commission in the South recently with regard to the oil matter. Counsel were appointed there by the Crown to assist the Commissioner, although the person charged was one of the Ministers, and other counsel appeared with the consent of the court for the different individuals interested in the matter.

The Commissioner: Did counsel in that case who appeared to assist the Commissioner appear for any of the parties.

Mr. Feez: Yes, Your Honour, as a matter of fact, this is the way that the learned judge put it: "The Government have given me the assistance of Mr. Shand, K.C., and Mr. Thomson, and I allowed the following counsel to appear for the different persons interested in the inquiry:—Mr. Ralston, K.C., and Mr. Broomfield for the Hon. A. Griffith, Minister for Education; Mr. Knox, K.C., and Mr. H. M. Stephen for the British Imperial Oil Coy., Ltd.; Mr. Lamb, K.C., and Mr. Weigall for Mr. J. Beynon Reed; Mr. Boyce and Mr. Lloyd for Mr. H. A. Morgan."

The Crown simply appointed counsel here to assist the Commission. Mr. Macgregor has said that he is not in a position to call all his evidence at the present time. The Crown, of course, desires the Commission to proceed with the greatest possible expediency. I may say at once I have a number of important witnesses here, and they are kept here at great inconvenience to themselves, and I certainly ask that there be no adjournment until some position arises that renders it absolutely necessary; we want to go on with the matter as rapidly as possible.

The Commissioner: When the question of the adjournment arises it can be dealt with.

Mr. Macgregor: It is only five minutes ago that I saw the documents—since the documents were received. It will be impossible for me to cross-examine the witnesses on those documents.

The Commissioner: What documents?

Mr. Macgregor: The documents and correspondence that Mr. Vowles has been asking for.

The Commissioner: Did Mr. Vowles only obtain those documents this morning?

Mr. Macgregor: Yes, Your Honour, five minutes ago.

Mr. Feez: The Crown only got the request for them on Saturday morning.

Mr. Macgregor: They were asked for in the House months ago.

Mr. Feez: That was only a request to the Attorney-General—this request was only received on Saturday morning, and they could not find Mr. Vowles at the address he gave; there was no delay on the part of the Crown.

The Commissioner: Mr. Macgregor, you had better go on as far as you can.

Mr. Macgregor: I won't be able to cross-examine Mr. Feez's witnesses.

The Commissioner: Very well; we will take the matter as far as you can go with it.

Mr. Macgregor: I propose to call Mr. Vowles first. I ask for the usual proclamation to be made as to witnesses.

[The Commissioner directed that all persons proposed to be called as witnesses leave the room. The proposed witnesses then retired.]

WILLIAM JOHN VOWLES, Member of the Legislative Assembly, sworn and examined:

1. *By Mr. Macgregor:* You are a member of the Legislative Assembly?—Yes.
2. Representing what constituency?—Dalby.
3. And you were so on the 12th of September last?—Yes.
4. And on the afternoon or the evening of the 12th September you made a speech in the Legislative Assembly?—Yes, in the afternoon and evening.
5. That speech was reported in "Hansard"?—Yes.
6. Pages 1,091 to 1,096 inclusive?—Yes.
7. You have read that report in the "Hansard"?—Yes.
8. Is that a correct report of the speech?—Substantially so.

Mr. Macgregor: I tender those pages of *Hansard*, Your Honour. (*Admitted and marked Exhibit 1.*)

9. In the preceding pages of "Hansard" appears a speech by Mr. Godfrey Morgan—did you hear that speech before you delivered your speech?—No, I had not heard the speech, but I had heard comment upon it; I was not in the Chamber and I did not actually hear the speech, but I heard comment upon it, and I heard the latter portion of the speech. On page 1093 of the "Hansard," these words occur:—

"In regard to the purchase of Wando Vale in the northern Gulf country, beyond Hughenden, that is regarded as a small transaction to put the least expression on it. It is notorious that it was in the hands of an agent at Hughenden at a very much less sum than the Government purchased it for. I believe an hon. member said here this afternoon that there was only a difference of £5,000. I would like to know what the Government paid. I understand they paid £83,000. I am in a position to say that it could have been bought on the same day with all the stock on it for £45,000 and less.

"The Premier: You are prepared to say anything.

"Mr. VOWLES: I am not only prepared to say it; I am prepared to prove it."

10. What were the facts in your knowledge at the time you made that statement?—About the time the purchase of Wando Vale was made, Mr. Godfrey Morgan (member for Marilla) and I were staying at the Albert Hotel, in Brisbane. We had gone home for lunch one day and we met a gentleman named Pym at the hotel. Mr. Pym is here now and will give evidence.
11. Had you known him before this?—No.
12. By sight?—Yes, by sight, as one of the cattle-buyers for Brisbane meat companies. He told us that he had got certain information about the sale of Wando Vale—or, rather, the price of Wando Vale, not the sale of it—that he thought might be of interest to us. We went into the office and he informed the

- two of us that he had then come from the Hughenden district, and that he had been in conversation with a gentleman named Mr. Peter Gannan, who was a well-known and reputable agent—I am not giving his exact words. This took place some eighteen months ago. Mr. Gannan was a well-known and reputable gentleman, and he had told him that at the time the Government had purchased the property he (Mr. Gannan) had it on his books for sale for £45,000 with all the stock, and further that he had instructions to submit less offers. That was the extent of the conversation with Mr. Pym.
13. Did you make any inquiries about Mr. Pym after this conversation?—I did.
 14. Was the result such as to make you disbelieve Mr. Pym in any way?—Oh, certainly not. I spoke to several cattle men, including Mr. Ken. Nicholson, Mr. Syd. Baynes, and Mr. Mackie, of Chinchilla, whom I know very well. In each case they told me that he was a reputable man and I could be quite satisfied that what he told me would be correct.
 15. Did you accept Mr. Pym's statement?—I did, and so did Mr. Morgan.
 16. You cannot fix that date at all closely?—No; I can only fix about the time when the information became known about the price.
 17. *By the Commissioner:* That would be about twelve months ago?—About August twelve months.
 18. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Did you take any action on that information?—No, not at the time.
 19. It just remained in your mind?—Yes, I was concerning myself about another property—Mount Hutton. I wanted to get the truth about that.
 20. What was the next happening so far as Wando Vale was concerned?—I think it was a question in the House *By Mr. Macartney*, the member for Toowoong.
 21. Have you any idea as to the date of that question?—No, I cannot find it. I do not know whether it was asked without notice or in the course of a speech or by way of an interjection.
 22. You have a very clear memory as regards that?—Yes, and so has he. He asked the Secretary for Lands if he were aware that an advertisement of the Wando Vale station had appeared in the Southern papers as being for sale for £42,000 at the time that it was purchased by the Government. I am not sure what the reply was. I think it was that he was not aware; I know there was no information.
 23. You have made a search?—Yes, I have not been able to find it.
 24. What was the next incident so far as Wando Vale is concerned?—Well, ever since the session commenced there have been certain rumours going about the House—in the smokers room—about the sale of this property, and also about certain statements which were made by a Mr. Connor at Cloncurry in the presence of the Home Secretary, the Under Secretary of the Home Department, and the member for Flinders, Mr. John May. I am calling Mr. May; I don't know what evidence he will give; but if you would like to know the rumours, I will give them to you.
 25. *By the Commissioner:* This is smokers room talk?—And rumours were also current in the town. I was frequently spoken to about them.
 26. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Dealing with the price of Wando Vale, was there anything else before the 12th of September, when you made your speech?—No; except that the member for Murilla made a speech before me.
 27. Did you go that afternoon prepared to speak about Wando Vale?—No; about grievances generally.
 28. Wando Vale was in your memory at the time?—No; I was dealing with Mount Hutton.
 29. Why did you refer to Wando Vale?—The member for Murilla referred to it; he said there was only a difference of £5,000 between the two prices, whereas, from what Mr. Pym had told us, there was a difference of £45,000 and £82,000.
 30. You wanted to correct that?—I wanted to make that right.
 - 30A. From the time that you spoke to him—you think about twelve months ago last August—have you not seen Mr. Pym or spoken to him until this morning?—Never; until I spoke to him a moment ago.
 31. When you said on the 12th of September:—"I am in a position to say it could have been bought on the same day with all the stock on it for £45,000 or less. . . . I am not only prepared to say it, I am prepared to prove it," what did you have in your mind?—What came subsequently, that I could prove it through Mr. Gannan—he was the agent. I omitted something from Mr. Pym's conversation: he said, in addition to that, that Mr. Gannan was the agent and he was prepared to prove it.
 32. Did you know on the 12th of September that Mr. Gannan was ill?—No, I did not.
 33. You accepted Mr. Pym's statement and thought you could call Mr. Gannan to prove what Mr. Pym said he could prove?—That is so.
 34. *Cross-examined by Mr. Feez:* You are a solicitor, Mr. Vowles?—Yes.
 35. I suppose you know the rules of evidence?—I suppose so.
 36. The ordinary rule of evidence with regard to hearsay?—Yes.
 37. You know, of course, that such evidence as that upon which you made this statement could not be accepted in any court of justice?—No; I do not. Mr. Gannan was prepared to support that. That is all that is necessary in a court of justice.
 38. You said you were prepared to prove it on a conversation which passed through two persons?—Yes.
 39. One was Mr. Pym, who got it from Mr. Gannan?—If I were going into a court of law I should not have worried about Mr. Pym; I would have brought Mr. Gannan direct.
 40. You would if you could?—Yes.
 41. As a matter of fact, you never saw Mr. Gannan in your life?—No, not that I know of.
 42. You do not know him at all?—No.

43. You never had a conversation with him about this matter?—No.
44. And you simply took Mr. Pym's statement of what he said Mr. Gannan had said to him, and on which you founded your statement that you could prove that this station was in the hands of Mr. Gannan for sale for £45,000?—That is so.
45. At the time that the Government bought it for £82,000?—That is so.
46. Of course you intended to make a very serious accusation against someone when you said you could prove that?—Certainly—it was a most unbusinesslike transaction.
47. You wished to convey that what is usually known as "graft" was practised?—Show me where that is concerned.
48. Did you or did you not?—I did not refer to corruption of any sort.
49. Did you intend to convey that there was corruption or graft?—That had been previously conveyed by the member for Murilla.
50. Did you or did you not intend to convey that?—That there was corruption?
51. Corruption or graft, so that someone had some gain out of it?—I said it was a small transaction.
52. You made a speech not very long ago—only the 12th of last month—in which you made a statement. I am only asking if you wished to convey that there had been any impropriety?—I do not know where my words can convey that.
53. Did you intend in your mind when you made that speech to charge corruption?—I was trying to get at the truth. I never made any accusation at all, no accusation whatever.
54. *By the Commissioner:* Answer the question, Mr. Vowles?—I say a certain member of the House made a charge of corruption; he is going to be produced.
55. *By Mr. Feez:* What did you intend to convey by your words?—Which words?
56. Any words—by your speech?—My intention was that I regarded it as an unbusinesslike transaction, and certain things were being said.
57. I ask you—surely you can answer—did you, when you made that speech, intend to convey to members of Parliament and through them to the general public that there was something not only dishonest but that there was graft?—Something suspicious—I am prepared to say that there was something suspicious about it.
58. In what way do you mean suspicious?—Because the purchase was made without parliamentary authority, and members of the Opposition were given no information respecting it; the information was being withheld.
59. You say there was something suspicious—what was there suspicious about it?—My remarks in the first part—and you have to connect the one with the other—were in connection with Mount Hutton. I started to speak about Mount Hutton, and I came to Wando Vale. My remarks have to be taken as a general dealing with public enterprises—information was being suppressed.
60. I asked you first of all what you intended to convey with regard to dishonesty, and you said that you intended to convey that there was something suspicious?—Exactly.
61. I want to know what it was that you suggested was suspicious?—That the Government had given more money for this property than private individuals could have got it for.
62. Take all that in—what was there suspicious about it?—It is only open to one construction—that it is in the nature of an unbusinesslike transaction: something in which they are not looking after the interests of the public.
63. Merely bad management—is that what you want to say now?—And something that was being suppressed.
64. What was that?—We could not possibly arrive at any decision.
65. What was the suggestion you were making?—That the Government should give the members of the House all the information—
66. Oh, no! But what was the suggestion of something that was suppressed? What was the matter that was suppressed?—How could we tell until we got the information?
67. What was in your mind when you made the speech? You say you had the impression that something was being suppressed: what was it you had in your mind?—I could not tell you until I got the information.
68. You made a speech, and you say you had something in your mind that was being suppressed. What was it?—A certain statement had been made by a member of the Government which had come to my knowledge; and that referred to some corruption.
69. When you made the speech, you intended to convey that there had been corruption?—I did not convey it. I never said it. I never inferred it.
70. Never mind about that now; I am going to see directly whether you did or did not. I asked you, did you intend to convey the impression which you say you got from your conversation, which came from some member of the Government, apparently?—That is so; and I heard it was reported to the Premier.
71. Did you intend to convey that there was some corruption?—Did I intend to convey it?
72. Yes?—No; that had been suggested by a member of the Government.
73. When you made your speech, did you intend it?—My intention was to get the information and the details, so that I could see if there was anything in that charge of corruption.
74. When you made that speech, did you intend to convey that there had been any corruption?—I didn't intend to convey anything, because I never used the word "corruption."
75. I am asking you, did you intend to convey it?—I never used the word "corruption." I never referred to corruption.
76. I never asked you whether you used the word "corruption"; did you intend to convey that?—I don't know; if you show me what words you are referring to, I might be able to tell you.

77. You are the person. You are speaking in the House; your words are reported. When you got up to make this speech dealing with grievances and Wando Vale, I want to know what you intended to convey? Was it only bad management, or was it also corruption?—Well, I think I did say that it was either bad management, or perhaps it might be something worse.
78. We know what you said; we have a verbatim report of it. I am asking you now to say what you intended to convey?—There are the words; they speak for themselves, Mr. Feez. What particular words do you want me to interpret?
79. I don't want you to interpret any words. You get up and make an accusation which you said you could prove—that this station was in the hands of a certain agent for £45,000 at the same time that the Government bought it for £82,000. Now, that involves, of course, gross mismanagement; and it may involve a charge of direct dishonesty. Did you intend it to involve that charge of dishonesty?—No; I was looking for information. I may tell you I had heard a direct charge of dishonesty levelled against the Ministry by other honourable members previously.
80. What I understand you to say is this: you had previously heard a charge of dishonesty levelled against the Government by one of their own supporters—one of their own members?—Well, not a direct charge.
81. I only took your own words?—Well, a charge. I may as well give his exact words.
82. Well, you heard a charge of dishonesty levelled at the Government by one of their members supporting them in the House?—Yes.
The Commissioner: That is, one of their supporters.
83. *Mr. Feez:* Yes; but as a member of the House?—He said Theodore got £5,000 out of it. It is just as well to have it.
84. Did you believe the gentleman who said that?—Yes, I did; he said that a man named Connor had made that statement: he had taken a note of it, and reported the matter to the Premier, and the Premier had taken no action—that was three months previously; and that it was stated in the presence of another member of the Cabinet.
85. Well, you had this information in your mind when you made this speech?—Well, I had heard this some time previously. What I had in my mind was a correction of the statement made by the member for Murilla, as you find on page 1087, where he said that the property could have been purchased for £5,000 less than the Government paid for it. Now, that was not in accordance with what Mr. Pym stated; and when I went into the Chamber I pointed out that Mr. Pym had said £45,000.
86. You didn't say Mr. Pym?—No; my informant.
87. No, you didn't say who your informant was?—At any rate, going back to what Mr. Pym had told me; the figures should be £45,000 as against £82,000, instead of £5,000.
88. Do I understand you to mean this—that Mr. Morgan—the member for Murilla, I think you called him—had made a statement that £5,000 of the purchase money could have been saved?—Yes.
89. And that you understood that £5,000 had gone to Mr. Theodore?—No, I didn't say that at all.
90. I am asking you, is that what you intend to tell us now?—No.
91. How did you understand this £5,000 had gone astray?—I didn't know how it had gone astray; but Mr. Morgan was with me when Mr. Pym told us that the price was £45,000. When Mr. Morgan stated there was a difference of only £5,000 I corrected him by saying here what is reported.
92. Did you connect the £5,000 difference which Mr. Morgan referred to with the £5,000 which, you say, one of the Government's supporters stated Mr. Theodore got?—No, I didn't.
93. You didn't connect them?—No. I considered there was a difference between Mr. Connor's story and Mr. Pym's story.
94. Passing away from that for the minute. You notice apparently an extraordinary discrepancy in your memory as to what took place between you and Mr. Pym, and Mr. Morgan's memory of it?—Of course, I know that Mr. Morgan referred to Mr. Connor's statement here.
95. You say that you and Mr. Morgan and Mr. Pym had a conversation in which Mr. Pym told you that Mr. Gannan told him that the property was in his hands for sale at £45,000 at the time the Government purchased it for £82,000; and that Mr. Gannan was prepared to prove it—that is, if your statement is correct?—That is so.
96. Both you and Mr. Morgan made a speech on the same day? Mr. Morgan says the property could have been got for £5,000 less than the Government paid for it; and you come along and say it could have been bought for £45,000—that is, £37,000 less?—And my reason for referring to it was to correct what he said.
97. Doesn't it strike you, at all events, that your memory and Mr. Morgan's as to what Mr. Pym told you must have been at great variance?—No. I spoke to Mr. Morgan in the meantime, and asked him what he was referring to. He said he was referring to this conversation made in the presence of the Home Secretary.
98. That was £5,000—which was graft?—I don't know what Mr. Morgan meant.
99. But, good gracious, you said that Theodore got it! Didn't you think that that was what it was?—I wasn't in the Chamber when he said it.
100. You had spoken to him, you said?—During the recess, after Mr. Morgan had made his speech.
101. And before you made yours. You knew that Mr. Morgan was referring to the £5,000 which it was suggested that Mr. Theodore had got?—I did not know what he was referring to.
102. But didn't you tell us a minute ago that he told you then it was the £5,000 he was referring to?—I was in the smoke-room. This was a long while afterwards.
103. I know; but Mr. Morgan told you, after he had made his speech, and before you made yours, that he was referring to this £5,000 which it was suggested Mr. Theodore had got?—No.

104. Now, Mr. Vowles, Mr. Morgan, you say, told you that the £5,000 he was referring to was this £5,000?—No; he said the £5,000 he referred to was the £5,000 which had been referred to by Mr. Connor.
105. Which was supposed to have gone to Mr. Theodore?—No. I don't know what Mr. Morgan intended to tell me. He was referring to the £5,000 mentioned in that other incident at Cloncurry; not to the other story.
106. Saying that the £5,000 was supposed to have gone to Mr. Theodore?—Well, of course, I didn't give any credence to that story—as far as £5,000 going to Theodore was concerned.
107. You have forgotten what you swore a few minutes ago. You said that you believed him when he said that Theodore had got £5,000?—I believe that the incident took place.
108. You believed that Mr. May had said it?—No; Mr. May was there, and it was said; and I could take notice of it.
109. Mr. Macrossan's note, and my recollection, is that you stated you believed what he said. I asked you did you believe what he said; you said, "Yes"—That he took the £5,000?
110. Yes—I believed the incident had taken place and he had been charged; or that it had been stated.
111. You said that Mr. May said Theodore got £5,000; and I asked you did you believe that, and you said, "Yes"?—Believe that he got the £5,000?
112. Yes?—How was I to know whether Theodore got £5,000 or £500?
113. Do I understand now that you say when this statement was made you gave no credence to it; you didn't believe it at all—That he got £5,000?
114. Yes?—Well, no, I did not.
115. Now turn to page 1087 of *Hansard* and see what Mr. Morgan says there?—I was not in the Chamber when Mr. Morgan was making that speech.
116. You are suggesting now that Mr. Morgan heard a conversation, or was present with you at a conversation, with Mr. Pym. Do you see that Mr. Morgan says there: "That is not the point: the point is that an auctioneer living in that locality had the station listed for a certain price; but the Government came along and paid £5,000 more than the auctioneer was prepared to sell it for to any private individual." Now, how can you reconcile that with your memory of the conversation with Mr. Pym?—There is no question about my memory of the conversation with Mr. Pym; that is absolutely correct—the £45,000.
117. Evidently it is not the recollection Mr. Morgan had of it?—Well, I asked him about that, and he said he was referring to what had been stated about Mr. Connor by different persons.
118. But you see he says "An auctioneer living in that locality had the station listed for £5,000 less than the Government gave for it." That would mean that the agent had it listed at £77,000?—Which agent, Mr. Feez?
119. He doesn't say?—The agent I think he was referring to was Mr. Suter.
120. You suggest some other agent may have had it listed?—So I understand.
121. Although Mr. Gannan had it listed?—I don't know at all. I think the other man had it at £65,000.
122. Doesn't it strike you that, if Mr. Gannan ever made such a statement, it was a wild statement, without any foundation?—No.
123. Can you imagine the owner of a property having his station in the hands of one person at £45,000 and in the hands of another at £77,000 at the same time?—Of course I don't know. All I know is that a letter produced, to Mr. Barnes, refers to a variation of price; that is all I know of.
124. There is one letter in which Mr. Suter says he had the place in his hands for offer at £65,000; but the date of that we have to find out—if he had it in his hands?—There is something wrong about those dates there, if you look at it.
125. But don't you think, honestly, that it would be a most extraordinary thing for the owner of a property to have it in one agent's hands at £45,000, and in another agent's at £65,000, at the same time?—Well, it doesn't sound like business.
126. Do you happen to know Mr. Gannan?—No.
127. By reputation?—I have never seen the man.
128. Do you know him by reputation?—I have made inquiries from my bank manager in Dalby—he was in Hughenden—and he said he is a very, very reputable man, and a man he could thoroughly trust.
129. What else did he tell you?—Nothing else.
130. It is unfortunate that I have to ask this question: He takes liquor to excess?—I don't know anything about that.
131. And as a matter of fact, didn't he tell you that for a considerable time past he has hardly been responsible for his actions?—No.
132. Or his speech, rather, I should say?—No.
133. That he has been a man who has drunk to excess for many years; he didn't tell you that?—No.
134. He told you he liquored?—He liquored a bit; but he said he was a very solid man—thoroughly reliable—and if he said anything he would stand up to it.
135. You never took the trouble to inquire from Mr. Gannan?—No, I didn't; because this thing came too unexpectedly. I didn't think I was going to bring forward Wando Vale; it came on unexpectedly on account of what Mr. Morgan said.
136. I asked you before whether you intended to convey that there was something in the nature of graft in this transaction?—Yes.
137. I am not quite clear now whether you say you did, or did not?—Well, what do you describe as graft.
138. Well, payment to some person to carry out a transaction which is dishonest; that is to say, paying a man to further a transaction; paying one of the persons in power?

- By the Commissioner:* I think Mr. Vowles said he did not intend to convey a charge of corruption or dishonesty.
139. *By Mr. Feez:* I am going to ask you what you mean by this:
- “In regard to the purchase of Wando Vale, in the Northern Gulf country beyond Hughenden; that is regarded as a smellful transaction—to put the least expression on it.”
- Pretty strong wording, isn't it?—Yes; unbusinesslike—that is the first; from the fact that the Government were not prepared to give the information the House was asking for; that they knew it was unbusinesslike, and were not prepared to admit it.
140. Don't let us have any misunderstanding. Is that what you say you intended to convey by that wording?—Most certainly.
141. Nothing further—I had no complaint about any person in connection with the transaction, but the Government themselves.
142. Nothing further than that—it was an unbusinesslike transaction, and the Government refused to give any information on it?—They were suppressing information, like they always do.
143. You are not, evidently, particular in choosing your language, then?—I don't know; that is rather choice language for Parliament House.
144. Is it?—And is that what parliamentary language means—when you speak of a transaction being “smellful” it means simply that it is bad business?—The Speaker never took any exception to it; he is the judge.
145. I don't know that he could take exception to it. In parliamentary language, does the language “smellful” mean simply incompetence or mismanagement?—It means, when you are referring to the Government itself, that they are hiding information.
146. Now, is not this a fact—that you were trying to make political capital, and trying to lead those who heard or read your words to believe that the Government had been guilty of dishonesty in this transaction—or some member of it?—The Government were guilty of suppressing information.
147. Cannot you answer the question, Mr. Vowles?—You know, if you were dealing with a witness in court, you would feel very much annoyed if he would not answer?—If I were fool enough to answer words that you want to put into my mouth, it would be another thing; but I am not going to. I am interpreting my own words. You can interpret them in any other way you like.
148. I will ask you again; it is a perfectly simple question, and you can answer “Yes” or “No” with the greatest ease. You were, as a matter of fact?—Was I trying to make political capital?—I was, as a matter of fact.
149. How were you trying to make it?—By showing that the Government were afraid to disclose information in respect to a transaction which was unbusinesslike.
150. And why do you suggest they were afraid?—Because they would never give information on any of these public transactions.
151. Why do you suggest they were afraid?—Because I had challenged them in connection with Mount Hutton.
152. But with regard to Wando Vale?—Well, the information—
153. Yes; why do you suggest they were afraid?—Because they never had given it.
154. That is not an answer. You said they did not want to, or would not, give. Why do you suggest they were afraid?—I take it that I suggested that because I have asked for information since, and it has been refused.
155. That is not the question; the reason in your mind for their being afraid—that is what I want to know?—Because it was an unbusinesslike transaction, and they did not want the transaction to be made known.
156. That is all that was in your mind?—They did not want it ventilated.
157. When do you suggest that information was asked for?—I don't know the exact date; but it is in the “Votes and Proceedings.” I asked for it twice; on Tuesday, 16th September, I asked the Secretary for Lands; that is subsequent.
158. I am speaking of prior?—I didn't say prior; I said subsequent.
159. You said you had previously asked?—Pardon me, I didn't.
160. You had not asked previously?—About Wando Vale, no; but I had been asking about Mount Hutton.
161. Well, all this story about the Government being afraid to disclose the information was pure invention?—No. You have to read—as I said before—my reference to public enterprises; you have to read Mount Hutton with Wando Vale. I had been asking, times without number, for information, and had been refused, as far as public enterprises were concerned.
162. Yes; that has nothing to do with this particular transaction?—It has to do with the speech; you must read one in conjunction with the other.
163. It has nothing to do with what you said?—I asked for an inquiry.
164. You said the Government had been asked for information and were afraid to give it?—Well, they are afraid to give any information.
165. Will you admit that you had not asked for that information before you made your speech?—In respect of Wando Vale, no; but in respect of Mount Hutton.
166. Therefore, will you also admit that your statement just now—that they were afraid about Wando Vale—was made without any foundation?—No, I will not.
167. If they had not been asked, how could they?—It is their policy; their policy is to refuse information.
168. Do you understand the position you are taking up? You told us a few minutes ago that the Government had been asked for information, and that they were afraid to give it; and on that you came to certain conclusions. It now turns out that you had not asked for the information?—Well, Mr. Feez, before you go any further, I did not say that the Government had been asked for information about Wando Vale.

169. You didn't?—No.
170. What did you say?—I didn't say I had asked for information about Wando Vale.
171. Whether you said you had or had not asked, information had been asked, at all events?—About Wando Vale?
172. Yes?—I had not asked for any information about Wando Vale. I asked about Mount Hutton. After I made my speech I asked for the information about Wando Vale.
173. You have evidently forgotten what you told the Commission before?—Well, let us have what was said. You ask so many questions, and you won't take an answer.
- The Commissioner:* He does not say he asked specifically for information about Wando Vale before this. He says the policy of the Government was to hide the matter.
- Mr. Vowles:* Here's my question appearing in the "Votes and Proceedings" that I asked.
174. *By Mr. Feez:* Let us get what you say now. You had not asked, prior to the making of your speech, for any information from the Government with regard to Wando Vale?—No.
175. Had anyone else, to your knowledge?—Well, not about that time; they may have asked previously.
176. Well, to your knowledge, no one else had. You cannot remember any information being asked of the Government?—I have told you that one question was asked by Mr. Macartney.
177. That is another thing altogether?—You are asking me, and I tell you, "Yes, Mr. Macartney asked."
178. Not for information; that is a statement he made?—No; he asked him without notice, I think, was it a fact that it had been advertised in the Southern papers.
179. And the answer was, "No; he was not aware"?—Yes.
180. Was that the information that you asked for?—That was one of the questions that was asked.
181. Beyond that, are you aware of any information being asked of the Government before you made your statement?—I don't think so.
182. So, the only information that you had before that speech was the conversation that you had with Mr. Pym, who said he got it from Mr. Gannan?—That is so.
183. Can you point out to me anywhere in the records of the House where Mr. Macartney asked that question?—No, I cannot. I have looked for it. Mr. Macartney admits that he did ask for it.
184. A question like that is reported?—It might happen that it was asked in the course of debate—a question across the Chamber.
185. That is not a question; it is an interjection?—It is a question to the Minister.
186. It is not a question asked of the Minister; it is an interjection?—I do not know that it is.
187. You have not looked for it, have you?—Yes, I have looked for it; but it is a bit of a job to look for a single question in the records.
188. The Minister said he was not aware?—Yes.
189. If it had not taken place he could not be aware of it?—I believe it did take place.
190. Do you happen to know Mr. Barnes?—No, not at all.
191. Not even by reputation?—No, I would not know him if I saw him.
192. You do not know that he is one of the whitest men that you could meet with?—I do not know him at all.
193. Do you know Mr. McGugan?—No; I only saw Mr. McGugan once.
194. He is a man of high reputation; he is an honest man?—I don't know anything about him.
195. Do you know Mr. Gordon Graham?—Yes.
196. He is a man with a high reputation—an honourable man?—Yes, I dare say he is one of the most honourable men in Queensland.
197. Do you realise that your suggestion involves him in a serious charge?—I do not.
198. The property belonged to Mrs. Barnes, and Mr. Barnes did the work for Mrs. Barnes; so that Mr. McGugan, Mr. Barnes, and Mr. Gordon Graham must have been informed of the transaction. Do you realise that a statement like this is liable to do each of these gentlemen an immense amount of harm?—I do not think so at all. Mr. Graham sat in the office; he could not know anything about the value of stock in North Queensland.
199. It is a question of graft or dishonesty?—Has there been any suggestion that Mr. Graham has been guilty of dishonesty?
200. Any man who suggests dishonesty in the transaction must involve Mr. Graham?—Who suggested that? Did you, Mr. Feez?
201. You did. Later on you corrected it; you said it was a "smellful" transaction; you made a very gross charge, not only of incompetence, but of dishonesty?—You are making a speech, Mr. Feez; do you want me to make one, too?
202. At all events, all the information when you made that speech in the House was something told to you by a gentleman called Mr. Pym, who said he was told by another gentleman called Mr. Gannan?—Yes, and I gave that to the House. Mr. Gannan was the informant.
203. That was the information on which you said you were prepared to prove?—That Mr. Gannan was a competent man, yes.
204. That the Government might have bought that place for £45,000 on the same day, according to you, on which they paid £83,000 for it?—Yes.
205. And that he was told that he had instructions to sell for £45,000 and not refuse offers?—That is so.
206. Who told you he was not to refuse offers?—Mr. Pym.
207. He also told you that Mr. Gannan told him?—Yes.
208. Is that what you meant to convey when you said Mr. Pym told you he was to submit a less offer?—Yes.

209. As a man and an honourable man—it does not matter what the political opinions are—don't you think that was a very reckless thing to say?—If Mr. Gannan was prepared to support it?
210. You don't know whether Mr. Gannan was prepared to support it or not. Another man told you that Mr. Gannan had told him something, and on that you made this serious statement that you made in the House; don't you think that is a most reckless sort of thing?—No, I don't think so. It depends upon the person who conveys the information. Supposing you had conveyed that information to me, I would not have gone around looking for confirmation; I would have believed you.
211. You know the value of information that filters through two persons?—Yes.
212. Did you ask Mr. Pym where he saw Mr. Gannan?—Yes, in his office at Hughenden.
213. Did you ask him when he saw him?—Just about the time. Mr. Pym told me the class of stock, that it was a run-out herd, inbred. He described them as being “like lemonade bottles with buffalo horns.” They were a run out and badly-inbred herd. He said the cattle were running wild in basalt country.
214. When did Mr. Pym say that he saw the stock?—I am not quite certain when he said he saw them; he said he had the offer of certain cows and from the description he would not look at them.
215. He didn't say when he saw them?—He knew the herd.
216. Did he tell you that he had seen the herd?—Not actually seen them—at that time he knew them.
217. Had he ever seen them?—If he said they were like ginger-beer bottles—
218. Did he ever say that he ever saw them?—I cannot say at this length of time. He said distinctly that he saw them. He was able to give a description, he said they had horns on them like buffaloes.
219. You didn't say that in the House?—No, I did not.
220. Would you be surprised to learn that the vendor would be very glad to get the station back and pay more for it?—I should think so, it has gone up 100 per cent. since that. I know in my own locality they have gone up 100 per cent.
221. Since 1916?—Calves bought in Dalby are worth £6, they were worth 30s. If calves had been worth anything like £6 he would have got more for his property.
222. Don't you think they made an excellent bargain?—No, the prices were not the same, there has been a demand for young stock lately.
223. If it turned out that, if the place was ever in Mr. Gannan's hands for sale for £45,000, it was in 1912, I suppose you would think that had very little bearing on the price in 1916?—1912 was the drought year, was it not?
224. If you look at this letter from Mr. Barnes to Mr. Hunter you will see it was offered in 1913 for £42,000. The drought was somewhere about that. He says it was in 1913 that it was offered for £42,000, that is, to Mr. Barnes?—Yes, he said 1913.
- He says, “As I have destroyed the books, &c., with regard to Wando Vale, I cannot give you the information about the property, but so far as my memory serves me it was 1912 when the property was offered for £45,000.” As a matter of fact it turns out that it was £45,000 in 1913.
225. Assuming that this property was under offer in 1912 for £45,000 this would be very little criterion of the value in 1916?—That would depend upon the number of stock on it. In 1912 I understand there were 17,000 head but they were only prepared to guarantee 10,000 when they sold to the Government.
226. You understand that there were 12,700?—I have heard that from Mr. Hunter.
227. You admit that to value the station at the present time on the 1912 prices would be absurd, ridiculous?—You are not valuing the station—you are only valuing the stock; the improvements would be a very small percentage.
228. The improvements here are somewhere about £15,000 with the lease, but the improvements I think are about £5,000 by themselves. Do you think the prices prevailing in 1912 any criterion of the values in 1916?—If you compare the herd with that of Mount Hutton—
229. Can't you answer?—No; I have to have a comparison of the quality of the stock and the quantity of the stock.
230. The same quality of stock in 1912 as in 1916?—There was a big rise in the values.
231. What?—I cannot tell you.
232. Something like 100 per cent.?—Oh, no!
233. There has only been a 100 per cent. rise since 1916?—This gentleman here estimates it at 95 per cent.
234. This gentleman, Mr. Barnes, considers that there was a rise of 90 per cent. on the 1913 values?—Yes. According to that he should be getting £90,000 for his property.
235. You cannot compare the price of 1912 with the price of 1915?—No; you cannot. Yes; you can compare them.
236. There was a big rise—practically 100 per cent.?—I don't know what the rise was. If you can compare the quality of the stock on Mount Hutton at £7 3s. per head with the same stock at £8 2s. on Wando Vale, everything thrown in, I know which one I should sooner have.
237. Supposing your figures are wrong and there were 12,700 head?—They sold at 10,000.
238. If there were 12,700 that would lower your figures a good deal?—They put down 10,000, Mount Hutton and Wando Vale.
239. When was Mount Hutton sold?—Just a little previous to this. I cannot give you the date. They could muster Wando Vale in a couple of months.
240. In addition to making your statement on the statement of a man who was told by someone else, you were influenced by the rumours you heard about the House?—Yes.

241. Would you like people to make statements about you on rumours that they heard?—If I heard one of the members on my side of the House making indefinite statements about me I should like it brought into light as soon as possible.
242. Don't you think it is a serious matter to make a gross charge like that?—Where is the charge, and who is it against?
243. Here you say it is a "smellful" transaction?—That is against the Government; it is an unbusinesslike transaction and they are suppressing the information.
244. Don't you think it is very unfair to make a charge like that on the word of one person told by another person, and rumours?—I don't know. There are rumours in the House.
245. Don't you think that was an unfair thing to do?—No, I don't.
246. Are you speaking as a parliamentarian or as an ordinary individual?—I don't think there is a very great distinction.
247. At all events, you have told the Commissioner what you meant by saying you could prove it?—Yes.
248. That is all that you had in your mind when you said you could prove it?—Yes—that it could be bought for £45,000.
249. That it was in the hands of an agent at Hughenden at £45,000 on the same day that the Government bought it for, you say, £82,000, and that someone told you that he had been told by someone else—is that so?—Mr. Pym told me that Mr. Gannan told him that it was in his hands for £45,000, and Mr. Gannan was prepared to support that.
250. What was the charge that Mr. May is supposed to have made in connection with this transaction?—Mr. May will give evidence himself. My version of it is this: At Cloncurry, on an occasion when the Home Secretary, the Under Secretary of the Home Department, and Major Johnson were present, a man named Connor stated that he could have bought this station at a less price than the Government could buy it.
251. Who told you this, did you hear Mr. May say this?—Yes, to another man. He is going to give evidence himself.
252. You heard Mr. May say that Connor stated that he could have bought it at a less price than the Government paid for it?—Yes.
253. Connor said that?—Yes, and a certain member of the Cabinet got £5,000.
254. Mr. May said he heard Mr. Connor say that?—Yes.
255. Did he mention anyone?—Yes; he mentioned the Treasurer—Mr. Theodore's name—as the man who got £5,000 out of the business.
256. Mr. May said that was repeated again next morning by him?—By Connor in public.
257. Do you know Mr. Connor?—I do not.
258. Have you ever seen him?—No; I don't know who he is. I have subpoenaed him. It was said that Mr. Theodore got £5,000 out of it; this was repeated again next morning in public, and Mr. May said he took a written note of it in his notebook, and when he came down to Brisbane he put the matter before the Premier.
259. Was there anything further?—No; nothing further.
260. That is all that Mr. May said?—Yes.
261. When and where was this?—The date I cannot give you; it was in the smoke-room of the House.
262. How long was it before you made your speech?—It might have been a fortnight or so; I cannot give you the date.
263. It was in the House—in the smoke-room?—Yes.
264. Who was Mr. May talking to at the time?—He was talking to some other member. He had this notebook there, and wanted to show me the notebook, but I would not look at it.
265. Who was the other member?—I cannot tell you who it was. At any rate, Mr. May will tell you.
266. Do you know the political leanings of Mr. Pym?—I have not the slightest idea.
267. You have no idea whether he is a supporter of the Government or not?—No.
268. Or Mr. Connor's?—No.
269. You don't know anything about their political leanings?—No.
270. You had this conversation with Mr. Pym in August, 1916?—I am not fixing dates.
271. You say it was about Exhibition time?—I think about that time; it might have been before or after. When you are up and down to Brisbane you cannot remember everything.
272. How is it that you never referred to it until September, 1917?—If you knew anything about Parliament you would know that you cannot bring anything forward at any time—you have to wait your opportunity.
273. Could you not ask a question?—This is a matter of a grievance.
274. How many grievance days were there between August, 1916, and August, 1917?—This was when the suspension of the Standing Orders was moved—that is an opportunity to bring up grievances.
275. Was there no other day between August, 1916, and September, 1917, on which you could have done the same thing?—It might have been done on the previous Supply.
276. How many times would the House have been in Committee of Supply?—I cannot tell you.
277. It would be a good many times. Is it not remarkable that you did not bring it forward before September, 1917?—No; it was a public enterprise and I was devoting the whole of my energies to Mount Hutton.
278. You said you could prove it. The proof you gave us was something told you at the time?—Yes.
279. You had it at that time, therefore—you had what you called proof; why didn't you give it then?—I was interesting myself more in Mount Hutton than in Wando Vale; I could not get information about that; they were suppressing that.
280. You hear a charge made in August, 1916, and you go into the House in September, 1917; you do nothing to bring it up, according to yourself?—That is so.
281. Then you bring it up casually because Mr. Morgan made a misstatement?—That is so.

282. That is what you wish the Commission to believe, it was brought up casually because of that?—The whole matter was brought back to my mind.
283. You heard that statement from Mr. Pym which you said you believed so strongly as to state that it was given as proof. Didn't you think it was a very serious matter?—I regarded it as an unbusinesslike transaction, and I was in a position to get more information about Mount Hutton, which I considered was a more unbusinesslike transaction, and information was consistently refused.
284. Where is Mount Hutton?—In the Roma district.
285. You had heard, according to you, a statement which you believed, in 1916?—Yes.
286. That the Government had been practically diddled out of £37,000?—I don't think that is parliamentary language.
287. Well, "done out of" £37,000 through mismanagement; yet you kept your mouth shut until September, 1917, and only brought it up because Mr. Morgan made an error?—No, because the matter was revived by what Mr. Morgan said.
- The Commissioner:* Is not this a matter for comment, only?
- Mr. Feez:* I should think all of it is matter for comment. As I say, here is Mr. Vowles; and I want to give him an opportunity of explaining this delay.
- Mr. Vowles:* I have explained it twice already. I was devoting my energies to another public enterprise which I thought was unsatisfactory. One at a time is good enough for me.
288. *By Mr. Feez:* That is the only explanation you have?—Well, it is a pretty good one, isn't it?
- [Witness then retired.]
- EDWARD PYM, Station Manager, sworn and examined:
289. *By Mr. Macgregor:* What are you, Mr. Pym?—I am a station manager at present.
290. What station?—Clune.
291. Near Beaudesert?—Yes; *viâ* Beaudesert.
292. Have you had experience in stock and station management?—Yes; practically all my life, since I left school.
293. Do you know Wando Vale Station, North Queensland?—I know of it; I was never actually on it.
294. In 1916—that is last year—what position did you hold?—I was buying sheep for the A.M.E. Company.
295. Do you know Mr. Gannan, of Hughenden?—Yes, I know him.
296. Did you have a conversation with him about Wando Vale—the sale and price of Wando Vale?—Well, not about that exactly, altogether. He mentioned Wando Vale; the Government had just bought Wando Vale, and Mr. Gannan was talking about it.
297. Where, in Hughenden?—Yes.
298. And you heard him?—Yes.
299. What was it Mr. Gannan said?—Well, he said it is a rather funny thing the Government paid such a price for it, when he could have sold it for so much less. He talked in that strain.
300. Do you know how much the Government had agreed to pay for it?—No, I did not know at the time.
301. And did you know how much less it was that he could have sold it for?—Yes; he told me I could have bought it for £45,000.
302. Did he say when you could have bought it for £45,000?—No; he just said, "If you had wanted to buy Wando Vale, you could have bought it for £45,000; if you did not like it at £45,000, you could probably have got it for a little bit less."
303. Did he say anything about having it on his books at that price?—Yes. I got interested a bit in it then. I know the old man so well that I suggested to him, in a friendly sort of way, that if he were not quite sure of what he was talking about, he had better not say anything more about it. He got very emphatic then. He said he had it from Mr. Barnes for £45,000, with instructions not to let a buyer go past. I jumped him up again on that. I said, "Are you quite certain of that?" He said, "Yes, I am absolutely certain; I have it on my books at that price."
304. I don't know whether I asked you the date of that. Can you remember when that was?—I was in Hughenden in September and October of last year.
305. And that is when this conversation took place?—Yes.
306. Was it all at the one time?—Oh! different times.
307. During the time you were in Hughenden?—Yes. I was making Hughenden my headquarters, and I was there for two months.
308. Buying sheep?—Yes.
309. Can you remember anything more of the conversation with Mr. Gannan with respect to Wando Vale?—No, I cannot; I didn't attach a great amount of importance to it at that time. I really did not know anything about it. I didn't know the Government had bought at that price. I was not particularly interested. The only thing I was interested in was Mr. Gannan's statement; I thought, perhaps—he was talking so strongly about it—if he could not substantiate it he might find himself in an awkward position. He was a friend of mine, and I suggested that he should be careful of what he was saying. Then he said he could prove it up to the hilt in all directions—something to that effect.
310. Did you accept it as a fact; did you believe Mr. Gannan?—Oh, yes; I always believe Mr. Gannan.
311. You didn't actually look at the books?—Oh, no.
312. Some time after that you came south?—Yes.
313. Did you meet Mr. Vowles and Mr. Morgan on one occasion?—I used to lunch at the same hotel.
314. As they did?—Yes.
315. *By the Commissioner:* In Brisbane?—Yes.
316. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Did you see them on one occasion?—On a number of occasions.

317. Did you speak to them on one occasion about Wando Vale?—Something cropped up about State cattle stations. I had written a letter, or an article, some time previously to that, on State cattle stations, in the "Courier," analysing the position. I was showing the number of cattle they would have to buy, and the number of cows they would want, and all that sort of thing. The conversation turned on that, and I happened to mention something about Wando Vale, and Mr. Vowles asked me something about it. I really did not attach much importance to it at that time; I had no idea there was anything in it. I mentioned that the Government had bought it at a price far higher than it could have been bought at, according to Mr. Gannan.
318. At that time you were telling Mr. Vowles what you believed to be true?—Oh, yes; I had no reason to think anything else.
319. And have you ever spoken to Mr. Vowles since then, until you saw him this morning?—I don't believe I have. I cannot remember seeing him at all. I don't think so.
320. Did you know him before that day?—I just knew him, meeting him at the hotel. I knew who he was, and he knew who I was.
321. *Cross-examined by Mr. Macrossan:* Could you fix the date when you had the conversation with Mr. Vowles?—Yes; probably I can fix it this way—I know I was in Townsville on Referendum Day (28th October); and we took some time to get down from Townsville—the boat was delayed. It was in the first fortnight in November.
322. 1916?—Yes, last year.
323. I take it, from your account of it, you regarded it as an ordinary casual lunch conversation?—Yes, that is really what it was. I had no intention of getting into any inquiry.
324. Nor any intention of giving information to be acted on in a public manner?—I would not put it that way; I didn't care about that; I really was not interested enough.
325. Had you any intention of giving information as to warrant the person who heard it in acting upon it in a public manner?—I believe I told him that if he wanted any further particulars to refer to Mr. Gannan.
326. Now, would you just try and throw your memory back and tell us what you did tell Mr. Vowles and Mr. Morgan?—Well, I think I put it pretty clearly.
327. Well, tell us again; it won't take long. What did you tell Mr. Vowles and Mr. Morgan?—I told them this—in substance, not in actual words; I don't remember actually what I said.
328. Well, I put it—the conversation did not make very much impression on you?—Well, it did a bit; it made a bit of an impression on me when I found Mr. Vowles coming at me and asking me things about it. I thought he was more interested than anybody else, perhaps, would be.
329. He seemed more keen about getting the information than you about giving it?—I was not keen about it.
330. You told him?—I told him anything I knew about it.
331. To apply to Mr. Gannan?—Yes.
332. And it would have been a wise precaution to apply to Mr. Gannan before he did anything further? You would have, anyhow, if you had been in his position?—Yes, I would have gone to Mr. Gannan, because he was in a position to give the whole of the information.
333. If correct, Mr. Gannan was the man to get the information from?—Yes.
334. When Mr. Gannan gave it to you at first, you doubted it?—No, I didn't doubt it; because I know the old man so well—he was very reliable.
335. You knew the old man so well that you told him not to say anything more about it?—Yes. I didn't want him to get into any trouble.
336. And the reason was because you did not believe that it was a fact?—No, I didn't put it quite that way. I told him that, unless he was quite sure of his facts, not to say anything about it.
337. That is the polite way of putting it; and that means, as you have told it to me, I don't accept that—in your own mind—doesn't it?—Oh, no; I should not put it quite that way.
338. Tell me this: Where did the conversation with Mr. Gannan take place?—Well, it was probably at the Central Hotel, Hughenden, or in his office; I don't know which.
339. If it were in his office he would have his books handy to show you?—Yes.
340. Did he have his books there?—He didn't show them to me.
341. And you didn't ask to see them?—No.
342. Mr. Gannan got very hurt and got more positive?—Not hurt; he got very emphatic about it.
343. Don't you think that if it were in his office and he told you he had them in his books he would have been so emphatic—or sufficiently emphatic?—To show me a list? Yes. He did not do that. I used to meet him so often, and did such a lot of business through him; he made me a number of offers.
344. What age is Mr. Gannan?—About 58 or 60.
345. Is he regarded as "the old man"?—He is called "Old P.T."
346. May I put it to you that he is regarded as of a very sociable disposition?—Oh, he is.
347. And inclined to talk a little too much?—Oh! Well—
348. Well, you evidently thought so?—Not in business; he never said too much in business.
349. He was not talking business to you?—Oh, he was a good deal.
350. Not on this?—I bought a lot of stock from him.
351. Not on this matter?—At that time I did.
352. Not in respect to Wando Vale?—Oh, no, I was not doing business with him regarding Wando Vale.
353. Was not he, outside business, inclined to talk a little too much—more than the facts would warrant? I put it to you?—I should not like to answer that. I don't think so. I don't want to say anything about him.

354. Now, did you ever inspect any Wando Vale stock, that you remember?—Yes.
355. Where?—On the roads.
356. Whereabouts?—Travelling. I have seen them on the Landsborough. I have to go back a good way now.
357. How long ago?—Oh! Any time in the last, say—I think it is in the last twenty-five years, anyway. I know the cattle pretty well. I have seen a good many of them—always a travelling mob. I never saw the cattle on the station.
358. And never inspected any cows?—No; I had them offered to me once, through Mr. Gannan.
359. What sort of description were they—the cows; were they described as being “like lemonade bottles, with buffalo horns”?—Yes, they were. I don't know how they were, but that is the reputation. It is not for me to give an opinion of anybody else's cattle. I don't know how you know, but that is the description. I would not have said so, if you had not mentioned it.
360. They were described that way?—They have some other terms for them, too.
361. How long is it since you last saw any of those stock?—I saw Wando Vale cattle at Pentland. I think about three years ago—perhaps four; between three and four.
362. And what were they?—Cows.
363. In what number?—I am apt to get confused over that. I really don't know. Perhaps I had better not say anything about it. I really don't know how many I did see.
364. You don't know when, do you?—It is between three and four years ago. I was interested in them, because there were a thousand offered to me; I was buying cattle out there for Messrs. Harding and Company.
365. That was just about the drought?—Oh! no; some time after the drought. The season was pretty good out there; I bought a great many cattle out there at that time. I know that Mr. Gannan offered me these thousand Wando Vale cows. I was going out to inspect them, and another cattle man there told me I would have a 90-mile ride over basalt for nothing; and I let them go.
366. What price were they offered to you at?—I believe £3 5s. or £3 3s., I am not sure.
367. You don't remember the number?—1,000.
368. Cows?—Yes. It might have been 1,500. It was a good number, I know—a big lot.
369. And you never inspected them?—No. I got a report; really that is why I did not inspect them.
370. Whom did you get the report from—Mr. Gannan?—Oh, no! He was the agent.
371. Whom then?—It was really a man named Simpson. I would not like you to divulge that. Mr. Simpson told me they were no good.
372. Who is Mr. Simpson?—He is a selector over near Wando Vale—between Fair Light and Wando Vale—on the basalt. They call all that side of the Flinders the basalt; it is very rough country.
373. Anyhow, you never inspected them?—No.
374. At the time you were having a conversation with Mr. Gannan, neither you nor Mr. Gannan knew the price the Government had paid, apparently?—No, I don't think so; I didn't, anyhow.
375. And he never told you?—Afterwards he did.
376. When?—Before I left Hughenden. I was there two months.
377. At the time you had this conversation you have retailed to Mr. Vowles—portion of it, or some of it; at that time you did not know the price?—Oh! yes; when I came back.
378. No; in Hughenden, when you were having this conversation, either at the Central Hotel or in Mr. Gannan's office, the first time, you did not know the price?—No, I didn't.
379. And Mr. Gannan did not tell you—that follows, I suppose?—Well, I have an opinion in my head that he told me something like £75,000. I did not know the price the Government actually paid was £83,000.
380. May I put it to you that it is now clear that Mr. Gannan was talking about a transaction with regard to the details of which he knew very little?—Oh! no; I think he knew all about it.
381. But he did not tell you?—No, he didn't. Well, if he did tell me, it has gone out of my mind. I really was not sufficiently interested; I was not taking any notice of it at all.
382. And as to this conversation, you say it made a bit of an impression. What was the price you had in your mind, that would make an impression on you?—I thought they paid £70,000 or £75,000.
383. Which was it?—I really don't know; I was not sufficiently interested. I didn't care whether they paid £175,000.
384. You were not taking very much notice of what Mr. Gannan was telling you?—I generally take notice of what he tells me. If he mentioned the price then, well, it has gone out of my mind.
385. Did you write the articles to the “Courier” after you came back?—No; before I went.
386. I take it the articles were rather hostile to the Government's enterprises?—No; they were not.
387. Were they in favour of it?—I think it was. I was complimented on it as being a very fair analysis of the cattle position. I analysed the cattle position; there was nothing hostile to the Government at all.
388. Not personally hostile; but hostile to the practicability of their carrying on these enterprises successfully?—Yes; on the assumption that they wanted 12,000 tons of meat a year, I showed how many cattle they wanted to have.
389. You have been complimented by the pastoralists with whom you came in touch, on your letter?—Oh! yes; and other people, too.
390. Mostly pastoralists?—Oh, I mix mostly with them. The letter was far from being hostile.
391. I put it to you—you did not agree with the Government's political opinions?—Well, when I tell you that the first time Mr. T. J. Ryan stood for the Barcoo, I voted for him!

The Commissioner: You need not go into that unless you want to.

392. *By Mr. Macrossan:* You thought it was good to have him in Opposition?—I did not know where he was going to. I voted for him and supported him.
393. I think you said quite clearly that you have never seen these thousand cows which were placed under offer to you?—No; I believe I saw some of them afterwards. That is what I was trying to say about Pentland. They were stragglers. I know the brand very well, and I saw OP2 cattle—that is the brand of them. I believe it was at Pentland. I have seen so many cattle.
394. You have never been on Wando Vale Station, and have never seen any stock thereon?—No.
395. And you know that there has been a very big increase in values from 1912 to 1916?—Oh! yes; very big.
396. The great increase in the value of cattle had taken place before the middle of last year?—Oh! it has become much bigger since last year.
397. Yes, I know it has; but the great increase?—There was a pretty big increase before last year. I inspected a lot of cows at Hughenden the last time I was up there—very good cows—at £6, belonging to a man named Bligh.
398. What would bullocks be at that time?—£8 to £9 at that time; that is, store bullocks. I am not sure if it was not more for fat bullocks; but there were not very many fat bullocks there.
399. Fat bullocks were a very high price at that time in the North?—They were very scarce; it was hard to get them.
400. *Re-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* How does Mr. Gannan spell his name?—Gannan.
401. You know him very well, you say?—Yes.
402. It has been hinted here that he took a little drop too much. Was he under the influence of liquor when he made this statement to you?—Oh! no. You know, there are times when he was under the influence.
403. Yes, I know; but in fairness to Mr. Gannan, would you believe what he told you?—Absolutely. Anybody who ever goes to Mr. Gannan believes him absolutely. He is the most reliable agent I have ever known in my experience.
404. *Cross-examined further by Mr. Macrossan:* That is in business?—Yes. He is absolutely reliable, and absolutely honest and honourable. He would never lead you astray or tell you something that was not right.
405. *Re-examined further by Mr. Macgregor:* Was he that sort of man when he was making this statement to you?—Yes. Anyone who knew him would take him to be all right.
406. *Cross-examined further by Mr. Macrossan:* Assuming all the facts are as stated, and he was Mr. Barnes's agent, do you think he was doing the proper thing? Assuming he got his information as Mr. Barnes's agent, do you think he did the proper thing?—I presume that is for him to judge. I have no opinion on that at all.
407. *Cross-examined by Mr. Fees:* If he were an honourable man, he would never have done it?—Well, he was an honourable man—highly honourable; the soul of honour—old P.T.
408. *Re-examined further by Mr. Macgregor:* You say that Wando Vale is on the basalt country?—Yes.
- [*The witness then retired.*]
- JOHN MAY, Member of the Legislative Assembly, sworn and examined:
409. *By Mr. Macgregor:* You are a member of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. May?—Yes.
410. For the electorate of Flinders?—Flinders.
411. And have been so for some years past?—Ten years last May.
412. Were you in Cloncurry about June last year—1916?—Yes; I left Cloncurry early in June, 1917.
413. Tell us what the occasion was, Mr. May, and what you heard relative to Wando Vale Station only?—Well, what I heard was this: That on the 18th May last a gentleman by name of Connor stated that Wando Vale station was in the market for £47,000 a fortnight previous to the Government paying £82,000, and that the Treasurer got £5,000 out of the deal.
414. *By the Commissioner:* That is Mr. Theodore?—Yes.
415. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Anything else?—This is purely hearsay evidence. This gentleman made the statement to me and to others in the Post Office Hotel, Cloncurry. I then called him to Mr. Huxham and Mr. Gall, who were there at the time, and he made the same statement before them.
416. Was it exactly the same words?—Exactly the same words, as near as I can remember. I could not swear to every single word.
417. *By the Commissioner:* He repeated the statement?—He repeated the statement. That is all I have to say.
418. *By Mr. Macgregor:* When you came to Brisbane, did you report the statement to anyone?—I told Mr. Ryan, the Premier, about it some little time later—some time in June; it might have been the beginning of July—I cannot remember the exact time I mentioned it to him.
419. Did you tell Mr. Vowles?—No, I don't recollect telling him. Up in the North it is a usual thing to talk about the sale of stations, and I took no particular cognisance of it; but down here a lot of people asked me, and I cannot tell you everyone who asked me or what they asked.
420. Did you say that Mr. Connor said the station was in the market for £47,000 a fortnight before the Government's purchase?—Yes.
421. Who is this Mr. Connor?—I put him down at the time as a buyer of stations.
422. Didn't you know him before that?—I had not met him before that.
423. *By the Commissioner:* You said you put him down as a buyer of stations?—Yes; he had been out in the Northern Territory looking for property.

424. *By Mr. Macgregor:* What is his name—Connor or Connors?—I cannot swear to that.

425. Did you make a note of the conversation at the time?—I made a note of it on the following morning.

426. Have you got that note?—I have. I thought it was so important that I intended to bring it before the Premier.

427. Please read the note?—*[Mr. May reads as under]*—

“When Mr. Huxham and Mr. Gall were in Cloncurry on 18th May, 1917, a gentleman, a buyer of stations and a station-owner, named Connor, said Wando Vale Station was offered for sale for £47,000 a fortnight before the Government purchased it for £82,000, and that Mr. Theodore got £5,000. The above statement was made before a room-full of people, including Mr. Huxham, Mr. Gall, Inspector Johnson, and myself.”

428. *Cross-examined by Mr. Feez:* Did Mr. Connor give any grounds for his statement?—It was known in the North that the station was being bought, and he made this statement before a whole room-full of people.

429. He said Wando Vale had been in the market for £47,000 a fortnight before the Government had bought it for £82,000?—Yes, that is what he said.

430. Did he give any grounds for the statement?—Not that I can recollect.

431. Did you ask him where he got the information from?—I did ask him how he got the information. He made the statement, and I got him to make it before Mr. Huxham and Inspector Johnson; I thought I was clearing myself.

432. It was a very serious statement against the Government that they had lost £35,000 on the deal, and against Mr. Theodore?—Yes; that was the reason I asked him to repeat the statement before the Home Secretary, Mr. Huxham.

433. Why didn't you or someone get the source of his information?—I cannot tell you the reason I did not do it.

434. Didn't you say, “That is an awful thing to say”?—The first time he mentioned it to me I said, “That is very strong.” I didn't believe it. At the same time I said, “Will you repeat that before Mr. Huxham?” He said, “I will, readily.”

435. You were looking more to Mr. Theodore's interests—the fact that this defamation was made public?—I did it in the interests of the Labour party—to clear the Labour party—so that they could prove that such was not the case. I did it in the public interests, but more to clear our own party.

436. You thought that Mr. Theodore would take action?—Yes; I thought it was preposterous.

437. You had never met Mr. Connor before?—No; I have not seen him since the following morning.

438. Was he drunk?—Decidedly not.

439. Was he sober?—Yes.

440. This meeting was in Cloncurry?—Yes; in the Post Office Hotel.

441. You came down here and you said you saw the Premier?—Yes.

442. And you reported it to him?—I read this note out to him.

443. How did Mr. Ryan treat it?—He treated it with contempt; he did not believe it.

444. So he thought it was too incredible to be worth consideration?—Yes, decidedly.

445. Did you make any inquiries yourself as to whether Mr. Theodore had had anything to do with this purchase?—No, I made no inquiries. I left it, I thought, in better hands than my own to make inquiries.

446. Personally, you knew nothing about the purchase of Wando Vale station?—No; that was the first I heard or knew about it. That was on the 18th of May, 1917. I left Cloncurry early in June.

447. Prior to that you had not personally heard anything about the transaction?—Prior to that I had not.

448. Do you know Hughenden well?—Yes, I do.

449. Do you know Mr. Gannan up there?—Yes.

450. What sort of a man is he?—He is a stock and station agent.

451. Is he a man who talks a great deal?—I cannot say very much about that. I knew him for five years. I was living in Hughenden for five years.

452. Was he a man with any failing?—I think every man in the North occasionally has a failing.

453. He occasionally had that failing?—He occasionally had that failing.

454. Was he a great talker when the failing was severe?—I cannot say that he was particularly so.

455. At all events, you never heard anything from Mr. Gannan about this?—No, I did not.

456. Did you meet him at any time?—I knew him well; I have met him when going up and down; I have met him at the Hughenden Railway Station.

457. Have you seen Mr. Gannan since August, 1916, to talk to?—I will not swear that I have; I may have met him on the railway station; I have met a lot of people when going up and down.

458. He did not mention the sale of Wando Vale to you?—Not to my recollection.

459. Did you ever talk to Mr. Vowles about this transaction, or the conversation that you had with Mr. Connor?—Not to my recollection. I do not recollect; I may have spoken of it casually.

460. Did you ever offer to show Mr. Vowles the note that you had in the book?—No; I have not shown him the note.

461. Did you ever offer to do so?—I don't think so; I don't remember having done so.

462. You offering to show him and he refusing to look at it?—I don't remember anything of that sort.

463. *Re-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* Do you know how Mr. Vowles would become aware that you had such a note?—I cannot say.

464. Have you ever told Mr. Theodore what you heard Mr. Connor say?—No, I have not. Mr. Theodore spoke to me one day about the matter.

Mr. Macgregor: That, Your Honour, finishes all the available witnesses that I have. Mr. Gannan and Mr. Connor have been subpoenaed.

The Secretary to the Commission announced the receipt of a telegram advising that Mr. Connor was leaving Rockhampton to-day and would reach Brisbane to-morrow.

Mr. Feez: I understand that the Premier and the Home Secretary have been subpoenaed.

Mr. Macgregor: You have no right to know that.

Mr. Feez: Mr. Huxham told me he had been subpoenaed.

The Commissioner: The only witnesses that you want, Mr. Macgregor, are Mr. Gannan and Mr. Connor?

Mr. Macgregor: Yes.

Mr. Feez: Mr. Gannan is dying.

The Commissioner: There is not much chance of getting Mr. Gannan. I think the best thing is to adjourn until to-morrow.

Mr. Feez: I can go on with some witnesses.

[The Commission adjourned at 12.30 p.m. till 2.30 p.m.]

On resuming at 2.30 p.m.,

Mr. Feez said: I want to ask my friend if he does not propose to call Mr. Ryan or Mr. Huxham?

The Commissioner: I understood him to say he did not.

Mr. Feez: With regard to Mr. Connor, I presume he will be called?

The Commissioner: It is in Mr. Macgregor's hands. Mr. Connor would be called now if he were here.

Mr. Feez: Unfortunately, it seems to be impossible to get Mr. Gannan's evidence. Owing to his critical illness he does not seem capable of giving it.

I want to say a few words before calling the evidence. The inquiry that you are authorised to hold, Your Honour, is an inquiry into practically three subjects—one as to certain statements made by Mr. Vowles in the House in which he said he was in a position to prove that this station, Wando Vale, could have been purchased for £45,000, at the time that the Government bought it for £82,000, and that it was in the hands of an agent, Mr. Gannan, at this price of £45,000, with instructions not to refuse offers. These are the two matters in which Mr. Vowles is directly interested. In these we have already had the whole of the evidence, apparently, that Mr. Vowles can give, except something that can come from Mr. Connor. I submit that there is not the slightest ground for Mr. Vowles's statement that he could prove that. I propose to call everyone that can, in any possible way that we can conceive, be interested in this transaction to show to you that everything was straightforward and aboveboard, and that the price at which Mr. Barnes sold the property was an absolutely fair price, and one which Mr. Barnes would not take for the property at the present time. I will prove that it was not in any agent's hands at the sum of £45,000 at the time of the sale to the Government, or any sum less than the sum for which Mr. Barnes offered it to the Government, and this allegation that it was in Mr. Gannan's hands for £45,000, and he was instructed not to refuse any offer, is absolutely without any foundation.

One need not say that the matter is one of vast importance to everyone who is

interested. To the public, it is important to the public to know that the affairs of the public are not being carried out in this disgraceful manner suggested by Mr. Vowles.

I will call Mr. Barnes to tell you exactly the position of the station, and to give you his views as to its value. He will also inform you that the price at which he sold it was absolutely not one farthing more than it was worth, and he would be glad to get it back if the purchase was not carried out. Mr. Barnes is not the real owner of the property; Mrs. Barnes was the owner and Mr. Barnes was the attorney or agent for Mrs. Barnes in the transaction.

So far as No. 2 of the matters for inquiry submitted to Your Honour, to find the amount of purchase price paid by the Government for Wando Vale, there will be no dispute that it was £32,000. The person or persons to whom the money for Wando Vale Station and stock was paid was Mrs. Barnes. I will prove her the owner and I will prove to Your Honour that the whole of that money was handed over to Mrs. Barnes, and no one else had one farthing out of it. There was nothing in the nature of graft; the balance of the money was paid over to Mrs. Barnes's attorney, The Union Trustee Company of Australia. They had the handling of the whole of the money and the debentures, and the manager will be called to prove that not one farthing went to anyone but the owner.

As to whether the price paid by the Government was fair and reasonable, Mr. Barnes will give evidence about that. I propose to call Mr. Hunter, the Minister for Lands, Mr. Gordon Graham, who must be included in this transaction, Mr. McGugan, the State stations manager, who is also involved in this. I also intend to call—I did not intend to do so until this evidence came out this morning—to call the Treasurer, Mr. Theodore, to show that the allegation that he received £5,000 out of it is an absolute fabrication.

I do not think that I need say any more. In the public interest, it is a very proper thing that this inquiry should be held, and I am glad to be able to put the evidence before Your Honour and the public at the earliest possible moment.

JOHN HAWKINS SMITH BARNES, sworn and examined:

465. By Mr. Feez: You are a grazier?—Yes.
466. Where are you living now?—At Canning Downs, Warwick.
467. Prior to buying Canning Downs you lived at Wando Vale?—No, at Lyndhurst.
468. Where is Lyndhurst?—It is an adjoining property about 70 miles distant from Wando Vale.
469. Was Lyndhurst your own property?—Yes.
470. And to whom did Wando Vale belong?—To my wife.
471. How long has she owned Wando Vale?—I think she acquired it about 1903.
472. And has held it ever since?—Yes.
473. During the whole of that period you have acted as her agent?—Yes.
474. In connection with Wando Vale?—Yes.
475. Had you full power to act on her behalf?—Yes.
476. Was there any written power of attorney?—No, nothing in writing.

477. Who held your wife's power of attorney?—There was no power of attorney granted until some time last year.
478. After the sale?—Yes.
479. Who had power of attorney?—The Union Trustee Company.
480. Wando Vale—what locality is it in?—In North Kennedy district, about 90 miles west of Charters Towers, almost due west. That is approximately the distance.
481. Prior to the sale to the Government in 1916, what was the last time that you put it in the hands of any agent for sale?—I have only the recollection of placing it in the hands of Dalgety and Co. for sale in 1912.
482. Did you do it verbally or by writing?—I cannot swear, but I think I did it by writing.
483. What was the price that you put it in their hands at?—£45,000.
484. That was in 1912?—Yes.
485. In that letter that you wrote to Mr. Hunter you said, "As I have destroyed all the books in connection with the Wando Vale, I cannot give you a definite answer to your inquiries, but, so far as my memory answers, I did give it at £42,000 about 1913?—Yes.
486. Have you since looked up the matter?—Yes.
487. Is that statement correct?—No; £42,000 is not correct; I made it approximately; I had a faint recollection of offering it to Dalgety's. That was in my mind when I wrote that letter.
488. You were referring to the offer to Dalgety's when you wrote that letter; you had no records before you?—No.
489. You found that it was in 1912 and the price was £45,000?—Yes.
490. Is it correct that you have destroyed all your books on Wando Vale?—I am not absolutely positive on that. I destroyed a good many documents before I left Lyndhurst. When this matter cropped up I made a search at the station. I could not discover any; I did not continue the search, thinking that in all probability some papers might have been sent to Canning Downs with personal effects.
491. After the sale you considered Wando Vale at an end?—Yes.
492. So far as you know, did you destroy all the papers in connection with Wando Vale?—Yes.
493. Do you remember putting Wando Vale into the hands of any other agent since 1912?—I have made inquiries and I find that I placed it in the hands of Messrs. Brodie and Co., of Sydney.
494. When was that?—About June, 1913.
495. What was the price put on it then?—£55,000.
496. Did you ever, at any time, place the station in the hands of Mr. P. T. Gannan?—I have no recollection of it; I don't think I ever did.
497. Did you know Mr. Gannan at all?—Yes; I knew him personally.
498. Is there the slightest shadow of truth in the statement that it was in Mr. Gannan's hands in August, 1916, for £45,000?—I am positive there is no truth in it.
499. And that Mr. Gannan had instructions not to refuse offers?—A ridiculous suggestion.
500. Well, so far as your memory carries you, you never placed it in any other agent's hands but those of Messrs. Dalgety and Brodie?—That is so.
501. Did you ever place it in the hands of Mr. Suter?—I have no recollection.
502. Now, Mr. Barnes, we have heard something about the cattle on Wando Vale. What class of cattle were they?—They were what you call a Hereford-Shorthorn cross.
503. So far as quality was concerned, what were they?—What you could term fair quality.
504. There is a suggestion made that they were like "a lemonade bottle with buffalo horns." Is there any truth in that?
- The Commissioner:* I don't think you want any evidence on that.
505. *By Mr. Feez:* The idea is that they were such a poor class of cattle, from inbreeding, that they were practically no good?—They were not by any means a poor class of cattle.
- The Commissioner:* "Lemonade bottle" is only a figure of speech.
506. *By Mr. Feez:* Oh, yes; it was only a suggestion to show that they were very much inbred. *To Witness:* Were they very much inbred?—No.
507. At all events, no business resulted from putting it in the hands of Messrs. Dalgety and Brodie?—No.
508. Did you have an offer later, Mr. Barnes?—I think some time in 1915 I had a wire from the Pastoral Estates, Toowoomba, inquiring whether I would offer Wando Vale.
509. We will put that correspondence in directly. Do you remember an offer in November, 1913, you had for it, through Messrs. Brodie and Co.?—Yes.
510. Do you remember what the price was?—£55,000.
511. How did you treat it?—I refused it.
512. How did you first come in touch with the Government in connection with the sale?—It was through the Pastoral Estates, Ltd., Toowoomba.
513. Mr. Bennett is the manager of that?—Yes.
514. By the by; at the time did you know a single member of the Government—of the Cabinet?—No; I was not acquainted with any of them.
515. Did you know Mr. McGugan?—No.
516. I suppose you know Mr. Gordon Graham?—Yes, I had met him previously.
517. On Lands Office business?—Yes.
518. Do you know any members of the Cabinet at the present time?—I have met several, of course, in connection with the case.
519. But except meeting them in connection with this case?—Not previously have I ever met them.
520. I believe you met Mr. Hunter once, just at the completion of the sale?—Yes.
521. Before the completion of the sale, had you ever met a member of the Cabinet?—Not one.

522. Well, you say you came into contact with the Government through Mr. Bennett, the manager for the Australian Estates?—The Pastoral Estates.
523. That is a company that carries on business in Toowoomba?—Yes.
[Mr. Feez tenders letter from witness to Messrs. F. A. Brodie and Co., Sydney, dated 21st June, 1913. Admitted, marked *Exhibit 2*, and read.]
524. What bulls were you using?—Bulls that I got from White and Sons, of Bluff Downs.
525. You were not using your own bulls?—Some.
[Mr. Feez tenders following telegrams and correspondence, which are admitted and marked as *Exhibits*, and read:—
Copy telegram from Pastoral Estates to witness, dated 9th March, 1915. *Exhibit 3*.
Copy of letter from Pastoral Estates to witness of same date. *Exhibit 4*.
Telegram from witness to Pastoral Estates, dated 15th March, 1915. *Exhibit 5*.]
526. *By Mr. Feez*: Now, after that, Mr. Barnes, from the time you sent that telegram to the Pastoral Estates up till the time you got into these negotiations which eventuated in your sale of the property to the Government, did you ever do anything in the way of selling the property? After that, between the time you refused to offer it to the Pastoral Estates in March, 1915, until you started these negotiations with the Pastoral Estates on behalf of the Government, did you ever offer it to anyone else, or do anything?—So far as I can remember, I never offered it. In fact, it was contrary to my policy. From what I remember, I decided to institute certain improvements, and hold the property.
527. When you say “you”—you did everything?—I did everything. I had full power to act in every way.
528. And did you effect these improvements?—Yes.
529. Well, how did you first come into contact with Mr. Bennett, of the Pastoral Estates—by letter, or telegram, or personally?—I had met him personally at various times: but in connection with Wando Vale, I received a wire from him advising me that the Government were the purchasers for a large lot of North Queensland cattle.
Mr. Feez tenders the following telegram from witness to Pastoral Estates, dated 10th July, 1916, which is admitted, marked *Exhibit 6*, and read:
“Can offer whole herd of Wando Vale—about 10,000 head—at £7, including about 6,000 bullocks and steers: no old cows; unweanable calves, 30s.; writing.”
530. *By Mr. Feez*: That is evidently in answer to a wire to you?—Yes.
531. At that time, did you consider that that was the number you had on the station—about 10,000?—Yes.
532. Was that your opinion; was that a fair price at that time?—Yes.
[Mr. Feez tenders the following telegrams and correspondence, which are admitted, marked as *Exhibits*, and read:—

Copy of telegram from Pastoral Estates to witness, dated 13th July, 1916. *Exhibit 7*.

Copy of letter from Pastoral Estates to witness, dated 13th July, 1916. *Exhibit 8*.

Letter from witness to Pastoral Estates, as follows, dated 16th July, 1916. *Exhibit 9*:

“I am in receipt of your telegram, and wired you as follows: . . . I can say that about 50 per cent. of the herd on Wando Vale died in last year's drought; so that you can readily imagine no old cows would be there now, and the stock either would be suitable for stocking up with, or held for fattening.”

533. *By Mr. Feez*: Was that true, Mr. Barnes?—Yes.

534. By the by, who was managing Wando Vale for you?—Mr. A. H. Bowman.

535. Is he a reliable man; a good man?—Yes.

[Mr. Feez tenders the following correspondence and telegrams, which are admitted, marked as *Exhibits*, and read:

Copy letter from Pastoral Estates to witness, dated 17th July, 1916. *Exhibit 10*.

Copy telegram from Pastoral Estates to witness, dated 20th July, 1916. *Exhibit 11*.

Copy letter from Pastoral Estates to witness, dated 20th July, 1916. *Exhibit 12*.

Telegrams from witnesses to Pastoral Estates, dated 20th July, 1916. *Exhibit 13*.

Telegram from witness to Pastoral Estates, dated 21st July, 1916. *Exhibit 14*.]

536. *By Mr. Feez*: Were you very keen on selling, Mr. Barnes?—It is very hard to remember whether I was at that time.

537. I mean, judging by this: “Please don't list, or offer elsewhere”?—I meant I did not want various agents to have it go through their books, and keep pestering me with inquiries.

538. Is that a custom with the agents?—Yes.

539. How do they get it?—I presume they hand it from one to the other.

540. Send round a list from one to another?—They must do it, because I have innumerable inquiries which I put in the waste-paper basket; perhaps keep a private secretary to answer them.

541. It was to militate against that trouble that you put this note on?—Yes.

Mr. Feez: I was going to ask you—on the 20th July you telegraphed:

“Please leave matter in abeyance. Expect arrive Brisbane end first week August”; and on the 21st: “Will grant you offer Wando Vale Station.” What had happened in the meantime? Oh, Wando Vale cattle? I see. It was Wando Vale cattle you were offering, not the station, at that time. That explains it.

[Mr. Feez tenders copy telegram from Pastoral Estates to witness, dated 21st July, 1916. Admitted, marked *Exhibit 15*, and read. Tenders also letter from witness to the Pastoral Estates, dated 24th July, 1916. Admitted, marked *Exhibit 16*, and read.]

542. *By Mr. Feez:* You evidently had sent another wire in these words—"Will offer property going concern £85,000"?—Yes.

543. How do you telegraph from Lyndhurst?—Mount Surprise station; have to send some distance.

544. How far is Mount Surprise from Lyndhurst?—We send a messenger to Carpenteria Downs, which has telephone communication with Mount Surprise.

545. You say in your letter of the 24th that you had sent a wire: "Will offer property going concern, £85,000"; and the telegram which I have here seems to have reached Toowoomba only on the 26th?—In all probability that would be sent down by the mailman; it would take two days to reach Carpenteria Downs.

[Mr. Feez tenders telegram from witness to the Pastoral Estates. Sending date does not appear, but it reached Toowoomba on the 26th July, 1916. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 17, and read. Tenders also letter from witness to the Pastoral Estates dated 24th July, 1916. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 18, and read.]

[Mr. Feez tenders copy letter dated 24th July, 1916, from the Pastoral Estates to witness. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 19, and read.]

546. Now, you fixed the price at £85,000 at that time?—Yes.

547. Was that a fair price?—Yes.

548. Was that based on a herd consisting of 10,000 head?—Yes.

549. You know that 10,000 head is very much less than what really was on the station?—I have heard so.

550. At that time did you know a single member of the Ministry?—No.

551. Did you know Mr. McGugan at that time?—No.

[Mr. Feez tenders copy—

1. A letter dated 25th July, 1916, from the Pastoral Estates to witness. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 20, and read.

2. A letter dated 29th July, 1916, from the Pastoral Estates to witness. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 21, and read.

3. A telegram dated 29th July, 1916, to the same effect from the Pastoral Estates to witness. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 22, and read.

4. Original telegram dated 3rd August, 1916, from witness to the Pastoral Estates. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 23, and read.]

552. *By Mr. Feez:* When did you leave Lyndhurst?—I cannot swear to that distinctly; about the time that that wire was sent, within two or three days.

553. You were not there when the inspection was made?—No.

554. You were not in the district when the inspection was made?—No.

[Mr. Feez tenders copy letter dated 8th August, 1916, from the Pastoral Estates to witness. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 24, and read.]

555. *By Mr. Feez:* That was dated 8th August; did you meet Mr. Bennett and Mr. McGugan?—Yes.

556. Where did you meet them?—At the Hotel Daniel, Brisbane.

557. Was that the first time that you met them?—Yes.

558. What took place at that meeting?—We discussed the offer.

559. Was anything definitely fixed up; had the inspection been made then?—No; of course, they already had the offer on from the 26th of July; I have forgotten exactly what transpired.

560. Do you remember whether the way the money was to be paid was discussed?—Mr. McGugan advised me that in all probability the deal would be more readily effected if I did not ask a big amount in cash. He said the less cash I asked the more the likelihood of a sale being effected.

561. Did you come to an arrangement as to how much cash and how much debentures you were to receive?—I said I was not anxious to receive cash; I would be satisfied with £10,000, so far as I can remember.

[Mr. Feez tenders the following correspondence and telegrams:—

Letter dated 19th August, 1916, from witness to the Pastoral Estates. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 25, and read.

A telegram dated 21st August, 1916, from witness to the Pastoral Estates. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 26, and read.

Copy telegram dated 21st August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates to witness. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 27, and read.

A letter dated 21st August, 1916, from witness to the Pastoral Estates. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 28, and read.

Copy letter dated 21st August, 1916, from the Pastoral Estates to witness. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 29, and read.

Copy letter dated 22nd August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates to witness. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 30, and read.

Letter dated 23rd August, 1916, from witness to Pastoral Estates. Admitted, marked *Exhibit* 31, and read.]

562. After that, did you have an interview with the Under Secretary, Mr. Gordon Graham?—Yes.

563. What was that interview about?—In company with Mr. Bennett I called upon the Under Secretary and discussed the matter of the sale with Mr. Graham. After considerable discussion he said he considered that I was asking too much for the property at £85,000; he offered me £80,000, which offer I declined. After further discussion I suggested splitting the difference. He would not agree to that, but offered me £82,000, an offer which I thought fit to accept.

564. What do you say with regard to the price—£82,000—as the price of Wando Vale at that time?—I considered it was a reasonable price.

565. Do you think the Government made a bad bargain?—By no means: I would be prepared to take it back from them and allow them a liberal rate of interest.

566. At that time you thought there were only 10,000 head of stock on the station?—Yes.

567. *By the Commissioner*: What do you call liberal rate of interest?—I would take it back at that price and give them from 10 to 15 per cent. interest.
568. *By Mr. Feez*: Is there any truth in the suggestion that the cattle are in any way inferior cattle?—No; I received just as good a price for the Wando Vale cattle as the neighbouring stations.
569. You have sold a number of cattle off it?—Yes, and the prices compared very favourably with the adjoining stations.
570. Do you know any reason for such a suggestion that they deformed?—It is ridiculous.
571. One gentleman said that three or four years ago 1,000 or 1,500 cows were being offered for sale, and they were described as being like lemonade bottles with horns like buffaloes?—If there were any lemonade bottles, they were floated away by the drought; if there were any rubbishy cattle the drought killed them. It was a case of the survival of the fittest.
572. You had a severe drought out there?—Yes.
573. Is there the slightest shadow of foundation for the idea that your cattle are badly inbred?—No, I do not say that they are first-class cattle, but they are fair cattle; there are no rubbishy cattle. I got the same price for my cattle as my neighbours got.
574. Were they as good as the general run of cattle in the district?—Yes, except one or two herds; such as Bluff Downs station, for instance, which are the finest cattle that you will meet with in Queensland.
575. When you put the price of £7 per head on 10,000 head, was that, in your opinion, a fair price for them?—Yes.
576. For the cattle as they were on the run?—Yes, as they were.
[Mr. Feez tenders a letter, dated 26th August, 1916, from witness to the Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands. Admitted, marked *Exhibit 32*, and read.]
577. You had a telephone conversation with Mr. Graham, then you had that interview; you have spoken of a draft agreement having been forwarded to you?—I think it was forwarded to the manager of the Union Trustee Company.
[Mr. Feez tenders a letter, dated 30th August, 1916, from witness; it is written to Mr. Gordon Graham. *Exhibit 33*.]
578. You tell us that the Union Trustee Company have got the power of attorney from Mrs. Barnes?—Yes.
579. And since the sale have they acted entirely for her?—Yes.
580. What commission was paid on the sale to the Pastoral Estates?—£850.
581. Is that the usual commission, so far as you are aware?—I believe so.
582. *By the Commissioner*: One per cent.?—Yes.
[Mr. Feez tenders letter, dated 30th August, 1916, from witness to the Pastoral Estates, Limited. Admitted, marked *Exhibit 34*, and read.]
583. *By Mr. Feez*: Do you know what became of the money after the sale was completed?—Yes: the purchase money was paid to the Union Trustee Company.
584. There was £10,000 in cash?—Yes.
585. And the balance in Queensland Government debentures?—Yes.
586. And the whole of it was handed over to the Union Trustees?—Yes.
587. Now, out of that amount, did any sum go to anyone in connection with this sale, except that £850 commission?—No.
588. Even to the smallest fraction of a penny, did anyone get anything, except —?—The Union Trustee Company was paid for its services.
589. I mean out of the purchase money?—None whatever; not a penny.
590. For instance, there is a suggestion made—or a statement made—that a certain gentleman said that Mr. Theodore got £5,000. Is there the slightest foundation for that?—None whatever.
591. Or that he got anything?—No.
592. Do you know Mr. Theodore at all; ever met him?—Met him recently; but not previous to the sale.
593. You had not met him until after the money was paid over?—No.
594. Was there anything in the nature of an arrangement that anyone should get anything?—No.
595. In the past, the present, or the future?—No.
596. Was anything of the sort ever mooted, or hinted at, or suggested?—No.
597. Now, after the sale—in fact, this year—you got a letter from the Pastoral Estates about rumours that had been going about?—Yes.
[Mr. Feez tenders letter, dated 26th June, 1917, from the Pastoral Estates to witness. Admitted, marked *Exhibit 35*, and read.]
[Mr. Feez tenders also witness's reply, dated 9th July, 1917. Admitted, marked *Exhibit 36*, and read.]
598. *By Mr. Feez*: Now, I asked you about that £42,000. You say that your examination has since proved that your memory was inaccurate?—Even there I stated that so far as my memory was concerned.
599. Exactly. It was in 1912. You say the cattle had appreciated fully 90 per cent. on 1913 values. Is that correct?—That is a miscalculation; they have appreciated more than that. I was very busy at the time that letter was written, and I had not time to go into values.
600. But it is a fact they have appreciated since 1913, or 1912?—From 1912 they have appreciated fully 150 per cent.
601. Could you give us an idea of the difference in prices in 1912 and in 1916?—Well, I purchased a property in 1912. I should not like to divulge the name of the station. If His Honour wishes I will write the name down for his information.
- The Commissioner*: I don't know what Mr. Feez wants this particularly for.
602. *By Mr. Feez*: I don't want you to name the property. You purchased a property?—Yes, for £50,000, in North Queensland.
603. How many head of cattle on it?—About 20,000. I gave the offer to a firm some few months ago to inspect at £170,000.
604. How were the numbers of the cattle at the two times—when you bought and when you offered?—About the same.

605. And were they the same class of cattle?
—Yes.
606. Had anything been done to the station—any large improvements or anything of that sort?—Yes; not what you would call “large,” I suppose.
607. I mean to say, about how much did you spend on improvements in the meantime?—Well, approximately, £12,000 or £15,000.
608. Had you improved Wando Vale between 1912 and 1916?—Yes.
609. Can you give us an idea of the extent to which you had improved it? What sort of improvements, first of all?—Water conservation—wells and windmills; fencing.
610. What were the improvements worth in 1916 at Wando Vale; can you give us that?—The cost of the improvements would be approximately £9,000.
611. And prior to 1912, how much had you spent in the meantime between 1912 and 1916—when the Government bought it?—
612. *By the Commissioner:* When was that £9,000 up to?—
613. *By Mr. Fees:* £9,000 was the total?—The total cost; up to 1912 there was practically nothing spent in improvements.
614. Nearly all put on since?—Yes.
615. How are cattle selling at the meatworks in price, compared with 1912? What is the difference between 1912 and 1916?—Fully 100 per cent. in advance.
616. You knew that the Government inspector inspected Wando Vale?—I believe so, yes.
617. You were not present?—No.
618. I suppose your manager was?—He advised me, yes, that he inspected.
619. I suppose you have heard from your manager what cattle were found when the muster was made?—No.
620. How did you learn what the number of cattle was that were actually mustered on the run?—Just heard reports, and read the newspapers.
621. Oh, you haven't got information from your manager?—No.
622. Mr. Bowman is now manager for the Government?—I believe so.
623. *Cross-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* You were asked just now whether you had heard what cattle were found when the muster was made, Mr. Barnes. Are you aware that any muster was ever made?—It was in progress before I sold to the Government.
624. Are you aware whether it was ever made—a muster of all the cattle on Wando Vale?—I am not certain on that point.
625. Have not you heard that a muster of all the cattle on Wando Vale was never made?—No.
626. Would you be surprised if it had never been made?—I would be surprised.
627. It is very hard to get cattle in places, isn't it?—It is hard, but not impossible.
628. When was the last muster you had made before you sold to the Government?—The muster was in progress when I sold.
629. Prior to that, when was the last muster?—Never any muster made.
630. That is an extraordinary thing, isn't it?—No.
631. Is not that consistent with the description of the station as a neglected station? No. I have had a property for the last twenty years in North Queensland, and I have never mustered it yet.
632. You say you bought this in 1903?—Yes.
633. What did you pay for it?—£15,000.
634. And what number were on it then?—5,000, approximately.
635. How did they arrive at 5,000? Was that on the book figures, or was there a muster made for you?—No; I took it on the book figures.
636. Did you ask when a muster had been made before?—No.
637. Of course, you made an inspection?—I made an inspection.
638. And was that only Wando Vale proper, or the other three properties that went in with Wando Vale? I see in the agreement there are four properties, really, you sold to the Government?—They are all in the one.
639. What you bought for £15,000 too, or what Mrs. Barnes bought for £15,000?—Is Jamieson included in that?
640. Yes?—I think I acquired Jamieson afterwards.
641. Wando Vale, containing an area of 445 square miles; Jamieson lease, containing an area of 38 square miles; Bulgeri lease, containing an area of about 125 square miles; Kinlock, containing an area of 170 square miles. You think it was Wando Vale, Bulgeri, and Kinlock that you got?—Yes.
642. Said to be 5,000 cattle on them?—Yes.
643. Did you ever live there yourself?—Yes.
644. For how long?—About two years.
645. And then left it to a manager?—Yes.
646. Where did you go to live at—Lyndhurst?—Lyndhurst.
647. And adjoining property?—Yes.
648. And do you still live at Lyndhurst?—Yes.
649. When you sold Wando Vale you made up your mind to leave Lyndhurst, did you?—Yes.
650. How long has Mr. Bowman been managing for you—or had he been, before you sold?—I should say six or seven years.
651. When you acquired it, it was just after the great drought, wasn't it?—1902.
652. The drought that ended in 1902?—Yes.
653. It was bad in the north of Queensland, as well as in the south and the centre?—Very bad.
654. So that it was a poor herd, I suppose, when you acquired it?—No; a good herd.
655. Was it a Shorthorn and Hereford cross then?—No; a Hereford herd.
656. Well, did you buy any bulls?—Yes.
657. How many?—Well, I could not say exactly. We bought some bulls that were travelling from New South Wales—some Hereford bulls.
658. That is because you saw them passing?—No. I received particulars of them. I think they were from Archer, of Grace mere, the mob were travelling for; and I took the opportunity of securing some.
659. When was that?—I could not say exactly; probably 1906, I suppose.

460. Well, did you buy any after that?—Yes.
461. Do you remember how many you bought that time?—Yes.
462. When was the last time before you sold to the Government that you bought any bulls?—Well, about twelve or eighteen months before.
463. How many did you buy then?—I think about 30 head; and then a year again before that I bought another 30; and I think 40 before that.
464. It is rather strange that the Government buy 130 or 150 as soon as they buy from you, isn't it?—Rather strange?
465. I mean if your herd was a good herd there was no need to do that?—Well, I think the bulk of the bulls would die in the drought.
466. I thought you said the weak cattle died in the drought? The bulls are the rubbish, eh?—The bulls are more subject to tick worry than female cattle.
467. Yes; well, how do you explain the Government buying a number?—The supply of bulls would be depleted. You can imagine that a bull will do a certain amount of work amongst the cows and will lose condition. If a drought intervenes he is not in a fit condition to stand that drought, and he succumbs.
468. Had not you had time to repair the losses of the drought, as it were, build up your stock again after the drought losses, before you sold to the Government?—The muster was in progress. We did not know exactly how many bulls, or how many cattle, were on the run.
469. Well, you say that in 1912 you think you tried to sell that for £45,000; or you put it on the market for £45,000?—Yes.
470. You are not quite sure about it, are you?—Well, I am sure in this way—that I have had the word from a reputable firm that they have my particulars.
471. And did you only give it to one firm?—I am not sure.
472. When was the drought that you complain of—the second drought?—In 1915.
473. And how long had it been raging?—Practically from January until—well, fully a year, I suppose.
474. Just for one year?—Yes.
475. Do you know what your losses were?—I estimated them at 50 per cent.
476. Of the whole herd?—Yes.
477. And what did you reckon your herd was before the drought?—About 18,000 odd.
478. That is, 9,000 cattle died?—Yes.
479. Did you see anything on your run to justify that estimate?—No.
480. It must be white with bones?—Yes.
481. All over the place?—Yes.
482. And the Government inspector, or anybody, could have seen those when he went there?—No.
483. Why not?—The wet season had come and washed them away; bush fires had intervened and burnt those bones.
484. You had the luck of it, then, hadn't you?—Very bad luck.
485. Well, in 1912—this was before the drought—on a low price of cattle this is offered at £45,000?—No offer.
486. Placing it on the market; giving it to Dalgety's, you say?—Yes.
487. And then later—about June, 1913—you raised it £10,000. You had no offer for that £45,000?—Not that I remember.
488. Not one?—No; I could not say for certain.
489. Then in June, 1913, you put it in Brodie's hands, in Sydney, at a £10,000 increase?—Yes.
490. Why was that?—Prices were rising.
491. The price of cattle was rising then?—Yes.
492. Do you know what number you stated when you put it in Brodie's hands?—About 18,000 head.
493. And did you get any offer on that figure—£55,000?—Yes. I am advised by Brodie that I did. This was verbal; I cannot swear definitely to it; but so far as my memory serves me, I interviewed the late F. A. Brodie in Sydney; and I had a letter from the firm the other day advising me that Mr. Brodie, in communication with his client, advised him that there was no use approaching me—that I had refused to accept £55,000. That was in November, 1913.
494. You never had an offer, as a matter of fact? You say that Brodie's tell you they smothered an offer before it got to you?—I never actually received that offer; but Brodie, in the course of conversation—and I have a letter from the firm confirming it—advised me that a firm in Victoria were prepared to give me £55,000 in November, 1913.
495. But you didn't hear about it in November, 1913?—Well, I think I did. I said, "As far as I remember." I remember Brodie discussing it with me.
496. Did you withdraw the £55,000?—I could not say whether I did. In all probability I would. I may point out that these particulars were given to F. A. Brodie, I think, in June, 1913, with instructions that I would be pleased if he could name his client within a month or six weeks—whatever the case may be. This offer came in November. I was not prepared to accept that, because cattle and properties were still rising.
497. You did not withdraw, unless the implied withdrawal by only giving him a month or six weeks for a client?—Yes.
498. You say that you have no recollection of placing it in any other agent's hands at all?—Than Brodie's or Dalgety's, yes.
499. And that that was the last time you placed it in an agent's hands—when you placed it in Brodie's hands?—Yes.
500. You say you know Mr. P. T. Gannan?—Yes.
501. Know him personally?—Yes.
502. Do you know Mr. Pym?—No.
503. Never saw him?—No.
504. Pym said he thought Gannan a very honourable and upright man?—He is a very honourable man.
505. Is that your personal experience of him?—Yes.
506. You never had any personal experience to make you judge otherwise?—No.
507. Well, if Gannan said he had it in his books—well, of course, you are the person; if Gannan told you he had another property in his books, you would generally believe him?—Yes.

708. Had Bowman any authority to place Wando Vale on the market?—No.

709. Or offer it?—No.

710. And you say Suter had no authority, either, to sell Wando Vale?—Not that I remember.

711. Well, might he have had, Mr. Barnes?—He may have, through some other agent.

712. There is a letter here from Mr. Suter, I see, in these papers. He had no direct authority from you, but he could not have had from any other agent because you had not put it in any other agent's hands. That must be the position, must it not?—Yes.

713. Well, then, Suter writes on the 23rd June, 1917; addresses it, "A. McGugan, Esq., care Dalgety's—

"Dear Sir,—We regret to find that the particulars we held of Wando Vale were destroyed when they became of no use to us on the Government purchasing, but the main particulars were: Price, £65,000, with 10,000 head of cattle; walk in, walk out. We never offered it under these particulars, and consider you made a good deal over it when the terms of payment, &c., are taken into consideration.

"Yours faithfully,

"J. V. SUTER & Co.,

"J. V. Suter."

Do you know J. V. Suter, the writer of that letter?—Yes.

714. Would he state a thing like that if he had no authority for it—no foundation?—I would not think so.

715. He says there very distinctly, "The particulars we held of Wando Vale were destroyed when they became of no use to us on the Government purchasing"—Yes.

716. "But the main particulars were, price £65,000, with 10,000 head of cattle, walk in, walk out." You did sell to the Government 10,000, walk in, walk out?—Yes.

717. He is correct as far as that is concerned?—Yes.

718. And what about the price—£65,000?—Absolutely wrong. I would not accept £65,000.

719. But, Mr. Barnes, will you swear that Mr. Suter never had it?—No, I would not swear; I cannot rely on my memory.

720. Well, possibly Suter did have authority to sell Wando Vale?—A very remote possibility.

721. I don't care how remote. You say that Suter is a good man—a decent, straightforward chap?—Yes.

722. There is a very remote possibility, you say, that Suter did have authority to sell Wando Vale at £65,000?—Very remote.

723. Yes; but what about the 10,000 head of cattle? That must have been recent, must not it?—What date was it?

724. You can see the letter yourself. He writes on the 23rd June to Mr. McGugan, and he says that "We regret to find that the particulars we held of Wando Vale were destroyed when they became of no use to us"—showing that he had particulars in his books—I submit to you on that letter—right up to the time that the Government purchased?—It appears so.

725. And he says—"but the main particulars were, price £65,000, with 10,000 head of

cattle, walk in, walk out." Will you or will you not swear positively that Suter had no authority to sell?—I am not going to swear anything I am not sure of. I am here to tell the truth.

726. Quite so. I am quite sure of that. It must be possible that Suter had authority to sell Wando Vale at £65,000?—But very improbable.

The Commissioner: This is rather outside the inquiry, isn't it?

Mr. Macgregor: It is that fourth issue that it is relevant to—"Was it a fair and a reasonable price?"

727. *By Mr. Macgregor:* You take it that he was writing there in response to an inquiry as to whether he had authority to sell?—He had no authority to sell.

728. If an agent holds particulars of a property, you take it that he has those particulars for the purpose of sale?—No; for the purpose of eliciting clients.

729. He did not have direct authority from you?—No.

730. There was no one else he could get authority from?—No.

731. Mrs. Barnes was not managing that at the time herself?—No.

732. You say he might have got particulars from other agents?—I only deal with two agents—Brodie and Dalgety.

733. Did you ever place it in any agents' hands for sale at £65,000 with 10,000 head of stock?—I have no recollection. I don't think it possible that I should do so at that time; it is a ridiculous price to ask.

734. When was the first time that £65,000 was a ridiculous offer for Wando Vale?—Probably in 1913; I refused £55,000 in 1913.

735. You did not have 10,000 head of cattle then?—No, not in 1913; I think I had approximately 18,000 head.

736. What was it worth then, immediately after the drought?—Well, about the same, according to the cattle on the run; I had a fair idea of what was there.

737. Were you making sales off Wando Vale all the time?—I forget whether we sold any cattle in 1916; we sold in 1915.

738. What did you sell?—I think about 1,600 head.

739. What sort?—Bullocks principally.

740. What price?—About £10 10s., I think.

741. Are you sure?—It is a difficult matter to take one's memory back to a transaction like that. I am dealing in stock every day, and it is difficult to keep the prices of cattle sold in your mind.

742. You think you sold 1,600 head of cattle in 1915?—Yes, in 1915.

743. At £10 10s. per head?—Yes.

744. That must have been the pick of the station, were they?—The pick of what we did get; probably we could muster more.

745. Were they fat bullocks?—Yes, fat bullocks.

746. Delivery given on the station?—I would not be sure on that point, I think they were.

747. You sold nothing in 1916?—I don't think we did.

748. You had not sold for some time prior to Bennett coming along with the Government offer?—No.

749. From what I can make out from the correspondence, Mr. Bennett first suggested a sale at £55,000 was it?—In 1915, I think Bennett wired me, and I replied that Wando Vale was not for sale. I think it was 9th March, 1915.

750. Did you ever find out that the buyer whom Bennett mentioned was the Government, "Up to £100,000"?—No, I did not find out; I do not know who that was.

751. You would not have thought of asking £100,000 for Wando Vale at that time?—It is hard to say.

752. Nothing would have tempted you to sell at that time, 9th of March, 1915. If the price was anything above what you would have asked for Wando Vale then, why did you turn it down?—At that time I did not want to sell, I had no intention of selling.

753. Then in July, 1915, there is a telegram from you, *Exhibit 4*, I think, in which you say you can offer for sale a herd about 10,000 head, including 6,000 bullocks, at £7 per head. What brought about that wire from you?—A wire from the Pastoral Estates advising me that the Government were buyers of a large lot of cattle in North Queensland.

754. You knew when you got the wire from Mr. Bennett that the Government were the probable purchasers?—Yes.

[The Commission adjourned at 4.30 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. on 2nd October, 1917.]

(PARLIAMENT HOUSE, BRISBANE.)

TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER, 1917.

FIFTH DAY.

Witness J. H. S. BARNES, further cross-examined by Mr. Macgregor:

755. *By Mr. Macgregor:* From the first you knew that the Government were probable purchasers of Wando Vale?—Yes.

756. Had you ever had any dealings with the Pastoral Estates before?—No.

757. Never put any property of yours in their hands?—Well, I had correspondence with them; but I don't think I actually placed any property in their hands.

758. Do you know Mr. Bennett personally?—Yes.

759. When you fixed your price at £85,000 for Wando Vale as a going concern, did you know then that the Government would probably not pay cash?—Yes.

760. Was the price of £85,000 fixed on a cash basis, or on a credit basis?—I didn't take that into consideration at the time. I was not requiring cash.

761. Well, then, your price of £85,000 for Wando Vale as a going concern was fixed irrespective of Government debentures?—Yes.

762. Do you remember in your letter of the 19th June, 1917, you stated:—"Furthermore, considering that I was accepting Government debentures at par, which, at the moment, were only worth £95 in the open market, . . . and . . . not negotiable for five years, I do not think the agent you allude to has much reason for talking"?—Yes. I intended by that, that looking at it from that point of view I ought to have asked £90,000.

763. That was an afterthought—that justification of your price. When you fixed the price, it had nothing to do with cash or credit?—I looked at it in this way—if I wanted cash I probably would have asked for cash. I didn't want the cash at the time. If I had got the cash I probably would have had to reinvest it on a disturbed market at that particular time; and it suited me to take Government debentures.

764. Yes; but had you taken the matter into consideration when you fixed £85,000?—No.

765. You say it suited you to take Government debentures?—Yes.

766. At 4½ per cent.?—Yes.

767. Free of State and Federal income tax?—Yes.

768. How are you managing about the Federal income tax? Are the Government paying that for you?—I could not say.

769. They have no right to make your debentures free of Federal income tax, have they?—I have no idea what the position is.

Mr. Fees: I understand there are some arrangements between the Governments.

Mr. Macrossan: Are not the debentures free?

Mr. Macgregor: Yes, in the agreement.

770. *By Mr. Macgregor:* When you got your bill from the Federal Government, did you pass it on to the Queensland Government?—I understood at the time that there was some arrangement between the Commonwealth and State Governments.

771. At any rate, you got it; you did not pay Federal income tax on this money?—No.

772. And you don't want to?—I do not.

773. You said there was no muster from the time you bought Wando Vale until the time the negotiations began?—Yes.

774. It was proceeding at that time?—Yes.

775. How far had it proceeded?—I think they had bantailed about between 5,000 and 6,000 head.

776. And did it stop when the Government negotiations began?—I could not say. No, I think the muster was still in progress.

777. Well, but did that muster go on to completion?—You asked me that question yesterday.

778. Yes?—I haven't been on the station since and made inquiries. It would not be my business to make inquiries in a matter of that kind. I am not the owner of the station.

779. You were the owner up to 31st August?—I know the muster was not completed when I sold. I take it it was in progress on 31st August.

780. 1916?—Yes.

781. And you never had the curiosity to inquire whether the muster was completed?—No; I don't think it was my business to do so. It would be a most improper thing for me to do so.

782. I am sorry I asked you an improper question; I didn't mean it. I thought the muster would go on, and out of curiosity you would have found out what the numbers of cattle were; and you didn't even know whether the muster was actually completed?—No, I didn't.

783. Had the Government any man inspecting the property, before, Ferry, do you know?—Not to my knowledge. Ferry was the man who inspected the property, so my manager advised me.
784. It would not be correct to say there was a man for several months on the place, before the sale took place?—It would be very incorrect, I should say.
785. If he was there, he was there without your knowledge?—He was there without my knowledge.
786. Would it be possible that there might be an employee there on behalf of the Government, finding out information for the Government?—I hardly think so.
787. Do you remember whether you had any fresh employees there before the sale?—No.
788. The same hands had been there for years past?—The same hands for years, yes.
789. Will you say you offered on the basis of 10,000 head of cattle, Mr. Barnes?—Yes.
790. But it was very well known there were 12,330 cattle there?—If I had had information of that, I would not have offered at the price I did. I based my calculations on 10,000.
791. Yes; but you knew there were more than 10,000?—I would not have offered the place for 10,000 if I knew there were more. I would have asked for more.
792. But, didn't you refuse a muster on the ground that you knew there were more than 10,000?—Refuse a muster?
793. A muster delivery?—I have no recollection of having refused a muster.
794. What do these words mean? Mr. McGugan, writing on 19th August to the Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, says: "Mr. Barnes, the owner, states that he would not give a muster delivery, as he knows that he has under-estimated the number (10,000) offered." You cannot imagine why he should say that?—No, I don't know my reason for saying that. I considered I was well within the mark in estimating the number at 10,000.
795. Yes; but did you say it, first of all?—I did not swear to that.
796. It is possible you did?—I am certain on this point—in submitting my offer I would prefer to under-estimate than to over-estimate; and probably that is the reason why I put that down.
797. The curious thing is that in this letter of Mr. McGugan's on the 19th August he recommends the purchase of this property at £85,000; and he names the stock as 12,330 head of cattle, £69,900; 350 horses, £2,100—and somebody has queried that; perhaps we will find out from Mr. Graham, or somebody, who has queried that. But here is a bit of yellow paper which says that that £69,900 was made up from 12,330 head of cattle?—That is after the square-tailed muster.
798. Did you ever see that bit of yellow paper?—No.
799. Is that your writing on it?—No.
800. Or Bowman's?—No, I would not know the writing; besides, I don't think it is Bowman's.
801. Do you know at all how Ferry or McGugan made up £69,900 as the value of the cattle?—In all probability they made a minute inspection of the run, and came to the conclusion that there were more cattle on it.
802. I am not asking you to guess; if you don't know, say so?—No, I don't know.
803. Well, then, what did you think were the numbers on Wando Vale when you sold?—Approximately 10,000 head.
804. Is it a surprise to you, if it is correct, that there are 2,700 more than the 10,000?—I am not surprised at all. You could very easily make a mistake in a large run—a mistake of 1,000 or 2,000 in a large run; the cattle cover such a tremendous area of country that there could easily be 1,000 or 2,000 missed.
805. Did you know, when you reduced your price from £85,000 to £82,000—did you still think—there were just about 10,000 there? You had no idea there were 2,000 more than 10,000—or nearly 3,000 more than 10,000?—No; I heard that read in the paper, months after the transaction.
806. Of course, you were living at Lyndhurst yourself?—Yes.
807. Bowman was managing the place?—Yes.
808. Did you ever go over?—Occasionally.
809. How far is Lyndhurst from Wando Vale?—Seventy-five miles.
810. You never went round the run, I suppose—Wando Vale—much?—No.
811. Now, isn't it possible that that 2,700 were mostly male cattle—unbranded bulls?—Oh, no.
812. And they had run wild amongst your herd? That would account for a good deal of the inbreeding?—Of course, there is always a sprinkling of unbranded cattle in a run like that.
813. And a large number of bulls from your own herd?—Yes. I would not say a large number. You say 2,000 head would be?
814. Two thousand seven hundred we are told?—Unbranded?
815. I don't know about being unbranded; we only know there were 12,711?—I take it there were a lot missed in the muster; in the muster a lot of grown branded cattle were missed—in the first muster. You cannot get cattle clean.
816. You don't admit 2,700 were found on the muster? If they were found, it shows that there was some neglect in the management of the station?—There is neglect if there was 2,000 unbranded cattle.
817. Do you know whether McGugan was inspecting other properties for the Government? McGugan did not inspect your property, as a matter of fact, did he?—No.
818. When they were negotiating about your offering Wando Vale as a going concern, he said that he would inspect himself?—Yes.
819. But he didn't, as a matter of fact?—No, he didn't.
820. A man named Ferry inspected?—Ferry.
821. Do you know Ferry?—No, never met him.
822. Do you know whether the Government were inspecting any other properties round there at that time?—No, I could not say.

823. You rather suspected it, didn't you?—Yes.
824. Did you never find any actual ground for your suspicion?—No; it was only hearsay. I don't pry into other people's business.
825. No, no; but you said in one of your letters you fancied that McGugan's delay was due to the fact that he would rather pick and choose than take Wando Vale?—Yes.
826. Do you know any other places round about?—Yes.
827. Do you know Reedy Springs?—I have not been all over the run; I know portion of the run.
828. Reedy Springs has a less area than Wando Vale?—I could not say for certain.
829. There is a large area of black soil; there is better soil than is on Wando Vale?—I could not say that. From my general knowledge, I should say that Wando Vale had more black soil.
830. Well, Reedy Springs is better watered than Wando Vale?—No, I would not say that. Wando Vale in some instances is what you could call well watered. Round Broken River there are big permanent holes running right through the run, and those holes have a sandy bottom; there is no bog in connection with them, and they are navigable in times of dry weather.
831. Is there black soil on your place; was there, on Wando Vale?—Yes, a good deal of black soil.
832. Page's Creek country is south of Wando Vale?—Yes.
833. "Third-class country there; poor, sandy surface, with rock at shallow depth; stunted silver-leaf ironbark timber; narrow-leaf box flats; limestone; rough ridges; most of the timber in a dying state"?—Most of those particulars are correct; but I would not call it really third-class country.
834. "Lots of poison hart-leaf on the best quality country"?—The cattle don't get poisoned. The poison is on nearly all northern runs.
835. "On the best quality country towards the Broken River. There is about 100-miles stretch of this country could be fenced off with about 6 miles of fencing . . . range to range." You never fenced it off, did you?—No; but I contemplated doing it on account of the poison.
836. You were contemplating it for fifteen years, were you; from 1903 to 1916—thirteen years?—No.
837. "Clarke River sandy; no permanent waterholes on the surface, but water usually procurable in bad times by sinking in the sand a few feet." Where is this—on Page's Creek country?—What is it?
838. I don't know where it is. It is Clarke River. It is in Ferry's report, just after he has mentioned about the fencing off; then he goes on to say, "Clarke River sandy; no permanent waterholes on the surface, but water usually procurable in bad times by sinking in the sand a few feet—I should say about 8 or 10 feet deep to get a good supply. . . The rest of the country . . . is good soft, healthy country; basalt ridges, black soil flats . . ." That is what you say is black soil flats?—Yes.
839. Don't you think that Reedy Springs compares quite favourably with Wando Vale?—Well, I could not compare the two, because I have not made a minute inspection of Reedy Springs. From what I have heard in general conversation, I should say that Wando Vale was a much better run.
840. Was not Reedy Springs, with 10,000 cattle on it—the Government only wanting cattle and a place to hold them, apparently, from the correspondence—quite good enough for that purpose?—I don't know what their purpose was.
841. To buy cattle and have a place to hold them. They were dealing with your herd, instead of the country?—There was no comparison with the two deals. Reedy Springs would be almost fully stocked with 10,000; Wando Vale would not be stocked fully. Wando Vale was considerably in advance. It is not a question of return from the station; it is a question of the increase in cattle that you have to look at.
842. You say that Reedy Springs would be no comparison as far as the two deals were concerned?—I would not hesitate a moment in taking Wando Vale.
843. At what price? Would you rather pay £94,000? Do you say you are prepared to pay £94,000 now for Wando Vale?—Yes, I would buy Wando Vale to-morrow.
844. At £94,000?—Yes.
845. Rather than pay £50,000 for Reedy Springs?—£50,000?
846. You saw it is in the market, or was in the market at the time, at £50,000. On 24th July, 1916, F. A. Brodie and Co. had it for £50,000, with 10,000 shorthorn cattle. The cattle are better than yours, are not they?—No, I would not admit that. I would sooner have Wando Vale to-day at £94,000 than Reedy Springs at £50,000.
847. And *a fortiori*, I see the price has gone up now to £62,000?—I don't quite agree with the particulars.
848. You know F. A. Brodie and Co.?—Yes.
849. "About 10,000 shorthorn cattle, including about 800 No. 3's and older males"?—I think the word "about" should be underlined.
850. Do you know that on 23rd March, 1917, they were offering it with 12,000?—I was aware of it.
851. Through Mactaggart?—I don't know the agent. I heard it was being offered.
852. Of course, you would not pay £62,000 for 12,000 if you would not pay £50,000 for 10,000?—I have a doubt about the cattle.
853. That is what bothers you as a buyer?—Yes.
854. You say you are prepared to give £94,000 to-day for Wando Vale; that is assuming the same number of cattle as when you sold it?—No; I understand there are more cattle on the property. They told me—at least, I read in the papers—that they have bangtailed 3,000 more than what I sold the place with. I presume that they branded a considerable number of calves since.

855. Well, is £94,000 the most you are prepared to give for it?—Oh, well, I don't like to show my hand.
856. Well, what do you think of a valuation of £138,000? Would you give £138,000 for it?—Well, I would not like to say offhand. I prefer to make an inspection first, and have a look at the books and the brandings.
857. Fifty per cent. increase on your £94,000, pretty well; it is a good rise?—It sounds good.
858. You would not think of giving £138,000 for it, would you?—I would inspect it at that.
859. Can you imagine Wando Vale ever being worth that?—Yes; more than that.
860. With how many cattle on it?—The same number of cattle as are on it to-day.
861. And cattle worth £100 apiece?—No necessity to do that.
862. You were living at Lyndhurst. You still own Lyndhurst, do you?—Yes.
863. And the books of Wando Vale—were they kept at Lyndhurst?—No.
864. Bowman kept them at Wando Vale, did he?—Yes.
865. And they were all destroyed as soon as you sold to the Government?—Not so soon as I sold to the Government; some time afterwards, when I decided to leave Lyndhurst and come down.
866. When was that?—I suppose it would be probably at the end of the year; I would not be sure.
867. What was the idea of destroying all the books?—I was leaving the North, and I did not want to be hampered with a lot of obsolete—or what I looked upon as obsolete—material. The sale of Wando Vale was concluded, and I looked upon all those papers as being of no further use. They were taking up a lot of room, and I had a lot of luggage and personal effects.
868. They were on Wando Vale, you say?—Well, the books may have been; but all my private letter-books in connection with the sale of Wando Vale—those letters written to Bennett—Bowman had nothing to do with that; I wrote from my headquarters.
869. Lyndhurst?—Yes.
870. Did you copy your letters?—Into a copy book.
871. The old style of press copy book, was it?—Yes.
872. And you destroyed that, too?—I destroyed that.
873. That had in it a lot of correspondence besides Wando Vale, had it not?—No; I kept a separate book for Wando Vale.
874. You started a new press copy book?—I always kept them separate, so that I should have less trouble in making reference at any time.
875. And had you no documents whatever with reference to Wando Vale and your negotiations with the Government?—No.
876. You stated that since you wrote this letter of July, 1917, to Mr. McGugan—or to Mr. Graham, I forgot who it was—you looked the matter up and found that you had made a mistake in that letter—the one that the Minister read out—

“Subsequent to writing you a day or two ago, I received your letter of the 26th

June and note contents. As I have destroyed all books, &c., in connection with Wando Vale, I cannot give you a definite answer to your inquiry, but so far as my memory serves me, I did give the offer at, I think, £42,000 in about 1913.”

You said yesterday that since you wrote that letter you have looked the matter up and found it was £45,000 in 1912?—I wrote to Dalgety, and they have refreshed my memory. I take their word as a reputable firm.

877. That is what you mean by looking the matter up; you made inquiries?—Yes.
878. Didn't you hand any books to the Government?—No.
879. Didn't you leave all the Wando Vale books on Wando Vale?—No; I think most of the books—the day books, the ledgers, and things like that—were sent on to the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney.
880. All your stock books; did you take those off, too?—I didn't take them off; I don't know whether the manager took them.
881. It was on those books that you arrived at the 10,000?—Not on the books—on my manager's estimate.
882. Bowman was responsible for the 10,000, then, was he?—Yes; I took his estimate.
883. I ask you, was the £85,000 fixed before you had any idea of how the Government was going to pay you?—Yes.
884. You knew from the first that the Government were going to be buyers?—I did not know they were going to be buying.
885. Well, they were proposed buyers?—They were proposed buyers.
886. Did you make the price a little bit higher because it was the Government?—No.
887. Would it have been the same with a private buyer?—Yes.
888. You say you offered £850 for the commission?—Yes.
889. Bennett was not satisfied with that £850, was he?—He was satisfied—well, he made some demur about it.
890. Is that the only letter referring to the omission (*Exhibit 34*)?—I think so.
891. Well, then, the rest was verbal, was it?—No; I think I wrote to him to state his commission.
892. Oh, yes; but he said, “Let that hang over,” and you were going to talk about it; and there eventually is a letter (which has been put in)?—I fancy we discussed it after he left it in abeyance. In the meantime, when I met him, we discussed it, and I wrote that letter confirming my conversation. We arrived at £850. I think.
893. He was not satisfied with £850, was he?—He was satisfied; of course, he made a struggle—as they generally do.
894. *By the Commissioner:* He would have preferred more?—He would have preferred more.
895. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Do you know a Mr. Colin Wright, the owner of Waverley station and Jellinbah?—No.
896. Never heard of him?—I have heard of several Wrights.

897. Have you heard of this man who inspected Wando Vale and turned it down, at £44,000?—Yes; I think he made an inspection, at some time in 1912 probably.
898. Probably?—Yes; I cannot remember the date. I don't know whether it was that Mr. Wright; but there was a man named Wright.
899. Who had it under offer for £44,000?—I could not say exactly now; probably £45,000—the original offer.
900. Wasn't it since 1912?—I think it was 1912; or it might have been early in 1913.
901. At any rate, as soon as he inspected he said "No," didn't he?—Well, there was some mistake in the offer; when he took the offer he thought there were 1,500 bullocks included in the sale; 1,500 bullocks had been sent to the works at the time. The offer came through Brodie and Company, in Sydney, and there was some mistake in that respect. He came away with a misunderstanding that he was buying 1,500 bullocks outside the number of cattle on it; and I think that is the real reason why he turned the offer down.
902. Was not the real reason—?—He felt hurt that he had been sent that distance; and it looked like as though we had been playing underhand work with him. He took the hurt.
903. Was not he hurt at the quality of the cattle which he was asked to inspect?—I could not say.
904. Apparently you know Wright pretty well?—I have never met Wright. Those are the instructions which I received from Brodie and Company, in Sydney.
905. Has anybody else ever inspected Wando Vale with the idea of purchase?—Yes.
906. Who?—A man named Lamb at one time.
907. When was that, Mr. Barnes?—I think about 1910 or 1911.
908. And at what price then?—About £40,000. At that time he offered me £37,500; but there was some difficulty in securing the money—I could not make satisfactory terms with him.
909. You were ready to sell at £40,000 at that time?—Yes. I could not say exactly what year it was in.
910. Your last sale—I think you told us yesterday—off Wando Vale as a cattle dealer, was about?—About 1915; I think we sold 1,600 head at ten guineas.
911. You say those were fats?—Yes.
912. I don't know about 1915; about a year before the sale, I think you stated—about a year before you agreed to sell?—That would be about it; yes.
913. Had you destroyed your books before you sent in your income tax return last year?—For the return of income, monthly statements were sent down to the Union Trustee Company.
914. To make up returns from the monthly statements?—Yes.
915. So the books were not necessary?—No.
916. *Re-examined by Mr. Feez:* Mr. Barnes, you were asked some questions about Reedy Springs, in connection with some particulars that were given. Do you know whether Reedy Springs was sold?—I think it was.
917. To a man called Bedford?—Yes.
918. And you know that Bedford brought an action?—Yes.
919. Did you hear the result of the action?—No, I haven't heard.
920. Did you hear what was the estimate on which Bedford took possession of the cattle on Reedy Springs?—He bought it with an estimated herd of 10,000 head, I heard.
921. Twelve thousand head, I think it was. Do you know what actually was found?—I am only giving hearsay; I heard there were only between 4,000 and 5,000.
922. As a matter of fact, there is a suggestion made that Wando Vale is inferior country. Do you know how the rents on Wando Vale compare with the surrounding runs?—It is rented higher than most of the runs in that locality.
923. Your rent runs up to 21s.?—Yes.
924. The largest part of it—444 square miles—is 20s.?—Yes.
925. Do you know what the rents of the other runs are?—I know that Wando Vale is rented higher than the others. I have gone into that matter.
926. What are your adjoining runs? Is Reedy Springs adjoining you?—Yes. Lyndhurst, Barker's Plains—
927. The rent of that is 17s.?—Shield Creek.
928. Shield Creek, 16s.?—Maryvale.
929. Maryvale 19s.?—I might mention that Maryvale is much nearer the railway line, too; that is taken into consideration in assessing the rental.
930. Well, as a matter of fact, how does the Wando Vale country compare with the adjoining runs as regards its carrying capacity?—Very favourably.
931. Can you say it is a really good run?—It is a good run.
932. With regard to this gentleman—Mr. Colin Wright—who, you say, inspected in 1912—or it may have been early in 1913—I notice in these particulars that you mentioned yesterday, this 1,500 cattle that had been sold were mentioned—in Dalgety's particulars?—Yes.
933. Are those the 1,500 you refer to?—I could not say from memory. I naturally would conclude that they were. The number was not in my mind when I answered the question to Mr. McGugan.
934. At all events, the difficulty with regard to Mr. Wright was?—Some hitch with regard to some bullocks which were sold before he inspected.
935. That was not your fault?—No; it was really Brodie; Brodie admitted the mistake.
936. You still own Lyndhurst?—Yes.
937. But you have made your home at Canning Downs, near Warwick?—Yes.
938. You have left the North altogether?—Not altogether; I make periodical visits.
939. So far as residence is concerned?—Yes.
940. Up to the time you bought Canning Downs I understand you lived at Lyndhurst; that was your home?—Yes.
941. When you left the North you destroyed all your superfluous property?—Yes.
942. Did the fact—you have really answered it, but I want to ask it again—that the Government were negotiating for this property, in any way affect your price?—No.

943. With regard to that report of Ferry's that Mr. Macgregor read to you in connection with the piece of country—he describes it as about 100 square miles; a piece that he talks of fencing off at six miles. What country is that? I mean to say, how is it you can fence it off at six miles?—By taking advantage of the mountain ranges it could be done.
944. It is country that runs in amongst the ranges, and you can fence just across the different gorges?—Yes.
945. Apart from that, is it good country?—Well, it is not exactly what you call good country; but it is very useful to use in conjunction with the other. In the winter time the cattle go in amongst those ranges, and they hold their condition better than those on the lower portions of the run. It is sheltered country, and warm.
946. And then with regard to the poison spoken of there—some poison plant. Does that apply to all the country in the North?—On the ranges.
947. On the ranges, I mean?—Yes.
948. Nothing peculiar to Wando Vale?—No.
949. As a matter of fact, is it any great detriment?—Not a great deal.
950. Now, when you put the figure down at about 10,000, had you an idea there were as many as 12,700?—No.
951. And if you had?—I would have increased my price.
952. You would not have thought of offering it at £85,000?—No; I would have got more if I put the cattle on the road.
953. You told us there was a drought in 1915?—Yes.
954. That is just before you sold to the Government?—Yes.
955. Was the drought over at the time?—Yes.
956. And had it been a very severe drought?—Yes.
957. Your losses had been very heavy?—Yes.
958. It was simply on the estimate of your losses that you reckoned you had only about 10,000 head left?—Yes.
959. With regard to Mr. Sutor, you were asked some questions about placing this matter in his hands. He says in one letter that he has destroyed his records; but his recollection is he had it in his hands for £65,000. Did you ever put it in his hands at £65,000?—I would not swear.
960. Well, any time near the time you sold to the Government, anyhow?—I am certain I never placed it in his hands.
961. Could you have placed it in his hands anywhere like £65,000, anywhere near the time you were selling to the Government?—I don't think so.
962. Was it for sale at £65,000 about that time? About July or August, if someone had come along and offered you £65,000, would you have looked at it?—No, I would not have entertained the offer for a minute.
963. You were asked some questions about someone else; the suggestion was made that someone else on the run had been doing a sort of spy business for the Government. Did you ever hear of such a person?—No.
- Mr. Macgregor: The Minister says they had a man there for several months.

964. By Mr. Feez: Did you ever hear of a man being there?—No.
965. Any sort of man?—In connection with the Government?
966. Yes?—No, I never had any word of it. [Mr. Macgregor reads from *Hansard*:—“What is more, before we bought we had a man up there for several months, who went through the property . . .” That is Mr. Hunter speaking.]
967. By Mr. Feez: That is Mr. Ferry, of course; he is referring to Mr. Ferry there. That is evidently Mr. Ferry, because he is the man who wrote and said he was satisfied?—They only had a month's offer; they could not have run about for several months.
968. As a matter of fact, you know of no one else, except Mr. Ferry, being there on behalf of the Government?—Yes.
- [Witness then retired.]

ALEXANDER MCGUGAN, State Stations Manager, sworn and examined:

969. By Mr. Macrossan: What is your position?—State Stations Manager.
970. You are a sort of general manager for the State stations?—Yes.
971. Have you been managing for any length of time for the State?—Since 3rd May, 1916.
972. And prior to that, had you pastoral experience in Queensland?—Yes.
973. Extending over what period?—Seventeen years.
974. And had you previous experience in managing stations in Queensland?—Yes.
975. What stations?—Managing Buckingham Downs, Lucknow, Manningham (near Longreach), Dimora, Jairloch, and The Ranch.
976. You have managed for very large cattle-owners?—Yes.
977. And you are well acquainted with the cattle industry in Queensland?—Yes.
978. I suppose you were not the only applicant for the position of State Stations Manager, were you?—No; there were a number.
979. There were over 200?—Yes.
980. And you were selected as the best person for the position?—Yes.
981. Now, about the middle of 1916 had you any particular instructions as to the desirability of buying cattle for the State purposes?—Yes; I had instructions to get the offer of any properties I could.
982. Were you given any special instructions as to a probable rise?—Yes; I was told there would be a rise in cattle stations.
983. And you were attempting to buy before the rise?—Yes.
984. Well, in accordance with those instructions, I suppose you made inquiries as to the various properties available?—Yes.
985. And you also made inquiries as to stock available?—Yes.
986. Apart from properties?—Yes.
987. And did you communicate with commission agents all through Queensland?—Yes, practically all the well-known agents.
988. Well, did you communicate with a Mr. Bennett, of the Pastoral Estates Company?—Yes.

989. And in what way did you communicate with him—by wire, was it?—Telephone.
990. Were you personally acquainted with Mr. Barnes at that time?—No, I did not know him at all.
991. When did you first meet Mr. Barnes?—On the 10th August, 1916, in Brisbane.
992. At Daniell's Hotel, where he was staying?—Yes, that is the first time.
993. By prearrangement, to have an interview?—Yes.
994. Is that a copy of a wire you got from the Pastoral Estates, dated 8th July, 1916?—Yes.
[Copy telegram admitted, marked *Exhibit 37*, and read.]
995. Did you reply to that?—By telephone.
996. And you subsequently got a wire from the Pastoral Estates Company, dated 10th July, offering you Mr. Barnes's cattle?—Yes.
[Copy telegram admitted, marked *Exhibit 38*, and read.]
997. You were then in Roma?—Yes.
998. You subsequently got a letter of the same date, confirming that wire?—Yes.
[Copy letter admitted, marked *Exhibit 39*, and read.]
999. Well, on these particulars as they appear there, did that appear a desirable proposition?—Yes.
1000. Subsequently Mr. Bennett, of the Pastoral Estates Company, wrote to you, on the same day, at a different address, trying to get you at one or other?—Yes.
1001. And this is a letter he addressed to Brisbane on the same day?—Yes, that is right.
[Copy letter 10th July from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Manager, State stations, admitted, marked *Exhibit 40*, and read.]
1002. Did you subsequently communicate with Mr. Bennett in relation to that offer?—Yes; I sent a wire on the 15th from Chinchilla.
1003. Would this be it?—Yes, that is it.
[Telegram admitted, marked *Exhibit 41*, and read.]
1004. Did you subsequently ask for an offer in relation to the particulars?—That afternoon I asked for an offer of the cattle.
1005. You had some personal communication with Mr. Bennett in Toowoomba?—On the way up in the train I saw him on the platform.
[Letter dated 15th July, 1916, from Mr. Bennett to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit 42*, and read.]
1006. You subsequently asked for the offer of the place as a going concern?—Yes.
1007. How was it that you came to do that?—After considering the matter, I thought it would be better to have the whole property, and I discussed the matter with Mr. Graham.
1008. You had a discussion with Mr. Bennett at Toowoomba about the 15th of July?—Yes.
1009. Then you asked him to get the offer of cattle?—Yes, as a going concern.
1010. *The Commissioner*: You said you had a discussion with Mr. Graham?—Yes, when I came back.
1011. *By Mr. Macrossan*: And subsequently with Mr. Bennett?—Yes.
1012. Then you asked him to get the offer of the cattle and the place as a going concern?—Yes.
1013. What was the effect of the discussion with Mr. Graham?—We discussed the question of getting the offer of the whole property as a going concern. I agreed that it would be a good thing to get it.
1014. In buying a large herd like that it would be necessary to have country to put them on?—Yes.
1015. And the best country would be that where they were?—Yes.
1016. You and Mr. Graham discussed the matter?—Yes.
1017. And you came to the conclusion that to buy it as a going concern was the best possible thing?—Yes.
1018. You acted on that and got Mr. Barnes to give you the offer of the place as a going concern?—Yes.
1019. Mr. Bennett sent you a copy of a letter from Mr. Barnes to him dated the 16th of July?—Yes.
1020. Is that a usual result of the drought, that the weaker beasts die off and the better class survive?—Yes.
1021. As Mr. Barnes terms it, "the survival of the fittest"?—Yes.
1022. Subsequently you received a letter from Mr. Bennett dated 20th of July?—Yes.
[Copy of letter admitted, marked *Exhibit 43*, and read.]
1023. That is apparently acting upon your suggestion to Mr. Bennett to get in touch with Mr. Barnes?—Yes.
1024. And Mr. Barnes was communicating back with Mr. Bennett?—Yes.
1025. Did Mr. Bennett phone you?—Yes, he phoned me.
1026. And the next thing that you heard about it was that you had got an offer of the place as a going concern?—Yes.
1027. Where were you then?—At Marlborough, between Rockhampton and St. Lawrence.
1028. That was advice from the Pastoral Estates that they had received an offer of Wando Vale as a going concern for £85,000?—Yes.
1029. You sent a wire in reply to that?—Yes.
[Telegram dated 28th July, 1916, admitted, marked *Exhibit 44*, and read.]
1030. You came back to Brisbane a few days later?—Yes.
1031. And you got a letter of the 24th of July addressed to you in Brisbane?—Yes.
1032. From the Pastoral Estates?—Yes.
[Copy letter dated 24th July, 1916, admitted, marked *Exhibit 45*, and read.]
[Copy letter dated 25th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan also admitted, marked *Exhibit 46*, and read.]
1033. Had you had a conversation with Mr. Bennett over the phone?—Yes.
[Copy letter dated 25th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit 46*, and read.]
1034. Both of these letters would be received by you in Brisbane after your return from St. Lawrence?—Yes.

1035. Then, on the 26th of July, a wire was addressed to you at Marlborough from the Pastoral Estates at Toowoomba?—Yes.

[Copy telegram dated 26th July, 1916, admitted, marked *Exhibit* 47, and read.]

1036. And a letter confirming that on the 27th of July?—Yes.

[Letter dated 27th July, 1916, admitted, marked *Exhibit* 48, and read.]

1037. There were very considerable improvements on Wando Vale about that time?—Yes.

1038. It would be in answer to that wire of the 26th of July giving you an offer of the place as a going concern that you wired that your inspector would go there to inspect in the first week in August?—Yes.

1039. On your return to Brisbane, as a result of the correspondence, did you communicate with Mr. Bennett at Toowoomba by 'phone?—Yes.

1040. Did you discuss Wando Vale and the prospective inspection?—Yes.

1041. Subsequently you received a letter from Mr. Bennett intimating that Mr. Barnes would be in Brisbane; that letter was dated the 3rd August?—Yes.

[Letter admitted, marked *Exhibit* 49, and read.]

[Copy telegram, dated 29th July, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan at Marlborough, admitted, marked *Exhibit* 50, and read.]

1042. Subsequent to that you had a conversation with him on the telephone?—Yes.

1043. And on the 3rd of August you received a letter dated 2nd of August.

[Copy letter dated 2nd August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit* 51, and read.]

1044. Did you arrange an interview with them by telephone?—Yes.

1045. Did you subsequently meet Mr. Bennett and Mr. Barnes at the Hotel Daniell on the 10th of August?—Yes.

1046. Then, did you have a discussion?—Yes, we discussed the matter of the number of the stock that were there.

1047. That was the first occasion that you had ever met Barnes?—Yes.

1048. After that, did you get a letter from Bennett stating what terms Barnes was prepared to take?—Yes.

[Letter dated 10th August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to the General Manager, State stations, admitted (with annexures), marked *Exhibit* 52, and read.]

1049. Was the annexure with the letter?—Yes.

1050. Showing the areas of the different leases, rentals, improvements, and the estimated cattle and horses?—Yes.

1051. Throughout the negotiations were you in constant touch with Mr. Graham?—Yes.

1052. And Mr. Graham would be in constant touch with his Ministerial heads?—Yes.

1053. Did you send anyone to inspect the property?—Yes.

1054. Who was it?—Mr. Stanley Ferry.

1055. Who is he?—He lives at Roma; he is a cattle man.

1056. Has he had previous experience?—Yes.

1057. You knew him?—Yes.

1058. Is he a man in whose capacity you have confidence?—Yes, every confidence.

1059. Is he a regular employee of the State Stations Department?—Yes.

1060. After you got that offer from Bennett acting as agent for Barnes you went to North Queensland yourself?—Yes.

1061. Leaving Brisbane on the 11th of August, you met Mr. Ferry?—On the 10th, the same night.

1062. Did you meet Ferry?—I met Ferry on the 19th of August at Pentlands.

1063. Is that between Charters Towers and Hughenden?—It is between Hughenden and Charters Towers.

1064. Did you travel together from there?—Yes, to Ravenswood Junction.

1065. At that time he had inspected?—Yes.

1066. Did he give you full particulars of his inspection?—Yes.

1067. You had no knowledge of Wando Vale yourself?—No.

1068. As a result of what he told you, did you write to the Under Secretary for Lands?—Yes.

[Letter dated 19th August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to the Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands (with annexures) admitted, marked *Exhibit* 53, and read.]

1069. When did you make out these figures?—On the night of the 19th of August.

1070. You sent them with your letter?—Yes.

1071. Was that report written or verbal at that time?—It was a verbal report.

1072. Was it a full report?—Yes, it was a full report.

1073. Showing a complete inspection?—Yes.

1074. On the results of that inspection was the station good buying at £85,000?—Yes.

1075. At the same time that you got that verbal report from Mr. Ferry, did you request him to make out a report in writing?—Yes.

1076. You subsequently got a written report dated 21st of August?—Yes.

[Report, dated 21st August, 1916, from Mr. Ferry to Mr. McGugan admitted (with annexures), marked *Exhibit* 54, and read.]

1077. In the meanwhile you wired to the Pastoral Estates to get an extension of time?—Yes.

[Telegram, dated 19th August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Pastoral Estates, Limited, admitted, marked *Exhibit* 55, and read.]

1078. You got a reply from Bennett on the same day?—Yes.

[Copy urgent telegram, dated 19th August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit* 56, and read.]

[Copy urgent telegram, dated 21st August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit* 57, and read.]

1079. In the meanwhile you sent a wire to the Pastoral Estates, on the 20th of August, asking for the longest extension possible?—That was on the 19th. I sent two wires.

- [Telegram, dated 20th August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Pastoral Estates, Limited, admitted, marked *Exhibit* 58, and read.]
- [Letter, dated 21st August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit* 59, and read.]
1080. Didn't you get something then about the time necessary for delivery?—Yes, a telegram.
1081. You got a wire from Mr. Bennett asking you to take delivery in the event of a sale?—Yes.
1082. You wired back some time in August? About fourteen days after the contract was signed?—Yes.
- [Copy telegram, dated 22nd August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan, admitted, marked *Exhibit* 60, and read.]
- [Urgent telegram, dated 23rd August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to Pastoral Estates, Limited, admitted, marked *Exhibit* 61, and read.]
- [Copy letter, dated 24th August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit* 62, and read.]
- [Copy letter, dated 28th August, 1916, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit* 63, and read.]
1083. Your reply to that is on the 28th of August; it is already in as *Exhibit* 61?—Yes.
1084. Would it be Bennett's duty to get into touch with the Brisbane office?—Yes.
1085. You got a wire at Cairns from Mr. Graham, the Under Secretary for Public Lands?—Yes.
1086. Apprising you of the sale?—Yes.
- [Copy telegram, dated 29th August, 1916, from Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit* 64, and read.]
1087. In reply to that, you wired to the Under Secretary on 31st August?—Yes.
1088. Advising what arrangements you had made as to the management?—Yes, and the date of delivery.
- [Telegram, dated 31st August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to the Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, admitted, marked *Exhibit* 65, and read.]
1089. You wrote a letter confirming that from Croydon?—Yes.
- [Letter, dated 31st August, 1916, from Mr. McGugan to the Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, admitted, marked *Exhibit* 66, and read.]
1090. During the time that you were negotiating with the Pastoral Estates, did you have any discussion with any other agent?—No.
1091. About Wando Vale?—No.
1092. Or did you discuss it with any persons except the ones that you have mentioned—Mr. Ferry, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Barnes, and the Under Secretary?—No.
1093. Subsequently you learned of an assertion by some agent that he could have sold the property for £40,000?—Yes.
1094. How did you hear that?—From Mr. Graham.
1095. I suppose he wanted some explanation from you on the matter?—Yes.
1096. You made inquiries?—Yes.
1097. And you also made inquiries from Suter and Co., of Hughenden?—Yes.
1098. You got a letter from them on the 23rd of June last?—Yes.
- [Letter, dated 23rd June, 1917, from Mr. Suter to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit* 67, and read.]
1099. As a result of what Mr. Graham said to you, you communicated with Bennett?—Yes.
1100. And he got in touch with Mr. Barnes?—Yes.
1101. You subsequently got a wire from Mr. Bennett, dated 19th July, 1917?—Yes.
- [Letter, dated 19th July, 1917, from Pastoral Estates, Limited, to Mr. McGugan admitted, marked *Exhibit* 68, and read.]
1102. Now, Mr. McGugan, has the muster of Wando Vale continued?—Yes.
1103. And has it been completed?—No.
1104. Well, what has the bangtail muster shown as to the number of cattle on the run at the time of purchase?—12,300—that is the muster; and we have accounted for another 400.
1105. And what is the number there at the present time?—15,493; that is branded cattle.
1106. That includes calves branded since?—Yes.
1107. Well, Mr. McGugan, from your own experience as a cattle man, do you think the Government made a very good bargain at the end of August, 1916, in buying Wando Vale for £82,000?—Yes, very good.
1108. And do you think they got full value for their money?—Yes.
1109. And with the same knowledge, and with all the added knowledge that you have now would you have recommended the purchase, do you think?—Yes.
1110. So far as you know, was it possible for you or for anyone else to have got that station at a less price than the Government paid for it?—No.
1111. You, yourself, recommended £85,000?—Yes.
1112. And you consider that it was a good bargain at that price?—Yes.
1113. The Government actually got it at £82,000?—Yes.
1114. It was bought on the basis of there being 10,000 head of cattle there?—Yes.
1115. And on that basis do you think it was worth £85,000?—Yes.
1116. And, as a matter of fact, there were over 12,000?—Yes.
1117. Mr. McGugan, there has been a suggestion as to some part of the purchase money being appropriated to improper purposes. Do you know anything about that?—Nothing more than is generally known.
1118. And what is that?—Something else—palm grease.
1119. Do you believe that?—No.
1120. Did you get anything?—No.
1121. Was there any inducement held out to you to make this recommendation?—None whatever.

1122. Had you any personal interest whatever in the bargain?—Nothing.
1123. Have you anything to gain in the future from it?—No.
1124. Do you know of anybody else that has?—No.
1125. *Cross-examined by Mr. McGill:* You told us you had sixteen years' pastoral experience in Queensland?—Seventeen years.
1126. On certain stations. Who were your employers during that time?—Mr. Knox, Mr. Bunning, and Mr. Jowett.
1127. Which was Knox's?—Dimora, The Ranch, and Jairloch.
1128. Was he the first man you were with?—Yes. I got colonial experience with him and then commenced with Mr. Bunning.
1129. How old were you when you left Mr. Knox?—Twenty-two.
1130. Did he have sheep or cattle?—He had sheep.
1131. And what were you doing there?—General experience—learning.
1132. Then you went to Mr. Bunning, did you?—Yes.
1133. And how long were you with Mr. Bunning?—About eight years.
1134. On what place?—First at Darr River Downs; then Buckingham Downs, and Lucknow.
1135. Your experience there was with sheep, principally, wasn't it?—No; sheep and cattle both.
1136. Is Lucknow a sheep station?—Yes.
1137. How long were you on Lucknow?—About five years; Lucknow and Buckingham Downs; I managed the two properties.
1138. You managed the properties?—Yes.
1139. Well, is Buckingham Downs sheep?—No, it is cattle.
1140. Did you do any buying?—Yes.
1141. Cattle?—Yes.
1142. Before you became manager of Buckingham Downs, what experience of cattle had you?—Cattle experience on Evesham and Darr River Downs.
1143. Whose stations are they?—That is Mr. Bunning's; and Evesham is Mr. Knox's, which he was managing at the time.
1144. How many years' experience did you have on these stations with cattle before you became manager of Buckingham Downs?—Roughly, five years.
1145. In what capacity were you employed on these stations before you became manager?—I was overseer on Darr River Downs.
1146. Had you done any buying then?—No, not any at that time.
1147. When did you first do any buying?—Managing Buckingham and Lucknow.
1148. And how long, did you say, were you managing these two places?—About five years.
1149. Are they adjoining properties?—No; about 150 miles apart.
1150. And on which one did you reside?—I lived on Lucknow most of the time.
1151. And who was in charge of Buckingham; was there an overseer there?—There was a head stockman there.
1152. How many head were running on Buckingham Downs?—At that time there were about 10,000.
1153. Well, then, after that five years did you leave Mr. Bunning's employment?—Yes, I left his employment.
1154. For what purpose?—To get more experience in wool matters.
1155. You then entered the employment of Mr. Jowett?—No; Mr. Knox first.
1156. How long did you stay with Mr. Knox?—I was there three years.
1157. In what capacity?—Manager of his properties.
1158. Sheep properties?—Yes, sheep properties. Some cattle also; but practically sheep.
1159. And after that you went to Mr. Jowett, did you?—Yes.
1160. On what property?—Manningham.
1161. And how long were you with Mr. Jowett?—About two years.
1162. Managing sheep station?—Cattle also; but practically sheep station.
1163. And then you accepted your present appointment?—Yes.
1164. Is Mr. Knox a relative of yours?—Yes.
1165. Will you just tell us how long before you accepted this appointment was it that you had had anything to do with cattle—the buying of cattle?—About seven years.
1166. What was your salary at Mr. Jowett's place?—£300.
1167. And with Mr. Knox?—£300.
1168. Mr. Bunning?—£325.
1169. And you told us that about the middle of 1916 you had instructions to get offers of any properties you could?—Yes.
1170. Were they cattle stations you mean by that?—Yes.
1171. Had you had anything previously to do with buying cattle stations?—No, I never bought cattle stations.
1172. Had you anything to do with the buying of a cattle station at all?—No.
1173. Well, when did you get these instructions?—Soon after entering the service of the Government.
1174. I don't know exactly when that was. When was that?—3rd May, 1916, I entered.
1175. And from whom did you get instructions?—Mr. Hunter.
1176. Direct from Mr. Hunter?—Yes.
1177. Was it Mr. Hunter who told you there would be a rise in cattle properties?—Yes.
1178. You didn't know that until he told you?—Yes.
1179. You knew it yourself?—Yes, I knew it would go up.
1180. Why did you think there would be?—Values were going up, of stock; general observation.
1181. Now, you say you communicated with well-known agents throughout Queensland?—Yes.
1182. Did you communicate with any agents in the North?—Dalgety, Townsville—those are the only agents; and Edkins, Marsh and Co., Longreach.
1183. Were you after Northern properties particularly?—Yes.

1184. Had you heard of Wando Vale before you communicated with the Pastoral Estates Co.?—No.
1185. Had you heard of Reedy Springs?—No, nothing about it. I knew about it.
1186. Did you have any knowledge yourself of Northern station properties when you communicated with these agents?—Yes.
1187. You had some knowledge of Northern properties?—Yes.
1188. Cattle properties?—Yes.
1189. You say you didn't know Mr. Barnes; you had never met him?—Yes.
1190. Well, now, when you communicated with those agents, did you get any offers; did you hear of any offers besides this one of Wando Vale?—Yes.
1191. What others did you hear of; did you get particulars of them?—Yes.
1192. What others?—Kangaroo Hills and Fairlight; and several other that I cannot remember now.
1193. Where is Kangaroo Hills?—Near Ingham.
1194. How many head of stock were on it?—Nine thousand.
1195. And what was the price wanted?—Sixty odd thousand, I think.
1196. Did you inspect it?—No.
1197. And the other place?—Twelve thousand head of cattle, and £150,000.
1198. Did you inspect that?—No.
1199. Any others?—I got particulars of Reedy Springs and Cargoon.
1200. Did you inspect Reedy Springs?—No.
1201. Of course, when I ask you did you inspect, I mean did you cause an inspection to be made?—No.
1202. Did you make any inquiries about Reedy Springs?—Yes.
1203. From whom?—My manager at Wando Vale and other people.
1204. He was not your manager at this time, remember?—Yes, he was, at the time I made the inquiries.
1205. He became your manager when?—7th September.
1206. When did you get particulars of Reedy Springs?—I got particulars some time in September.
1207. Not before you had commenced negotiations for Wando Vale?—No, not before.
1208. Not till after you bought Wando Vale?—Not till after I bought it.
1209. Before buying Wando Vale, did you cause an inspection to be made of any other property in the North?—No.
1210. You say the only Northern agents you communicated with were Dalgety's and a firm at Longreach?—Yes, that is practically the lot.
1211. And did you get reports from them; did you ask them to report at all on any of these properties that were offered?—In the North, no.
1212. Did you make any inquiries about these properties—that first one you told us about—Kangaroo Hills?—Yes.
1213. From whom?—I could not say.
1214. What do you mean by that—you cannot remember?—I cannot remember.
1215. Did you make any inquiries about Fairlight?—Oh, I know that place.
1216. And you didn't consider Fairlight at all?—No.
1217. Now, when was the first you heard of Wando Vale—was that from Mr. Bennett?—Yes, that is the first.
1218. Did he tell you whether he had it for sale or not?—No, he didn't.
1219. Had you had any previous dealings with the Pastoral Estates Company at Toowoomba?—No.
1220. Did you know Mr. Bennett?—I never met him before, until that day.
1221. What do you mean by "that day"?—15th July.
1222. Is that when you met him on the platform at Toowoomba?—Yes, that is the first time.
1223. *By Mr. McGill:* With regard to the interview you had with Mr. Graham, was it on the 15th July?—No, not on the 15th; it would be on the 17th—the 16th or the 17th.
1224. Before that, had you contemplated buying only the cattle on Wando Vale?—That is what I asked the offer for—for the cattle.
1225. That is what you contemplated buying?—Yes.
1226. What did you propose doing with cattle at that time?—At that particular time, taking them into the Gulf country.
1227. Well, after a discussion with Mr. Graham, you decided to try and get Wando Vale as a going concern?—Yes.
1228. Was that on your recommendation or on Mr. Graham's?—On mine.
1229. And did you make that recommendation simply because you wanted the place to put the cattle on?—Yes, that is practically the reason.
1230. Any other reason?—No.
1231. At that time?—No; that was the only reason at that time.
1232. Now, have you any instructions from the Minister as to the inspection of properties you propose to purchase?—No.
1233. Are you instructed to inspect personally yourself before purchase?—No.
1234. How many station properties have been purchased by the Government since your appointment?—Thirteen.
1235. Have you inspected any of them personally before purchase?—Yes.
1236. How many of them?—I think about eight.
1237. Now, you remember the interview you told us about with Mr. Bennett and Mr. Barnes at the Hotel Daniel?—Yes.
1238. That was on the 10th August?—Yes.
1239. You then discussed the number of stock running on Wando Vale with Mr. Barnes?—Yes.
1240. What did Mr. Barnes tell you as to the number of stock?—About 10,000.
1241. Is that all?—Yes, that's all.
1242. Did he say that he estimated there were more than 10,000?—No.
1243. Did he at any time tell you that?—Did he at any time?
1244. Yes?—He may have said some time he considered there were more than 10,000.
1245. Did you ask him about his stock returns?—No.

1246. Well, what was the discussion about the number of stock?—About the number? I asked him did he consider the number were there, and so forth.
1247. And he said "Yes"?—Yes.
1248. And that was the whole of the discussion as to the number of stock?—Yes.
1249. Was that the full extent of your inquiries as to the number of stock?—Practically all, at that time.
1250. Well, now, where is Mr. Ferry at present? You know where he is now?—Yes; he is on the sea.
1251. Is he coming from Townsville?—Yes.
1252. He is an employee of the State stations?—Yes.
1253. What is the nature of his employment?—He manages Dotswood Station.
1254. Who engaged him?—I did.
1255. Did you know him before engaging him?—Not personally.
1256. Well, now, you sent Mr. Ferry to inspect?—Yes.
1257. Do you know when he arrived in Wando Vale?—About 1st August.
1258. And was he there until the 18th, do you know?—Yes.
1259. And you got a report from him on the 19th?—Yes.
1260. That was a verbal report?—Yes.
1261. And then you wrote to the Under Secretary for Lands?—Yes.
1262. Now, you say his report showed a complete inspection?—Yes.
1263. Did you ask him whether he had got any information he gave you from Mr. Bowman?—No.
1264. What was the inspection he told you he made?—He went through the run, saw the improvements, and estimated the number of cattle.
1265. Did he say he had gone over the whole of the country?—Yes; as far as one can call the whole of the country.
1266. And he gave an estimate of the number of cattle?—Yes.
1267. From going over the run?—Yes.
1268. Now, in this letter that you wrote to the Under Secretary you stated this: "Mr. Barnes, the owner, states that he would not give a muster delivery, as he knows that he has under-estimated the number"?—Yes.
1269. "Ten thousand offered"?—Yes.
1270. When did Mr. Barnes state that?—That would be on the 10th August.
1271. At the interview at the Hotel Daniell?—Yes; that is the only time I saw him.
1272. Did Mr. Ferry value the improvements?—Yes, he valued them.
1273. In this report of yours they are valued at £5,500. Is that the value put on by Mr. Ferry?—Ferry, yes.
1274. Now, it was with this letter that you sent this piece of yellow paper, wasn't it?—Yes.
1275. This is your handwriting?—Oh, yes, that's right.
1276. And you worked out the value of stock there at £69,900?—Yes; that is the cattle.
1277. That is the value at 12,330 cattle?—Yes.
1278. Now, did you tell Mr. Barnes or his agents at any time that there were 12,330 cattle there?—No.
1279. Is that an estimate—12,330?—That is an estimate; yes.
1280. And this is what you bought on?—No; I bought, acting on the 10,000 basis; but I made it up that particular way.
1281. Yes; but in your report you agree that £69,900 is the value on 10,000 cattle?—Yes, that is right.
1282. Upon these figures attached, you estimate that the value on 12,330 was this?—No, I only showed it on the 2,000 extra cattle; I put it so that they would understand the extra cattle.
1283. But didn't you work it out?—Yes, I know I worked it out.
1284. And arrived at this result—that there are 12,330 cattle?—Yes.
1285. And the value of those cattle was £69,900?—Yes, that is right.
1286. You say you were satisfied with that number of cattle, were you?—Yes.
1287. You never told Mr. Barnes or the Pastoral Estates?—No.
1288. Now, what report about the quality of the cattle did Mr. Ferry give you?—That they were a good quality.
1289. Is that all he said about it?—Yes.
1290. Did you ask nothing more?—Oh yes, I asked all about them.
1291. What did you ask?—I cannot remember exactly what I asked.
1292. What did he tell you?—They were good quality cattle; bullocks very good.
1293. Is that all he said?—That is all I can remember. We discussed the thing very fully in all details; that is what it boiled down to.
1294. Did you ask the number of bulls?—Yes.
1295. What was the number of bulls?—He said he thought about 80.
1296. Did you ask what bulls they were?—Yes.
1297. What bulls were they?—Some Mount Sturgeon, some Bluff Downs, and Lyndhurst.
1298. Did he tell you how he knew that?—From information.
1299. Supplied by Mr. Bowman?—Yes, it would be that.
1300. Now, since the Government have acquired this place—Wando Vale—have you purchased any cattle to put on Wando Vale?—130 bulls.
1301. Do you now know whether there were more bulls than 80 on the place before you got those?—Yes.
1302. Well, how many bulls actually were on the place?—110.
1303. Were they all branded?—The bulls all branded?
1304. Yes?—The 110?
1305. Yes?—Yes.
1306. What bulls were the others?—The 130?
1307. You have told us there was an estimate of 80 bulls, on Bowman's information?—Yes.
1308. Well now, you say there were 110. What were the other 30?—I don't understand what you mean.
1309. You say you have found now there were 30 more bulls than Ferry told you of?—Oh, I don't know what they were.

1310. How do you know they were branded?
—I don't know; bulls are always branded.
1311. You are simply assuming that they are branded, because they are bulls?—No, I am not.
1312. Well, how do you know they are branded?—I know they were branded.
1313. How do you know?—Because they would not be sold unless they were branded.
1314. Would not be sold? How do you know when they were bought?—I don't know when they were bought.
1315. Have you any idea of their age?—No.
1316. Do you know, as a matter of fact, whether they are Wando Vale bulls, or bulls from other stocks?—They are from other stations.
1317. The whole lot of them?—I don't say that; I say a few of them are.
1318. A few of what?—Some are from Bluff Downs, and some from Mount Sturgeon.
1319. Can you tell us how many are Wando Vale bulls?—I cannot.
1320. How many?—No.
1321. Did you ever make any inquiries about what bulls they had there—where they came from?—Yes.
1322. Were you told that any of the bulls were from a Wando Vale herd?—No.
1323. Now, have you ever been on Wando Vale?—Yes.
1324. When?—I was there about the 12th October, 1916.
1325. Is it correct to say that 12,700 head of cattle have been mustered on Wando Vale?—No, it would not be correct.
1326. You told us that the bangtail muster showed 12,300, and there were 400 others accounted for. What do you mean by that?—You can notice them through the herd—the long tails—in passing; and you can estimate it.
1327. Is that a report from Mr. Bowman?—Yes.
1328. How many have actually been mustered?—12,300.
1329. Who recommended the purchase of 130 bulls?—I did.
1330. Why did you purchase them?—Because I required them.
1331. On Wando Vale?—Yes.
1332. Have you ever made any inquiry whether there had been any inbreeding?—No.
1333. Well, on what you saw of the stock in October, how would you describe them?—Good class of Shorthorn and Hereford cross.
1334. Have you sold any?—No.
1335. Do you know if the Government have paid any commission to the Pastoral Estates on the sale of Wando Vale?—No.
1336. Or to Mr. Bennett?—No.
1337. Well, do you mean by that, that you know nothing about it, or do you know it is not a fact, or what?—I know nothing about it.
1338. Does the 12,300 include any calves?—No, no calves.
1339. What age stock do they include?—They are a year and upwards.
1340. Did any man besides Mr. Ferry go up to Wando Vale?—No, not on my instructions.
1341. Was it correct to say that there was a man on Wando Vale on behalf of the Government, for some months before the purchase?—I don't know of any.
1342. There was not a very great preponderance of males over females, was there, Mr. McGugan?—No.
1343. Males were slightly in excess of females?—Yes.
1344. *Re-examined by Mr. Macrossan:* When you were estimating the preponderance of males over females, was that on the 10,000 count?—Yes, on the 10,000.
1345. And the estimated number of males in that 10,000 was about 6,000?—No, 5,000.
1346. How many males did you actually get from the bangtail muster?—6,000 odd.
1347. And does £69,900, in your opinion, represent the fair market value with an estimate of 10,000 cattle?—Yes.
1348. This purchase of yours took place after a very severe drought?—Yes.
1349. Is it a fact that, as a result of a drought, bulls die off rather largely?—Yes.
1350. And it would be ordinarily necessary to restock with bulls?—Yes.
1351. Could you have sold cattle off there since you bought it?—Yes.
1352. In considerable numbers?—Yes.
1353. What numbers?—
The Commissioner: Rather difficult to say, isn't it, Mr. Macrossan?
Mr. Macrossan: Well, no; I think he can answer it.
Witness: I could have sold 3,700 male cattle for £11 10s. this year.
1354. *By Mr. Macrossan:* You declined the offer?—Yes. I could have sold 2,000 of practically the same class, at £12. I refused the offer.
1355. Where were those offers?—Bergl Australia, and Burdekin Meatworks.
1356. Those are North Queensland Meatworks?—Yes.
1357. In addition to the 12,300, how many calves do you estimate there would be?—3,100.
1358. And what would be the value of those at a rough average?—At the present minute?
1359. No; at the time you mustered, at the end of 1916?—Oh, about 30s.
1360. You were up there and inspected the cattle yourself personally—generally, I mean; you did not go right over the place?—Yes; after the sale, of course.
1361. And as a result of your inspection, do you think the cattle were fairly described as cattle of good quality?—Yes.
1362. Some humourist has described them as "lemonade bottles with buffalo horns." Did you see any of that class of cattle?—No.
1363. Perhaps it all depends on what state you go out there?—Yes.
1364. And are you satisfied that it is not a badly inbred herd?—Yes.
1365. And you are satisfied that you have done a good stroke of business for the Government?—Absolutely.
1366. *Further cross-examined by Mr. McGill:* Have you got a copy of the letter you wrote to Mr. Suter?—I didn't write a letter.
1367. Who wrote to Mr. Suter?—Nobody. I asked him; I was talking to him.

1368. Where did you see him?—In Hughenden.
1369. Did you ask him to write?—Yes, I asked him to write me a letter.
1370. And did you give that letter to Mr. Hunter?—I posted it down to Mr. Graham.
1371. Well, did you tell the Minister that that referred to 1913?—I didn't mention anything about that in the letter.
1372. Didn't you understand Mr. Suter to have the particulars up to the date of sale to the Government?—No.
1373. Well, you have seen the letter Mr. Suter wrote?—Yes, I have seen the letter.
1374. You know he says that?—He didn't say that.
1375. Mr. Suter writes this: [*Reads Exhibit 67.*] Doesn't that mean that Mr. Suter had the place on his books up till the sale to the Government?—No, I don't think so.
1376. Well, what does it mean?—It might mean anything.
1377. What is the "anything"?—I don't know.
1378. Can you suggest something else it does mean?—No, I cannot suggest anything else.
1379. Well, what did he tell you about when he had it?—He didn't say they had it on the books at all; he said they had it some time and he would have to look up and get particulars.
1380. Did you ask him when he had it?—Yes, I asked him to find out and give me particulars.
1381. Well, you didn't tell anybody—the Minister or the Under Secretary—it was in 1913?—No.
- [Witness then retired.]
- FREDERICK ERNEST BENNETT, Stock and Station Agent, sworn and examined:
1382. *By Mr. Feez:* You, Mr. Bennett, are the Managing Director of the Pastoral Estates, Limited, Toowoomba?—Yes.
1383. That, I understand, is a private company of which you are the proprietor?—Yes, I am practically the proprietor.
1384. How long have you been in business—you carry on the business of a stock and station agency?—Yes.
1385. How long have you been in business as a stock and station agent?—About twelve years.
1386. In Toowoomba?—Toowoomba, yes.
1387. And it was through your agency that this purchase of Wando Vale station and stock was brought about?—Yes.
1388. How did you first come into the matter? Well, through a wire to Mr. Barnes, really; but, in the first place, I had Mr. McGugan on the 'phone offering him a line of cattle.
1389. That is what I mean: the first thing was, you rang up Mr. McGugan?—I rang up Mr. McGugan submitting a line of cattle to him; and he said that this particular line was not suitable, but he was open to buy a good big line. So with that I got on the wires; and, amongst others, I wired Mr. Barnes.
1390. Did you know at that time that the Government were on the lookout for cattle?—I knew that they were on the lookout for cattle, but not for 'cattle stations.
1391. For cattle, I asked you?—Yes.
1392. After you got on to Mr. McGugan on the telephone, you say you got "on the wires." Did you communicate with many people?—Yes, I suppose half a dozen—perhaps more.
1393. And, amongst others, Mr. Barnes?—Yes.
1394. We have the whole of the correspondence put in, so I need not worry you with the correspondence, but you had a lot of communications with Mr. McGugan and Mr. Barnes?—Yes.
1395. Do you remember when you approached him—first of all, the negotiations about the sale of the cattle alone; and, beyond what appears in the correspondence, did anything material take place, any verbal communication that was material at all, in the negotiations?—Yes. The first time I met Mr. McGugan was really after we had wired him giving him this line of cattle—giving him particulars. At that time he said he would be more open to buy the property as a going concern. With that I wired Mr. Barnes again to try and get him to offer it.
1396. And eventually he agreed?—Yes, after some time.
1397. He placed the station, as a going concern, in your hands at £85,000?—That is correct.
1398. And also, eventually, the Government agreed to accept; at least, the Government agreed to inspect?—Yes, they inspected the property.
1399. And you know a report was sent down from Mr. McGugan as the result of the inspection?—Yes, Mr. McGugan sent his report in. I think at the same time he wired me he thought the report was favourable, and that he might want an extension of the offer.
1400. You asked for the extension?—Yes. Mr. Barnes refused the extension I asked for. I asked for a fortnight's extension, and he thought it was unreasonable in view of the fact that Mr. McGugan had stated that, when he got Ferry's report, he was open to say, "Yes" or "No." Mr. Barnes declined to grant the fortnight's offer; but after some difficulty we got him to give us a week's extension.
1401. When did the question of the way in which the money was to be payable first arise?—I think it was the morning of an interview with Mr. McGugan. We knew that the sale of Mount Hutton was conducted on these terms, and we naturally assumed that this would be a similar sale.
1402. When was that morning—what morning was that?—When Mr. Barnes was in Brisbane. It would be about the 10th August, I think.
1403. Where—at the Hotel Daniell?—Yes.
1404. What took place about that?—We discussed the offer—Mr. Barnes and myself. We also discussed the terms, and I raised the point as to what cash would be paid over, and Mr. McGugan said the less cash we got the better would be the chance of doing business. I knew that Mr. Barnes was not wanting the cash, so I got him to agree to the lowest deposit possible with a view to effecting a sale.

1405. You were anxious to effect a sale?—Yes.
1406. Your commission depended upon it?—Yes.
1407. Eventually he agreed to accept £10,000 cash?—Yes.
1408. Then I don't think anything material took place until the Government agreed to buy?—That is so.
1409. Had you arranged your commission before the Government agreed to buy?—No. Mr. Barnes wrote from the North asking me to fix the commission before he went any further. I wrote in reply that I felt sure that we could arrange the matter, and we left the whole thing over until about the 29th or the 30th August, just about the time that the deal was made and before the contract was signed.
1410. Then it was fixed up, was it?—Yes.
1411. Was that the usual commission that you charged?—Yes, in one sense it was; perhaps it was a little less than we get in other cases.
1412. What is the usual commission on a big transaction like that?—It is a matter of arrangement.
1413. When the Government eventually agreed to purchase for £82,000, you were not present, were you?—Yes.
1414. You were present in Mr. Gordon Graham's office?—Yes.
1415. What took place there?—Mr. Graham first made an offer of £80,000. Mr. Barnes declined the offer. He said he could not let the property go at £80,000. After some conversation they split the difference at £82,000.
1416. Was any sum mentioned between £85,000 and £82,000 in the course of the negotiations?—I don't think so.
1417. You think it went from £85,000 to £82,000?—Yes.
1418. And was fixed at £82,000?—Yes.
1419. Of course, you have not seen this property yourself?—No.
1420. Had you other properties in your hands for sale at the time?—Yes, not at that time under offer to the Government.
1421. But in your hands for sale?—Yes.
1422. Stations with large numbers of cattle on them?—Yes.
1423. How did the price for Wando Vale compare with them?—Well, I think in view of the fact that it is usual when a man is selling a herd of cattle for the bulk of the stock to consist of female cattle, in this case it consisted of half and half. The usual thing, when a man is offering a property for sale is that he will have about two-thirds female cattle and one-third male cattle, and he would probably have sold all the saleable cattle off the run. It was not so in this case.
1424. Without actually knowing the property, how do you say the price of Wando Vale compared with the other properties that you had for sale as regards it being cheap or dear?—Well, you have just got to work out the values of the stock. It was the stock.
1425. Did you form any opinion as to its value at the time?—Yes. I think it was very reasonable.
1426. What were male cattle worth in 1913, say threes and over?—It all depends upon the condition.
1427. Fats would be worth more than stores?—Yes, sales have been made as high as £12 10s. It depends, as I say, upon the condition of the cattle at the time.
1428. You did not see the cattle, so you could not tell?—No.
1429. If they were in good condition they would be worth as high as £12 10s.?—Say £10.
1430. And fours, what would they be worth?—About £8 10s. or £9.
1431. And fives?—I should say about £7.
1432. And female cattle, what would they be worth—a herd such as you would expect to find on a run like that?—I should say about £6.
1433. £6 all round?—Yes.
1434. Now, in March, 1915, you had a client who wanted to buy Wando Vale?—Yes.
1435. And you approached Mr. Barnes with regard to it?—Yes, I wired Mr. Barnes. I had a genuine buyer at the time, a man who was prepared to take the offer.
1436. Mr. Barnes replied that it was not for sale?—Yes.
1437. Did you mention any definite price?—I told him that I had a buyer up to £100,000 for the property.
1438. And he replied that Wando Vale was not for sale?—Yes.
1439. With regard to the £850 that we know that you got for commission on the transaction, did you handle any other money in the transaction at all?—No.
1440. Who did you get that £850 from?—That was banked to my credit here in Brisbane by the Union Trustees.
1441. Have you given any of that away to anyone else?—No, certainly not.
1442. Or promised anything?—No.
1443. Do you know of anyone who got even the smallest fraction of a sum of money out of this transaction besides yourself?—No.
1444. Were you personally acquainted with any member of the Cabinet prior to the sale?—Not before I went in that morning and saw Mr. Hunter.
1445. You met Mr. Hunter when the deal was just about to be closed?—Yes.
1446. You didn't tell us that, after you had discussed the matter and fixed the price with Mr. Graham, you went in to Mr. Hunter?—Yes. Mr. Graham took Mr. Barnes and myself in to Mr. Hunter.
1447. How long were you in with Mr. Hunter?—It did not take so very long with Mr. Hunter.
1448. What took place in Mr. Hunter's presence?—I think I told him that I was very pleased that the Government had decided to purchase the property, and I was glad that the terms had been arranged.
1449. There was nothing more than the formal announcement of the fixing of the price and the bargain being completed?—No.
1450. *Cross-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* How long have you been manager?—The Company was formed in 1906.
1451. And you have been manager of the Company since then?—Yes.

1452. It is quite a usual thing for you to exchange lists as an agent, is it?—It is where we are not given confidential particulars, not otherwise.
1453. Did you ever have Wando Vale on your list or under your notice by communication with another firm?—Yes, I have seen a list of Wando Vale. I cannot say that I have had it on my books; information gets old, you know.
1454. If you wanted very much to sell a property you would send around to your fellow-agents?—If it was in the open market, not otherwise, and very often it is not wise to do it even then.
1455. It means a lessening of the commission?—Not that altogether. Sometimes the other man does not respect the confidences of your client.
1456. Had you had Wando Vale on your books from any other agent?—No.
1457. Did you ever have Wando Vale directly from Mr. Barnes?—Not until I got it this time. Not until I got it on this occasion.
1458. Why did you wire to Mr. Barnes in 1915?—That was a general inquiry. I had a buyer for property, and I raised the point as to whether he would sell.
1459. You must have known something about Wando Vale before asking if he would sell?—Not exactly. I am in touch with all the Northern men; every one I have been working at for years. I do business with them now and then.
1460. It was just a wild shot at every one then; you sent a wire to every one of your clients?—No, not every one.
1461. Every one that you thought had something decent to offer this big buyer?—Yes.
1462. Have you ever heard of Wando Vale being on the market for any figure, say, before 1915, when you wired to Mr. Barnes?—Yes.
1463. What figure did you hear of?—£45,000.
1464. When was that?—In 1912, I think.
1465. How did you come to know it then?—I saw a list, and Wando Vale was in that list.
1466. For £45,000?—Yes.
1467. Whose list was it?—It was a general list.
1468. What is a general list, a list sent out by an association, or what?—No; sent out by a firm of agents.
1469. What firm?—The New Zealand Loan, of Melbourne.
1470. Did you ever hear of it in any other list later than that?—Yes, I think I have seen further particulars. I am not sure whose they were.
1471. What particulars were they, as to price?—I think they were the same as the other; all the same particulars, £45,000.
1472. How late would that be?—I don't know that they are dated.
1473. You said that you knew in 1912 of the New Zealand Loan, of Melbourne, having the property in their list for £45,000—have you heard of any other figure later than that?—No.
1474. Is it not correct that you asked a Brisbane firm last year to get Wando Vale under offer to the Government?—No, certainly not.
1475. There is not the slightest truth in that?—No.
1476. Did you ask a firm in Brisbane to get it under offer to the Government at £44,000?—No.
1477. You never approached any firm in Brisbane last year with respect to Wando Vale?—No.
1478. Or at any other time?—No, I never did. I have never dealt with any agent with respect to Wando Vale. I always felt that if Mr. Barnes wanted to sell, if he meant to sell, he would give me the particulars.
1479. You say the offer was reduced to £80,000, that they split the difference; Mr. Barnes gives a slightly different story; he says he wanted to split the difference, but Mr. Graham would not. You see, splitting the difference would not be quite £82,000?—No. Not quite; it was Mr. Graham's way of expressing it, I think.
1480. It was brought down to £82,000?—Yes.
1481. You were getting 1 per cent. on the original price?—Yes, that is £850.
1482. That is not very liberal commission, is it?—Taking all the facts into consideration, I think it was very fair commission.
1483. Didn't you ask for some more?—I did.
1484. Were you dissatisfied with £850?—No.
1485. Was not the work that you did in connection with the transaction worth more than 1 per cent.?—I was satisfied with the commission.
1486. What did you ask for?—I asked for £1,000.
1487. Was there ever any suggestion that the Government should pay a part of your commission, to your knowledge?—No.
1488. You say these prices are for threes and over—that sales have been made as high as £12 10s.—what do you mean, is that up to the present time?—Yes.
1489. Up to August, 1916, what sales had been made for threes and over. It was not as high as £12 10s., was it?—No.
1490. Cattle have been increasing in price ever since?—Yes.
1491. On the figures that you have given for fours and fives, are these prices up to the present day?—You would not get cows to-day at £6, a mixed herd.
1492. Were those prices up to August, 1916?—Yes.
1493. Do you know how many threes and fours and fives were on the station?—Yes.
1494. Where did you get these figures?—Mr. Barnes gave them to me.
1495. When was that?—On the morning of the sale, pretty well.
1496. You didn't know until then?—No.
1497. *Re-examined by Mr. Feez:* Did you know Mr. Barnes personally?—No.
1498. Or Mr. McGugan?—No, not prior to this.
1499. Talking about the price of cattle, what is the price of fats, three years old, now on the station?—It all depends upon the condition.

1500. Fats of good quality?—Fats from the adjoining places sold up to £12 10s., I think.

1501. Do you know anything about the offer that Mr. McGugan had of these particular cattle, 2,000 at £12?—I did hear; I heard yesterday.

1502. You didn't know at the time?—No.

[Witness then retired.]

HENRY WILLIAM BYRAM, sworn and examined:

1503. *By Mr. Macrossan:* Your position?—Manager of the Union Trustees, Limited, Brisbane.

1504. Are you the holder of power of attorney for Mrs. Barnes?—The Company are.

1505. When was that made?—I have not got that with me.

1506. Was it about shortly prior to this sale?—Yes, it is for Mrs. Sara Barnes.

1507. Did your Company have anything to do with the original offer of Wando Vale to the Government?—No. Nothing to do with the original offer.

1508. When did you first come into the transaction?—When the matter was arranged and a settlement reached we were instructed by Mr. Barnes to act for him—to handle the debentures and cash.

1509. To get the execution of the agreement and receive the debentures?—Yes.

1510. Acting under instructions from Mr. Barnes did you call upon Mr. Graham?—Yes, the Under Secretary for Lands.

1511. Did he say anything to you?—I arranged with him under the terms of the agreement to pay the deposit.

1512. The Government had to pay a deposit of how much?—£1,000 had been paid, and £9,000 was paid to Mrs. Barnes's credit into the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney, making up the £10,000 cash.

1513. Did all that go through your hands?—No, under our instructions, £1,000 went through our hands, and under our instructions £9,000 was paid to the credit of Mrs. Barnes—Mrs. Sara Barnes—into the Commercial Bank of Sydney.

1514. With regard to the debentures?—We received those for Mrs. Barnes in the following denominations—

1515. You got the full amount of the debentures?—Yes, the total amount of cash and debentures was £82,000.

1516. And the cash was received by you as attorney for Mrs. Barnes, and was credited to her in your books?—Yes.

1517. And the debentures were received by you as attorney for Mrs. Barnes?—Yes.

1518. When was the balance of the £10,000 in cash paid?—On the 9th September, 1916.

1519. Were all the debentures issued in the name of Mrs. Barnes?—No.

1520. What proportion?—Under her instructions £25,000 was issued in the name of the Union Trustee Co.; £38,600 in her name; and £1,300 was issued in the name of Louise Carruthers King, in payment for some land purchased from the Minister for Lands.

1521. You know where that land is situated?—Yes, adjoining Canning Downs, Warwick.

1522. The land was purchased by Mrs. Barnes and paid for by Government debentures issued in the name of Mrs. King?—Precisely. Also another lot of £6,500 issued in the name of Mrs. Esther Jane Counsell, also for the payment for land.

1523. That land was got for Mrs. Barnes and was paid for by debentures issued in the name of Mrs. Counsell?—Yes.

1524. Was it arranged that the debentures should be so issued?—Yes.

1525. And you attended to these transactions?—Yes.

1526. The balance of the debentures were issued either in the name of the Union Trustee Company or Mrs. Barnes?—Exactly.

1527. Who paid the commission?—We paid the commission under instructions from Mr. Barnes.

1528. What commission?—£850.

1529. To whom?—The Pastoral Estates Company, of Toowoomba, Mr. Bennett's company, and obtained his receipt.

1530. I suppose you debited Mrs. Barnes in the books?—Yes.

1531. Apart from these payments has there been any payment of commission out of this money?—None whatever.

1532. Any fees?—None whatever.

1533. No outgoings of any kind?—None whatever.

1534. Did you yourself or anyone authorise payment to be made in any transaction with any member of the Government except as you have told us?—No.

1535. I suppose you will be quite prepared to say of your own knowledge that it is quite untrue to say that any member of the Government received £5,000, or anything else?—Yes.

1536. You got the whole amount?—Yes.

1537. And you never paid anything over except what you have told us?—No.

1538. You got it as Mrs. Barnes's attorney and disposed of it as you have told us?—Yes.

[The witness was not cross-examined.]

WILLIAM GORDON GRAHAM, sworn and examined:

1539. *By Mr. Feez:* You are the Under Secretary to the Department of Public Lands?—Yes.

1540. Some time last year I think the Government started buying cattle stations?—Yes.

1541. And, as Under Secretary, did you have instructions from them as regards recommendation and so forth?—Yes, when it was decided that the Government should buy pastoral properties they instructed me to recommend suitable areas, and suitable stations to purchase.

1542. Did they also ask you to find a suitable man to manage the State stations?—They did on my suggestion. I said the first thing to do was to get a thoroughly practical man as general manager.

1543. You caused applications to be called for the position of station manager?—I did.

1544. Did you have many applications?—I should say from memory over 200.

1545. How did you select the man—did you go through them yourself?—Yes, carefully. First of all the men who valued themselves at from £100 to £250 per annum, and there were a good many of them, I put out. Then the men who had sheaves of credentials indicating that they had worked for lots of pastoral holders were dealt with and I put them out, and eventually I reduced the thing down to about six, and out of these six I personally selected Mr. McGugan, but I referred the whole of the six candidates to the Cabinet.
1546. You knew Mr. McGugan personally?—No, not personally.
1547. You recommended him on his certificates?—On what I had heard of him. I think what appealed to me more than anything else was the fact that since he has been in the State he worked for only three men, Messrs. Knox, Bunning, and Jowett. I think these are about the hardest three men it is possible to work for, and if he satisfied them, and they gave him good credentials, then I thought he was a good man.
1548. And they did give him good ones?—Yes they did.
1549. You recommended him for the position?—Yes.
1550. And the Cabinet accepted your recommendation?—Yes, that is so.
1551. So he was appointed?—Yes, by Executive minute.
1552. As Manager of State Stations?—Yes.
1553. After his appointment did Mr. McGugan have full control of the State Stations Department?—Absolutely; he has full control of stations and station management. Of course, in the early stages he did not have full authority to purchase anything he wanted to—they had to be submitted through me to my Minister and to the Cabinet.
1554. That is to say that before you made a purchase of a station you wanted ministerial authority?—Naturally, of course.
1555. After his appointment did you give instructions to obtain particulars of cattle stations and cattle?—Both myself and the Minister, Mr. Hunter, instructed him to get into touch with cattle and likely cattle stations, cattle station property. I advised him of the property he should try to buy so far as property went.
1556. You, as Under Secretary, have a great knowledge of the land of the different State tenants?—Although I have no actual personal experience I think I know most of the lands in Queensland—good and bad.
1557. You know the values put on them by the Government valuers for rent and purchase?—Yes.
1558. Did Mr. McGugan report to you from time to time offers that he received?—Yes.
1559. And I suppose when he reported the offer to you, you instructed him either to go on or to drop it?—Yes, after discussing things some were turned down immediately. In some cases we decided to get further information, and in others to recommend the purchase.
1560. Do you remember him bringing Wando Vale before your notice?—I do; I think it was some time early in July, 1916.
- First of all he had an offer of the stock of Wando Vale. Knowing the position of Wando Vale, and knowing that I always regarded it as a good safe cattle property and well situated, I asked him—told him, if possible, to get an offer as a going concern.
1561. What was the first offer with regard to the cattle?—So far as I can remember, the first offer was of 10,000 head for £72,000, or £70,000. That was the first offer.
1562. You thought it was a good idea to get the offer of the station itself?—I did.
1563. And after that I suppose you had nothing to do with it?—I had nothing more to do with it except when he came along with a recommendation to purchase at a certain figure.
1564. That was a written recommendation of £85,000?—Yes, after he inspected.
1565. After you got his recommendation? Is that the recommendation (*Exhibit 53*)?—I remember the recommendation; that is the recommendation I spoke of.
1566. When you got that what did you do?—I am not a practical man as regards station property, but I went into the thing very thoroughly so far as I was capable, as to the ages, numbers, &c., of cattle, and the selling value of stock at that particular time, and, after sifting the thing as well as I could, and taking his advice as a practical man, and depending a good deal on what Mr. Ferry told me, I decided to recommend the purchase of the property.
1567. You placed it before the Minister then?—Yes.
1568. Did you place before the Minister the facts, the report, and the correspondence?—Yes, everything I knew about it.
1569. And what instructions did you get from the Minister?—After submitting it to the Cabinet he told me to purchase.
1570. He took it to the Cabinet?—Yes, and we were to purchase up to £85,000.
1571. That is to say, you were not to exceed £85,000; you were to make as good deal as you could?—Yes.
1572. Eventually, after that, you saw Mr. Barnes and Mr. Bennett together?—That is so.
1573. Was Mr. McGugan there also?—Part of the time.
1574. What happened at that interview?—Well, there was a good deal of discussion as to the terms—we were to pay in debentures if we possibly could. We wanted to pay as little cash as possible—there was a good deal of discussion on that on general lines—the currency of the debentures, and other things. Eventually, I offered Mr. Barnes £80,000. We discussed it for a considerable time, and he absolutely refused to accept £80,000. He was practically leaving my room, saying the deal was off. I asked him, so far as I can remember, not to say definitely that the deal was off—he could think over it during the morning and possibly see me again in the afternoon. Then he offered to split the difference and make it £82,500; I offered him £82,000, and he took it, after some consideration.
1575. That ended it so far as you were concerned?—That is so.

1576. Who completed the transaction so far as carrying it out?—The Crown Solicitor's office and the Union Trustees Company.
1577. During the whole of the negotiations did you see any one in connection with the matter besides the Minister, Mr. Barnes, and Mr. Bennett?—No, and I did not see them until I saw them on the day that we made the deal.
1578. Did any other agent approach you in any shape or form in connection with this?—No.
1579. Did you approach any other agent?—No; as a matter of fact, I don't have anything to do with agents; if they write to me or wire to me, as they sometimes do, I forward it on to Mr. McGugan.
1580. Had you known Mr. Bennett before this?—Very slightly; I knew him as a boy, but I had not seen him for many years.
1581. You had known Mr. Barnes as a Crown tenant?—Yes, as I had known many of the Crown tenants.
1582. You knew him as a visitor in connection with lands?—I do not say that I was intimately acquainted with him; he is a man whom I see when he comes to Brisbane. I stop to speak to him.
1583. From what you know of cattle matters, though you are not a practical man, what do you think of the purchase of Wando Vale now?—I think it is a most excellent purchase.
1584. You are quite satisfied with it?—Absolutely.
1585. Under "The Land Act of 1910" there is a basis for the valuing of resumptions of leases?—Yes, section 54.
1586. Can you tell us what the value works out at for Wando Vale?—It is based on 4s. a mile on the average carrying capacity, and it is based on the balance of the term not exceeding ten years.
1587. What would it cost to resume Wando Vale?—On that basis it would be £23,000.
1588. What is the carrying capacity?—According to this the carrying capacity is 17,524. Basing the compensation upon these figures and allowing for the areas of Crown land that the Crown are entitled to resume, the amount would be £23,000.
1589. That is on the figures, the carrying capacity of 17,000?—It could not exceed that; it might be less. On the carrying capacity it would work out at £23,000.
1590. That is quite apart from the improvements?—Yes, quite apart.
1591. Of course, the improvements were valued when you were deciding whether you would purchase it or not?—That is so.
1592. Under the 1910 Act, what are the areas of Wando Vale and the adjacent stations, and the terms of the leases?—Wando Vale, 445 square miles, lease expires in 1938; Bulgeri, 125 square miles, lease expires in 1948; Kinlock, 110 square miles, lease expires in 1951; and Jamison, 38 square miles, lease expires in 1951.
1593. It has been suggested that this is inferior country?—From memory I should say it is rated less than some of the surrounding runs; it is not as good a run as Lyndhurst, of Bluff Downs.
1594. At the time that you were negotiating for this property, had you any knowledge of it being under offer to anyone else for a lower figure?—No.
1595. Or in anyone's hands for sale at a lower figure?—I don't know; I heard it stated subsequently.
1596. From your knowledge of Mr. Barnes, do you think he would do such a thing?—I would be very much surprised if I thought he would do such a thing; I would not believe it for a moment if I was told it.
1597. You had not knowledge of it?—No.
1598. I suppose you have not received any benefit, personally, from this purchase in any shape or form?—No, none whatever.
1599. Or any promise of any benefit?—None.
1600. Have you any idea of any one else beyond the commission agents getting any benefit from the purchase?—No. I say this, knowing a lot about the whole transaction as I do, it would be impossible for it to be done without my knowing it.
1601. You and the Union Trustees carried out the whole thing?—The Crown Law officers fixed up the details; they came along and I went through the thing carefully with Mr. McGugan. I think we made one or two slight alterations, and I submitted it to the Minister.
1602. And the money was handed to whom?—By the Treasury to the Crown Law officers, and they handed it over to the Union Trustees.

(PARLIAMENT HOUSE, BRISBANE.)

WEDNESDAY, 3 OCTOBER, 1917.

SIXTH DAY.

Mr. Macgregor drew the Commissioner's attention to section 5, subsection (2) of the Inquiries Evidence Act.

Mr. Macrossan drew the Commissioner's attention to section 380 of the Queensland Criminal Code.

THOMAS FRANCIS CONNOR, sworn and examined:

1603. *By Mr. Macgregor:* What are you?—I am a selector.

1604. Living where?—I am living at Emerald.

1605. Were you in Cloncurry about June of 1917—this year?—Yes, I think I was there in May or so.

1606. The 18th May?—Yes, I was there in May—some time in May.

1607. *By the Commissioner:* May and June?—Yes, I think I was there in June; I know I was there in May.

1608. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Do you remember an occasion in Cloncurry when you saw Mr. John May?—Yes.

1609. Do you know Mr. John May?—Yes, I have met him.

1610. He is the member for Flinders?—Yes.

1611. Mr. May says that on that occasion you made a statement in front of the Home Secretary, the Under Secretary to the Home Secretary, at his (Mr. May's) request?—I don't know that it was at Mr. May's request. I met the three gentlemen there.

1612. They were Mr. Huxham, Mr. Gall, and Mr. May, and it was at Cloncurry?—Yes, at Cloncurry.

1613. What part of Cloncurry?—About the Post Office.
1614. Mr. May wrote a note of what he said took place. He wrote the note down at the time or the next day that "Mr. Huxham called in at Cloncurry on the 18th May, and a gentleman named Connor, a buyer of stations and a station-owner, said that Wando Vale was offered for sale for the sum of £45,000 a fortnight before the Government bought it for £82,000, and that Mr. Theodore got £5,000." Do you remember whether you made such a statement?—I remember saying that Mr. Gannan said it was under offer before it was sold to the Government for £47,000. He said that that offer could have been secured—that is the offer at £47,000.
1615. *By the Commissioner:* When?—Before it was sold to the Government.
1616. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Had Mr. Gannan said that to you?—Yes.
1617. Can you tell us when and where Mr. Gannan said it to you?—Yes. Mr. Gannan said it to me about August or September of the previous year, about the time the sale took place, I think.
1618. Where were you when he said it to you?—In Hughenden.
1619. Just tell us as much as you can remember about the conversation with Mr. Gannan—that is, the conversation relating to Wando Vale?—That is all I remember. He said it was a pity I was not there a few weeks sooner. If I was there sooner I could have got the offer of Wando Vale at £47,000.
1620. *By the Commissioner:* Mr. Gannan said that to you?—Yes.
1621. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Was that all he said about it to you? What did you say?—I said it seems very cheap.
1622. What else?—That is about everything.
1623. Did you or Mr. Gannan then know of the price the Government paid when you were speaking?—I knew the price. I had heard the price which the Government paid for it.
1624. Did you ever have any other conversation at any time with Mr. Gannan about Wando Vale?—No.
1625. Did Mr. Gannan tell you how he knew it could be had for £47,000?—I understood from him that he had it in his books. He is a commission agent, and I understood he could have got it. He said he could have granted the offer.
1626. *By the Commissioner:* You understood he had it in his books?—Yes, or he would not speak that way.
1627. *By Mr. Macgregor:* The impression that Mr. Gannan left on you was that he had authority to sell for £47,000?—He had authority to offer for £47,000.
1628. That was the conversation that you were referring to when you spoke in Cloncurry this year?—Yes.
1629. On the occasion you mention?—Yes.
1630. Mr. May said it was stated one afternoon and then again the next morning—do you remember that?—No, I do not remember that.
1631. It was rather a festive occasion in Cloncurry at that time?—Yes, it was.
1632. When Mr. Gannan spoke to you, about August or September, 1916, was he in good health at that time?—I think so; I think he was.
1633. Was he under the influence of liquor?—Well, he is a man who is always under the influence generally I noticed.
1634. Did you accept his statement when he said about £47,000?—Yes, I accepted his statement. I thought it was right. He always takes a glass, you know.
1635. Is Mr. Gannan a man of good repute?—Yes, he is very highly respected.
1636. When was the last time that you saw him?—Well, four or five months ago. He was in the hospital at Hughenden when I saw him—that is, roughly, four or five months ago. He was in bed.
1637. Did you interview him?—Yes, I went up to see him.
1638. He was well enough to speak to you?—Yes.
1639. Do you know Mr. Vowles?—No; I have never met Mr. Vowles.
1640. Would you know him if you saw him?—No, I would not.
1641. You don't know that he is sitting in front of you now?—No.
1642. You have never spoken to Mr. Vowles at any time?—No.
1643. Or to anyone on behalf of Mr. Vowles since you came to Brisbane?—No, I have not.
1644. As to your statement in Cloncurry—did anyone inquire from you who this agent was or where it could be got for £47,000. You said that in Cloncurry this year; you said Gannan told him he could have got the offer for £47,000?—[No answer.]
1645. You mentioned Gannan's name?—Yes.
1646. *Cross-examined by Mr. Feez:* You are aware, I suppose, that Mr. Gannan is dying at present?—I knew he was very bad; I heard he was bad some months ago.
1647. Do you mean to say you have not heard that he is in such a condition as, say, practically dying in bed?—No, I did not know that he was as bad as that. I know that he was in bed some time ago, but they told me he was improving.
1648. You have not heard that since you came down or in Rockhampton?—No.
1649. You don't know that it is perfectly safe to say that Mr. Gannan told you something when Mr. Gannan cannot be called to contradict you?—Mr. Gannan told me.
1650. Tell us the circumstances under which Mr. Gannan told you?—I was introduced to Mr. Gannan. I was on the lookout for properties to buy for Mr. Naughton.
1651. Had you never met Mr. Gannan before?—Not before that month, though a lot of business had been done through him.
1652. What do you mean about a lot of business having been done?—Mr. Naughton had done a lot of business with him.
1653. What was Mr. Naughton doing for you?—I was inspecting properties for him.
1654. Mr. Naughton had done a lot of business with him?—Yes.
1655. What were you doing in Cloncurry?—I met Mr. Gannan in Hughenden. I came through from Normanton with Naughton. I stopped there, and Mr. Naughton came in.
1656. You stopped there and Mr. Naughton did not?—No, he came in.

1657. Was this conversation in Mr. Naughton's presence?—No; it was a day or two after they had gone.
1658. Where did it take place?—In Mr. Gannan's office at Hughenden.
1659. You say that Mr. Gannan then informed you that if you had been there sooner you could have got the offer of Wando Vale at £47,000?—Yes. He said he could have granted the offer before I got there.
1660. What was it he said?—I asked if there were any station properties for sale, and he said, "If you had been here a bit sooner you could have got Wando Vale; it was on the market."
1661. What else?—He said, "It is just sold."
1662. Is that all?—I think that is about all.
1663. What about the £47,000?—Yes, there was a price. I asked him the price. He said about £47,000.
1664. About £47,000?—Yes.
1665. Did you ask any particulars about Wando Vale?—No, it was gone; he told me it was sold.
1666. How did you come to the conclusion that the property was very cheap?—Well, there were 10,000 cattle on it. It would be very cheap.
1667. Where did you get the 10,000 cattle?—From general information.
1668. Just give an explanation—what do you mean by general information?—I made inquiries, and found out that it was sold for that price, and they told me there were 10,000 cattle on it.
1669. Mr. Gannan told you, you say, that if you had been there, too, you could have got the offer of Wando Vale for £47,000. In reply to that you said it was very cheap?—Yes.
1670. How did you know at that time that it was very cheap; how did you come to the conclusion that it was very cheap?—Because I had heard before I met Mr. Gannan. I also heard that it was sold before I met Mr. Gannan.
1671. Supposing you had heard before you met Mr. Gannan, what particulars enabled you to say that it was cheap?—I was told there were 10,000 head of cattle on it.
1672. Who told you that?—I cannot say for certain.
1673. You were there; you can give some idea. Have you no idea who told you there were 10,000 cattle on it?—Yes, I have an idea.
1674. Who was it?—Mr. Suter.
1675. He told you what?—He told me that Mr. Barnes had just sold Wando Vale with 10,000 cattle.
1676. What else?—He also told me the particulars about £82,000—in the neighbourhood of £82,000.
1677. Anything else?—No, nothing that I know of.
1678. Did Suter say whether he had it under offer also?—No.
1679. Did he suggest that it had been in his hands for sale at all?—No, he never said anything about it.
1680. How did he come to tell you?—Mr. Barnes was in Suter's office, and he just walked out.
1681. Mr. Barnes was in Suter's office about August or September, 1916, and he just walked out?—He said, "That is Mr. Barnes" as he walked out—about August or September.
1682. That is just about the time the property was sold?—Just about the time.
1683. August or September, 1916?—Yes, about August or September.
1684. Give us a little information about your trip, where you started from?—I started from Port Alma—from Emerald in the first place, and I joined the boat at Port Alma.
1685. When did you leave Port Alma?—Some time in August, 1916. Then I went by boat to Cairns, and I went from there to Georgetown.
1686. Why did you mention Emerald?—I came down from Emerald by train to get the boat at Port Alma.
1687. When did you leave Emerald, and when did you leave Port Alma?—It was in August, I know, but I do not know the date. I was in Rockhampton when I got the subpoena—when I got the telegram. I could have supplied the information if I had brought my books, but I was not at Emerald, and I had to go around to get the wire. I cannot say the time, but I know it was August last year.
1688. You went from Port Alma to Cairns?—Yes, and I went from there, *via* Georgetown, and inspected property there.
1689. What property?—Rosebush.
1690. Where did you go from there?—From there I went to Normanton. I joined Mr. Naughton at Normanton, and I came back with him then to Hughenden by car. I stopped at Hughenden, and if I had my book with me I would know exactly the date I got there. I think it was some time late in September.
1691. That is the way you place it in August or September?—About September. I left in August, and I was ten days inspecting Rosebush; it must have taken me about a month to do the trip—it must have been late in September.
1692. What did you go to Hughenden for?—To inspect properties.
1693. What properties?—Whatever I could pick up.
1694. Do you mean to tell me you went there on a wildgoose chase—had you no offer at the time?—Yes, Rosebush.
1695. At Hughenden?—I came back to Hughenden.
1696. Had you any property under offer about Hughenden?—No, there were cattle bought I had to attend to; they were bought at Berrimira, between Julia Creek and Sudan Dip.
1697. What is the locality of Berrimira?—You don't know anything about Julia Creek, then. I should say it is, roughly speaking, something about 200 or 250 miles north-west of Hughenden. That is as near as I can gauge, and about 80 miles off the railway to Julia Creek.
1698. That would be nearer to Cloncurry than to Hughenden?—Cloncurry is about 480 miles from Townsville, and I think Hughenden is about 280 miles.
1699. You got to Berrimira—what took you to Hughenden?—We had a car of our own going through, and I came to Hughenden.

1700. What took you to Hughenden?—Well, the cattle had not to be delivered for a fortnight, and Mr. Naughton said, "You had better go on to Hughenden, as it is the best centre."
1701. You went to Hughenden without knowing what property you were going to look at?—Mr. Naughton took me around to the agents and said, "If there are any properties on the market you can have a look at them." It was after that I got the offer of the Kangaroo Hills.
1702. Who did you get that from?—From Dalgety's office in Hughenden; they approached me first.
1703. Were there any other properties offered to you?—Yes, Pelham Park.
1704. You inspected Kangaroo Hills?—Yes. Pelham Park was not worth inspecting.
1705. Can't you give the date of that?—Yes; well, I inspected Kangaroo Hills some time in February this year.
1706. When did you get the offer of it, then? In February this year.
1707. What were you doing in Hughenden in August?—You asked me if I had got any offers of places at Hughenden.
1708. At the time that you were in Hughenden had you got the offer of that place?—No, in Richmond. While I was stopping in Hughenden the branch of Burke and Co., in Richmond, put the offer before me, and I inspected.
1709. In Hughenden?—It was telephoned down to Hughenden.
1710. What was that place?—One was a cattle place near Croydon, and the other was a sheep place outside of Nanda. I cannot think of the name.
1711. Did you inspect either of them?—Yes, the sheep place outside of Nanda.
1712. What was the date of that inspection?—Some time later; just a few weeks.
1713. Can't you give the date of the inspection?—Some time later; in September or October.
1714. That is the nearest that you can go to it?—If I had my books I could tell you; but I did not go home.
1715. When you were in Hughenden you saw Mr. Suter and Mr. Gannan?—Yes.
1716. They both mentioned Wando Vale property?—Yes.
1717. Mr. Gannan, you say, told you that if you had been there sooner you could have got the offer for £45,000?—Yes.
1718. Suter did not mention any price?—No, not to me.
1719. How did you know or how did you come to the conclusion that the offer of Wando Vale was cheap at that price?—Well, Suter told me that there were 10,000 cattle on it.
1720. How did he come to tell you that there were 10,000 head of cattle on it?—This gentleman just walked out of his office, and he said, "That gentleman has just sold Wando Vale."
1721. You said a while ago that he said, "That is Mr. Barnes"?—Yes. I said, "Who is he?" and he said, "Barnes."
1722. He identified him as Mr. Barnes to you?—Yes.
1723. What else?—I asked Mr. Suter what price he sold for, and he said in the neighbourhood of £80,000. I said, "How many cattle?" and he said, "10,000 head."
1724. Did you inquire as to the class of the cattle?—No; I had a fair idea of the cattle, or what the cattle would be in that district.
1725. You never saw the Wando Vale cattle?—No.
1726. He said in the neighbourhood of £80,000?—Yes.
1727. Didn't he tell you £82,000?—I would not be certain of that. I reckon the amount was £80,000 to £82,000. It would be in the neighbourhood as well as I can remember. I reckon about £82,000—something in the neighbourhood of £82,000.
1728. Did you ask anything about the price?—Yes; I said it was a very good price.
1729. Why did you say it was a very good price?—We could get offers in any amount of places at £6 per head basis; that amounts to—
1730. Give one or two?—Brooklands, as I understand, was sold on that basis.
1731. You said you could get offers of plenty of places—any amount of places on the basis of £6 per head; tell us one of them?—Well, Rosebush I had on offer for £5 per head.
1732. What were the particulars of Rosebush?—Ten thousand head for £41,000.
1733. That is on the basis of £4 per head?—Yes, that is what was in the book—what the book said; but when I inspected I found the cattle were not there. I would have taken the cattle at £5 per head.
1734. You were trying to make out that there were places on offer at this time on a basis of £6 per head. I want you to name one, two, or three of them. You said there were any amount of places?—Yes; it was the standing rate.
1735. That is not the question I am asking you. You said there were any amount of places on offer at that time on the basis of £6 per head?—Yes.
1736. Including improvements?—Yes.
1737. I want you to name one that you could get the offer for?—Yes; Kangaroo Hills was on that basis four or five months afterwards.
1738. What was the price of Kangaroo Hills?—£50,000.
1739. How many head of cattle?—Within 100 or so of 9,000. Mr. Barnes—Charlie Barnes—gave us the offer.
1740. Is he a relation of this Mr. Barnes?—Yes; a brother.
1741. Was there any other?—Well, I could name a good few if I could get my book. £5 10s. to £6 was the standing rate for inspection.
1742. Kangaroo Hills was in February this year?—Yes.
1743. Not in August last year?—No.
1744. You said you could get the offer of any number of places on the basis of £6 per head?—Yes. That was about the standing price of property then.
1745. Name one if you can. You said that at that time you could get any amount of places?—I have named one. Brooklands was about £6 per head.
1746. Did you get the offer of Brooklands at that time?—No; the offer was taken while I was there.

1747. What were the particulars of Brooklands?—Brooklands was 7,000 to 8,000, roughly, say, about £42,000 to £43,000.
1748. Who offered it to you?—I am not sure what agent; an agent gave us the next call.
1749. You say some agent; where?—In Hughenden.
1750. You are not sure which agent?—No; there are a good few there. I applied for the offer at that, but it was gone.
1751. Can you name another?—Well, I named these places I was going to look at for Burke's, Limited, at £5 per head.
1752. Where is that?—Just south of Croydon.
1753. What were the particulars of Kangaroo Hills when offered to you?—Within 100 or 200 of 9,000 cattle.
1754. What was the price?—£50,000.
1755. Have you anything to show that?—I have the particulars at home—a full lot from Dalgety's in Townsville. They sent them along.
1756. Referring to Kangaroo Hills, I think you said Mr. Charlie Barnes offered it to you direct?—No; I said I got it in Hughenden, off Dalgety.
1757. Dalgety offered you that?—Yes.
1758. On behalf of whom was that offered?—On behalf of Mr. Charlie Barnes.
1759. At £50,000?—Yes.
1760. In February this year?—Yes.
1761. It would be astonishing if it was in the market for about £60,000 about August before with the same number of cattle—9,000?—I heard that it was on offer to the Government for £60,000.
1762. And was turned down by the Government?—Yes, the manager told me that it was offered to the Government for £60,000.
1763. And it was afterwards offered to you for £50,000?—Yes.
1764. The same number of cattle?—Within a hundred or two of 9,000 cattle.
1765. You don't accept the number of cattle stated by the vendor, do you, as being correct?—No.
1766. Had you Reedy Springs offered to you?—Yes.
1767. At what was it offered to you?—Well, Reedy Springs was offered on the basis of £5 per head.
1768. Ten thousand head?—Yes; I would not inspect it.
1769. I suppose you heard afterwards that there was nothing like that number?—I met Mr. Gannan at the time, and from the information that I got I did not go to inspect it.
1770. You heard that there was nothing like 10,000 head of cattle on it?—Yes; I heard that the cattle were not turning up too well.
1771. That there was not half that number?—I did not hear that. I heard that they were not turning up too well.
1772. These are the only properties that you can remember as having been under offer to you?—No; I had several places under offer; if I could get my book I could tell you.
1773. Let us get back to this conversation in Hughenden. You had a conversation with Mr. Suter before you saw Mr. Gannan?—Yes.
1774. Then you saw Mr. Gannan, and Mr. Gannan told you, in effect, that you could have got the offer of Wando Vale at £47,000?—Yes.
1775. You are quite sure about the £47,000?—Yes; £47,000.
1776. Not £45,000?—Well, I say £47,000.
1777. You thought, of course, that that was a ridiculous price?—Ridiculously cheap. You often get good bargains, you know.
1778. Kangaroo Hills, you say, was a good sale with 9,000 cattle for £50,000?—I took the offer and inspected.
1779. And you turned it down after inspection?—I did not; I approved of it.
1780. Was it bought?—Yes; Mr. Naughton bought it.
1781. He bought 9,000 cattle for £50,000?—He bought the station for £50,000, walk-in-walk-out terms.
1782. How did the cattle turn out?—Nine hundred fat bullocks turned up—I estimated at 1,000.
1783. How did the cattle turn out?—There was no bangtail muster; it would take eight months to muster.
1784. You did not find anything like 9,000?—No; I didn't estimate it at 9,000.
1785. What did you estimate it at?—After I had the inspection, I had about twelve days; I estimated it at 7,000 cattle.
1786. So you bought on a basis of £7 per head?—Yes; I valued the cattle at £6 per head.
1787. But you paid on the basis of £7 per head if you bought 7,000 for £50,000?—Yes; of course, I valued the lease.
1788. £8,000 for the lease?—No; £1,000 for horses—there were something over 250 horses.
1789. That makes £43,000?—Yes; I valued the land, the station unstocked, and the improvements at £6,000.
1790. You valued the lease and the improvements at £6,000?—Yes.
1791. Supposing that Wando Vale turned out to have 12,000 head of cattle, would you think £82,000 a bad bargain?—Properties have improved in value now.
1792. In 1916?—At the time of the sale I considered it was worth inspection at £70,000.
1793. That was with 10,000 head of cattle, so it would be worth inspection at £84,000 with 12,000 head of cattle?—I would consider it worth inspection at £70,000 at that time; I would estimate £6 per head for the cattle, and £10,000 for the lease.
1794. If there were 12,000 head of cattle on it you would consider it worth inspection at £82,000 at all events—that is, £6 per head for the others?—Yes.
1795. At £82,000?—Yes, with 12,000 cattle.
1796. Did you take the trouble to ask Mr. Gannan how this extraordinary discrepancy occurred between £47,000 and £82,000?—No, I did not; I looked upon it that it was gone.
1797. You are a man going around looking for properties. You hear that the Government had bought a place for £82,000 that you could have got for £47,000. Do you mean to say that you let it go at that and said nothing more about it?—I heard that it was £82,000 for 10,000 cattle; it was very well sold.

1798. Gannan, you said, told you that it was sold for £82,000, and Gannan told you that he could have offered it for £47,000?—Yes.
1799. Did you not think of asking Mr. Gannan why he could sell for £47,000 and someone else got £82,000?—He said he could have got the offer previous to that; it was before that he could have got the offer.
1800. How long before?—He said it was not long before.
1801. What did you understand him to mean by "not long"?—I don't know; some time previous.
1802. *By the Commissioner:* Was it before September, 1916?—Yes.
1803. *By Mr. Feez:* We know that it got into Gannan's hands at £45,000 on 1912, apparently?—Yes.
1804. Did Mr. Gannan say anything about the time that it got into his hands for sale?—No, I cannot say.
1805. Where did the conservation take place with Gannan?—About his office, so far as I can remember.
1806. You told us before that it was in his office?—I believe it was; I have met him a good deal.
1807. This conversation with Gannan made such an impression on your mind that you were making this statement to Mr. Huxham, Mr. May, Mr. Gall, and Mr. Johnson eight or nine months later. It made such an impression on your mind that eight or nine months afterwards you made a statement imputing very bad management by the Government?—I did not impute anything; I said myself that it was worth £70,000.
1808. Why didn't you ask Mr. Gannan something about the £47,000?—Well, it was gone, and there was no use bothering about it any more.
1809. Eight or nine months afterwards it was so important to you that you bring it up publicly?—Well, Mr. May asked me what I thought about the stations.
1810. Did you know Mr. May before?—No.
1811. Before that occasion?—Yes, I had met him before on the train.
1812. He asked you what?—He asked me what I thought about the cattle stations, and I said I thought the Government were making money out of it.
1813. He asked me what I thought about the cattle stations, and I said I thought the Government were doing well with the rising values of cattle. I don't remember much more.
1814. You told Mr. Macgregor that Mr. Gannan said that Wando Vale was on offer at £47,000, and the offer could have been secured before it was sold to the Government. Gannan said that in August or September previous. How did that conversation crop up with Mr. May?—I don't know exactly. You get talking, and one thing brings on another; you get into it that way.
1815. Don't you see that you were making a very serious accusation that the Government had been taken down for £35,000?—If they got 10,000 cattle they were not; they were all right.
1816. Why did you tell Mr. May that it could be bought, or was offered for £47,000?—I said what Mr. Gannan said.
1817. What was your object—what impression did you wish to convey to Mr. May?—I did not wish to convey any impression that I am aware.
1818. Then, why on earth did you make the statement?—Well, in ordinary conversation, I just mentioned it.
1819. You knew that Mr. May was a Government supporter?—No, I did not.
1820. You knew that he was member for Flinders?—I did not know until afterwards.
1821. You knew him on the train?—When I met him on the train I did not know who he was.
1822. When did you get to know who he was?—It would be shortly after he came along on the train with me.
1823. Was that before or after this conversation?—It was before.
1824. Then, you did know that he was the member for Flinders?—I understood you to say did I know him when I first met him on the train.
1825. Did you know that he was a Government supporter?—No; I knew that he was a member of Parliament.
1826. Did you imagine that he was a supporter of the Government?—Yes.
1827. You said that this place could have been bought for £47,000, though the Government paid £82,000 for it?—I said that I heard that it could have been bought.
1828. What was the object of saying that to Mr. May? What did you intend to convey to him?—I had no object. It was said only in very ordinary conversation.
1829. Don't you see that such a suggestion was a very gross one? You were suggesting that the Government paid £35,000 more than was necessary?—I heard that there were 10,000 cattle on it.
1830. If you could have got the offer for £47,000, then the Government could. Then they paid £35,000 more than they should have paid?—They had the cattle.
1831. I want you to explain your motives for making the statement that the property was under offer for £47,000, yet the Government paid £82,000 for it?—I had no object; it was in ordinary conversation, knowing that the place was offered previously, knowing the amount, which was a ridiculous price.
1832. How long previous—was it a year or two previous—you are leaving the impression that the £47,000 was the price shortly prior to the purchase?—Yes.
1833. When you said that Mr. Gannan had said that he could have got the offer some time previous, did you mean some years before?—I thought it might be some time before.
1834. How long?—It might have been a good while.
1835. That was the impression that Mr. Gannan left on you?—I don't know how long back.
1836. Was the impression left on your mind that he got the offer two or three years back?—No; I thought just before the offer to the Government.

1837. You are suggesting that just before the Government bought, the property was under offer at £47,000. You led Mr. May to believe that at the time that the Government bought it for £82,000 it was under offer at £47,000?—I did not know that I led Mr. May to believe that.
1838. The offer could be got?—He said that it was under offer.
1839. That is the same thing. If an offer is given and accepted at £47,000 it means a sale at £47,000, doesn't it?—Yes.
1840. What is your object in making that remark?—I had no object at all in making that remark.
1841. You could see that anyone else would think you had an object, couldn't you?—Oh! well, properties went up very quickly.
1842. That is not an answer to my question. Cannot you see there is only one inference to be drawn from such a remark—that the Government had been taken down, or else there had been some corruption about it?—When I heard there were 10,000 cattle I knew the Government was not taken down.
1843. You did not believe, did you, that anyone could have got that property with 10,000 in August, 1916, for £47,000?—No, I don't think so.
1844. Or anything like £47,000?—Oh! well, I considered it on the basis of £6 a head—about £5 10s. to £6 those times.
1845. You said £6 first; that would be £60,000?—Yes.
1846. And then about £10,000 for improvements and lease?—Yes, that is so. I say I value it at £70,000.
1847. You did not believe Mr. Gannan when he told you he could have given you the offer of £47,000?—I believed him; but I thought it was strange.
1848. And yet you did not have the curiosity even to inquire how this extraordinary discrepancy existed?—Well, it was no business of mine.
1849. I should think it was a very great business of yours. You were out looking for properties, and if a property like Wando Vale was under offer for £47,000 it might affect your prices for other properties?—No; I was told on what basis to inspect.
1850. At all events, it made such an impression upon your mind—if it was ever told to you—that you retailed it about eight or nine months later to a number of other gentlemen?—Yes, I mentioned it later.
1851. Well, why did it make that impression on your mind?—Well, I tell you they were asking about the cattle stations that the Government was buying, and they asked me what I thought about them.
1852. Who was "they"?—Well, Mr. May.
1853. They were asking you about the cattle stations they were trying to buy?—Yes; that they had bought.
1854. Well, then you were trying to show that they had bought badly, were you?—No, I was not.
1855. Well, what was the object, then? This thing had evidently made such an impression on your mind that you brought it up to Mr. May eight or nine months later. What was the object of doing that?—Well, I had no object.
1856. Oh, Mr. O'Connor, you must have had some object. You did not bring it up out of pure—just gossip, or anything of that sort?—I have often spoken about places that went up in price; places have gone up perhaps £10,000 or £15,000 in three months.
1857. Now, look here; you had had a conversation with Mr. May, according to yourself?—Yes.
1858. About the advantage or otherwise of the Government entering into this business of buying cattle stations?—Yes.
1859. Then you had also had a conversation, according to yourself, with regard to the prices; the class of stations they had bought. You told us just now—I don't remember your exact words—in effect that you were talking about the success or otherwise of those purchases?—Oh, just general information about the stations.
1860. And then you brought out this statement that this station was under offer for £47,000 when the Government had bought it for £82,000?—No; I said that Mr. Gannan said that Wando Vale could have been bought before it was sold to the Government.
1861. Yes, I know you say that. Cannot you give us any idea of why you brought that up?—No.
1862. Of course, Mr. May says that what you said was—and he took a note of it at the time—that Wando Vale Station was offered for sale for £47,000 a fortnight before the Government purchased it for £82,000. Is that correct?—No; I don't remember saying "a fortnight"; I remember saying "before."
1863. That it was offered for sale?—It was on the market, you know.
1864. And not a word about Mr. Gannan being mentioned?—Well, that is how I would get it, through Mr. Gannan.
1865. I don't care; but Mr. May does not say a word about your having mentioned Mr. Gannan's name. Is not that a little addition of your own about mentioning Gannan's name?—No; because it was Gannan who told me.
1866. I don't care whether he told you or not. Did you tell Mr. May that it was Mr. Gannan who told you?—I don't remember. I may have said "it is through the agents"; that is how I generally say if anyone asks me.
1867. Do you remember what you told Mr. Macgregor this morning with regard to the conversation?—Well, I spoke as near to the truth as I could.
1868. Well, but do you remember what it was?—No, I would not remember it now.
1869. You might just tell me now again the conversation as it occurred—according to your memory—with Mr. May?—Oh, he asked me about the stations—what did I think about them? I said I thought it was a very good thing. He asked me did I think the Government would come out of them all right. I said, Yes, I thought they would, on account of the rise in cattle. I don't remember much more.

1370. Oh, you have not mentioned Wando Vale yet. Tell us about Wando Vale?—Oh! well, to tell you the truth I don't really know how that subject was brought up about Wando Vale.
1371. Well, give us your recollection now. Tell us how you think it came up, and what was said?—Well, I don't remember it really; I don't remember exactly how it was said; but I know it was mentioned—something to that effect.
1372. First of all I want to get a little more particularly out of you; where did this conversation about Wando Vale take place?—About Cloncurry; about the Post Office.
1373. Whereabouts, though?—The Post Office.
1374. It was not in a room full of people?—No; I don't know.
1375. If Mr. May swears that the first conversation was in a room full of people, do you deny that?—No, I would not deny it. I don't remember exactly where it was said.
1376. Would you deny you spoke first to Mr. May about Wando Vale, and made this statement, in a room full of people?—No, I would not.
1377. Give us your memory of what was said by you and by Mr. May?—Well, I thought I had just said it.
1378. Yes; but I want you to say it again, if you can?—About the station business.
1379. About Wando Vale?—Well, he asked me what were we paying. I remember it coming up, something about what were we paying for station properties—on what basis.
1380. Who said this?—Mr. May.
1381. Mr. May said what?—On what basis were we buying cattle.
1382. Who is "you"?—I was inspecting; on what basis I was inspecting cattle. It would all depend on the district, you see.
1383. I don't care what it depended on. Tell us what you said to Mr. May?—Well, I don't remember really much about it.
1384. Oh, but, Mr. Connor, you had a very good memory when Mr. Macgregor asked you this morning?—I remember saying it; but I don't remember—
1385. You remember saying what? Tell us what was said—what you did say?—About Mr. Gannan speaking about Wando Vale being sold for £47,000?
1386. Tell us what it was?—Well, all I can remember about it is, there were several other stations mentioned in the conversation. I mentioned that Mr. Gannan told me that it was offered some time previous at £47,000—Wando Vale.
1387. Yes; that all?—That is about all, I think.
1388. But, good gracious me; a little while ago you mentioned a price of £47,000?—I just said £47,000.
1389. You did not say a word about the price just now?—Yes, I did.
1390. Was anything said about £82,000 in the conversation?—Yes; I remember I said that £82,000 seemed a fair price.
1391. Well, would you kindly piece together this conversation as far as you can do it. Look here; you say a number of stations were mentioned. First of all, what other stations were mentioned?—Oh, the general stations; he never mentioned the name of the stations, but the stations which the Government were buying.
1892. You said a number of stations were mentioned a minute ago?—Well, mentioned generally—the stations they were buying; he asked me what I thought about it.
1893. Well, now, will you go on and put it together in your own way. I don't care how you do it; I only want to get from you your recollection of what took place at that conversation?—Yes. Well, I said that by buying Wando Vale at £82,000 they had paid a very fair price for it. I had heard Mr. Gannan say before they had bought it that the offer could have been secured at £47,000.
1894. Now, that is the whole of the conversation?—That is just about as well as I can remember it, how it went.
1895. And Mr. May asked you to repeat that conversation before Mr. Huxham and Mr. Gall?—Not that I remember.
1896. You don't remember that?—No.
1897. Don't you remember his bringing Mr. Huxham and Mr. Gall and Mr. Johnson (Inspector of Police), and asking you to repeat to those gentlemen what you had said about it?—No; I never remember him asking me to repeat that again.
1898. Not to repeat that; to repeat what you had said before to these gentlemen?—No, I don't. Was that the same day?
1899. Yes, the same day?—No, I don't remember it.
1900. Now, Mr. May swears that, first of all, you made this statement about Wando Vale in the Post Office Hotel. Is that what you meant by the "Post Office"?—Yes; that is where I stopped—at the Post Office Hotel.
1901. When you spoke of "the Post Office" before, you meant the Post Office Hotel, did you?—Yes.
1902. Did you make it in a crowded room in the Post Office Hotel?—Oh, I don't know whether there was anyone there or not.
1903. And you have no recollection of Mr. May bringing Mr. Huxham and Mr. Gall, and asking you to repeat the statement before them?—No, I don't.
1904. Do you deny that?—I don't remember. I remember meeting Mr. Huxham and Mr. Gall there, but I don't remember him bringing them and asking me to make the statement.
1905. If Mr. May swears, and if Mr. Huxham swears that you did make the statement—and if Mr. Gall swears it—would you deny it?—No, I would not deny it if Mr. Gall and Mr. Huxham say so.
1906. You understand, Mr. Connor, that it was a very serious statement, don't you?—Yes, it is.
1907. Well, will you now—admitting that you understand that—tell us the circumstances which induced you to make it?—You mean about the—
1908. About the property being for sale, or on offer, at £47,000 when the Government paid £82,000 for it?—
- The Commissioner:* He doesn't say "when the Government"; he says "before the Government."

Mr. Feez: What he said was, the offer could have been secured before it was sold to the Government; but what Mr. May says he said was that Wando Vale was offered for sale a fortnight before the Government purchased it for £82,000.

The Commissioner: He does not admit he said that.

Mr. Feez: What he does say is, it was on offer shortly before the Government purchased it for £82,000 for £47,000.

Witness: I say that Mr. Gannan told me that before.

The Commissioner: Did you say "shortly before"?—Not that I remember; "before."

1909. *By Mr. Feez:* How long do you say Mr. Gannan told you?—You mean how long before I said that?

1910. How long before the purchase by the Government did Gannan tell you that it could be sold at £47,000, or that it was under offer for £47,000?—He didn't say what time before.

1911. Look here, you were there?—In September, wasn't it, in 1916.

1912. August or September, 1916?—Yes.

1913. When Mr. Gannan told you that it could have been purchased, or that it was under offer?—No; the offer could have been secured.

1914. Well, the offer could have been secured at £47,000?—Yes, some time previous.

1915. How long was that prior to the Government purchasing? We know that the Government's purchase was completed in August?—Oh, I had it something about the end of August or September.

1916. That was just at the time of the purchase by the Government?—Yes.

1917. And you say Mr. Gannan told you just about the time the Government purchased that it could have been got for £47,000?—No, I didn't say that. I said what he said. I said that the offer could have been secured some time previous.

1918. I am not asking you that. Just at the time the Government purchased Mr. Gannan told you—according to you—that it had been under offer—could have been got under offer—at £47,000?—No, not at that time.

1919. What time?—What Mr. Gannan said was some time previous; it could have been got under offer.

1920. What do you mean by "some time previous"?—Whatever Gannan meant.

1921. What did you mean when you made the statement—what impression was in your mind?—It may have been twelve months before.

1922. Of course, it may have been three years before; but when you made this statement to Mr. May, what had you in your mind with regard to the time the offer could have been got at £47,000?—I did not have anything in my mind much.

1923. Well, how long did you think, from what Mr. Gannan told you, the offer went back—how long did you think?—Well, I think it would have been within the last twelve months—within the previous twelve months.

1924. You have forgotten entirely what you said a little while ago. You told us that Mr. Gannan said that, if you had

been there a few weeks earlier, you could have got the offer at £47,000?—Well, what he meant by that, I should think, was that if I had got there before it was offered for sale to the Government.

1925. Exactly: had you been there a few weeks earlier you could have got the offer at £47,000; that is what you swore a little while ago?—Yes, that is what he thought—he could have granted the offer.

1926. Now, you say he was speaking of a time a year before?—Yes; he said the offer could have been secured for about £47,000.

1927. Which did he say? Did he tell you, or leave the impression on your mind, that this offer could have been got a year before, or a few weeks before the Government bought it?—Well, I was under the impression it could have been got a few weeks before.

1928. Well, then, it is not within twelve months?—Since August last.

1929. Twelve months back from the time you were speaking to Mr. Gannan. When Mr. Gannan said "within a few weeks," he didn't mean within twelve months?—I take it, it could have been some time just previous.

1930. But a minute ago you told us that it might have been some period extending back twelve months?—It may have been, too, I find out now.

1931. But now you say you think it was within a few weeks that he was talking of?—Yes, I thought at that time that it was.

1932. I only want to get what you mean?—When he mentioned it I thought it was only just a few weeks.

1933. Well, then, the impression left on your mind was a few weeks before the Government paid £82,000 the property could have been offered to them for £47,000; that is what was in your mind?—Well, I don't know what other people could do.

1934. Is that the impression that Mr. Gannan left on your mind?—Oh, no; I came to the conclusion that the properties had gone up.

1935. That is not what I am asking you. You said that Mr. Gannan told you that if you had been there a few weeks earlier you could have got the property under offer—he could have offered you the property—at £47,000?—Yes.

1936. The Government had then just paid £82,000?—That is right.

1937. Then Mr. Gannan left the impression on your mind that a few weeks before the Government bought they could have got the offer of the property at £47,000?—I think it was on the market at £47,000 before that.

1938. Of course you did, if you are telling the truth; but that is not what I am trying to get you to admit. You have said it a dozen times, but I want to follow it up. Mr. Gannan told you, you say, that if you had been there a few weeks earlier you could have got the offer of that property at £47,000?—Yes.

1939. You swear that?—Yes, Gannan said that.

1940. You knew that just about that time the Government had bought it at £82,000?—Yes, that's right; I did. That was just about the time, I reckon.
1941. So Mr. Gannan led you to believe that a few weeks before the Government bought it at £82,000 the property could have been offered to them at £47,000?—If he knew what he was talking about.
1942. You did not believe he knew what he was talking about?—Well, I could not see through it that it could be done.
1943. Did you credit what Mr. Gannan was saying. Did you put any faith in it?—Yes, I have had him on several occasions to report on sheep and that; and he is a very good man.
1944. Well, then, you did believe what he said?—Yes, I had to believe him.
1945. Then you came to the conclusion that the Government had paid £82,000 for a property they could have got a few weeks before for £47,000?—Oh, well, it is this way—
1946. Now did you, or did you not?—No, I didn't; for this reason—I might explain it. Very often an agent will tell you he can do a thing, and when you go and get full particulars some other body has got the station. They often tell you then can do a thing; sometimes they can do it, and sometimes they cannot. Often they come to you and say, "Here's a property I can give you for a certain price"; and I would say, "All right, go on with it."
1947. Did you or did you not believe Gannan when he said he could have offered you the property a few weeks previously for £47,000?—I believed him.
1948. You thought you could have got the offer?—Yes.
1949. If you could have got it, the Government could?—You would think so.
1950. So you came to the conclusion that the Government had paid £82,000 for a property which they might have bought for £47,000?—After what Suter told me, I thought there was something wrong.
1951. Well then, why did you repeat the statement to Mr. May nine months later?—Well, in ordinary conversation.
1952. I know; but why? You don't repeat ordinary conversations if you think they are ridiculous, or lies, do you?—Oh no; we were talking about other stations which the Government had bought previously, and how quickly they had gone up.
1953. Now, look here! Did not you mean to convey to Mr. May and any other person who heard your language that the Government had paid a great deal more than they ought to have paid for that station?—No, I did not.
1954. Well, what other meaning can you attribute to your words?—I thought £70,000 I said.
1955. Well, then, £82,000 is a great deal more than £70,000. Why did you mention £47,000?—Well, in the ordinary conversation right through the piece—what had happened.
1956. Was that all the conversation you had with Mr. May?—Was there anything else said about any individual member of the Government?—No, I don't remember; no.

1957. Do you remember Mr. Theodore's name being mentioned?—No.
1958. You don't remember that?—No.
1959. Now, if Mr. May swears that you said that Mr. Theodore got £5,000 out of the bargain, or out of the transaction, do you deny it?—I don't remember saying it.
1960. You don't remember saying it?—No.
1961. And if Mr. May, Mr. Huxham, Mr. Gall, and Inspector Johnson, come here and say that you said, "Theodore got £5,000," will you deny it?—I don't remember saying it.
1962. Will you deny you said it?—Well, I don't remember saying it.
1963. Well, if you did say it, and on two occasions—first of all to Mr. May alone—or rather, to Mr. May in a room full—and afterwards in the presence of these three gentlemen specially called to hear you say it, to see if you would repeat it?—Yes? Well, I never said it; I don't remember saying it.
1964. You say you don't remember saying it. Will you deny you did say it?
The Commissioner informs the witness of a proviso in section 5 (2) of "The Official Inquiries Evidence Act of 1910" enacting that a witness shall not be compelled to answer any question tending to incriminate such witness, and says if Mr. Connor prefers not to answer the question he is at liberty to say so.
Witness: Yes, I prefer not to answer that.
1965. By Mr. Feez: Well now, if you say you prefer not to answer it, assume you did say it—that Mr. Theodore got £5,000; mind you, in the same conversation in which you say the Government bought it at £82,000 when it was offered a fortnight previously or the offer could have been given to you shortly previously at £47,000, you must have been trying to make out that the Government were either very incapable or very dishonest?—No, I was not. I reckon the Government has done very well in their station business.
1966. But that is not the point. Did you make a statement that the Government paid £82,000 for a property which you say a few weeks earlier was under offer or could have been got under offer for £47,000; and add to that that one of the Ministers got £5,000 out of it? I am assuming that you did say that. Can you explain any other meaning than that it was a charge of gross incompetency and dishonesty on the part of the Government and one of its Ministers?—No, I would not, because I heard there were 10,000 cattle, and the impression on me was that the place was worth nearly the price they gave for it, if not it.
1967. That is quite apart from the question. I asked you, supposing you heard another another man say that the Government had bought a station for £82,000 which they could have got a few weeks previously for £47,000, and one of the Ministers got £5,000 "palm grease" out of it, what would you think he meant; we will say he got £5,000 out of it, we won't say "palm grease"; what would you think he meant?—Well, I don't know what he would mean.

1968. If you heard a man say that, what interpretation would you yourself put on the words?—Well, I would not know whether he knew what he was talking about.
1969. Well supposing he did know what he was talking about, and repeated it when he was asked to? Is there any doubt, Mr. Connor, that that man would have meant that the Government was both incapable and dishonest, and that one of the Ministers was corrupt?—I never made that; I never had that impression.
1970. You never had that impression? You cannot remember Mr. May asking you to repeat what you had said, in the presence of these gentlemen?—No, I cannot.
1971. You cannot remember that?—No.
1972. Do you remember who were present when you made the statement originally?—I just remember a conversation with Mr. May about it, but I don't know if there was anyone present.
1973. Mr. Gannan you say was pretty well always under the influence—that is the way you expressed it?—Well, he drinks, you know.
1974. He drinks pretty heavily at times?—Yes.
1975. And when he drinks he talks a lot?—Well, no; he is not a man of that sort; he don't talk such a terrible lot when he drinks.
1976. When he made the statement you say he made to you—that he had this place under offer a few weeks previously at £47,000—was he drinking at that time?—Well, of a morning Mr. Gannan used to be generally sober; but of an evening he used to drink a good bit.
1977. I don't suppose you could remember for a moment whether it was morning or afternoon, with the vagueness of your memory, could you?—I don't remember whether it was morning or evening.
1978. And if it was evening I presume you would not pay much attention to what Mr. Gannan said?—Oh, yes; some evenings he is as right as rain.
1979. Can you remember whether, when this conversation which you say you had with him took place, he was as right as rain?—Oh, yes, I think so.
1980. Well, you believed it then?—When he told me; oh, yes.
1981. When he told you that if you had been there a few weeks earlier you could have got the offer at £47,000, you believed it?—Yes.
1982. And therefore you believed that the Government had made a very bad bargain?—Oh, well, I don't know what the Government had done about the bargain—when I heard from Mr. Suter.
1983. Look here, Connor, you believed that a few weeks prior you could have got the place under offer to you at £47,000; and the Government paid £82,000; you must have believed that the Government got a very bad bargain?—I may have got the place a fortnight before at £47,000, and after I had inspected it I might not have bought it.
1984. Well, then, that would be a worse bargain for the Government to pay £82,000?—When the cattle are there it is all right; it is worth buying.
1985. That is not the question—whether the cattle are there or not. If you can buy a property for £47,000 one week, and two or three weeks afterwards you pay £82,000, it looks a very bad bargain, doesn't it?—Oh, well, it might have been offered too cheap at the start.
1986. Whether it was offered too cheap or not it looks a very bad bargain?—Well, you see there are plenty of properties and things which are sold at half rates, you know.
1987. If you were offered a property at £47,000, and two or three weeks afterwards a man bought that property at £82,000, you would come to the conclusion he had made a very bad bargain, wouldn't you?—No, I would not.
1988. You would think there might be a rise in those few weeks of £35,000?—I might have thought I was too slow—that it was a good bargain, and I never made use of it.
1989. Well, it would be a remarkable rise in a few weeks—£35,000—wouldn't it?—If everyone thought they had the right price there would be no buyers of property, would there?
1990. There is not usually a difference between £47,000 and £82,000, is there?—No, there is not usually that difference.
1991. It is a remarkable rise in two or three weeks?—Yes; oh, it may have been.
1992. Now, look here, Mr. Connor, you declined to answer about the statement that Mr. May says you made—that Mr. Theodore had got £5,000 out of this transaction. Assume for a moment that you did make that statement, have you got the slightest ground—can you give the slightest suggestion of ground—for the statement? You need not say whether you made it or not at present. Have you any suggestion of evidence, or even hearsay evidence, of Mr. Theodore getting £5,000 or anything out of that transaction?—No, no evidence at all.
1993. And if you made it, it must have been a pure invention?—Yes, if I did it must have been.
1994. You were not even told it by anyone?—No.
1995. As far as you know, if anyone said that it is a wicked lie?—Yes.
1996. *Re-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* You mentioned Mr. Naughton whom you met after leaving Emerald and joining the boat at Port Alma?—Yes.
1997. Who is Mr. Naughton?—He is a station owner in North Queensland.
1998. Is he a New South Wales gentleman?—Yes.
1999. A very wealthy man?—Yes.
2000. And buys and sells stations?—That's he.
2001. And is it on your advice that he buys and sells?—On the stations that I inspect, yes.
2002. So that you have a very good knowledge of station properties in the North of Queensland?—Yes.
2003. You know Mr. Gannan? You said you had big deals through him?—Yes.
Mr Feez: He said that Mr. Naughton had.
2004. *Re-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* You knew all about them?—Yes.

2005. You said that Kangaroo Hills was offered to Mr. Naughton and bought by him?—Yes, I inspected it.
2006. When was it first offered?—About February.
2007. February of this year?—Yes.
2008. Do you know Mr. Charles Barnes, the late owner of it?—No, I don't know him.
2009. By sight?—No; I have seen him, but I would not be able to recognise him.
2010. This man you saw leaving Mr. Suter's office—would you recognise him again?—Well, I would not be too sure; but I think he resembles that man [*Witness indicates Mr. J. H. S. Barnes*] over in the back sitting near the books.
2011. You have not seen him since you saw him coming out of that room?—No.
2012. And nobody told you that that is Mr. Barnes?—No, nobody has told me. Am I right?
2013. You are, as a matter of fact. You say you have a fair idea of the cattle in that district?—Yes.
2014. The district round Hughenden?—Yes.
2015. What sort of cattle are they?—Well, they are fair; the Shorthorn cattle are.
2016. Do you know the Shorthorn-Hereford cross?—Yes.
2017. What sort of cattle are those?—Oh, well, they are better than the Hereford; they are an improvement, you understand.
2018. Would £6 a head be a fair price for those at that time, in August, 1916?—A full herd do you mean?
2019. Yes?—That is with the property given in; with the land added?
2020. Yes, buying a station?—Yes, it would be just a fair price.
2021. Round that district?—Yes.
2022. You mean, buying the whole station with the herd on it?—Yes. What I mean by that is, there are a lot of cattle on the roads travelling. If you don't have a place to put them on they would not be worth as much as they would be if you could buy the place they are on, and the cattle too.
2023. If you knew a man had 12,000 cattle—if you had a man up for several months and found out that he had 12,000 cattle and he thought he had only 10,000 cattle, would you tell him that he was wrong?—If I was buying the place?
2024. Yes?—Oh, no.
2025. *By the Commissioner*: You would not try to lift the price on yourself?—No. I would tell him after I bought it.
2026. *By Mr. Macgregor*: Do you know the basalt country there?—Yes.
2027. With about 750 square miles, how long would it take to muster a place of that sort?—It depends a good deal on the time of the year—if it was summer or winter. I reckon you do well to clean it up properly in eight to ten months.
2028. How long would it take you to inspect it?—Well, to satisfy yourself, with a herd of 10,000, I would expect to be about fourteen days; I would be pretty well satisfied then.
2029. Do you know Emu Plains or Cargoon?—I just know of them.
2030. Or Reedy Springs?—Yes.

2031. Are they on the basalt country?—Yes. I know their cattle; I have had a lot to do with their cattle. There are better cattle over Kangaroo Hills way.
2032. Do you know Dagworth cattle station?—I know of it; I have seen a lot of the cattle from it.
2033. Did you hear about the sale of it lately?—I heard it was sold.
2034. Did you know any of the particulars?—No, I didn't know much about it.
2035. These cattle at Kangaroo Hills—how would they compare with the cattle round Hughenden—Wando Vale cattle, for instance?—I understand that Wando Vale's are ballys, are they not? I have seen Reedy Springs cattle, and that is not too far from Wando Vale. The Kangaroo Hills cattle are a lot better.
2036. You know Reedy Springs cattle?—Yes, I have seen a lot of them.
2037. Have you never seen Wando Vale cattle on the road?—Not that I can say; I may have seen them.
2038. Have you ever seen any cattle resembling "lemonade bottles with buffalo horns"?—They are tight-rumped cattle; I have heard men call them that.
2039. *By the Commissioner*: Do you know whether Mr. Gannan has an office up at Hughenden?—Yes.
2040. And a staff?—Yes.
2041. Do you know who is his manager?—Well, his manager was Mr. Cosgrove when I was there lately.

[*Witness then retired.*]

The Honourable EDWARD GRANVILLE THEODORE, M.L.A., Treasurer of Queensland, and Secretary for Public Works, sworn and examined:

2042. *By Mr. Feez*: You are the Treasurer and Secretary for Public Works in the present Government?—That is so.
2043. You have heard, of course, about the purchase of Wando Vale by the Government?—Oh, yes.
2044. Had you anything personally to do with that purchase?—No; the only thing I had to do with it was as a member of the Cabinet when the matter came before the Cabinet.
2045. Until it came before the Cabinet it never came before you in any shape or form?—It had never been mentioned to me in any shape or form.
2046. And, of course, it was simply in Cabinet in connection with the determination whether it should be bought or not?—That is so, yes.
2047. The price had been fixed at that time?—Yes, the price had been fixed.
2048. And it was only a question whether the Government would determine to carry out the actual purchase?—
2049. *By the Commissioner*: A question of Cabinet approval?—That is so. It was only a question of giving it Cabinet approval.
2050. *By Mr. Feez*: Have you ever received anything in the way of money or money's worth in connection with this sale?—Absolutely nothing.
2051. Have you ever been promised anything?—Never promised anything.

2052. Has any suggestion been made that you were to get anything out of it?—Never any suggestion made.

2053. If it was stated by a person that you had benefited to the extent of £5,000, what do you think of that?—I would say that was an outrageous slander.

2054. Is there even the shadow of a suggestion for it?—Not the slightest shadow of justification for any allegation of the kind.

2055. You never had anything, I understand, to do with the money, or the purchase price, or anything in connection with the sale in any shape or form?—Nothing whatever to do with it until the Cabinet had approved of the purchase. After that, of course, it was the question I had to consider as Treasurer as to the form in which debentures might be issued. Apart from that I had nothing whatever to do with it.

2056. Do you know, as a matter of fact, what was done?—There was £10,000 cash paid, and £72,000 in debentures?—Yes.

2057. Do you know, as a matter of fact, what was done with the debentures?—Well, my recollection is that the debentures were made payable to the persons whose names were submitted by the Union Trustee Company.

2058. I suppose, once the amount was fixed, you left that in the hands of the Under Secretary?—That was left in the hands of the officials entirely.

2059. You had nothing personally to do with it?—Nothing whatever.

Mr. Macgregor intimated that he did not desire to ask any questions.

[The witness then retired.]

The Honourable JOHN McEWAN HUNTER, M.L.A., Secretary for Public Lands, sworn and examined:

2060. *By Mr. Feez:* You are the Secretary for Public Lands in the present Government?—Yes.

2061. And as such you, of course, had a good deal to do with the determination as to whether the Government would or would not purchase Wando Vale?—Yes.

2062. With regard to these purchases of cattle stations by the Government, how was it worked? Did you give instructions to anyone to look at suitable properties?—Mr. McGugan.

2063. You gave Mr. McGugan instructions?—Yes.

2064. He is the State stations manager?—Yes.

2065. The instructions were to obtain offers?—To get firm offers of as many properties as he could which were suitable.

2066. When you gave those instructions, had the Government determined on any number; was there any limitation?—No, there was no limitation.

2067. It was simply to obtain the offers, and each one would be considered on its merits?—Yes.

2068. Where was he to obtain them? What sort of stations was he to look for?—The best cattle country he could in the North, as well as in the Central and Southern parts of the State.

2069. What was the idea of that?—Well, to get suitable geographical stations from which our cattle could be trained and diverted from one station to another.

2070. Was that in the case of drought?—Yes.

2071. So that you would have depôts to move them to?—Yes. Also for marketing purposes and fattening.

2072. The ultimate idea was what, with regard to these cattle stations?—They were to be used for supplies for our State butcher shops.

2073. And any surplus, I suppose?—For Imperial meat.

2074. Of course, Mr. McGugan is a practical man?—Yes.

2075. What was your opinion of Mr. McGugan as a practical man?—Before he was employed?

2076. Yes?—I had not met him.

2077. But I mean when he was employed?—Oh, well, from the testimonials he presented and the men he had worked for, I thought he was a most capable man, absolutely.

2078. I suppose you had every confidence in his honesty and his ability as well?—Absolutely.

2079. Was he wholly responsible to the Government for the recommendations as to purchases?—Yes.

2080. Did you give him any instructions with regard to interference with his duties?—Yes; I told him he was to allow no political influence of any description to interfere with them.

2081. Either political or otherwise?—Political or otherwise.

2082. I understand that he was an absolutely responsible officer outside the interference of anyone?—That is so.

2083. He was made responsible for his own station department?—For the good management of the business.

2084. And his position depended on that?—On that.

2085. Did you also instruct him with regard to the methods in which payments were to be made for station properties?—I told him that the great bulk of the payment would have to be by Government debenture.

2086. Well, now, when did the purchase of Wando Vale first come under your notice?—Wando Vale station itself?

2087. First of all, the cattle?—The cattle were offered some time about the middle of last year.

2088. How did that come to your notice?—Through the Under Secretary.

2089. And did you discuss the matter with him?—Yes.

2090. And give him any instructions?—First of all, the cattle were offered. I suggested it would be much better for us to obtain properties; we were not wanting to buy stock merely. We wanted to buy properties, and it would be better to look out for station properties, so that we could carry them right on.

2091. You gave him instructions in connection with Wando Vale, to try and get the offer of the station as a going concern?—If we could not have got that we would not have bothered taking the cattle, unless we could get a suitable property adjoining to put them on.

2092. Well, then, when the offer was made as a going concern, did you give any further instructions?—I told him to have it inspected.
2093. And with regard to these inspections; who would usually do the inspections?—Mr. McGugan, or some responsible officer of his that he could trust.
2094. You would not expect him to do them all?—Oh, no.
2095. And who was responsible for the inspection?—Ferry.
2096. In this particular case; but I mean whom did you look to as being responsible for a proper inspection being made?—Oh, Mr. McGugan was always responsible to the Government.
2097. In this case we know that a man named Ferry made the inspection. Is he a capable man in the cattle business?—A most capable man.
2098. He is a Government employee, of course?—Yes.
2099. Manager of Dotswood at present?—Yes, manager of one of the properties in the North.
2100. Well, you remember receiving Ferry's report; or was it first of all Mr. McGugan's report? Mr. McGugan's report you received first. You remember receiving, at all events, both McGugan's and Ferry's reports?—Yes.
2101. Well, after the receipt of those reports, did you give Mr. Graham any instructions? First of all, did you see Mr. McGugan after he had made his report? He recommended, of course, the purchase. Did you see him after that?—I saw Mr. Graham and Mr. McGugan together.
2102. And did you discuss the matter with them?—Yes.
2103. In your opinion it was a good offer that you had, and you determined to buy if the Cabinet approved?—To submit the recommendation to the Cabinet.
2104. Well, then, you did submit the matter to the Cabinet?—Yes.
2105. And the Cabinet approved of it?—Yes.
2106. The Cabinet approved of the purchase at £85,000?—Yes, not to exceed that, but as much under as we could get it.
2107. You gave Mr. Graham instructions?—Yes.
2108. What were they?—To try to get it for £80,000.
2109. What was the limit fixed at first?—£85,000; that was the recommendation.
2110. You instructed him to pay as low as he could, but not to pay more than £85,000?—Yes, not more than £85,000, but to try to get it for £80,000.
2111. He afterwards reported to you that he had agreed to pay £82,000?—That is right.
2112. And the sale was then fixed up at that price?—Yes.
2113. Now, prior to the sale did you ever meet Mr. Barnes?—I am not aware that I had ever heard of him before the property was put on offer.
2114. You certainly never knew him personally?—No.
2115. And you practically did not know of him?—No.
2116. Did you during the course of the proceedings meet him at all?—I met him once.
2117. At what period was that?—Just about the time that the sale was closed.
2118. After the recommendation to purchase was made and the method of payment was being discussed?—Yes.
2119. After the Government had agreed to buy?—Yes.
2120. Was the price actually fixed at that time?—Yes.
2121. Was it after the £82,000 was actually fixed?—I think at that time he called upon me the debentures had been fixed.
2122. You did not meet him until the price was actually fixed?—No.
2123. It was after the £82,000 was fixed?—When it was closed.
2124. Up to that time you had never met him at all?—No.
2125. Have you had any benefit from this transaction, personally?—None whatever.
2126. And have you had any promise of any benefit, or any hint of any benefit coming to you from it?—No.
2127. Do you know of anyone else except the persons who made the commission out of it—the agents?—No.
2128. Of anyone who got anything in the shape of benefit beyond the exchange of the property and the money?—None except the commission agents and the vendor.
2129. With regard to Mr. McGugan—have you found Mr. McGugan, since he has been in the employ of the Government, a reliable man?—Yes.
2130. Have his recommendations to purchase been advantageous to the Government?—Yes; very much so.
2131. Have you found Inspector Ferry a capable and reliable man?—I believe him to be one of the most capable cattle-men in Queensland.
2132. *Cross-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* Are you capable of judging whether they are practical men or not?—I think so.
2133. Have you had personal experience with pastoral or station property?—I have been mixed up with station properties.
2134. Since when?—In my early youth.
2135. Then you gave that up?—It was only as the son of a farmer.
2136. A few acres?—Yes.
2137. Would you say that you had experience in station properties?—I deal in stock.
2138. Before you became a Minister?—Yes; in the business of commission agent.
2139. Your experience was as a commission agent prior to undertaking these purchases, and you have got some experience since?—I have a good general knowledge.
2140. What is your idea of this Commission; what is this Commission for?—Which Commission?
2141. This Commission now sitting?—To allow Mr. Vowles an opportunity to prove his statements made in the House.
2142. It is an inquiry into Mr. Vowles's truthfulness, is it not?—I should say so.
2143. Anyone using that expression would be saying the correct thing?—I should say so.

2144. That is what you understand, yourself?—That the whole question of Wando Vale was to be inquired into.
2145. Did you say that it was an inquiry into that on the 30th September, Mr. Vowles asked for the correspondence in connection with the negotiations to purchase Wando Vale by the Government, and you have never put those on the table of the House?—No, I told him, I think, in reply at some stage that they would be used at the inquiry.
2146. Into the truthfulness or otherwise of the member?—Yes. I stand by that.
2147. Did you intend that?—Certainly.
2148. So this inquiry is an inquiry into the truthfulness or otherwise of the member?—Yes.
2149. Are you responsible for the Commission?—The Chief Secretary is responsible.
2150. Did you suggest it to the Chief Secretary?—No, I did not.
2151. Will you say who is responsible?—The Premier suggested it; he is responsible.
2152. And it is really for political purposes is it, to be used at the next elections?—No, to clear the Government of a charge that was made in the House.
2153. And for the purpose of using at the next elections?—No.
2154. Will you give your word that you will not use it at the next election?—No, I will not; nothing of the sort.
2155. It arises out of a statement made by Mr. Vowles in the House?—Yes.
2156. To which you replied?—Yes.
2157. Have you studied your speech?—No.
2158. You said in the House that, speaking of Mr. McGugan, "All station properties that are to be purchased have first to be inspected by him"?—Yes.
2159. That is not correct?—It is correct in a general sense. All reports and general inspection of reports come under his hands and are passed on.
2160. Didn't you intend the House to rely upon Mr. McGugan and you said, "All properties to be purchased have to be inspected by him"?—To pass his inspection and receive his approval.
2161. Does not "Pass under inspection" mean going over the property?—Not necessarily.
2162. You did not mean the House to believe that Mr. McGugan made a personal inspection of the property?—No, it would be impossible; several inspections were due at that time.
2163. It is unfortunate that you did not say, "Or other responsible officer," as you found it necessary to say just now when you were asked and you said, "Mr. McGugan or some other responsible officer." You were on your defence?—I do not consider that I am on my defence.
2164. About Mount Hutton and Wando Vale?—I think for political purposes a charge was made, and I think the public should be made acquainted with the facts.
2165. You still say you are not using this for political purposes?—No.
2166. Then why not give a commission on Mount Hutton too?—We have sold Mount Hutton and made a profit out of it.
2167. You know what Mr. Vowles said about bad management?—He said the number of cattle mentioned in the books were not there. We did not complete the muster, so that a commission could do nothing.
2168. When you complete the muster will you consider the matter of a commission?—Consider anything.
- Mr. Macrossan:* In due course.
2169. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Then in another statement in the House you said, "The furthest back I can get a quotation for Wando Vale is in 1913. According to a letter received from Mr. Suter, who is one of the Hughenden commission agents, and who once had this property on his books, the price for the station on his books was £65,000, walk-in-walk-out." Is that the letter that you got from Suter?—No.
2170. What was the quotation that you had furthest back in 1913?—I think that was some reference to Mr. Barnes's letter, I think it is further on.
2171. You say that you did not intend the House to think that Mr. Suter's letter (*Exhibit 67*) was the quotation for 1913?—No; there is no date attached there.
2172. He writes in 1917, he does not say when, he says he burnt the papers because the Government had purchased, leaving you to believe that he had it on his books at the time of the Government purchase?—No.
2173. Supposing it was in Mr. Suter's books at £65,000 and the Government paid £82,000 that would be bad business?—I should say so.
2174. If Suter says that Barnes, in June, 1916, gave him the property at £65,000, with 10,000 head of cattle, that means that there was bad purchasing somewhere?—I would not believe him. I would ask Mr. Barnes; I would know by what authority he had it on his books. Plenty of commission agents have properties on their books without the authority of the owner, and I should ask Mr. Barnes before I believed him.
2175. Mr. Suter says, "Mr. Barnes gave us Wando Vale about June or July, 1916, with 10,000 cattle, for £65,000?—I would not believe it unless Mr. Barnes said it.
2176. Well, Mr. Suter should be brought here?—Yes.
- Mr. Macgregor:* I am going to ask the Commission to get him here on oath.
2177. You admit then that if it was on Mr. Suter's books at £65,000 it was bad business?—No, I want to be satisfied that he had authority to put it on his books.
2178. It is your principle not to believe a man? If a man says "I am Smith," You would not believe it?—In the circumstances I would not.
2179. You have no reason to believe anything—that is your principle?—I would sooner believe Mr. Barnes.
2180. Mr. Barnes has not denied it?—Have you asked Mr. Barnes?
2181. Yes, he said there was a remote possibility of it being true; he would not swear that it was false; but he did not remember doing it.

2182. You said further, "What is more, before we bought the cattle we had a man up there for several months"?—Yes.
2183. Do you still stick to that?—Yes.
2184. You had a man there?—Yes.
2185. Who was he?—Mr. Ferry; he was in the district two or three months.
2186. During that time he wrote to the Government?—Whatever communication he made were to Mr. McGugan. I did not see all the communications between Mr. McGugan and him.
2187. You say that Mr. Ferry was on the property for a fortnight or seventeen days?—He was in the district for three months.
2188. During that time was he giving information to you about Wando Vale?—Wando Vale, amongst other things.
2189. He was doing that—you knew that he was not on the property—he was doing that without Mr. Barnes knowledge?—I do not know all his movements. He was sent there for the purpose of inspecting and reporting upon this property.
2190. You are certain that he was in that district before the first of August?—He left Brisbane before the first of August for the North.
2191. You say, "Before we bought the cattle, for several months." You actually signed the agreement on the 31st of August, 1916. How long before that do you say he was in the district, on the station?—A few weeks.
2192. You say, "Several months"?—He was in the district.
2193. You said, "We had a man up there for several months, who went through the property and wrote and told us that he was quite satisfied that between 2,000 and 3,000 more cattle were on the station than were being offered." Is that true?—Yes.
2194. He was up there before the purchase was made?—He was in the district for several months.
2195. Whereabouts in the district was he?—At Silver Plains and York Downs. He also visited Wando Vale during that trip. He was in the district for three months altogether.
2196. And before he went to inspect, did you have information about Wando Vale?—Wando Vale was one of the properties under offer.
2197. According to Mr. Ferry's correspondence Mr. Ferry never dreamed of going there before the first of August, that is not several months?—He was in the district for several months.
2198. What is, "Went through the property"—is that the inspection, or before the inspection?—I suppose he inspected when he went through the property.
2199. Do you mean to convey that, "Went through the property" was the inspection?—Yes.
2200. I suppose with your pastoral experience if you knew that there were 12,000 head of cattle on the station, and you knew that the man believed that there were 10,000, would you tell him that there were 12,000?—Would you?
2201. I believe I would. I do not deal in stock. I would say, "You think you have 10,000; I think you have more." Would you do it if you knew that a man had 12,000 cattle and you knew that he thought he had only 10,000? Would you tell him that he had more?—It was a book muster that we bought on. We satisfied ourselves of the book muster—that the cattle were there, and we paid on that.
2202. If you knew that he had 12,000 and you knew that he thought that there were only 10,000, would you tell him?—No.
2203. You read a letter to the House. You asked him if there was any truth in it. Did you suppress any part of that letter?—Yes, because it was irrelevant to the whole matter.
2204. You didn't tell the House that you were suppressing anything—everyone would believe that you read the whole letter—everyone in the House?—Not necessarily.
2205. Everyone except those on your own side of the House?—That part of the letter that I read dealt exclusively with the subject under review.
2206. You deliberately suppressed it?—Yes, that part.
2207. Without telling the House that you were suppressing a part of the letter, you avoided presenting that letter to the House, didn't you?—No.
2208. Mr. Vowles asked on the 12th of September, "Will the Hon. the Minister for Lands place that letter on the table?" You never did place that letter on the table of the House, did you?—No; the reply was that it would be made available with other documents at this inquiry.
2209. In the meantime you got Mr. Winstanley to get up and ask questions about Wando Vale?—Yes.
2210. That is the usual parliamentary procedure?—Yes.
2211. And you deliberately postponed your reply to Mr. Vowles to enable you to do that?—No.
2212. It was after that?—No; it was while the Premier was deciding about this Commission.
2213. You thought that you would have a little fun on your own?—There is no fun in this matter; it is serious for Mr. Vowles.
2214. It is more serious for you, though?—I don't think so.
2215. Do you know the property known as Kangaroo Hills?—I have heard of it.
2216. Did you have that under offer for £60,000?—Yes, it was under offer; I am not sure as to the amount. It was among other offers.
2217. It was suggested to Mr. McGugan and refused?—He did not recommend it. I am not in a position to say what the price was.
- Mr. Macgregor: Well, Mr. McGugan said about £60,000.
2218. Re-examined by Mr. Feez: You were asked about a letter quoted by you, or read by you in the House, and you were asked whether you did not suppress a certain part of it. I think you said, "Yes, a part had been suppressed"—is that a fair word to use, "Suppressed"?—I perhaps omitted the letter.
2219. Please look at Exhibit 36, a letter dated 9th July, 1917, from Mr. Barnes to the Pastoral Estates, Limited. Is that the letter?—Yes, that is the letter.

2220. What portion of that was omitted when you read the letter out to the House? "With the reports current at the time regarding the corrupt business methods of the Government I was agreeably surprised to know that"—those are the words that were omitted?—Yes.
2221. What do you say with regard to the omission of those words? Do you say it was a justifiable thing to do?—I think so.
2222. Had it anything to do with this particular matter at all?—Nothing at all.
2223. As a matter of fact these are the very words which gave the lie to the suggestion that there was corruption?—Exactly.
2224. Do you think it is a fair thing to allow to be published what you know to be untrue, when you know that it is not necessary?—I thought it would not be a fair thing to do.
2225. You were asked this morning if you knew that there were 12,000 head of cattle on a place offered, and you knew that he thought that there were only 10,000, would you let him know. I understood you to say you would not?—Well, what I meant by that was this, that in this particular case the purchase was being made on a book muster, an estimate, giving due allowance for a percentage of deaths and so forth. In these circumstances it was merely a matter of knowledge between the parties, there was no certainty. If I knew positively that a man was offering something for sale and called 10,000, when there were 12,000, I would tell him so. I have done so in my business transactions.
2226. This was simply a "walk-in-walk-out" transaction, you took the risk of there being 10,000, and he took the risk of there being 12,000?—We sent an inspector to see if we would be safe in buying on the 10,000.
2227. If you knew that there were more cows than you had bought you would not let the person know?—I have done it more than once.
2228. Knowing that a man was sending you a certain quantity, and he sent you more, would you accept them without saying anything?—No, I would not.
2229. When you referred to the matter you were dealing with this particular sale?—Yes, we were then buying on an estimate.
2230. Before you read this letter to the House you did not consult Mr. Barnes as to whether he would allow you to publish that statement about the Government?—No, I did not feel that I was justified in giving expression to an opinion with regard to rumours.
2231. It has been suggested that the object of this Commission was for political purposes. Is there any foundation for that suggestion?—None whatever, the Premier decided to have an inquiry because he considered it was a charge against the Government. Mr. Vowles said he could prove it. All the same I believe the charges were made purely for political purposes; it has been the continuous policy followed by the Opposition for a considerable time.
2232. As to this charge made by Mr. Vowles that this Commission of Inquiry was appointed to inquire into, do you look upon that as a charge of corruption against the Government?—Certainly, I do.
2233. You only wanted to clear yourselves of an untruth?—We think the public are entitled to know whether it is true or not.
2234. You see Mr. Vowles used the words in his speech with regard to Wando Vale that he regarded it as "A smellful transaction." Do you look upon that as a simple charge of incompetence or bad management?—I look upon it as a charge of corruption against the Government—as a corrupt transaction.
2235. And this inquiry was to clear that charge up?—That is so.
2236. Of course, if there was anything in the nature of corruption on the part of any one connected with this transaction it should be made known?—Any one guilty should be found out and punished.
2237. That is the attitude that you adopt?—Yes.
- [The witness then retired.]
- J. H. S. BARNES, on his former oath, recalled and further cross-examined:
2238. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Do you remember me asking you about putting this into the hands of Mr. Suter—you said you knew Mr. Suter and Mr. Suter was an honourable man?—Yes.
2239. If Mr. Suter says you put Wando Vale in their hands at £65,000 in June or July, 1916, with 10,000 cattle, will you deny it?—I told you before that it would be very improbable.
2240. Will you deny that you put Wando Vale into Mr. Suter's hands for sale at £65,000?—I won't deny it.
- The Commissioner:* Not if Mr. Suter says so.
2241. *By Mr. Macgregor:* In June or July, 1916?—Yes.
2242. Well, then, if you had put Wando Vale in Mr. Suter's hands for £65,000 in June or July?—I won't deny it.
2243. You won't deny it, because you know it is the truth?—I don't know that it is the truth; it is the furthest from my thoughts that I would do such a thing.
2244. You have no reason to doubt that that is Mr. Suter's telegram, have you? It says, "Barnes gave us Wando Vale at £65,000 in June or July with 10,000 cattle"—is that the truth?—I cannot say it is.
2245. Can you say that it is not?—I cannot rely upon my memory. I cannot remember—I am here to tell the truth.
- Mr. Macgregor:* I ask Your Honour to subpoena Mr. Suter.
- The Commissioner:* You can make that application later on.
2246. *Further re-examined by Mr. Feez:* You say you have no recollection of putting it in Mr. Suter's hands at £65,000?—No.
2247. Would you at that time, June or July, 1916, think of selling at £65,000?—No, I would not.
2248. There is no doubt about that?—No; no doubt about that.
2249. Would you have sold under £80,000 at that time?—No, most emphatically I would not.
2250. Or at the time of the sale?—No.

2251. Now, at the present moment, it is suggested, or at least Mr. Suter apparently says that he got particulars from you in June or July, 1916, at £65,000—what do you say as to the value of £82,000 in August, 1916, of that place, knowing what you know now with these statements?—I consider I made a very bad bargain, with the knowledge I have now.

2252. *Further cross-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* Would you think it is a fair thing for Mr. McGugan or anyone else if they knew you had 12,000 cattle, and they knew that you thought you had only 10,000—would you think it fair on the part of the Government to pay without telling you?—I would not expect them to tell me.

2253. You don't think they are taking you down?—No.

The Commissioner: It is quite evident that it was one estimate against another estimate.

[Witness then retired.]

Does that conclude the evidence?

Mr. Feez: No, Your Honour, there is Mr. Ferry, the inspector; I want to call him. I understand that he will arrive to-morrow, and I suggest adjourning until Friday.

Mr. Macgregor: I ask Your Honour to get Mr. Suter's evidence.

The Commissioner: What branch of the inquiry does Mr. Suter's evidence bear on?

Mr. Macgregor: On the fourth question: Is it "a fair and reasonable price," if it was saleable at £65,000, to pay £82,000? These telegrams passed. We sent a telegram to Suter on the 1st of October, "Did you have Wando Vale for sale in August, 1916; if so, state particulars, and from whom?"

The answer was, "Barnes gave us Wando Vale in June or July, 1916, with 10,000 cattle."

The Commissioner: What do you say, Mr. Feez, as to this application?

Mr. Feez: It is a matter entirely for Your Honour. It seems to me to be a very wide and remote sort of matter in connection with the inquiry; but we are not here to block anything.

The Commissioner: It appears to me to have some bearing on the question whether it is "a fair and reasonable price."

How long will it take to get Mr. Suter here?

Mr. Macgregor: I should say about a fortnight, though we could wire the subpoena to the police at Hughenden, and he could come overland.

Mr. Feez: Of course, it is hoped, naturally, that a report from the Commissioner should be given as soon as possible, and if this delay is to take place I will certainly ask you to report on the matters that have so far been disposed of, if we are going to adjourn for a fortnight.

The Commissioner: At the present time I am doubtful whether the evidence of Mr. Suter—assuming that Mr. Suter gives evidence to the effect of the telegram—is more than slight evidence on this fourth question.

Mr. Macgregor: Even slight evidence, Your Honour, I submit you should have it.

The Commissioner: Supposing that is true.

Mr. Feez: It is the remotest evidence, if any.

The Commissioner: I can hardly say that it might not have some slight bearing upon it.

Mr. Macgregor: Another point has arisen—that telegram of the 27th ultimo, which Mr. O'Hagan read out last Thursday—by that, Mr. Gannan was supposed to be in *articula mortis* on that day; but he might be improving. You could have Mr. Gannan's books here.

The Commissioner: I will consider the question and let you know.

Mr. Macgregor: Would you allow me to add that every effort should be made to get the evidence from Mr. Gannan's office.

The Commissioner: Do you know the name of Mr. Gannan's manager?

Mr. Feez: He is an old employee named Cox.

Mr. Macgregor: It is a matter of books.

Mr. Feez: If we are going into that he should be brought down.

Mr. Macgregor: I ask that Mr. Gannan's books be brought down.

The Commissioner: Mr. Gannan's state of health makes it impossible for him to be here; if the books are produced by some person in charge of his office that would suffice.

Mr. Feez: This man Cox, I believe, was a partner of Mr. Gannan's, and is now on his own. He may be able to give some information.

Mr. Macgregor: I will add Mr. Cox's—Edmund Cox's—name to that of Mr. Suter in the one application, Your Honour.

The Commissioner: In the meantime, Mr. Feez, you wish to have an *interim* report on the matters not affected by Mr. Suter's evidence? I will consider that also, and let the parties know on Friday.

Mr. Macgregor: May I, Your Honour, tender copy Nos. 28, 29, 30, and 31, of the "Votes and Proceedings" of the Legislative Assembly, 1917, page 222 of No. 28 [copy admitted and marked *Exhibit* 69]; page 229 of No. 29 [copy admitted and marked *Exhibit* 70]; page 231 of No. 30 [copy admitted and marked *Exhibit* 71]; and page 239 of No. 31 [copy admitted and marked *Exhibit* 72].

The Commissioner: After Mr. Ferry's evidence has been given you will be ready to address on question (1), (2), and (3), and let number (4) stand over?

Mr. Macgregor: I may have to submit that I am handicapped by the absence of Mr. Gannan's and Mr. Suter's evidence.

The Commissioner: I understand from you that they do not allege to have any bearing on questions (1), (2), and (3)?

Mr. Macgregor: Mr. Gannan's evidence and Mr. Gannan's books are the final resort to prove.

The Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Gannan's books would have some bearing on question (1) (a). We had better allow the matter to stand over until Friday morning.

Mr. Macgregor: You will not expect addresses on Friday morning, Your Honour?

The Commissioner: No, I think perhaps Mr. Gannan's evidence will have some bearing on question (1) (a).

[Commission adjourned to 5th October, 1917.]

(LAND COURT, BRISBANE.)

FRIDAY, 5 OCTOBER, 1917.

SEVENTH DAY.

STANLEY HERBERT LEWIS FERRY, Station Manager, sworn and examined:

2254. *By Mr. Macrossan*: What is your present position?—Manager of Dotswood Station.
2255. Situated in?—In the Kennedy District, Charters Towers.
2256. And is that adjacent to Wando Vale?—No, it is some distance away from Wando Vale.
2257. About how far is it from Wando Vale?—I really don't know exactly; somewhere about 100 miles, I should think.
2258. And Dotswood is a cattle station isn't it?—Yes.
2259. With an area of about 2,100 square miles?—Yes.
2260. And a herd of about 16,000?—Yes.
2261. And you are managing that for the Government of Queensland?—The State Government?—Yes.
2262. Have you had considerable experience among cattle, Mr. Ferry?—I have had a life's experience.
2263. You were born on a cattle station owned by your father?—Yes.
2264. And lived on it until you were about thirteen, until your father died—is that it?—Yes.
2265. And after that you have been among cattle ever since?—Ever since.
2266. And prior to entering the service of the State Government you have been employed by the Queensland National Bank?—Yes.
2267. In connection with their pastoral properties?—Yes.
2268. You were acting manager of one particular place; what was the place?—I was relieving manager of Bloomsbury, Wetheron, and Yabba.
2269. And you have carried out inspections for them, have you?—Not for the Queensland National Bank; for McPhie and Co.
2270. And are you well acquainted with the district in the North where Wando Vale is situated?—Yes; fairly well acquainted with it.
2271. And are you acquainted with the class of cattle on the different stations there?—Yes.
2272. Now, about the end of July, you received certain instructions from Mr. McGugan?—Yes.
2273. July, 1916—last year?—Yes.
2274. And in consequence of those instructions you proceeded to Wando Vale?—Yes.
2275. Arriving there about the beginning of August last year?—Yes.
2276. And on Wando Vale did you carry out an inspection of the property and the stock?—Yes.
2277. Did you make a thorough inspection?—Yes.
2278. Was it such an inspection as would enable you to give a full and reliable report as to what was the nature of the property and the stock thereon?—Yes.

2279. You were on the property, I understand, Mr. Ferry, for over a fortnight?—Yes.
2280. And during that time you went all over the place?—Practically, yes.
2281. Now, whilst on the property, you heard from Mr. Bowman, the manager for Mr. Barnes, the price at which the place was under offer to the Government as a going concern?—Yes.
2282. And subsequently you met Mr. McGugan at Ravenswood Junction, was it?—At Pentland.
2283. About the 19th August?—Yes.
2284. And he confirmed that price that you had previously heard?—Yes.
2285. Did you then give Mr. McGugan a verbal report of your inspection?—Yes.
2286. And were you requested to give a written report?—No.
2287. Well, did you give a written report?—Yes.
2288. Just have a look at this. [*Hands witness Exhibit 54.*] Is that your report, Mr. Ferry?—Yes.
2289. I suppose you remember the contents of it fairly well?—Yes.
2290. And have you any reason to vary it in any way?—No, I have not.
2291. How does Wando Vale country compare as cattle country with the general class of country in that district?—Almost equal to any, I think, round about that district.
2292. Now, the class of cattle on Wando Vale—how would you describe those?—They are a fairly good class.
2293. Somebody has said that they are described as "lemonade bottles with buffalo horns"—did you see any cattle like that there?—No.
2294. Now, Mr. Ferry, you give in your report, as the number of cattle you estimate on the place, 12,000?—Yes.
2295. Now, did you regard that as an underestimate?—No; yes it was.
2296. Did you think there would be at least 12,000 turn up?—Yes.
2297. And did you expect more to turn up?—Probably a few more—Yes.
2298. And you confirmed that estimate from your own personal inspection; is that so?—Yes.
2299. And from what you were told about the numbers mustered?—Yes.
2300. And what you could see?—Yes.
2301. You put in your report, "I gave you a list of improvements and so on. They have allowed 7 per cent. for their losses since 1912 each year." That information, I suppose, you got from Mr. Bowman, did you?—Yes.
2302. Then you say, "Last year they wiped off 12½ per cent., which left roughly about 17,000, which Mr. Barnes cut down to 10,000 when he gave you the offer. In this I am sure they have over-estimated their loss." That is your opinion?—Yes.
2303. And you know that your opinion has been confirmed?—Yes.
2304. Now, the last words in that report of yours are, "I think this is a good proposition." At that time, what did you believe to be the price that was to be paid?—£85,000.

2305. And do you still think it would have been a good proposition to purchase it at £85,000?—Yes.
2306. *Cross-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* How long have you been on Dotswood Station—as manager, I mean?—About twelve months.
2307. Twelve months back from now?—Yes; of course, I was representing the Government there during the delivery, you see.
2308. This is October, 1917. You took up your duties as manager about October, 1916?—No, I arrived at Dotswood somewhere about 6th September, 1916.
2309. As manager?—Well, no; Mr. Taylor was manager for Barnes and Lawson. I was there to take delivery for the Government.
2310. I got a wrong impression. I got an impression that you came across from Dotswood to Wando Vale. You were not on Dotswood at the time?—No.
2311. Where were you in July, 1916?—In Roma; in the Maranoa.
2312. And did you go from Roma to Wando Vale?—Yes.
2313. Had you ever been on Wando Vale before?—No, not on Wando Vale before.
2314. Well, it is not correct to say that you were in the district for several months before the sale took place?—No; but I had been round about the district previous to this time of going up.
2315. Can you tell us exactly when?—Yes; well, about five years before I had left the district; I had been round there, though, two or three years previously, you see, backwards and forwards, droving from Dotswood Station for the Queensland National Bank.
2316. Which did you say—five years, or two or three years? Which is it?—It is about five years at the time I went back—from the time I left until I returned this time for the Government.
2317. That is very vague; I cannot follow that. You got to Wando Vale about 1st August, 1916?—Yes.
2318. How long before that was it that you had been in that district?—About five years.
2319. And you went from the Maranoa District to Wando Vale for the express purpose of inspecting Wando Vale?—Yes.
2320. Who asked you to go—Mr. McGugan, or the Minister, or who?—Mr. McGugan.
2321. I take it, then, the only thing you did with respect to Wando Vale was to go up and inspect it for fourteen or fifteen days, come down to Pentland and meet Mr. McGugan, write your report a few days afterwards, and then make arrangements to go to Dotswood?—Yes; I returned to Brisbane afterwards.
2322. Well, you came down to Brisbane after you had finished with Wando Vale?—Yes.
2323. How long were you at Wando Vale, Mr. Ferry?—I arrived there somewhere about the 2nd August, I think, and left on the 18th.
2324. We know you were in Pentland on the 19th?—Yes.
2325. It would take about a day to come down, would it?—Two days.
2326. Well, you must have left about the 17th?—I think I left on the 18th and came to Laurelworth, and come to Pentland on the 19th.
2327. Well, you had finished your inspection of Wando Vale on the 17th or the 16th?—Yes; on the 17th I think it was.
2328. You say Wando Vale is almost equal to any property round about that district?—Yes, I think so.
2329. Not quite equal?—Possibly it is not. I don't think there is a great deal of difference.
2330. They are pretty poor, in your opinion, are they?—Oh, no; they are fairly good properties, the general run of them.
2331. Yes; but the general run of them are slightly better than Wando Vale; you say Wando Vale is almost equal?—To the best.
2332. Which is the best run there, in your opinion?—I really don't know which would be considered the best.
2333. Have you inspected any others for the purpose of forming a judgment?—No.
2334. It is only talk amongst cattle men?—Yes.
2335. They are on the basalt country, all these, are they not?—Basalt, yes.
2336. And it is rather mountainous, apparently, from your report?—In parts.
2337. You advocated the wiring off of about 100 square miles?—Yes.
2338. If you look at the first page on your report you will see it at the bottom there?—Yes.
2339. By the by, is this the first time you have seen your report since you came down?—Yes.
2340. You did not see it yesterday?—No.
2341. Did you have any communication or conversation with Mr. McGugan yesterday?—No.
2342. Or the Minister?—No.
2343. You have not told anybody what you were going to say?—No.
2344. Then you say the cattle on Wando Vale are a fairly good class?—Yes, fairly good class.
2345. Not the best class either?—No.
2346. How do they compare with the Dotswood cattle?—Dotswood is a good breed of cattle. Dotswood are a Shorthorn-Devon cross.
2347. Is that a better cross than the Shorthorn-Hereford, in your opinion?—Well, I like it better.
2348. These cattle are bred for meat, I suppose, are they?—Yes.
2349. And the more meat they carry the better? The Dotswood cattle—are they heavier than the Wando Vale cattle?—I fancy there would be a little difference in the weight.
2350. What do you judge Wando Vale cattle would run?—
The Commissioner: That is a bullock you mean?
Mr. Macgregor: Yes, bullocks?
Witness: What ages?
2351. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Well, what is the saleable age? The first saleable age is about three years, is it?—About four years.

2352. Well, what are the fours?—They would average somewhere about 680 to 700, I should think.
2353. That is fat, is it?—Yes.
2354. Did you see any fat cattle when you were there?—Where?
2355. When you were inspecting, I mean, on Wando Vale?—Yes.
2356. Many?—Well, roughly, I should say there would be about 1,200.
2357. Fat bullocks?—Yes.
2358. Mr. McGugan writes on the 19th August, and he says, "Mr. Ferry reports that 5,000 cows have been counted." Was that information from Mr. Bowman?—Yes.
2359. Had the muster, or partial muster, finished before you got there?—Partly, yes.
2360. And was there any mustering while you were there?—Yes, they were still mustering.
2361. And up to what numbers had they got before you left on the 17th; do you remember?—No, I had not seen the muster after I had arrived there. I had been out on to that part, you see; I had been over it previously.
2362. "The manager states"—I take it Mr. McGugan means that it is what Mr. Bowman stated to you—"that he will not at present muster any more cattle, as they are very much scattered, and it would knock them about too much to muster." Were you asking for a muster?—No; they were taking the muster, and going on with it as far as I know.
2363. Do you know how many cattle were actually mustered on Wando Vale, from any source whatever—from hearsay or any knowledge of your own?—No; only just hearsay.
2364. From whom did you hear it?—From Mr. Bowman.
2365. What did Mr. Bowman tell you?—That he had mustered somewhere about 12,000. I forget what date I received the letter; it was some time back.
2366. Were those the words—"somewhere about 12,000"?—No; he said, "There are 12,000 branded cattle on Wando Vale at the present time."
2367. Well, did you and Mr. Bowman have any discussion whatever as to the numbers on Wando Vale?—The estimated numbers?
2368. Yes; did not you say to Mr. Bowman, "Cannot you give me anything near the number on Wando Vale"?—No.
2369. You never asked him for any information as to the number?—None at all.
2370. Did you tell him when you came back what your idea of the number on Wando Vale was?—No.
2371. You and Mr. Bowman, I suppose, saw a good deal of one another during the sixteen days?—Yes.
2372. And kept absolutely silent about the number of cattle on Wando Vale?—Yes.
2373. When did you get Mr. Bowman's letter telling you there were about 12,000 branded cattle?—I really forget the date.
2374. This year?—It was some time back. Yes, probably it would be in the beginning of this year.
2375. This 12,000 might have included a good many that you did not see, branded since your inspection?—I think not.
2376. He did not tell you whether that was so or not?—No.
2377. Did you and Mr. Bowman have any conversation about the price of Wando Vale?—Only that he told me that Mr. Barnes was asking £85,000 for it; that is the day I was leaving.
2378. He knew you were there inspecting for the Government, did he?—Yes.
2379. Of course he would not tell you whether there had been any lower offer at any time?—No.
2380. You would not expect him to tell you, even if he knew?—No.
2381. Had you ever heard, apart from Mr. Bowman, that Wando Vale had been under offer at any lower figure at any time?—No.
2382. Never heard?—No.
2383. Did you make the figure £85,000 yourself?—Yes.
2384. How did you make up £85,000 as the value of Wando Vale on 16th August, 1916?—I valued the cattle at somewhere about £70,000 I think.
2385. Yes; but how many cattle; on what basis per head did you arrive at £70,000?—At £7 per head.
2386. 10,000 head, that would be?—Yes.
2387. 10,000 head at £7—that would be £70,000?—Yes. Well, the value of the improvements, I think, was somewhere about £5,000 odd, and the plant £120; and the value of the lease was somewhere about £10,000 on my valuation.
2388. Did not you and Mr. McGugan make it out on a bit of paper?—We discussed the matter on the way down from Pentland.
2389. And did not you calculate on the basis of 12,000?—No, on 10,000.
2390. That is your report you are looking at there?—Yes.
2391. Well, look at Mr. McGugan's letter which is the exhibit in front of that; do you see that?—Mr. McGugan's figures?
2392. You see that letter. Look at the first part of it. Just to make it clear, that is written on the 19th. It is dated from Ravenswood Junction, which, I take it, is a little down the line from Pentland?—Yes.
2393. Further in towards Townsville?—Yes.
2394. And it is on the 19th—the day you gave him your verbal report?—Yes.
2395. Look at the last page and you will see that he is giving the values of the cattle. You see "Stock—10,000 cattle, 350 horses, £69,000"; and then underneath "Horses £2,100"?—Yes.
2396. He got those figures from you, didn't he?—Yes, we were discussing this.
2397. Now look at that yellow sheet; do you see that?—Yes.
2398. Do you know Mr. McGugan's handwriting?—Yes.
2399. Do you recognise it there?—Yes.
2400. Well, you look at that £69,900, which are the figures he must have got from you on the 19th; you see that they are made up on the basis of 12,330 cattle?—Yes.

2401. Is not that so?—Yes.
2402. So that your figures were made up on a basis of 12,330 cattle, weren't they?—No; we were discussing the 10,000 when I was with Mr. McGugan. Of course, probably he has made this up afterwards.
2403. Was not that done in your presence?—No, not that I am aware of.
2404. Well, the curious thing is that, in the letter he writes, he gives the same figures. You see, it is supposed to be his account of your report, and he gives exactly those figures—£69,900—for the stock.
- Mr. Macrossan:* Oh, he gives 10,000 stock.
- Witness:* I told him, at the time we were discussing the proposition, that my estimate was 12,000—but I worked my figures out on the 10,000.
2405. *By Mr. Macgregor:* That is what I was coming to. I am putting it to you that the £69,900 is arrived at on a basis of 12,330 head of cattle, and if there had been only 10,000 it would have been much lower. You don't follow me, Mr. Ferry. You see the figures there are £69,900?—Yes.
2406. I am suggesting to you that that is on the basis of 12,330 head of cattle and not 10,000 head; if you had thought there were only 10,000, would not you have put a much lower value for the stock?—Of course, we valued it at 10,000. We only surmised that the 12,000 were there; we were not absolutely certain about it.
2407. That is what you say. Then, if there were only 10,000 of the same quality cattle as you had seen on Wando Vale, you would still consider they were of the value of £70,000?—Yes.
2408. I suppose it was not any part of your duty to find out whether it could be purchased at any less price than £85,000?—No.
2409. If you were inspecting for the Q.N. Bank, would not you have tried to find out the lowest figures it could have been bought for?—As a rule, if you try to find out, you don't get much information.
2410. Oh! Surely. Hughenden is reeking with agents, isn't it?—Yes.
2411. There are a good many stock and station agents in Hughenden, I am told?—Yes, I believe there are.
2412. At any rate, you did not consider it part of your duty to find out whether it could be purchased at a lower price than £85,000?—I did not get much of a chance to do so. Still, it was good value at the money. I thought, when I was there inspecting.
2413. And you did not care whether it could be bought at any less price?—No, there is good value in it at £85,000.
2414. And if Mr. Barnes could get £85,000 for it, good luck to him?—[No answer.]
2415. You had said nothing to Mr. McGugan or any member of the Lands Department—I mean there was no letter containing any information—before that verbal report that you gave to Mr. McGugan?—Yes, I have an idea a letter went in previously to that.
2416. From you?—Yes.
2417. To whom?—To Mr. McGugan.
2418. Well, you only have an idea; can you go any further than that?—
2419. *By the Commissioner:* Before your verbal report to Mr. McGugan, did you write to him?—Yes; there was one letter I had written to him, I think, previously.
2420. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Where would you be when you wrote it?—At Wando Vale.
2421. Of course it was about Wando Vale that you wrote?—Yes.
2422. And you have not a copy of the letter?—No, I have not.
2423. Can you remember what was in it, or what was its effect?—Only describing a portion of the country, and that sort of thing; the kind of cattle I had seen up to that time, and the quality of the country.
2424. Was it of any use to form a judgment on?—As regards the numbers and that sort of thing it would not be.
2425. No, you had not finished your inspection?—No.
2426. You would not be able to say then whether you estimated more than they thought was on the place?—No.
2427. You cannot remember the effect of the letter?—No, I cannot; except that I know it was a report in reference to the class of country and that sort of thing.
2428. You are quite certain you did send one, are you?—Yes.
2429. And wrote it from Wando Vale Station?—Yes.
2430. Have you been manager of a good many stations, Mr. Ferry?—No.
2431. One or two?—Yes; I was relieving manager for the Q.N. Bank, on two or three different properties.
2432. Have you ever left one that has been sold; I mean has your occupation ceased as manager because the station has been sold to somebody else?—No; I was at Wetheron when most of the stock was sold by auction, and I went to another place; that was for the Q.N. Bank.
2433. Did you ever hear of any stationowner whose station had been sold, burning all his books after it was sold?—Oh, I don't know; of course, if he is going out of the business, I don't suppose the books would be of much use to him afterwards.
2434. They would be of use to the man who was coming on afterwards, would not they?—Not much.
2435. He could form a comparison as to costs of the previous years, couldn't he?—The stock books may be useful; as a rule, the general ones would not be.
2436. Did you hear of anybody burning his books?—No, I cannot say I have.
2437. *Re-examined by Mr. Macrossan:* Mr. Ferry, have you yourself destroyed correspondence which you regarded as of no further use?—Yes.
2438. And when you went up to Wando Vale originally you were asked to report on the offer of 10,000 head of cattle at £7 per head?—Yes.
2439. And subsequently you were re-instructed to report on the country as well, and the whole of the herd?—Yes.
2440. And as a result of your inspection you came to the conclusion that there were 10,000 head of cattle there, worth £7 a head?—Yes.

(LAND COURT, BRISBANE.)

THURSDAY, 11 OCTOBER, 1917.

EIGHTH DAY.

The Commissioner: Have you got your witnesses, Mr. Macgregor?

Mr. Macgregor: Yes, Your Honour.

Mr. Feez: Before these witnesses are called, Your Honour, it has been suggested, and I put it before you, that Mr. Morgan should be called at a witness, that is Mr. Godfrey Morgan, the member for Murilla. Mr. Morgan was present when this conversation between Mr. Vowles and Mr. Pym took place, and I think we should have Mr. Morgan's version of what took place.

The Commissioner: Why? I don't think there is any dispute about the conversation.

Mr. Feez: There is a good deal of discrepancy.

The Commissioner: I don't think there is very much discrepancy.

Mr. Feez: I think there is a very serious one, and I will point that out when I come to the addresses. However, it is a matter for Your Honour to decide, whether he as a witness should be called or not. Mr. Morgan made a speech in the House, in which he alleged that the station could have been sold for £5,000 less than the Government paid for it.

The Commissioner: That is the thing that Mr. Vowles wanted to correct.

Mr. Feez: Mr. Vowles says that is why he made his speech. This is what Mr. Morgan said in connection with the purchase of Wando Vale:—"I wish to refer to the purchase of the Wando Vale Station. In connection with that purchase we know that that very station was listed by the auctioneers in that district at £5,000 less than the Government paid for it. I want the Treasurer to reply to that, and to tell us why the Government paid £5,000 more for that station than this firm of auctioneers asked for it." Mr. H. L. Hartley: You missed a jolly good deal when you did not buy it. Mr. Morgan: "That is not the point. The point is that an auctioneer living in that locality had the station listed for a certain price, but the Government came along and paid £5,000 more than the auctioneer was prepared to sell it for to any private individual." What I suggest is that Mr. Morgan must have been referring to Gannan when he made that statement, and we ought to have it from Mr. Morgan.

The Commissioner: He was probably referring to the rumours circulated by someone else. Mr. Vowles said he was.

Mr. Feez: He could not have been doing that, since he said: "That is not the point. It is listed by an auctioneer for £5,000 less than the Government paid for it."

The Commissioner: I do not think it is necessary to call Mr. Morgan, Mr. Feez.

Mr. Feez: He then goes on:—"I infer that there ought to be a proper inquiry into it. I know that the typewritten list of properties for sale, which I obtained, shows in round figures that that property could have been purchased at £5,000 less than the Government actually paid for it."

Mr. Macgregor: Is that correct? I don't think he ever had anything to do with the herd as a herd, had he?

Mr. Macrossan: Oh! yes, the first thing. There was no firm offer at all until 10th August; they were asking for it, but they did not get it.

Mr. Macgregor: Ask him.

2441. *By Mr. Macrossan:* Mr. Ferry, what was the first suggestion that you were to inspect?—I went up to inspect the 10,000 cattle.

The Commissioner: Mr. Macgregor, do you want to ask anything further on that? He said his first instructions were to inspect 10,000 head of cattle?

2442. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Your memory is clear on that, Mr. Ferry?—Yes.

2443. You did not go up to inspect the place as a going concern first?—No; I only received word at Townsville to inspect the place as a going concern; they wired me afterwards.

2444. That was before you had been on the place?—Yes.

2445. And therefore you never actually went to the place to inspect the cattle merely?—No.

2446. Before you actually got on the place you got your instructions to inspect it as a going concern?—Yes.

2447. *By Mr. Macrossan:* And when did you first know of the offer as a going concern, Mr. Ferry?—Towards the end of August, when I arrived at Townsville.

Mr. Macgregor: The end of July, he means.

Witness: Yes, the end of July.

2448. *By Mr. Macrossan:* And when did you first know there was an offer of the place as a going concern at any particular price. Where did you get your first information from?—At Wando Vale.

2449. Whom from?—Mr. Bowman.

2450. You gave us that; that was on 17th August?—Yes.

[*The witness then retired.*]

The Commissioner: Well, now there is no other witness available?

Mr. Feez: No.

The Commissioner: I have issued subpoenas for Mr. Suter and Mr. Cox. They cannot get down before Thursday morning, I understand.

Mr. Macgregor: Mr. O'Hagan showed me a telegram, but I had not time to grasp it. I understood that they would be down on Wednesday.

The Commissioner: There was a subsequent telegram which stated that they could not get down until Thursday. I propose to adjourn until Thursday at 10.30. The evidence, I take it, will be concluded then, will it?

Mr. Feez: I think so, unless something crops up.

The Commissioner: Will you be able to go on with your addresses after the conclusion of the evidence? I have to get the report in as soon as possible.

Counsel intimated that they would proceed with their addresses immediately after the conclusion of the evidence.

The Commissioner: Very well; adjourn until 10.30 a.m. on Thursday.

[The Commission adjourned at 11.15 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. on Thursday, 11th October, 1917.]

The Commissioner: Do you think there is a possibility that Mr. Morgan might contradict Mr. Vowles and Mr. Pym?

Mr. Feez: I think he must. He says "a typewritten list of properties."

Mr. Macgregor: It is not an inquiry into what Mr. Morgan said.

Mr. Feez: No, it is an inquiry into the truth of the statement made by Mr. Vowles. That is one of the matters into which Your Honour has been asked to inquire, as to whether the price paid by the Government was a reasonable price.

The Commissioner: I do not think the conversation with Mr. Morgan would have any bearing on that.

Mr. Feez: It is suggested first of all that it could have been bought for £45,000, then £65,000, and next £77,000.

The Commissioner: What bearing has Mr. Morgan on this? It has no connection with the £65,000.

Mr. Feez: He says he obtained a list—"I know that the typewritten list of properties for sale, which I obtained, shows in round figures that that property could have been purchased at £5,000 less than the Government actually paid for it."

The Commissioner: That is not Mr. Pym's conversation.

Mr. Feez: No, not exactly, though it has a very important bearing on that. Mr. Morgan says he had a typewritten list which would show that the property could have been purchased for £5,000 less than this Government paid for it. I am here to get out everything possible that can be brought out in connection with this transaction; if there was a list showing that the property could have been purchased for £5,000 less than the Government paid for it, I think it should be before the court.

The Commissioner: I do not think we can follow everything said by everybody. We would be here indefinitely.

Mr. Feez: It is a statement made by a responsible member of the House, and has gone forth to the public, and if it is not correct, I think Mr. Morgan should be given an opportunity to withdraw it.

The Commissioner: This is not the place for Mr. Morgan to withdraw.

Mr. Feez: It is the place to find out if there is any truth in the statement, otherwise the statement must be considered as so much tittle-tattle.

The Commissioner: I do not think it is necessary. Do you want Mr. Morgan called, Mr. Macgregor?

Mr. Macgregor: No, Your Honour. It is an extension of the inquiry that is not required.

The Commissioner: That is so. As to your witnesses, Mr. Macgregor?

Mr. Macgregor: I am told that they are here.

The Commissioner: Mr. Suter is here.

Mr. Macgregor: I will call Mr. Suter.

JAMES VERNON SUTER, on being called, said:

Before I give evidence I would like to know what fees are coming to me. I got a notice from Mr. O'Hagan to say that I would get Supreme Court fees; that is only £1 1s. a day; that will not pay us for coming down here. That is an absurd price to pay business men.

The Commissioner: We cannot revise the scale, Mr. Suter.

Mr. Suter: I think you may have the power to give us a decent fee for coming here.

The Commissioner: Mr. O'Hagan informs me that the regulation dealing with fees applies the Supreme Court scale.

Mr. Suter: Then I have to give evidence at £1 1s. a day?

The Commissioner: I will not decide that question just now. You are here, however, and will have to give your evidence.

JAMES VERNON SUTER, sworn and examined:

2451. *By Mr. Macgregor:* What are you?—I am a stock and station agent.

2452. You are a member of the firm of J. V. Suter and Co.?—I am—sole proprietor.

2453. How long have you been carrying on business at Hughenden?—I commenced in August, 1886—thirty-one years ago.

2454. Do you know Mr. P. T. Gannan?—I do.

2455. How long have you known him?—Since he started business in Hughenden.

2456. Was that after you, or before you?—Long after me. I should say that Mr. Gannan has been in business for eighteen or twenty years.

2457. When did you leave Hughenden to come down here—was it last Wednesday or Thursday?—I left on Sunday night.

2458. How was Mr. Gannan when you left?—I have not seen Mr. Gannan since he took seriously ill and went to the hospital.

2459. You have not seen him in the hospital?—No.

2460. What was the condition of his health?—I have heard from his doctor that he is absolutely off his head.

2461. And was so on Sunday night last when you left?—Oh, I do not know that.

2462. *By the Commissioner:* You heard from his doctor?—Yes. He is off his head.

2463. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Do you know J. H. S. Barnes?—Yes.

2464. Do you know Wando Vale Station?—I have never been on it.

2465. You know that Mr. Barnes once owned it?—Mrs. Barnes owned it.

2466. Was Wando Vale ever placed in your hands for sale?—I had it for sale, yes, it was placed in my hands for sale.

2467. When?—I am not prepared to say when. I have wired to Mr. Barnes himself and others that it was in June or July, 1916. But, on going further into the matter, I find that it was earlier, I believe it was in February or March—I will tell you why. One of my clients to whom I offered it, a Mr. Peel, states I offered it to him in May.

2468. What time?—In May, 1916, at £65,000, with 10,000 head of cattle.

2469. *By the Commissioner:* Someone told you?—Mr. Peel, one of my clients. He didn't tell me; he told my clerk, who wired me since I left.

2470. *The Commissioner:* You have got a wire from your clerk, telling you something?—Yes.

2471. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Have you got that wire?—I have.

2472. *By the Commissioner:* You produce that wire?—Yes.

Mr. Macgregor: I tender that wire, Your Honour.

[*Telegram admitted and marked Exhibit 73 and read.*]

Telegram signed by Livingstone.

2473. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Livingstone is your clerk?—Yes.

2474. That means, of course, that you left Hughenden on Sunday night, and you were still under the belief that it was in June or July, 1916, that you got instructions from Mr. Barnes?—I had my doubts about it, therefore when I found out that I was subpoenaed to give evidence here I went into the thing properly, and I tried to find out about the time we offered it. I asked my clerk to see—to find out from Mr. Peel and Mr. Reid. I do not know that I said Mr. Peel, but I said he was a likely man to offer it to. Apparently Mr. Peel came to Hughenden and my clerk saw him, and that telegram is the result.

2475. *By the Commissioner:* You got your clerk to make inquiries?—Yes.

2476. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Do you remember Mr. Peel now?—Yes, I know him.

2477. Do you remember it yet?—No.

2478. You don't know whether Mr. Peel turned it down?—He did not take it, so I presume he turned it down.

2479. *By the Commissioner:* You do not remember making this offer personally?—I do not.

2480. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Who gave you instructions to sell or offer Wando Vale at £65,000?—I am only quoting from memory. I have no documents to prove it, but I believe Mr. Barnes gave it to me personally.

2481. *By the Commissioner:* You believe that?—Yes.

2482. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Were these instructions ever revoked by Mr. Barnes or anyone else?—Yes, I think in July, 1916. Barnes, I think, told me it was under offer, but he did not revoke it. He did not pull it out of my hands. He told me it was under offer through the Pastoral Estates Company.

2483. To the Government?—He did not say.

2484. Did he say at what figure?—No.

2485. He did not withdraw his instructions to you to sell for £65,000?—No, of course I knew I could not offer when it was under offer by someone else. All these places are offered subject to the owner's confirmation.

2486. *By the Commissioner:* You mean that if a property is put into your hands for sale, or for offer, you cannot sell without the owner's sanction?—No. We have always to refer it to the owner, as another agent may have sold it.

2487. *By Mr. Macgregor:* In connection with Mr. Peel, you say you have no memory, what is your idea? Would Mr. Peel make inquiries, or would you make a direct offer to him?—I will tell you what we do: When we get a place like that, when Mr. Barnes was in Hughenden, I

believe in February or March, I went and saw him, or rather my clerk went and saw him and came back and told me.

2488. *By the Commissioner:* You are telling me something that your clerk said?—He told me that Barnes would sell for £65,000, and guarantee 10,000 or more cattle. I think it was 10,000 head. He would naturally, but I will not swear that he did it, make out a short price list and send it around to the clients, but anyone who came into the office I would offer it to myself direct.

2489. *By Mr. Macgregor:* If he said he would buy, you would refer it to Mr. Barnes?—I would ask for the offer.

2490. *By the Commissioner:* You would give him what you call a firm offer?—No, I would not give unless I referred it to Barnes. I would ask Mr. Barnes for a firm offer.

2491. *By the Commissioner:* During the time allowed in the offer he would inspect?—Yes.

2492. *By Mr. Macgregor:* When did you first hear what had happened to the offer through the Pastoral Estates Company?—I don't know when I heard.

2493. You said you heard from Mr. Barnes that it was offered through the Pastoral Estates Company; when did you hear the result of that offer?—I cannot say. I knew it was sold for £82,000.

2494. *By the Commissioner:* You heard that afterwards?—Yes.

2495. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Do you know Mr. Connor—the buyer for Mr. Naughton?—Yes.

2496. He says that on one occasion he went to your office, that Mr. Barnes was just leaving, and you said, "That is Barnes: he has sold Wando Vale for £80,000"—do you remember that?—It may have happened, but I do not remember it.

2497. You don't remember that you told him how you came to know how Wando Vale was sold to the Government for £82,000?—No. I have an idea that Mr. Barnes told me himself.

2498. Have you any idea when?—No, I have not.

2499. It has not remained in your memory at all. It would be a rather remarkable thing if Mr. Barnes came and told you that he had sold for £82,000 when you had it in your hands a month or two before for £65,000. You would say something about that, would you not?—No. I knew it was under offer, and when he told me that it was sold I have no doubt that I would ask him at what price.

2500. If you heard that it was £17,000 in advance of the figure at which you had it, you would make some remark on that, would you not?—I probably would, if it was under the same conditions. I would probably say it was sold well.

2501. What, at £82,000?—Yes.

2502. That means exceedingly well sold?—

2503. *By the Commissioner:* You see, Mr. Macgregor, he does not recollect all that.

2504. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Do you remember writing a letter to Mr. McGugan on the subject (*Exhibit 67*)?—(*Witness looks at Exhibit 67.*)

2505. That is addressed to Mr. McGugan?—Yes.

2506. And is dated June, this year?—Yes.

2507. In that you say, with regard to Wando Vale, all records were destroyed when the station was sold to the Government. How did you come to write that letter first of all, do you know?—Yes.

2508. June, this year?—Some time previous to this—it would be shortly previous to this—Mr. McGugan was in Hughenden, and in the course of a conversation with me he said, “You had Wando Vale for sale.” I said, “Yes.” He said, “What price,” and I told him £65,000, with 10,000 head of cattle. Some time after this I got a wire from Mr. McGugan. I think it was from Townsville. I have not got the wire with me—as a matter of fact I never looked for it.

2509. Do you remember the contents?—Yes. I had a wire from Mr. McGugan, asking me if I would write to him to the care of Dalgety’s, at Townsville—I think that was the address—what I had told him with regard to Wando Vale, and this is the outcome of it.

2510. This letter is addressed to Dalgety’s?—Yes. Before this letter was penned I confirmed the fact with my clerk that that was the price at which we held it.

2511. You say it is true to-day?—Yes.

2512. You had it at the very time that it was being offered through the Pastoral Estates Company to the Government?—I had it up to the time that Mr. Barnes told me that it was under offer through the Pastoral Estates Company.

2513. You say “We never offered it under this price”?—We never did.

2514. What about Mr. Peel?—Yes, I am not putting it quite accurate. That would, of course, refer to a reasonable period previously. I had the place in 1910, 1911, 1912 for sale from another agent—from Brodie and Co.

2515. That was a much lower figure?—I think the 1912 was 16,000 or 17,000 head of cattle for £45,000.

2516. That is from memory?—I have the particulars.

2517. I think Mr. Barnes said it was £42,000, that was in 1912 or 1913?—It was £42,000 in 1911.

2518. And £45,000 in 1912?—Yes.

2519. And this £65,000 figure, when was that given to you?—I think it was February or March, one month when Mr. Barnes passed through.

2520. You notice in that letter you say, “I consider it was a good sale when the terms, &c., are taken into consideration”?—Yes.

2521. Why did you put those words there—were you asked to put that in?—I believe Mr. McGugan said it was rumoured about Brisbane that I had this place on offer for £40,000—I am speaking from memory—it was rumoured in Brisbane that I was offering this place just before it was sold at £65,000. I said that was a lie. I said I considered it was a good deal. I considered it was a good deal for the Government.

2522. By the Commissioner: A good deal for the Government?—Yes, on the terms that I hear. If I am correct about the terms that Mr. Barnes got, it was a good deal for the Government.

2523. By Mr. Macgregor: You are saying that on what you know since?—Yes, I didn’t know the terms, but I knew them before I wrote this letter.

2524. Anybody who walked out with a lot of notes in his pocket and bought cattle stations at that time could not go wrong?—That is so.

2525. Can you tell us what your idea was in August, 1916?—When I heard of the sale?

2526. Did you think that £82,000 was a good deal for the Government?—No. I did not because I thought they were paying cash, afterwards I found that they were not. £82,000 in cash is a very different thing from £82,000 on terms. I said £82,000 was not such a great price, on account of the terms; as I understood then that Mr. Barnes had received very little cash, and the rest in calabashes, coupons—

Mr. Macgregor: Debentures.

The Commissioner: You have no high opinion of Government stock then? (Laughter.)

2527. By Mr. Macgregor: Did you ever hear that the price was £85,000?—Never.

2528. You never heard anything about £85,000?—Never.

2529. You don’t know that Mr. Barnes’s price was £85,000?—No, I have seen it in the papers since. I have seen it recently, that he could have got £85,000 if he had stuck out.

2530. Cross-examined by Mr. Feez: You say you consider that the Government made a good deal on the terms on which it was bought?—Yes.

2531. That was with 10,000 head of cattle on the place?—Well, I said that when I wrote this letter. I say it now because I know they got nearly 12,000 head of cattle.

2532. Ten thousand head of cattle, it was on these terms?—Yes, it would be 10,000 or more cattle, you see it was walk-in-walk-out.

2533. When you speak of that being a good deal for the Government you thought the guarantee was 10,000 head of cattle?—I knew it. I knew also that they got nearly 12,000, or 12,000 head.

2534. When did you know that?—From Mr. McGugan.

2535. You understood when you learned that the Government had bought it with 10,000 head of cattle for £82,000, on these particular terms that it was a good deal?—Yes, but I knew at the same time that they got more cattle.

2536. The vendor simply does not guarantee any number, except 10,000 head. He does not guarantee any more, it is walk-in-walk-out?—That is so.

2537. If there are more, then it is a better deal for the purchaser?—Yes.

2538. When you considered it was a good deal, you were considering it on the basis of 10,000 head of cattle in August, 1916, when they thought that they only bought 10,000 head?—In August, 1916, I did not know at what price they had it under offer.

2539. You said that Barnes told you he had sold?—Yes, he had sold.

2540. He had sold with 10,000 head. You thought then that it was a good deal for the Government?—I did.
2541. With 10,000 head of cattle?—On the terms, yes.
2542. If it turned out that there were nearer 13,000 head of cattle it would be a better deal?—It is a fine deal because the prices have been increasing all along.
2543. In August, 1916, you thought it was a good deal on these terms; if it turns out that there are nearly 13,000 head it is a much better deal?—Yes, I am not going to say, because that I did not know that there were 13,000 head of cattle on it when I said that.
2544. Mr. Barnes told you that he sold it?—Yes.
2545. That must have been before anyone knew the number?—That is so.
2546. Was that the time that you came to the conclusion that it was a good deal on these terms?—I do not know that I expressed that opinion then.
2547. Your idea was that it was all right if they sold 10,000 head; if the purchaser got 12,000 head or more, it was a still better deal?—Yes.
2548. As a matter of fact, the prices of cattle and stations have made a big rise between February and March, 1916, and July and August, 1916?—They have been rising all the time.
2549. Mr. Barnes has no recollection, he says, of having placed this station in your hands for sale. Can you tell us how he did it, can you remember?—No, that is why I said I was not going to swear to it. I cannot remember the time or place, and I do not swear to anything that I am not absolutely sure of.
2550. At all events there was nothing in writing?—No, nothing written.
2551. It must have been some conversation. I suppose, perhaps over a nip?—Probably it was at the club. I know I was there with him.
2552. *By the Commissioner*: There was no writing?—No, not the least. We often take a place like that.
2553. *By Mr. Feez*: I suppose when having a chat, Mr. Barnes might say, "If you can get an offer of £65,000"?—He said he would take £65,000 and guarantee 10,000 head of cattle. That is a common thing with a man like Mr. Barnes; I never ask for writing right away. I ask for writing when I get the offer.
2554. You did not consider that that gave you the right to sell?—No. I considered it gave me the right to ask for a firm offer.
- 2554A. If anyone came along and made an offer?—There is no one who would give an offer without inspection.
2555. Supposing someone offered to inspect at that price you would submit it to Mr. Barnes?—Naturally, that is the practice.
2556. That is the practice with stock agents?—That is right.
2557. You said you got it in 1912?—I do not know whether that refers to 1910 or 1911.
2558. It was from Brodie and Company?—Yes.
2559. All of the three 1910, 1911, 1912, were from Brodie and Company?—Yes.
2560. Is that also the custom of agents if one firm gets an offer, or gets a place put in their hands, they send it around to other agents?—That is so. We send it around if we have a buyer. I do not think it was done in this case. I think Mr. Barnes told me he did not want the place hawked. In that case we can only offer to those who we know are practical buyers.
2561. That is a common practice with stock and station agents?—Yes.
2562. For instance, Dalgety's get a place in their hands in your district; they might send to you and ask you to see if you could get someone to inspect at this price, or do you exchange lists?—We would send to other agents whom we usually do business with; we would send direct to them.
2563. If you had it you would send to other agents?—Yes.
2564. That is the way it would come to you from Brodie?—Yes. Brodie and Company at that time were probably the sole agents for it.
2565. As a matter of fact, so far as the placing of this place in your hands at £65,000, you have the dimmest of recollections. Anything that you remember now was recalled to your mind by your clerk?—It was not at the time—the first instance when I wrote to McGugan. I do not make rash statements like that unless I have something to go on. I would have something to go on before I would offer it to a client like Mr. Peel.
2566. You don't remember having offered it to Mr. Peel?—No, I may not have offered it personally, but Mr. Peel says he declined.
2567. Your recollection is perfectly dim about the whole thing. You do not recollect whether Mr. Barnes saw you?—That is quite natural. My memory is not good.
2568. I am not suggesting that it is. Some points have been made about the fact that you and Mr. Barnes are in difference about this: Mr. Barnes has no recollection whatever of having put it in your hands at £65,000 at any time, but if you say that it was in your hands Mr. Barnes says he will not contradict you?—Of course he will not.
2569. He has no recollection of having done so?—
2570. Your recollection is very dim about it?—I am not exactly a fool. I will not say—
2571. *By the Commissioner*: It is not a question of you being a fool, Mr. Suter, it is a question of your recollection. Mr. Barnes says he has no recollection of offering it to you. You say your recollection is dim about Mr. Barnes's offer?—I got it from someone.
2572. *By Mr. Feez*: After you discussed the matter first you thought it was in June or July, 1916?—Yes.
2573. You found that could not be so?—It is only on reference to Mr. Peel that I can tell you.
2574. Well, your clerk sent a wire to say that Mr. Peel said so; that Mr. Peel had it on offer for £65,000 in May, 1916. It must have been some time before you had it?—Yes.

2575. Well, it might have been early in February, or in March?—It would not be as early as that. I am suggesting that it was in 1916.
2576. It is evidently some conversation that you had with Mr. Barnes casually, and your recollection of what took place is perfectly dim?—Mr. Barnes could not say so himself if he recollected when he was in Hughenden.
2577. Mr. Barnes does not remember when he was in Hughenden, I suppose. I suppose Mr. Barnes was in Hughenden on more than one occasion?—He was there a good many times early in 1916.
2578. I suppose in 1915 also?—I do not know that. I am under the impression that it was in February or March, 1916, that I had it.
2579. Before you came down, before you got this information from Mr. Peel, your impression was that it was as late as June or July?—No, sir, I would swear to that.
2580. Do you remember sending a wire, too?—I wired to Mr. Barnes.
2581. And to Mr. Vowles?—Yes, I thought, that was Mr. Fowles, or he would never have got that wire. I thought it was the Under Secretary.
- Mr. Macgregor:* As a matter of fact, it is addressed to Mr. Fowles, Parliament House, Brisbane.
2582. *By Mr. Feez:* You wired that Mr. Barnes gave you Wando Vale in June or July, 1916, with 10,000 head of cattle?—Yes.
2583. You sent this yourself—it is signed Suter?—I did.
2584. Even at that time your memory was indistinct. You thought it was June or July, 1916?—Yes, but when I was subpoenaed and knew that I was to come down, I had to go very particularly into the matter.
2585. I suppose, before you sent this telegram, you discussed it with your clerk?—No, I discussed it with my clerk before I sent the wire to Mr. Barnes.
2586. You and your clerk thought it was June or July, 1916?—Yes.
2587. Both you and your clerk had a very dim recollection of the date—both of you must have had a very dim recollection of the date?—
2588. *By the Commissioner:* This witness, Mr. Feez, told you that he had no recollection at all when it was put into his hands. He concludes that it was put into his hands from the information given by his clerk.
2589. *By Mr. Feez:* I suppose you have hundreds of these passing through your hands?—I will not say hundreds; we have some.
2590. You say expressly that you forgot all about it; you thought that you did not have the particulars even?—Neither we have.
2591. You have particulars there?—We have no written particulars. All the written particulars that we had were destroyed when it was sold to the Government. We never thought it would be offered again.
2592. What are you looking at there?—I am only looking at the letter to Mr. McGugan.
2593. You have particulars about 1910, 1911, and 1912?—Yes, I did not know that; these were in an old book. I remembered that we had the place, but I did not know that we had these old particulars. I knew that 1916 had gone because we tried to find them.
2594. You have no recollection of having destroyed any particulars?—No, I do not think I destroyed them either. I think the clerk would do that.
2595. Your clerk would know?—Yes, when I told him that Mr. Barnes had sold he would dot it down. He would probably write memos. From what I can remember we never had the offer to give to other agents. We only had it to give to clients. We would simply send them a memo. saying that we could sell Wando Vale for £65,000, guaranteeing 10,000 cattle, and ask them if this was any use to them. We could give them the offer perhaps.
2596. Supposing that a client came to you, and said he wanted to get particulars—to get offers of stations on certain particulars, surely you would enter that in some book?—No, we have not so many buyers that we could not remember who would want a station of that size.
2597. Do you mean to say that you would not get the particulars?—I would naturally conclude that, having the former particulars of it, we could get the lease and other particulars of the property. If you are, if you want to make out that why I did not ask Mr. Barnes for the particulars—
2598. I am suggesting that a business man would make some record of authority?—There is no doubt that we did.
2599. What would you make them in?—We would make them out. I don't think I ever made out full particulars of Wando Vale.
2600. So far as you did where did you make them?—He would type them out immediately and send the memo. to buyers whom he knew.
2601. *By the Commissioner:* Would you make them in books?—No, we have got so many of these things.
2602. I thought you had the particulars in a book?—We used to paste them in a book.
2603. You did not do it in 1916?—It would have been if an ordinary individual bought, but when the Government bought we thought they had bought for good and it would be no good keeping them.
2604. Although you destroyed the 1916 records you kept the records for 1912?—Yes, Your Honour, it looks bad.
2605. You said you would not have destroyed any?—I might not myself. My clerk might have. They are not in my office.
2606. *By Mr. Feez:* I am suggesting to you that they were never in your office. I am not suggesting that you are not speaking the truth. I am suggesting that it was something in the nature of a casual conversation, and it was not of sufficient importance for you to make a record of it?—It was of sufficient importance for us to ask clients for offers. It was no good to them at £65,000.
2607. Unfortunately we cannot arrive at when that was?—It was in 1916.

2608. You are sure that it was in 1916 some time?—I am sure of it.
2609. What rise do you think there was between—what percentage of rise between the beginning of 1916 and July, 1916?—That is a very hard thing to say. It was considerable.
2610. Cattle were going up by leaps and bounds all that time?—Yes, and station property, too.
2611. You said that you knew Connor?—Yes.
2612. Do you ever remember having had a conversation with him about Wando Vale?—Nothing except what I saw in the papers.
2613. Do you remember having a conversation with him about Wando Vale?—No, sir.
2614. Do you remember having told him that there were 10,000 head of cattle on Wando Vale?—I might have. I don't remember.
2615. He gave a conversation that he said he had with you?—It may be Naughton; we have done business with Naughton. We may have given Mr. Naughton particulars.
2616. He says that it was after the sale?—Well, I don't remember.
2617. After Wando Vale was sold he says he had a conversation with you?—I don't remember. He possibly may have.
2618. He said you told him there were 10,000 head of cattle on it. At first he said he had no idea who told him, then he said he had an idea, and then he said it was you. You told him that Mr. Barnes had just sold Wando Vale with 10,000 cattle, and the price was in the neighbourhood of £82,000?—That is possible, it may have happened. I don't remember it.
2619. Can you remember what reason there could have been for that?—Well, at one time it was pretty current conversation that Mr. Barnes had sold Wando Vale.
2620. He says that Mr. Barnes was in your office at the time; that he just walked out?—That would be in July, I believe.
2621. That would be before it was sold. You see it was not sold before the end of August?—I don't think that Mr. Barnes was ever in my office after July.
2622. That is what Connor says. He says a man was going out of your office, and you said, "That is Barnes," or "That is the man who has just sold Wando Vale"?—Well, he has it to himself; I don't remember it.
2623. You don't think that Mr. Barnes was ever in your office?—I don't think he was in the office since some time in July, when he went back from Lyndhurst.
2624. Have you any idea as to what was the rise in the value of cattle and cattle stations between 1912 and 1916?—There was no comparison.
2625. Did they practically double between 1912 and 1916?—They might not have doubled. Stations sold about that time at from £3 to £3 10s. I cannot name them now; they have gone up. You can get at that if you take Wando Vale itself.
2626. There is another proposition that Connor said was put under offer in 1916 for £70,000. He did not name the property?—That is quite possible.
2627. That would show a rise of about 300 per cent.?—I don't know about any 300 per cent.
2628. *By the Commissioner:* Between 1912 and 1916 cattle doubled in value?—Yes.
2629. *By Mr. Feez:* Do you know Mr. Barnes's other property up there—Lyndhurst?—I have never been on it.
2630. You know that it is in existence, and that Lyndhurst belongs to Mr. Barnes?—I know that Lyndhurst belongs to Mr. Barnes.
2631. Was Lyndhurst ever in your hands for sale?—Yes.
2632. When was it in your hands, do you remember?—In July, 1916.
2633. Don't you think that is how you got the impression about Wando Vale being in your hands in 1916, that it was really Lyndhurst?—No, sir.
2634. Have you kept Lyndhurst?—I have written to Mr. Barnes. That was in July, 1916, I believe.
2635. You kept the records, I suppose?—Yes.
2636. If he was putting one property in your hands in writing it is hardly likely that he would not put the other one in writing also, is it. Give you written particulars at the same time?—He did not do it at the same time. I say it was previous to that.
2637. I am putting it to you, your idea that you had Wando Vale in June or July—in your hands in June or July—was from the fact that you had Lyndhurst?—No, I know that I had Wando Vale before I had Lyndhurst.
2638. Yes; but I am speaking of June and July, 1916. That is the only way in which I can explain, to my own idea, how you mentioned June or July, when it clearly was not June or July?—All I can say is, I know it was before I had Lyndhurst; and I had Lyndhurst in June or July.
2639. Have you got the particulars of Lyndhurst here now?—Yes.
2640. What is the date of it?—26th June, 1916.
2641. Now, Mr. Suter, do you know Mr. McGugan?—I do, sir; I have known him for years.
2642. How long have you known him?—Oh, a good number of years.
2643. Is he a man of experience?—Oh, I don't know exactly; but he has been a long time in the business.
2644. You, as a stock and station agent, would you look upon him as a good man?—A very good man.
2645. I suppose from what you know, of your own dealings with Wando Vale, you can say you don't believe it could have been in anyone's hands for sale in 1916, at £45,000, shortly prior to the sale?—I know that if there was any cut in price, Mr. Barnes would have given it to me.
2646. You could not believe, from what you know, that it was in anybody's hands at £45,000?—No; it is absurd.
2647. Did you know, Mr. Suter, that Mr. Barnes had refused an offer of £55,000 in 1913?—No, I knew nothing about that.
2648. You did not consider it was in your hands at that time?—No.

2649. *Re-examined by Mr. Macgregor:* You have no doubt whatever that Mr. Barnes did put Wando Vale in your hands during 1916, at £65,000?—No; although I cannot remember the date or place, I am satisfied he did.
2650. Mr. Barnes said somewhere—I cannot put my hand on it just now—that £65,000 was a ridiculous figure for him to put it in your hands at?—
- Mr. Macrossan:* At the date you gave.
- The Commissioner:* June or July, 1916.
2651. *By Mr. Macgregor:* It was in your hands in June or July; at least it had never been withdrawn from your hands?—No.
2652. *By Mr. Feez:* Neither was the one in 1912 withdrawn?—No; it never was in my hands. I was not the principal agent.
2653. *By Mr. Macgregor:* If a property is put into your hands at £42,000, and at £65,000 later, that is an implied withdrawal of the £42,000?—Yes.
2654. Do you know whether you were the only agent for Wando Vale?—I don't know that.
2655. Do you know whether Mr. Gannan had it in his hands?—No.
2656. I suppose you and Mr. Gannan were friendly?—Oh, well; we did not tell one another what we had in our hands.
2657. And you never heard whether Mr. Gannan had it in his hands or not?—I am pretty certain he never had it at £45,000.
2658. In his hands, I said, first of all?—No.
2659. You don't know whether he had it in his hands or not, at any price?—No.
2660. You say that you sent this wire thinking it was to Mr. Fowles, the Under Secretary to the Treasury?—Yes.
2661. About the same time, did you wire to Mr. Barnes?—Some days previous to that.
2662. And what was in your wire to Mr. Barnes?—
- Mr. Feez:* Here it is.
- [Mr. Macgregor tenders telegram from witness to J. H. S. Barnes, dated 27th September, marked *Exhibit 74*. Tenders also telegram from witness to "Fowles," dated 2nd October, 1917. *Exhibit 75*.]
2663. *By Mr. Macgregor:* Do you know a property called Kangaroo Hills?—I know of it.
2664. Did you ever have it in your hands?—I never had it direct. I think I had it through other agents.
2665. Do you remember the price?—No, I don't.
2666. You say that Lyndhurst was put into your hands on 26th June, 1916?—Yes.
2667. At what figure?—£125,000.
2668. And have you had it ever since?—No; he withdrew from me. I think within a week of giving it to me.
2669. You only had it a week?—I had a buyer for it immediately—the Hon. Mr. Bond, of Tasmania. As soon as I got word from Mr. Bond, I asked Mr. Barnes for a firm offer; and he withdrew it from me.
2670. What number of cattle are on Lyndhurst?—Twenty thousand seven hundred.
2671. Have you a letter offering you Lyndhurst?—I have.
2672. Will you let me see it?—(*Witness hands Mr. Macgregor letter.*)
2673. That £125,000 includes 8,000 stud herd and horses?—Eight thousand, no.
2674. "I value the stud herd and horses at £8,000"?—Oh, £8,000, yes.
2675. That would be included in the £125,000; that is so, isn't it?—Yes.
2676. So that reduces the price for the cattle to £117,000?—No.
2677. The lease is in that as well?—The lease, and cattle, and everything are in that; horses and everything.
2678. How does Lyndhurst compare with Wando Vale; do you know it?—I have never been on either. I would not say I have been on it. I have passed through part of Lyndhurst, I think, going North; but I can give no opinion.
2679. Are the improvements better on Lyndhurst than they are on Wando Vale?—I don't know; I cannot say.
- [Mr. Macgregor tenders written offer of Lyndhurst from J. H. S. Barnes to witness. Admitted and marked *Exhibit 76*.]
2680. *By Mr. Macgregor:* I am taking £8,000 off for the stud herd; that leaves £116,000?—There may have been more bullocks on Wando Vale than there were on Lyndhurst. I think there were.
2681. Take it all round. There was no stud herd on Wando Vale?—I don't know of any.
2682. You never heard of it, did you?—I don't know of it; there may have.
2683. I want to get at the price per head of these bullocks. At £117,000, and 20,700 head, it is less than £5 a head all round, isn't it?—It is only a matter of figures.
2684. I want to know if there is anything more to come off that £117,000 besides stud herd. How much for the improvements. I see practically 350 horses besides that stud herd?—Yes, I know there were horses. I don't know how many, but the list will show.
2685. Well, how much for the improvements is it, and lease?—A man who has never been on it cannot value improvements. I don't know what the improvements on Lyndhurst are.
2686. No? Well, Mr. Suter, I want to remind you that you said to Mr. Feez that cattle were worth about, I take it, £3. The station was bought at £3 a head in 1910. £3 to £3 10s., I think you said?—Yes.
2687. And that in 1916 it was about double?—Yes.
2688. That is, £6 to £7?—Yes.
2689. That would be how you would buy a station—at so much per head of stock?—Oh, it depends on the station itself. It all depends on the lease, and it all depends on the improvements.
2690. Well, here is Lyndhurst showing a good deal under £5 a head in June, 1916. You look at that document. You are better at working these things out than I am?—No; 20,700 at £5 a head is not £125,000.
2691. Well, you see you have to take off something. It is £113,000?—Why take off anything? You are buying that, and you are buying the horses.

2692. I want to compare it with Wando Vale. There was no stud herd on Wando Vale?—There may be. I am not in a position to say whether there is or not. I don't know of any.

The Commissioner (to Mr. Macgregor): Do you think there is much in that, seeing that the offer was withdrawn immediately after?

2693. *By Mr. Macgregor*: If Mr. Connor says he was buying stations at £5 to £6 a head in 1916, Mr. Suter, would you agree with that as being a fair average price?—No, not an average price; it would not be an average price. Some places are worth a great deal more than £5 or £6 a head, and some are not worth it. I could not average between the good and the bad. There are some places which have only two years to run, and they would be worth almost nothing as far as the lease is concerned. The place with the long lease is very much more valuable.

2694. Well, you could not average it?—No.

2695. You were asked about Mr. McGugan and you said you had known him for a good many years?—Yes.

2696. I suppose you only knew him as an acquaintance; did you meet him in Hughenden?—I have known him managing Dimora. I have known him on other places managing. I have known him as an overseer. He has always had a good name.

2697. You say he is a good man, as a stock and station agent?—He never gave me anything to sell.

2698. Well, are you competent to say whether he is a good man or not?—Well, I don't think there is anyone more competent to say such a thing than a stock and station agent. He sees the workings of a man's place and has conversations with him. He knows what his ideas of stock are. I say no one has a better idea of a man than stock and station agents; we stock and station agents are looking out for men.

2699. You yourself, you say, had no personal knowledge of how much experience Mr. McGugan had?—Well, I know he has been a good number of years—

2700. With cattle?—With cattle and sheep too; but since I have known him I think he has had more experience with sheep than with cattle.

2701. *Further cross-examined by Mr. Feez*: Have you had Lyndhurst lately in your hands?—No, I have not had Lyndhurst since Mr. Barnes withdrew it from me early in July.

2702. Well, do you know what the price of Lyndhurst is at the present time; do you know that Mr. Barnes is asking £200,000 for it?—I had heard some considerable time back that it is offered at £185,000 cash.

2703. And now he is asking £200,000?—Well, that is very likely, and it is worth it.

2704. You, as a matter of fact, got a man at £125,000?—I did, immediately.

2705. And Mr. Barnes at once turned it down?—He never gave me a chance.

2706. And you consider it is worth £200,000 at the present time?—Well, of course, I don't know what has transpired since those particulars were given to me. It

all depends on what number of cattle there are on it, whether bullocks have gone off it. I cannot compare it now.

2707. Assuming it is in the same position as it was with regard to cattle and everything else, do you consider that £200,000 is a fair price for it?—It is a very hard thing for me to go into.

2708. I thought you said so. I don't want to put words into your mouth?—I said if it is under the conditions, it would be—the way prices are now.

2709. *By the Commissioner*: It is worth it?—Yes.

[*The witness retired.*]

EDMUND COX, Stock and Station Agent, sworn and examined:

2710. *By Mr. McGill*: What are you?—Stock and station agent.

2711. Carrying on business where?—Hughenden, Richmond, Winton, and Prairies—four offices.

2712. On your own account?—I have a partner, Mr. Rayment.

2713. How long have you been carrying on business on your own account?—Since the end of March last year.

2714. 1916?—1916.

2715. Do you reside at Hughenden?—Yes.

2716. And what were you doing before March, 1916?—With P. T. Gannan and Co.

2717. As what?—For the last twelve years, a member of the firm; prior to that I was only an employee.

2718. For twelve years previous to March, 1916, you were a partner?—Yes.

2719. Were you in Hughenden just before you came down here?—I came straight from Hughenden; I left last Sunday night.

2720. When did you last see Mr. Gannan?—Not since he left the hospital at Charters Towers.

2721. How long ago was that?—It must be over two months ago. I inquired of his health; I asked the doctor if it was any use my going up to see him. He said it was no use my going up to see him, that he would not know me.

2722. Well, do you remember Wando Vale being in the hands of Mr. Gannan?—Yes.

2723. When was that?—Well, the only particulars we have were in 1910 and 1912.

2724. The price?—In 1910 we had it at 16,000 odd head of cattle for £37,500.

2725. *By the Commissioner*: And in 1912?—In 1912, 17,000 odd head of cattle at £45,000.

2726. *By Mr. McGill*: Who gave it to you?—We received particulars from F. A. Brodie and Co., Sydney.

2727. Since 1912, can you say whether Mr. Gannan had it?—No, I could not. I have been through all the books in the old office. I would like to explain that, since I left Mr. Gannan, I left him at the old office that still belonged to the two of us; and after that he shifted out of the office into new premises; and all the old books belonging to the firm of P. T. Gannan and Co. are in the old office with nobody to attend to them; so possibly anything may have happened to some of the papers. I have everything I could get. There may be some other papers missing, but I don't think so; I have gone through everything I can.

2728. *By the Commissioner:* You say you searched through the papers in the old office?—Yes, in the old office. We have all the old correspondence dating right back from when I started with Mr. Gannan—that is, the outward correspondence—and there is nothing to show there were any letters about the property itself; it is about stock.

2729. *By Mr. McGill:* You mean you found no record of its having been in the hands of Gannan and Co.?—Not since 1912.

2730. Do you know a man named Pym?—I do.

2731. Do you know a man named Edward Pym?—Yes.

2732. A cattle buyer?—Yes. I have known him since when he was a stock and station agent in Blackall. Since then I knew him as a cattle and sheep buyer.

2733. Can you remember whether Pym was in Hughenden in September or October, 1916?—I could not remember the exact date. I know he was in Hughenden last year, but I could not say what date.

2734. Do you know that he was staying there for two months?—Yes, he was staying there for some time; I would not say a few months; he was there for a fair time.

2735. Was he ever in Mr. Gannan's office, do you know?—I could not say; I have not been in the office since I left.

2736. Have you ever seen him talking to Mr. Gannan?—I dare say I have; but I would not take much notice of it.

2737. *Cross-examined by Mr. Feez:* What sort of man is Mr. Gannan? I don't mean in appearance. Is he a reliable man?—Yes.

2738. Not a man likely to make wild statements?—No, hardly; occasionally he would, to try and find something out from the other man.

2739. *By the Commissioner:* What you would call "feelers," eh?—Yes.

2740. *By Mr. Feez:* Is he the sort of man to say, for instance, he had a place in his hands for sale at £45,000, when he had not it?—No, he would not; but still he may have been misled about the date. He would remember having a property in his hands, but not think of what time. Mind you, this property has never been taken off our books; it has been on the books the whole of the time. Perhaps he was not thinking of the date when he said he had it for sale at £45,000.

2741. Mr. Gannan drank a good deal, didn't he?—Yes.

2742. I mean to say, for years past?—Oh, yes, for a good number of years.

2743. That was really the cause of your leaving him?—That was the main trouble.

2744. When he was drinking, was he responsible, or did he talk wildly?—Oh, he did, at times; yes, he talked a bit wildly.

2745. And I suppose, Mr. Cox—I have to ask you—it was a well-known fact that Mr. Gannan was drinking for years past?—Oh, yes, there is no use denying it.

2746. I mean to say everyone—a man like Pym, for instance, must know it?—Yes.

2747. Those are the particulars, are they not, that Mr. Gannan had of Wando Vale? [*Hands witness typewritten sheets.*] Yes, that is the last one.

2748. You, at that time, were a partner?—Yes.

2749. Those particulars, you say, Mr. Cox, came from Brodie and Co.?—Yes.

2750. It does not appear on this that it is so?—How do you know they came from Brodie and Co.?—We have a copy attached to our particulars, the same as you have there.

2751. Oh, well, I will tender yours, if you don't mind. [*Tendered and marked Exhibit 77.*] You looked for these among the papers, and found them?—Yes.

2752. What is this piece of paper on top?—Those are other particulars on top. We kept a "Property Book," and that has been torn out of it. Gannan and Co. got the particulars from that list, and sent them out to their buyers.

2753. Since then, Mr. Cox, so far as you know from being a partner in the firm, and so far as you have been able to find from a search of the papers, Wando Vale was never placed in Gannan and Co.'s hands?—No, never.

2754. And, of course, because a property is put into a stock and station agent's hands, say three years ago, it does not mean that he has authority to sell it three years afterwards?—No; because he would have no authority without referring it to the owner.

The Commissioner: Mr. Suter explained that. He said he has no authority until he gets a firm offer from the owner, and the proposed purchaser inspects.

2755. *By Mr. Feez:* I mean to say Mr. Gannan could not be under an impression that, because he had a place put into his hands in 1912, he was entitled to sell it in 1916, or offer it in 1916?—No.

2756. And I ask you, is there any possible shadow of foundation, in your mind, for the belief in Gannan's mind that he had it in his hands in 1916 for £45,000?—The only thing, as I said before, is that he remembered seeing the particulars in a book, but he would not think what date they were.

2757. Well, that is a very kindly way of putting it for Mr. Gannan; but perhaps Gannan never said it at all. That is the only explanation, if he said it?—If he said it, it would be just on the old particulars. I am quite satisfied he would not have any further particulars, unless Mr. Barnes gave them to him.

2758. The sale to the Government took place in August, 1916, at £82,000. Can you credit Mr. Gannan telling anyone that, if he had been there about a fortnight before, he could have sold it to him at £45,000?—No, I don't think so; I don't think he would have said it.

2759. Unless, of course, Mr. Gannan did not know what he was talking about?—That is right; he would not make that statement if he was right.

EXHIBITS.

[Exhibit 1.]

"Hansard," 12th September, 1917.

2760. As a matter of fact, in August, 1916, was Mr. Gannan in a condition that he did not know what he was talking about?—No. I could not say from memory. I have been away so much since I left him, travelling, in that particular time. Some days he may have been quite right; on other days he may not have been.

2761. I mean he had not got into this state that he is in at present?—Oh, no, far from it; he was able to conduct his business.

2762. And if he did make such a statement as that, you think he must have been very far gone in his cups?—Yes, I should think so.

2763. You have no doubt in your own mind it was not in his hands?—I am quite satisfied he had no later particulars.

2764. It would have been an absurd price at that time—£45,000?—Yes, rather too low.

2765. *Re-examined by Mr. McGill:* When did you arrive in Brisbane?—This morning.

2766. Did you see anybody before, in connection with this inquiry, before coming into court?—No, no one. The only man I spoke to in connection with the court, for about two seconds, was Mr. McGugan, outside as I went to the lavatory.

2767. Did you give any particulars to anybody at all?—No, sir, I did not. All the particulars I have kept in this bag; and I have kept that with me.

2768. Mr. Feez just showed you some particulars he had in his possession?—Yes.

2769. Did you give those to anybody?—No; neither gave them nor sent them.

[The witness then retired.]

Mr. Macgregor: May these witnesses leave for Hughenden, Your Honour?

The Commissioner: I suppose so. You don't require them further, Mr. Feez?

Mr. Feez: No, Your Honour.

The Commissioner: Very well, they may go. That concludes the evidence, I suppose?

Mr. Macgregor: Yes.

The Commissioner: Are you prepared to go on with your addresses?

Counsel: Yes.

The Commissioner: Who proposes to address first?

Mr. Feez: I presume I have the right to sum up.

Mr. Macgregor: I presume Mr. Feez has not. I opened this at the beginning. Mr. Feez is really the accuser. If I had to take the responsibility of going on first, I would have the right of reply.

After discussion on the point—

The Commissioner ruled that Mr. Macgregor had the right of reply.

After Mr. Feez and Mr. Macgregor had addressed the Commission—

The Commissioner said: Well, gentlemen, I will get my report ready as soon as I possibly can. I hope to have it ready on Saturday, as I have to go away. I will send it, in the usual way, to the Chief Secretary.

[This concluded the sittings of the Commission.]

"Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): This is one of the occasions on which members of the Opposition have an opportunity of discussing grievances. The Standing Orders are so hard-and-fast that we do not get a chance of doing what we want to do, but on an occasion like this when the Government ask the House to vote a sum of £1,650,000, I think we are justified in asking the Treasurer to let us know what is the state of his ledger account

"The Treasurer: You will have the Financial Statement soon.

"Mr. VOWLES: When engaged in private business on his own account, or as a director of a company, has cheques to sign and large liabilities to discharge, does he not generally want to know what is the state of his credit before he signs those cheques? Here we are asked to vote on the blind.

"The Treasurer; No, no!

"Mr. VOWLES: We do not know whether we have the credit that will bear that expenditure.

"The Treasurer: If you do not know it, it is because you are too tired to look up the public statement.

"Mr. VOWLES: We got no statement. If we followed the practice of the House of Commons, the Government would give us the details of the financial position within a reasonable time after the sitting of Parliament. We have endeavoured from time to time to get that information.

"The Premier: Did the late Government do it?

"Mr. VOWLES: I understood that this Government were the model Government. I understood that they were going to do everything on proper lines. We find that they are holding off. We find that their Financial Statement is not forthcoming. We cannot get that document on which the Opposition rely—that is, the criticism of the Treasurer's administration on the Auditor-General's report. We have been told that it may be expected shortly. We have been asking week after week for it, and now we are told that it is going to come forward some time next month. When one realises the financial position when the Government took over the Treasury benches, and compares it with the present state of the finances, I think it is only a fair thing that they should give us some information before they ask us—not altogether to incur obligations, but to become parties to the expenditure of money which we do not know is in the Treasury coffers. If we had the reports of certain enterprises on which the Government have embarked, if we knew what was being done in that direction, we might be in a better position to sanction the expenditure, but when we are kept in the dark as regards the conditions of these new enterprises, when we know that there is a cloud over most of them, we cannot know how to act. We know that quite recently the Government have claimed in connection with Mount Hutton that they have made a profit.

"Mr. Foley: Of £30,000.

"Mr. VOWLES: We will be very pleased to know that. All we know is that the Government entered into a most unbusinesslike transaction. They bought a property on a

book muster. We know that the quantity of stock was not forthcoming, and we have never been able to get the numbers of that muster in this House.

"The Premier: Walk in, walk out.

"Mr. VOWLES: I know that, so far as that is concerned, a claim was made on Mr. Glasson to refund some of the stock after the question was asked in this House, and I defy the Premier to deny it.

"The Premier: And he is willing to buy it back.

"Mr. VOWLES: And so would I be willing to buy it back if I had the money. I would be willing to buy it with 10,000 head of cattle if it was worth £70,000 two and a-half years ago, because, be it remembered, the price of stock has gone up enormously since then.

"The Premier: All you are proving is that these stations are worth a great deal more than we gave for them.

"Mr. VOWLES: That is not the fault of the Government; it is the fault in the rise of the price of cattle.

"The Premier: But it is the fact, all the same; and the National Political Council are lamenting it. It is common talk on the farms and trains.

"Mr. VOWLES: We have heard that the Government made a profit of £24,000 or up to £30,000. Now we are told that the profit was £30,000. I know myself that the muster was never made. I know that the information was suppressed in this House. I have asked question after question, and it was a notorious fact in the Roma district that the muster was short. The Secretary for Public Lands, who knows that it is so, and the whole of the front Treasury bench suppressed that fact, and would not let the people know that the numbers were not there.

"The Premier: That is not true.

"Mr. VOWLES: No, I know that it is not true that the numbers are there.

"The Premier: Your statement is not true.

"Mr. VOWLES: My statement is true, and I court all inquiry. Another correct thing is that the Government have been reticent in giving information.

"The Secretary for Public Instruction: If you say there has been no muster, how do you know there is a shortage?

"Mr. VOWLES: There has been a muster on country where it is easy to muster. There was a bangtail muster on several occasions, and there was something like 1,600 short. There have been several musters, but the numbers cannot be made up, and, although two years have gone past, we have not got those figures yet. If they are able to make a muster on Wando Vale, and tell us that they got more than the number they bargained for, why can they not do it on Mount Hutton, which is easy country to muster on? There has not been a complete muster in two and a-half years.

"The Secretary for Public Instruction: If you say there has not been a complete muster, how do you say there has been a shortage?

"Mr. VOWLES: I know that the Government now turn round and say that they have made a profit of £30,000. They incurred an expenditure of £73,000, and that money

has been out for over two years. It is worth more than 5 per cent., and in those two years it represents £15,000 in interest. Add to that the revenue that would have been got from the lessee had he been paying rent to the Crown for that period, and then take into consideration the natural increase and the fact that the Government sold their stock to an owner who had the privilege of taking them across the border—

"The Premier: No, he did not.

"Mr. VOWLES: He did. He sold some to the American meatworks—not for Imperial purposes—and in respect to the balance he had the privilege of taking them across the border, and he did take them across the border.

"The Premier: He had no permission to take them across, then.

"Mr. VOWLES: It was a notorious fact that when that sale was made the stock were worth, in the South, £2 per head more than in Queensland. And they talk about a profit! In a business, if a manager has the impudence to turn round and tell the directors that the country has been idle all the time, and he cannot show the cost of management, and he had to sell them to some individual who, on account of the action of the Government, was in a better position than any other individual, would the directors agree with him that he had made a profit?

"The Secretary for Public Instruction: I thought you said it was because of the market.

"Mr. VOWLES: It was because of the fact that the market was better and he was able to take them across the border. If that is not so, that is one of the grievances I want redressed, and, in the face of what I have said, I hope the Minister will see that we get the necessary information, because I make that as a direct charge of bad business management or something else.

"The Secretary for Public Instruction: It shows you do not know anything about it.

"Mr. VOWLES: I am very sorry to be criticised by the hon. member as to my mentality, because, so far as his mentality is concerned, I think it is the worst in the House.

"The Speaker: Order!

"Mr. VOWLES: I know all about it, because I made it my business to find out. I know how many went to the American meatworks and where the rest went to, and I know the numbers of the muster, and I am just waiting to see how much the Auditor-General's report discloses about the matter.

"The Premier: I know how your party feel about the cattle stations.

"Mr. VOWLES: So far as I am concerned, I do not care a twopenny dump what the hon. member deals in. The only thing is that he is dealing in a very dangerous thing when he takes on large quantities of stock in Queensland, and that has been the experience of the big men in Queensland. If they have a reverse in bad times, all the profits they make are gone.

"The Premier: That is an argument against the cattle industry.

"Mr. VOWLES: No, it is an argument for good management in the cattle industry, buying well and turning it over quick and lively and getting what profit there is to be made on it. In regard to the purchase of Wando Vale in the Northern Gulf territory, beyond Hughenden, that is regarded as a

smellful transaction, to put the least expression on it. It is notorious that it was in the hands of an agent at Hughenden at a very much less sum than the Government purchased it for. I believe an hon. member said here this afternoon that there was only a difference of £5,000. I would like to know what the Government paid. I understand they paid £83,000. I am in a position to say that it could have been bought on the same day with all the stock on it for £45,000, and less.

"The Premier: You are prepared to say anything.

"Mr. VOWLES: I am not only prepared to say it; I am prepared to prove it. I can give the Premier the name of the agent in whose hands it was on the day it was purchased by the Government, and he had instructions to sell it for £45,000 and not to refuse offers.

"The Premier: That is absolute rubbish. "Mr. VOWLES: And that very property was purchased by the Government for £83,000.

"Mr. Pollock: Who was the agent?

"Mr. VOWLES: I will give the Premier the agent's name.

"Government Members: Give the House the name.

"Mr. VOWLES: Well, I will give the House the name; it was Mr. Gannan.

"Mr. Pollock: Well, I asked Mr. Gannan, and he told me he knew nothing about it. (Government laughter.)

"Mr. VOWLES: I do not care what the hon. member asked him. I have this information.

"Mr. Pollock: I asked him in the presence of three or four men.

"Mr. VOWLES: Was that in the presence of the Home Secretary and the hon. member for Flinders? We know something about what took place on that occasion when they said, "Sh." (Opposition laughter.)

"Mr. Pollock: That is only a dirty insinuation.

"Mr. VOWLES: These are public enterprises that are being carried on, and the Government is in a position to pay more money for them than the public can pay.

"Mr. Pollock: Why not bring your proof to the House?

"Mr. VOWLES: These are things we are up against. The next measure we are going to deal with is the Produce Agents Bill, under which the Government can create monopolies and carry on business in the way these transactions have been carried on. If there is anything in what I say in regard to the smellfulness of these transactions, let the Premier put the whole of the facts in regard to Wando Vale on the table of this House, let him put the whole of the dealings about Mount Hutton before the Chamber and allow the public to see them, and if the Opposition are not prepared to take his figures, let him have them submitted to some accountant or business man and have his report on them, and then I venture to say we will get into a position where we will know something more about the Government's ventures than before.

"The Secretary for Public Instruction: Something like your munitions statement.

"Mr. VOWLES: My munitions statement? The hon. member told us that would be cleared up in the next Auditor-General's report. That is another case in point. The

Auditor-General disclosed last year—I forget what the exact figures were—that after £4,500 had been spent on labour and £5,000 on material, we got £50 10s. as a result.

"The Secretary for Public Instruction: That is an incomplete statement.

"Mr. VOWLES: That is the report of the Auditor-General, and I am more prepared to give credence to the report of the Auditor-General than to the statements of the Treasurer and other members on the Treasury bench. It will be remembered that he had certain words in italics to draw everybody's attention to them—that the statement of the Treasurer was not a proper business statement and that instead of showing a credit of £30,000 he should have showed a debit of £100,000.

"The Secretary for Public Instruction: He did not say that even.

"Mr. VOWLES: The Treasurer shakes his head.

"The Treasurer: Because he did not say anything to that effect.

"Mr. VOWLES: He said that if the practice of the previous years had been followed, instead of having a credit of £30,000, he would have had a debit of £100,000. The Secretary for Public Instruction has told us that something is to be disclosed again so far as that munition work is concerned.

"The Secretary for Public Instruction: I say it was an incomplete transaction.

"Mr. VOWLES: The Minister for Education has challenged me to prove that the Auditor-General's report of last year pointed out that, instead of showing a credit balance of £30,000, if a true state of affairs had been disclosed it would have shown a debit of £100,000.

"The Treasurer: The Auditor-General did not make that definite statement at all.

"Mr. VOWLES: I refer the Treasurer to page 2 of the Auditor-General's report for last year, which concludes as follows:—

"As a result of the course adopted by the Treasury Department, the year under review (1915-16) has not borne the full year's expenditure as compared with the immediate preceding years."

"The Treasurer: That is an entirely different statement to what you said just now.

"Mr. VOWLES:

"Had the practice of previous years been followed, and the items above referred to charged, the consolidated revenue fund at the 30th June last would have disclosed a deficit of approximately £100,000."

"The Treasurer: Of course, if the practice of previous years had been followed.

"Mr. VOWLES: If we did not get a faked balance-sheet, then the Financial Statement for the year ending 30th June last year would have shown a debit balance of £100,000. That would have been shown if the practice of previous years had been followed.

"The Treasurer: The practice of previous years was wrong.

"Mr. VOWLES: A number of abstracts were presented for payment on the 30th June, 1916, but they were held over until the following day before they were disbursed. Anyone looking through the report will see that that was done in the case of the Railway Department, Police Department, Department of Justice, if you please, Home

Department, and Agricultural Department. They are all absolutely cooked accounts. If the books had been audited, and the accounts acquitted at the proper time, then, instead of showing a credit balance, you would have shown a debit balance of £100,000.

"The Treasurer: Nonsense!

"Mr. VOWLES: Having that history before us, we can only come to the conclusion that the Government are actuated by some business or other motives as they were actuated last year. When we are asked to vote such a large sum as £1,650,000 on the blind it would be only business on the part of the Treasurer if he would tell us the position of our funds to-day, so that we would know what we were doing. That is only ordinary business. I do not ever remember an occasion like this in the House when such a large sum of money was being put through after the House had been asked to suspend the Standing Orders for the day to allow the Bill to be put through all stages at one sitting without the Minister in charge of the Bill giving some information of the position of our various accounts. I have dealt with matters which, to my mind, are of very great importance. They are of great importance to the public.

"The Treasurer: National importance.

"Mr. VOWLES: They are of national importance, and, what is more, they are matters of moral importance. They are matters on which the public mind is very much exercised at the present time. Twelve months ago there were very few State ventures entered into by the Government, but since then they have gone on by leaps and bounds, and spent large sums of money without proper administration. They have entered into these undertakings without the authority of Parliament, and we have had no information about them whatever. We have had no balance-sheet and no statements concerning them, and we know nothing about the business at all.

"The Treasurer: That is not correct.

"Mr. VOWLES: I was challenged by the Treasurer to state what happened in connection with the manufacture of munitions. I will quote what is stated in the Auditor-General's report of last year, page 37—

'The account has not yet been closed, but it is anticipated that, inclusive of the loss in manufacture and the cost of alterations to buildings and machinery referred to above, the undertaking will represent a loss of something like £10,000 to the department.'

"The Treasurer: Why enter into ancient history?

"Mr. VOWLES: I am entering into it because it hurts you. I am giving the history of your public enterprises.

"The Secretary for Public Lands: No one will take any notice of what you say, anyhow.

"Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman ought to be the last to interject after his transactions in connection with Mount Huton.

"The Secretary for Public Lands: I do not take any notice of anything you say.

"Mr. VOWLES: I am very pleased to think that I have drawn the hon. gentleman, because it hurts him, and it is personal so far as he is concerned. I have just shown that the Government transactions in connection with the munitions showed a loss of £10,000.

"The Treasurer: What date was that?

"Mr. VOWLES: I quoted from the Auditor-General's report of last year. The Treasurer shrugs his shoulders, although he knows that week after week we have been asking for this year's Auditor-General's report.

"The Treasurer: I don't present it.

"Mr. VOWLES: No, but you can expedite it if you want to.

"The Treasurer: No, I cannot. You ask the Auditor-General about it.

"Mr. VOWLES: Another transaction of the Government which we might look into is the purchase of the State sawmill. It was purchased as a going concern last year, and the first year's working showed a loss of £1,300. If all these Government enterprises are going to be carried on in that wild-cat way we will have plenty of losses. When the Government purchase stations and fail to charge up any interest or any rates and taxes like other stations have to do, no wonder they can make them pay. When the Government want to sell their stock they take them over the border to other States—a privilege which is denied to everyone else.

"The Secretary for Public Lands: That is another untruth.

"Mr. VOWLES: The American meat company were not allowed to send their cattle over the border.

"The Secretary for Public Lands: That is absolutely untrue.

"Mr. VOWLES: The truth is foreign to the hon. gentleman. We have asked a number of questions about this, but the hon. gentleman has always hedged and fenced, although direct charges were made against him. I would like to see him disprove some of those charges. His dealings in connection with Mount Hutton might be inquired into.

"The Premier: If we have an inquiry it will be into you. You will be the subject of the inquiry.

"Mr. VOWLES: As far as Mount Hutton is concerned, I am in a position to prove that the statements made by the Minister for Public Lands on the floor of this House are not correct.

"The Secretary for Public Lands: You cannot prove anything.

"Mr. VOWLES: I have just as much information as he has, and I am giving him the opportunity to ventilate the whole thing.

"The Secretary for Public Lands: You make those charges.

"Mr. VOWLES: Make them! I have made them a dozen times. Now, there is another matter which, I think, wants bringing before the public, and that is the representations the Government have made to the public through the fact that a certain measure was thrown out of the Upper House—that was, the super income tax of last year.

"The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in discussing legislation.

"Mr. VOWLES: It is only a passing reference to the incidence.

"The SPEAKER: Order! I do not intend to allow the hon. member to discuss legislation.

"Mr. VOWLES: I am not going to. I am going to discuss the Estimates, and it is necessary to refer to a Bill which was thrown out in the Upper House. I am going to deal with appropriation money passed by this House. At any rate, I will leave that as it is. There was a sum of £100,000 placed on the Estimates last year for the purpose

of soldiers. It came in two votes of £75,000 and £25,000 from two departments. Now, hon. members told the public that the reason that money was not available was because certain legislation had not been passed in the Upper House and the necessary additional expenditure in the way of income tax could not be got. I want to point out that, notwithstanding the fact that that sum of £100,000 was passed by this House, it was utilised by the Government in other directions—that money, which was put aside specially for the soldiers. Incidentally, they used the sum of a quarter of a million in addition.

“Mr. Macartney: It was passed by both Houses.

“Mr. VOWLES: Yes, it was passed by both Houses. They were very careful not to tell the public about that. Now, if the soldiers did not get the benefit of that vote it was not the fault of this side of the House and the Upper House. It is for the Government to say what has become of that money, because it was spent. The soldiers never got it; it went in other directions—in giving billets to their friends, in keeping these inspectors going and paying their expenses, in motor-cars for members of Parliament, and so on; all sorts of expenditure. That is where the money went, and the general public is asked to believe that this side of the House and the Upper House were the means of preventing that sum of money being made available to the soldiers.

“Another thing in connection with the actions of the Government is that the whole of their legislation in connection with land is retarding selection. This mania which they have for perpetual lease is keeping people off the land.

“The Secretary for Public Lands: What about the Jimbour selectors?

“Mr. Cooper: You asked for perpetual lease for Jimbour selectors

“Mr. VOWLES: I did not ask for anything of the kind.

“Mr. Cooper: You did; it is in ‘Hansard.’

“The Secretary for Public Lands: You said, ‘Why should not they have it?’

“Mr. VOWLES: The Jimbour selectors were asking to have the alternative privilege of having that principle applied to their land; either one or the other. (Government laughter.)

“The Secretary for Public Lands: You said, ‘Why should not they have it as well as the soldiers?’

“Mr. VOWLES: When that measure was going through, if you remember, the Secretary for Public Lands took the huff. His principal was away in Sydney or Melbourne on holiday, and he did not know what to do. He was cornered on his principles of the Labour platform when he was introducing a Bill for the closer settlement of the Jimbour selection; and when we asked him—as some of those men wanted that principle—‘Why not give it to them?’ he threw the Bill on the table in a huff and said that if I and other members referred to it again he would not introduce the measure.

“The Secretary for Public Lands: I never did.

“Mr. VOWLES: You did. The whole fact of the matter was, his principal was away and he did not know what to do, although

he had a telephone to the Trades Hall. Now, as far as the Government policy on the land question is concerned, it is absolutely nil. They have introduced legislation which will bring about this universal principle of perpetual lease for the future.

“The Secretary for Public Lands: What has that to do with this appropriation?

“Mr. VOWLES: What has it to do with it? It has a lot to do with it, because it is preventing people selecting land and making it productive. The revenue is falling off. Why, we have only eighteen prickly-pear selections for 1916-17. The majority of the men who went on to prickly-pear selections in my district have gone to the war.

“The Secretary for Public Lands: They would rather fight the Germans than live on the land you gave them.

“Mr. VOWLES: Dealing with that question of the assistance which the Government is giving them, or any other prickly-pear selectors, where is their policy so far as the prickly-pear selections are concerned? When sitting in Opposition, as member for Maranoa, nobody was more insistent than the Secretary for Public Lands as to what the provisions should be as regards this national curse of prickly-pear. What have they done? Here we have had three Governors’ Speeches, and not one reference to prickly-pear—which, they say, is the greatest curse Queensland has to face.

“The Secretary for Public Lands: We extended the leases to forty years.

“Mr. VOWLES: They were brought face to face with their suggestions, and had unwillingly to adopt them.

“The Premier: Why didn’t you force it on the Denham Government?

“Mr. VOWLES: They refused it for a couple of years.

“The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to keep to the subject of the motion.

“Mr. VOWLES: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Secretary for Public Lands drew me off the track. I had no desire to be drawn off. I say that when we are dealing with the question of finance, and are going to spend £1,600,000 in one vote, we people who are mixed up with the country lands, and who understand the ravages of the prickly-pear and the increase which it is making daily—when we see the inaction of the Government, their apathy and their want of consideration for the national asset; when we find that this principle of perpetual lease is being universally adopted to land of that sort: we know that the land is only going to be exploited. A man will take up this land, and will not observe his prickly-pear conditions. He will stay on it until he has spoilt the land, and when he has done with it he will go elsewhere. Now, there are two important public appointments which have not been filled. One of them is in connection with the Treasury Department—that is, the deputy, as far as the Agricultural Bank is concerned. I would like to know why that appointment is being kept open. It is a notorious fact, admitted by members of the Government, that the gentleman who is in charge of its management—Mr. Deshon—is overworked; that he is undermanned in his staff; that he is underpaid. That has been stated by members of the Government; yet there is an important appointment of deputy left unfilled. No doubt it is being

held back as a political appointment, but which, if properly filled, would relieve him and the department of a tremendous lot of work which now falls upon him.

"A Government Member: That is in the hands of the Commissioner.

"Mr. VOWLES: That is in the hands of the Commissioner, I admit. I want to know why it is being held over. Is the Commissioner in the hands of the Government? Is this going to be a political gift? Why has it not been filled long ago? What is the good of the Government telling us they have been two and a-half years in office, and have not had an opportunity of putting through an Act which came into operation last year; when they are undermanned and one of the most important offices is lying vacant?

"Then, there is that other plum—the Agency-General. Of course, Sir Thomas Robinson is not fitted for that job. A man like the hon. member for Maranoa is more suited—a man with such universal experience as he is could fill the place of a man like Sir Thomas Robinson! There will be no cattle stations there. Perhaps he will go away; and perhaps in a few years he will be the scape-goat of the Labour party, who will say, 'If it had not been for the unbusinesslike action of one man, who was a Minister, these things might have turned out a success instead of a failure.'

"Then, there is the subject of the railways. I suppose that you, Sir, will not allow me to refer at any length to the strike, as that matter has already been debated. But I wish to point out that, apart from the strike, there is the aftermath; there is the loss of revenue which has been suffered; and there are the retrospective payments which the rank and file of the party opposite would give to the strikers. I have got one local grievance which may be only a minor grievance, but it is one that should receive the attention of the Government, and that is, the deplorable delay in the transit of fruit and vegetables from Brisbane to Dalby. When those articles reach their destination they are not worth half of what was paid for them. It takes four days for perishable articles to get from Brisbane to Dalby, a distance of 150 miles.

"The Secretary for Railways: You know that is not true.

"Mr. VOWLES: I know that it is absolutely correct. This is a matter which will afford some work for the Railway Commission. They can find out the cause of the delay in the transit of vegetables and fruit between those two places. But it is evident that in appointing this commission the Government have appointed men who have no practical knowledge of the expert departments they are going to criticise, and that neither the department nor the Government, nor anybody else, will attach any weight to their conclusions. Their appointment is on a par with the appointment of the Public Works Commission, who know nothing about land values or local conditions, and who are nevertheless asked after one or two trips through the country to give an expert opinion as to which railway route should be preferred.

"An Honourable Member: You appeared before the commission at Dalby.

"Mr. VOWLES: I had nothing whatever to do with the Public Works Commission at Dalby or anywhere else, though I was present when witnesses were giving evidence.

I certainly had a trip with the Minister for Railways, and a very enjoyable trip it was, but I did not give him any advice. When money is being thrown about by the Government as it is at the present time, when we have a deficit such as we have, and have a prospective deficit ahead of us and general loss in every direction, when we have nothing but financial disaster ahead of us, it is our duty to consider these matters and endeavour to ascertain what the outcome will be. We know that the poor, overburdened taxpayers of the country are finding motor-cars for hon. members opposite.

"The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted his time."

[Exhibit 2.]

(Private.)

Lyndhurst, *via* Einasleigh,
21st June, 1913.

Messrs. F. A. Brodie and Co., Sydney.

DEAR SIRS,—If you have a buyer enquiring for a N. Q. property, and could rely on him inspecting immediately, I could offer Wando Vale at £55,000—walk in, walk out. I do not want the place listed or circularised, and unless a buyer would come up during this month or next I'd prefer to wait till the spring of next year.

You already have particulars of the leases, &c., and I append returns furnished last year. Of these, 1,500 bullocks (9's and older) have been sold. The manager tells me he could muster another 350 of same age, indicating that we have written off too large a percentage in the past.

These, together with estimated 0's and 1's, bring the total available bullocks of saleable ages to over 3,000.

About 2,000 calves have been branded to date, and he expects to put through 4,000 for the year.

A buyer would naturally conclude from same that the estimated number on station is excessive, but that is not so. We were deplorably short of bulls until last year, when we have purchased nearly 100 head.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

[Enclosure.]

Returns, 31st December, 1912.				
Males, 9's and older	...	...	1,670	
" 0's	...	...	1,850	
" 1's	...	...	1,128	
" 2's	...	...	1,710	
Bulls	...	...	127	6,485
Females, No. 7's and older	...	...	2,413	
" " 8's	...	...	1,267	
" " 9's	...	...	1,393	
" " 0's	...	...	1,715	
" " 1's	...	...	1,076	
" " 2's	...	...	1,674	9,538
				16,023
1913—Bullocks sold, about 1,500	...	...	1,500	
				14,523
Calves branded	...	...	2,000	
And estimated	...	...	2,000	4,000
				18,523
Horses, about 350—J.H.S.B.				

[Exhibit 3.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to J. H. S. BARNES, LYNDBURST.

Have real good man prepared inspect Wandovale. Will name him. Kindly wire if disposed offer property.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 9-3-5.

[Exhibit 4.]

9th March, 1915.

J. H. S. Barnes, Esq., Lyndhurst, Mt. Surprise.

DEAR SIR,—We wired you to-day as follows:—"Have real good man prepared inspect Wandavale. Will name him. Kindly wire if disposed offer property."

This message we now confirm, and our buyer has wired us stating he is now open to inspect a property up to £100,000. This is an absolutely genuine inquiry, and if you are disposed to offer Wandavale now we should like you to kindly wire us. We do not want to trouble you otherwise. If we do not hear from you we shall know you are not a seller.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 5.]

TELEGRAM FROM J. H. S. BARNES to PASTORAL ESTATES.

Mt. Surprise, 15 March, 1915.

Wandovale not for sale.

BARNES.

[Exhibit 6.]

TELEGRAM FROM J. H. S. BARNES to PASTORAL ESTATES.

Mt. Surprise, 10 Jul., 16.

Can offer whole herd of Wandavale about ten thousand head at seven pounds including about six thousand bullocks and steers no old cows unweanable calves at thirty shillings writing.

BARNES.

[Exhibit 7.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to J. H. S. BARNES, MT. SURPRISE.

Thanks wire waiting reply McGugan will wire earliest opportunity.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 12-7-1916.

[Exhibit 8.]

July 13, 16.

Barnes, Esq., Wandovale, Pentland.

DEAR SIR,—We appreciate your wire reading:—"Can offer whole herd of Wandovale about ten thousand head at seven pounds including about six thousand bullocks and steers no old cows unweanable calves at thirty shillings, writing," and have repeated the information on to Mr. McGugan and hope to hear from him immediately. We wired you as follows:—"Thanks wire waiting reply McGugan will wire earliest opportunity."

This message we now confirm.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 9.]

Lyndhurst, Cairns (Queensland),

16th July, 1916.

The Manager, Pastoral Estates, Toowoomba.

DEAR SIRS,—I am in receipt of your telegram reading:—"Confidentially advise Government are buyers for big lot Northern cattle please wire us any lines offering"; and I replied:—"Can offer whole herd on Wando Vale about 10,000 head at seven pounds; about 6,000 bullocks and steers no old cows unweanable calves at 30s. writing."

I may state that about 50 per cent. of the herd on Wando Vale died in last year's drought, so that you can readily imagine no old cows would be there now, and the cattle offered would be either suitable to stock up with, or hold for fattening.

Trusting to hear from you.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

Please do not list or offer elsewhere.—J.B.

[Exhibit 10.]

17th July, 1916.

J. H. S. Barnes, Esq., Wandovale, Pentland.

DEAR SIR,—McGugan wired us from Chin-chilla on Saturday on his way through, which occasioned our sending the first wire to you. Later on our Mr. Bennett interviewed him at the train and sent the other wire.

"McGugan wires us send full particulars awaiting your letter trust contains details."

"McGugan enquires if you will offer Wandovale as a going concern may suit them better buy it."

These messages we now confirm, and hope to hear from you early. He wants the cattle and yet he has not the country where he could put them. He has one or two properties under consideration up that way, but so far has decided on nothing. The country the Government want him to take up he is not satisfied with, besides a good deal of improvements would have to be put on the place before it would be ready. He has asked us to post him particulars this week directly we get a reply from you.

Failing Wandovale perhaps you would let us have particulars of Lyndhurst.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 11.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to J. H. S. BARNES, MT. SURPRISE.

20-7-1916.

McGugan definitely applies months' offer Wandovale cattle seven pounds guarantee inspection probably deal going concern if available can interview you Brisbane and wire him McGugan leaves Central district to-morrow thence North reply urgent.

PASTORAL ESTATES.

[Exhibit 12.]

20th July, 1916.

Barnes, Esq., Wandovale, Pentland.

DEAR SIR,—We appreciate your wire reading:—"Please leave matter in abeyance expect arrive Brisbane about end first week August will have full particulars and may offer property as going concern," and got Mr. McGugan on the 'phone, with a result that he has applied for the definite offer of the cattle on Wandovale at £7, and will leave the matter of purchase of the property as a going concern over until we can interview you in Brisbane. He leaves to-morrow night for Rockhampton, thence Longreach, but will not get to Townsville in time to interview you. He therefore suggests that we discuss the matter with you of selling the property as a going concern; in the meanwhile he will have the cattle inspected and either make a deal with you for the cattle or the property as a going concern. We await your further advices in the matter.

We wired you to-day as follows, urgent:—

20th July, 1916.

"McGugan definitely applies month's offer Wandovale cattle seven pounds guarantees inspection probably deal going concern if available can interview you Brisbane and wire him McGugan leaves for Central district to-morrow thence North reply urgent."

This message we now confirm.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 13.]

TELEGRAM FROM J. H. S. BARNES to PASTORAL ESTATES.

Mt. Surprise, 20 Jul., 16.

Please leave matter in abeyance expect arrive Brisbane about end first week August will have full particulars and may offer property as going concern.

BARNES.

[Exhibit 14.]

TELEGRAM FROM J. H. S. BARNES to PASTORAL ESTATES TOOWOOMBA.

Mt. Surprise, 21-7-16.

Will grant you offer Wandovale cattle as desired: Please advise McGuigan coach leaves Pentland for Wandovale every Tuesday morning.

BARNES.

[Exhibit 15.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to J. H. S. BARNES, MOUNT SURPRISE.

Thanks offer 'phoned McGugan who states if grant offer property going concern will arrange inspect himself if only cattle may have to send someone else.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 21-7-1916.

[Exhibit 16.]

Lyndhurst, Cairns (Queensland),

24th July, 1916.

The Manager, Pastoral Estates, Toowoomba.

DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your wire of the 22nd inst. reading:—"Thanks offer telephoned McGuigan, who states if grant

offer property going concern will arrange inspect himself if only cattle may have to send someone else," and confirm my reply reading:—"Will offer property going concern at eighty-five thousand."

Before going further in this matter I would ask you to quote your rate of commission as is usual in big dealings.

Trusting a deal may eventuate.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

[Exhibit 17.]

TELEGRAM FROM J. H. S. BARNES to PASTORAL ESTATES TOOWOOMBA.

Mt. Surprise, — July, 16.

Will offer property going concern at eighty-five thousand.

BARNES.

[Exhibit 18.]

Lyndhurst, Cairns (Queensland),

24th July, 1916.

The Manager, Pastoral Estates, Toowoomba.

DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your telegram of 20th inst. reading:—"McGuigan definitely applies month's offer Wandovale cattle, seven pounds guaranteed inspection probable deal going concern if available, can interview you Brisbane, and wire him. McGuigan leaves for Central district to-morrow thence North reply urgent."

I now confirm my reply as follows:—"Will grant you offer Wandovale cattle as desired. Please advise McGuigan coach leaves Pentland for Wandovale every Tuesday morning."

I expect to arrive in Brisbane about 10th prox., and will communicate with you then.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

[Exhibit 19.]

24th July, 1916.

J. H. S. Barnes, Esq., Wandovale, Pentland.

DEAR SIR,—We appreciate your wire received on Friday, the 21st inst., granting us the offer of the whole of the Wandovale herd at £7 per head, comprising about 6,000 bullocks and steers, unweanable calves at 30s. and no old cows.

We got Mr. McGugan on the 'phone and gave him a month's offer, which we have now confirmed to Rockhampton. He will be in the Rockhampton district this week and probably next week; however, we thought it better to wire you the gist of our conversation with him and did so:—"Thanks offer 'phoned McGugan who states if grant offer property going concern will arrange inspect himself if only cattle may have to send someone else."

This message we now confirm, and if you care to give us a price as a going concern, we should be glad to hear from you. Possibly you cannot do this until you get to Brisbane; however, we await you further advices with interest, and sincerely hope business will result as the result of the enquiry.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 20.]

25th July, 1916.

J. H. S. Barnes, Esq., Lyndhurst, Cairns.

DEAR SIR,—Enclosed please find copy of letter which have been sent on to Wandovale by mistake. We now acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th inst. confirming our wire, and have sent a copy of it to Mr. McGugan so that he will know the position. We sincerely regret the effects of last year's drought, and hope that we are now in for a run of good seasons.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

our treating the matter reasonably, and arranging it on a basis which we feel sure will be agreeable to your good self.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

P.S.—Should a sale eventuate, the Government would want you to take debentures for the bulk of the money. This is the way they did when they purchased Mount Hutton, and as it carries a fair amount of interest free from income tax, we trust the proposition will appeal to you. As to the exact terms, we cannot yet advise, but hope to put a proposition before you which will appeal to you.

[Exhibit 21.]

29th July, 1916.

J. H. S. Barnes, Esq., Wandovale, Pentland.

DEAR SIR,—We wired you to-day as follows:—"McGugan wires inspector will reach Wandovale first August McGugan expects return Brisbane Wednesday."

This message we now confirm.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 22.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to J. H. S. BARNES, MOUNT SURPRISE.

McGugan wires inspector will reach Wandovale first August McGugan expects return Brisbane Wednesday.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 29-7-1916.

[Exhibit 23.]

TELEGRAM FROM J. H. S. BARNES to PASTORAL ESTATES.

Mt. Surprise, 3 Aug., 16.

Please address all further correspondence Daniell's Hotel Brisbane.

BARNES, Lyndhurst.

[Exhibit 24.]

8th August, 1916.

J. H. S. Barnes, Esq., Hotel Daniell, Brisbane.

DEAR SIR,—We have to acknowledge receipt of your two letters of the 24th July relative to the sale of Wandovale as a going concern to the Queensland Government, and also confirming the offer of the whole herd of Wandovale, comprising about 10,000 cattle at £7 per head, and including about 6,000 bullocks and steers with no old cows, unweanable calves at 30s., for which we thank you.

Mr. McGugan wishes us to arrange an interview for Thursday morning as he is leaving for the North by Thursday's night mail.

Mr. Bennett will come down on Wednesday night and will interview you first thing on Thursday morning.

Re Commissioner. We will leave this matter over until we see you, but you can rely on

[Exhibit 25.]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane,

19th August, 1916.

The Manager, The Pastoral Estates, Ltd., Toowoomba.

DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 17th inst., and note you have not had any communication from Mr. McGugan in regard to Wando Vale.

I am in receipt of a letter from the manager there (dated 10th inst.) advising that the inspection was proceeding, and that Mr. Ferry was satisfied with all he had seen, and had expressed himself as being sure that a deal would eventuate.

Yesterday being mail day, I am surprised I did not get a wire; however, the next few days may decide the question.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

[Exhibit 26.]

URGENT TELEGRAM FROM J. H. S. BARNES to PASTORAL ESTATES, TOOWOOMBA.

Brisbane, 21 Aug., 16.

Consider McGugan's request quite unreasonable you will remember our conversation when he distinctly stated business could proceed on receipt inspector's report this I presume he now holds I will extend offer until Saturday next.

BARNES.

[Exhibit 27.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to J. H. S. BARNES.

Barnes, Hotel Daniell, Brisbane.

McGugan wires please get fortnight's extension offer seems favourable reply.

PASTORAL ESTATES, Aug. 21, 16.

[Exhibit 28.]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane,

21st August, 1916.

The Manager, The Pastoral Estates, Ltd., Toowoomba.

DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your wire reading:—"McGugan wires please get fortnight's extension offer reply," and I now confirm my reply thereto reading:—"Consider McGugan's request quite unreasonable. You will remember our conversation when he distinctly stated business could proceed on receipt inspector's report. This I presume he now holds. I will grant extension offer to Saturday next."

My impression is at present that McGugan has other irons in the fire and desires to pick and choose.

I think that you will agree with me that as the inspection is concluded he should, in fairness, give me a decided answer one way or the other.

Referring to your letter of the 19th inst. re Greenvale. I know this property fairly well, but would not care to purchase it. My object is to get out of the business, to a certain extent, and that is my chief reason for offering Wando Vale.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

[Exhibit 29.]

21st August, 1916.

J. H. S. Barnes, Hotel Daniell, Brisbane.

DEAR SIR,—We received the following wire from Mr. McGugan this morning:—"Please get fortnight's extension Wandovale offer seems favourable," and at once wired you as follows:—"McGugan wires please get fortnight's extension offer seems favourable reply." This message we now confirm, and we note your reply.

We agree with you that it is not wise to give them too long an extension as they may only be using the offer with a view of beating it elsewhere.

We wired McGugan to Ravenswood as follows:—"Barnes wires consider McGugan's request quite unreasonable you will remember our conversation when he distinctly stated business could proceed on receipt inspector's report this I presume he now holds I will extend offer until Saturday next reply"; so that we anticipate the matter being completed at an early date.

Yours faithfully,

FRED E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 30.]

22nd August, 1916.

J. H. S. Barnes, Esq., Hotel Daniell, Brisbane.

Re Wandovale.

DEAR SIR,—Thanks for your letter of the 21st instant, and we note your remarks.

Unfortunately, both Saturday and Monday's urgent wires lie undelivered at Ravenswood, although Mr. McGugan asked us to reply to Ravenswood. What put us astray was the fact that the one he sent first of all was delivered to us on Monday, asking for a fortnight's offer, and the Saturday's urgent wire was delivered Saturday night, so that his application for a fortnight's offer was not made after he received our Saturday's wire. The reply to this wire apparently still lies undelivered.

We have now wired to his Townsville address, and hope to get in touch with him within the next few days. It will mean a bit of a rush as Saturday is a holiday in Brisbane.

We will advise you further developments, and our Mr. Bennett will pop down immediately he is wanted.

We enclose contract in duplicate, which might meet the case. You might wish to add some amendments. Perhaps I have made it a bit too drastic; if so, we can easily modify it later on.

Yours faithfully,

FRED E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 31.]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane,

23rd August, 1916.

The Manager, The Pastoral Estates, Ltd., Toowoomba.

DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd inst., and am sorry to learn there has been delay in getting your wires to Mr. McGugan delivered. Under the circumstances, I would not be averse to extending the offer until Monday next.

I return herewith contract, which I consider is all in order with the exception of one or two minor errors.

On due consideration, I think it would be futile to insist on the stipulation of the interest being free from Federal and State income taxes that might be imposed in the future.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

[Exhibit 32.]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane,

26th August, 1916.

SIR,—Referring to our recent conversation on the 'phone in regard to Wando Vale, I have the honour to advise that I am compelled to leave for Warwick to-morrow morning, and will return on Monday night.

I trust my action will not inconvenience you in any way.

Will you please communicate your wishes to me here by letter in the meantime.

I have, &c.,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

The Under Secretary for Public Lands, Brisbane.

[Exhibit 33.]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane,

30th August, 1916.

Gordon Graham, Esq., City.

DEAR MR. GRAHAM,—I am in receipt of the draft agreement in connection with the sale of Wando Vale by Mrs. Barnes, and have lodged same with the manager of the Union Trustee Coy. of Aust., Ltd. He will now take the matter up on her behalf, and intimated to me this morning that he would consult you in the matter.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

[Exhibit 34.]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane,

30th August, 1916.

The Pastoral Estates, Ltd., Toowoomba.

DEAR SIR,—With reference to the sale of Wando Vale to the Queensland Government, I am prepared to pay your company a commission of £850 on the transaction.

JOHN H. S. BARNES,

Pro Sara Barnes.

[Exhibit 35.]

26th June, 1917.

J. H. S. Barnes, Esq., Lyndhurst, Mount Surprise.

Re Sale of Wando Vale.

DEAR SIR,—We find you will be away North for a month or so yet, and we cannot interview you regarding a matter utmost importance, so shall have to explain matters by letter.

A certain agent has made a definite statement which McGugan is anxious to refute. Did you ever give the definite offer of Wando Vale to any agent twelve months or so before the Government bought at £40,000? If so, what stock were offering at the figure?

A Northern agent is concerned in the statement. Perhaps you could write us fully by return post as the matter is urgent, and Mr. McGugan asked us to inquire three weeks or a month ago. We wrote you to Warwick asking you to let us know when you would be passing through so that we could have a chat with you.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,
Managing Director.

[Exhibit 36.]

Lyndhurst, Cairns (Queensland),

9th July, 1917.

The Manager, The Pastoral Estates, Toowoomba.

DEAR SIR,—Subsequent to writing to you a day or so ago, I received your letter of the 26th June, and note contents. As I have destroyed all books, &c., in connection with Wando Vale, I cannot give you a definite answer to your enquiry, but, so far as my memory serves me, I did give the offer at, I think, £42,000, in about 1913; this was before considerable sums had been spent in improvements. However, taking into consideration the fact that Wando Vale was sold with a preponderance of male cattle, occasioned by drought, that cattle had appreciated fully 90 per cent. on '13 values, and furthermore that I was accepting Government debentures at par which at the moment were only worth 95 in the open market, and, above all, not negotiable for five years, I do not think the agent you allude to has much reason for talking.

Personally, all I can say is that, with the reports, &c., current at the time regarding the corrupt business methods of the Government, I was agreeably surprised to know that, so far as the sale of Wando Vale was concerned, no fault could be found.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

P.S.—I expect to be at Canning Downs about 22nd inst.—J.B.

[Exhibit 37.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to
MCGUGAN, GRANDE HOTEL, ROMA.

Reference to Northern cattle what particular class cattle are required Expect have several likely big lots submit you.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 8-7-1916.

[Exhibit 38.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to
MCGUGAN, GRANDE HOTEL, ROMA.

Confidentially advise can offer whole herd of Wando Vale about ten thousand at seven pounds including about six thousand bullocks and steers no old cows unweanable calves thirty shillings reply.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 10-7-16.

[Exhibit 39.]

10th July, 1916.

McGugan, Esq., Grande Hotel, Roma.

DEAR SIR, We wired you to-day as follows:—"Confidentially advise can offer whole herd of Wandovale about ten thousand at seven pounds including about six thousand bullocks and steers. No old cows unweanable calves thirty shillings reply."

This message we now confirm, and in the absence of a reply to our Saturday's wire we thought we had better wire you the particulars to enable you to gage whether the line would suit your requirements. This is a good opportunity of getting a first-class herd, and we trust that you will decide to inspect.

Yours faithfully,

FRED E. BENNETT,
Managing Director.

[Exhibit 40.]

10th July, 1916.

General Manager State Stations,
Department of Public Lands, Brisbane.

DEAR SIR,—We wired Mr. McGugan to-day as follows:—"Confidentially advise can offer whole herd of Wandovale about ten thousand at seven pounds including about six thousand bullocks and steers. No old cows unweanable calves thirty shillings reply."

This message we now confirm, and trust to hear that he will take offer of this line. We know the cattle on Wandovale to be a good lot of cattle, and trust to hear that he will inspect.

Yours faithfully,

FRED E. BENNETT,
Managing Director.

[Exhibit 41.]

TELEGRAM FROM MR. MCGUGAN to PASTORAL
ESTATES, TOOWOOMBA.

Chinchilla, 15th July, 1916.

Thanks wire letters just received write me Brisbane full particulars Wandovale cattle.
MCGUGAN.

[Exhibit 42.]

Toowoomba, 15th July, 1916.

A. McGugan, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Your wire received this afternoon re Wandovale herd. Mr. Barnes said he was writing. We should get this letter next week, but wired him to-day again in case he has not gone into details. This seems a splendid opportunity of securing a first-class herd.

We have the offer of 50 male cattle on Springfield, *via* Fossilbrook, including about 300 number threes and older and 200 number fours, station delivery for cash by end August. Price, £9 per head. Cattle are now fat.

This reads a good line, and we advise prompt application for offer.

PASTORAL ESTATES, LIMITED,
Fred. E. Bennett.

[Exhibit 43.]

20th July, 1916.
A. McGugan, Esq., General Manager State
Stations, Department of Public Lands,
Brisbane.

Re Wandovale.

DEAR SIR, Mr. Barnes wires us to-day as follows:—"Please leave matter in abeyance expect arrive Brisbane about end first week August will have full particulars and may offer property as going concern."

We should be glad to learn if you would be in Brisbane about the time mentioned in the wire, when we shall be glad to arrange for our Mr. Bennett to interview you. No doubt Mr. Barnes will be down for the show.

Yours faithfully,
FRED. E. BENNETT,
Managing Director.

[Exhibit 44.]

TELEGRAM FROM MR. MCGUGAN to PASTORAL
ESTATES, TOOWOOMBA.

Marlborough, 28th July, 1916.

Inspector will reach Wandovale first
August. Expect be Brisbane Wednesday.

MCGUGAN.

[Exhibit 45.]

24th July, 1916.

Mr. A. McGugan, care of Criterion Hotel,
Rockhampton.

DEAR SIR,—We have pleasure in confirming our verbal intimation to you that you had the offer until the 21st day of August of the whole of the Wandovale herd, about 10,000 head, at £7 per head, including about 6,000 bullocks and steers. There are no old cows in the herd and you have the offer of the unweanable calves at 30s.

We wired Mr. Barnes as follows:—"Thanks offer phoned McGugan who states if grant offer property going concern will arrange inspect himself if only cattle may have send someone else"; and hope that he will decide to grant us the offer of the property as a going concern. He may not care to do this until he comes to Brisbane, but directly we get any news will at once wire you. Possibly Barnes does not care to give us the price until he has discussed the matter with his solicitor as to the taxation on his profit.

Yours faithfully,
FRED. E. BENNETT,
Managing Director.

[Exhibit 46.]

25th July, 1916.

A. McGugan, Esq., care of Criterion Hotel,
Rockhampton.

DEAR SIR,—We enclose copy of letter received from J. H. S. Barnes relative to the cattle on Wandovale, which explains itself. We hope to get you the offer of the property as a going concern, and anticipate hearing from Mr. Barnes any day; at the same time he may delay the matter until he comes to Brisbane early in August, so that we would suggest that you go on with the inspection of the cattle.

Yours faithfully,
FRED. E. BENNETT,
Managing Director.

[Exhibit 47.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to MCGUGAN,
CRITERION HOTEL, ROCKHAMPTON.

Pleased advise have secured offer Wandovale going concern eighty-five thousand country seven forty miles principally Hereford shorthorn cross watered Clarke and Broken rivers well improved trust you will inspect reply.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 26-7-16.

[Exhibit 48.]

Toowoomba, 27th July, 1916.

A. McGugan, Esq., General Manager, State
Stations, Department of Public Lands,
Brisbane.

DEAR SIR,—We wired you yesterday as follows:—"Please advise have secured offer Wandovale going concern eighty-five thousand country seven forty miles principally Hereford shorthorn cross watered Clarke and Broken rivers well improved trust you will inspect reply."

This message we now confirm, and we have pleasure in enclosing particulars of Wandovale. Mr. Barnes wired that he will grant you the offer as a going concern at £85,000, but does not give us any particulars. We have taken the particulars from old details which we had of the property, and think they will be quite correct. There may be additional improvements made since.

Yours faithfully,
FRED. E. BENNETT,
Managing Director.

Barnes is in a very healthy position financially, and may accept bonds in part or full payment of purchase money.—F.E.B.

P.S.—A copy of this letter has been sent on to the Criterion Hotel, Rockhampton.—F.E.B.

[Enclosure.]

WANDO VALE.

Situated in the North Kennedy district, Queensland, about 80 miles from the Norman Railway line.

Area.—755 square miles, tenure from thirty to thirty-five years.

Country.—First-class cattle country.

Water.—Permanently watered by the Clarke and Broken rivers, besides numerous creeks and springs and wells.

Improvements.—A comfortable homestead, well built, surrounded by a good garden and orange grove; abundance of water, raised by two hydraulic rams and hot air engine. There are four branding yards, with weaning

paddocks at each. Six herding paddocks, five at homestead.

Wells.—Three have lately been put down on the driest portion of the run, and windmills and troughing have been erected at two of these sites, whilst another is on the ground for erection at third site.

Dip.—A splendid concrete dip has been erected at the head station.

Stock.—Cattle about 10,000 head, principally Hereford and Shorthorn cross, comprising about 6,000 bullocks and steers. No old cows. Besides horses.

Price.—£85,000 as a going concern.

For further particulars and firm offer please apply to—

PASTORAL ESTATES, LIMITED,
Margaret street, Toowoomba.

(E. & O.E., 26-7-1916.)

[*Exhibit 49.*]

Toowoomba, 29th July, 1916.

A. McGugan, Esq., Criterion Hotel, Rockhampton.

DEAR SIR,—We appreciate your wire from Marlborough reading:—"Inspector will reach Wandovale first August expect be Brisbane Wednesday"; and at once replied as follows:—"Wired Rockhampton twenty-sixth secured offer Wandovale going concern eighty-five thousand country seven forty miles principally Hereford Shorthorn cross watered Clarke and Broken rivers well improved will inspector look at property going concern reply"; hoping we would catch you. This message we now confirm.

We should like to be able to advise Barnes whether your inspector will be viewing the property with a view to purchase as a going concern, or would only be inspecting the stock. Kindly advise us and oblige.

We wired Barnes to-day in the hope that we would catch him before he left for Brisbane, stating that your man would reach Wandovale on the 1st August.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,
Managing Director.

A copy of this letter has been sent on to Brisbane.

[*Exhibit 50.*]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to
MCGUGAN, MARLBOROUGH.

Wired Rockhampton twenty-sixth secured offer Wandovale going concern eighty-five thousand country seven forty miles principally Hereford Shorthorn cross watered Clarke and Broken rivers well improved. Will inspector look at property going concern reply.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 29-7-1916.

[*Exhibit 51.*]

2 August, 1916.

A. McGugan, Esq., General Manager, State Stations, Department of Public Lands, Brisbane.

Re Wandovale.

DEAR SIR,—We had a wire from Mr. Barnes stating that he will arrive in Brisbane on the 10th instant, and will be stopping

at Daniels Hotel, and we should be glad to arrange an interview with you, say for Friday morning, the 11th instant. Would you have your report in by this date? We await your further advices. We have since had a telephone message from you, and note that you are not quite sure of your movements, but will advise us in due course.

In the event of purchase, we take it that you want to pay the bulk of the money in Treasury bonds. Could you give us some idea of their currency, interest, &c., and what proportion would you want Mr. Barnes to accept in lieu of the property. We think the proposition a feasible one, and our Mr. Bennett will, we trust, be able to influence Mr. Barnes to sell in this way, specially if such bonds are free of income tax.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,
Managing Director.

[*Exhibit 52.*]

Toowoomba, 10th August, 1916.

The General Manager, State Stations,
Care of Lands Department, Brisbane.

Re Wandovale.

DEAR SIR,—I have interviewed Mr. Barnes, and he is prepared to accept £85,000 for Wandovale as a going concern, with about ten thousand cattle, three hundred and fifty horses, plant, &c., &c. Ten thousand pounds sterling to be paid in cash, and seventy-five thousand pounds by way of debentures extending over ten years, and bearing interest at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., free of State and Federal income tax.

PASTORAL ESTATES, LIMITED,
Per Fred. E. Bennett, Managing Director.

[*Enclosure No. 1.*]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane.
10th August, 1916.

WANDO VALE.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CATTLE, 2-8-16.

Males, No. 3 and older ...	2,450	
" 4 ...	1,800	
" 5 ...	1,000	
		5,250
Females ...		5,000
		*10,250
Horses ...		350

* Not including about 600 male cows branded to date.

[*Enclosure No. 2.*]

LEASES, WANDOVALE.

Name.	Sq. mls.	Rent.	Pr. sq mile	Date of Lease.	Term.
		£ s. d.			Years.
Wandovale ...	445	467 5 0	21/-	1 July, '06	32½
Jamison ...	33	23 15 0	12/6	1 Jan., '10	42
Bulgeri ...	125	93 15 0	15/-	1 Jan., '07	42
Kinlock ...	170	170 0 0	20/-	1 Jan., '07	42
	778	£754 15 0			

[Enclosure No. 3.]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane, 10-8-1916.

WANDOVALE IMPROVEMENTS.

Yards	...	£1,785
Fencing	...	1,520
Buildings	...	525
Wells	...	937 (about 9 wells)
Windmills	...	630 (about 9 mills)
Tanks	...	670
Troughing	...	270
Engines	...	230
Hyd. rams	...	25
Concrete dam	...	25
Watering place	...	25
		<hr/>
		£6,642

[Exhibit 53.]

Ravenswood Junction, 19th August, 1916.

The Under Secretary, Lands Department,
Brisbane.

Re Wandovale.

SIR,—I have the honour to report that I have received Mr. Ferry's report of his inspection of the above property and stock. The property is situated 90 miles from Pentland Railway Station, and about 120 miles from Charters Towers. The area is about 776 square miles. The offer expires on 20th instant. I have asked for two weeks' extension. In event of a sale, the price to be paid is £85,000 (eighty-five thousand) for Wandovale as a going concern—£10,000 cash, and balance in ten-year currency debentures.

Stock.—Mr. Ferry reports that 5,000 cows have been counted. The manager states that he will not at present muster any more cattle, as they are very much scattered, and it would knock them about too much to muster. Mr. Ferry states that he is certain there are 10,000 head of cattle on the station. He considers there are nearer 12,000 than 10,000, and that does not include the calves branded this year. The large number of bullocks makes the proposition worth considering. If the season holds good, about 3,000 bullocks can be turned off at end of this and next year. About 1,000 should be ready to go at the end of this year. The cattle are good quality and in good condition—Hereford-Shorthorn cross.

Mr. Barnes, the owner, states that he would not give a muster delivery, as he knows that he has underestimated the number (10,000) offered. The number and values of the cattle are as per the attached memo.

Country.—Is good sound cattle country—ironbark and thin-leaved boxwood. There is a small area of inferior country, but the rest of the country is good cattle country. The country as at present will carry the present herd safely until the end of the year.

Water Improvements.—There are ten wells on the property, at a depth of about 50 feet each; all good water, but more wells will require to be sunk if more cattle were put on. There are also several good springs and water-holes on the property.

I attach a list of improvements, all of which are in fairly good order, though the station buildings are pretty old, but won't require much to put all in order.

Plant.—There is sufficient for the working of the place, and in fair order.

I do not like the idea of a "walk in walk out" delivery, but, considering everything, I think it would be safe to make a purchase

on these lines. I think that there is sure to be more than 10,000 head of cattle on the place. Therefore, I recommend that the property be purchased at £85,000 (eighty-five thousand), viz.:—

Stock—10,000 cattle, 350 horses	...	£69,900
— horses	...	2,100
Improvements	...	5,500
Plant	...	120
		<hr/>
		£77,620
Lease	...	7,380
		<hr/>
		£85,000

Should you decide to purchase, I will arrange that the present manager (Bowman) carries on; he is well spoken of, and I think is a capable man. He can take delivery, and delivery can be taken at any time as soon as the contract is signed; but best allow a little time to elapse after signing the contract. On Thursday Mr. Bennett (Pastoral Estates), of Toowoomba, will ring you up, and he will arrange that Mr. Barnes calls to see you and arrange the sale if required.

My address for telegrams will be Ravenswood Junction until 26th night; on 27th I will be in Townsville, care of Dalgety. You will please wire me promptly if a sale has been made, as I would like to arrange matters with the manager of Wandovale before I leave on the 28th afternoon for Cairns.

I am, &c.,

A. MCGUGAN.

[Enclosure No. 1.]

WANDOVALE.

PARTICULARS OF IMPROVEMENTS.

Wells.—Ten, equipped with windmills and engines, tanks, &c.

Dips.—Three cement—in good order.

Fencing.—90 miles—two barbed boundary fencing. 87 miles division fences—three wires—two barb, one plain—including two bullock paddocks and several smaller paddocks.

Four stock yards.

Eleven small tailing yards.

Homestead, buildings, &c.

Total value of above, £5,500.

Plant.—Two drays, buggy, wagonette, saddles, &c., all sufficient for the working of the station. Value, £120.

[Enclosure No. 2.]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane, 10-8-1916.

LEASES, WANDOVALE.

Name.	Sq. mls.	Rent.	Pr. sq. mile.	Date of Lease.	Term.
		£ s. d.			Years.
Wandovale	445	467 5 0	21/-	1 July, '06	32½
Jamson	38	24 15 0	12 6	1 Jan., '10	42
Bulgeri	125	93 15 0	15/-	1 Jan., '07	42
Kinlock	170	170 0 0	20/-	1 Jan., '07	42
	778	£754 15 0			

[Enclosure No. 3.]

WANDOVALE.

Males, 3's and older	...	2,450
" 4	...	1,800
" 5	...	1,000
		<hr/>
Females	...	5,250
		5,000
		<hr/>
		*10,250

* Not including about 600 male calves branded to date.

[Enclosure No. 4.]

WANDO VALE STOCK VALUATION.

Males—							
3's and older	...	...	...	2,450	@ £8/10/-	per head	£20,825
4's and older	...	...	...	1,800	@ £7/10/-	per head	13,500
5's and older	...	...	...	1,000	@ £4/11/6	per head	4,575
				5,250	@ £7/8/2	...	£38,900
Bulls ...				80	@ £10/-	...	800
Females—							
3's and older,	2,200	@	£4/-	...	...	...	£8,800
4's and older,	1,800	@	£3/-	...	...	...	9,000
5's and older,	1,000	@	£4/-	...	...	...	4,000
5,000				5,000	=	£4/7/2 per head	£21,800
				10,330	...	...	£61,500
				2,000	head cattle @	£4/4/-	8,400
				12,330	approx. £5/13/4	...	£69,900
				350	horses @	£6/-	2,100
							<u>£72,000</u>
5,250 males @ £7/8/2 per head				...	...	...	£38,900
80 Bulls @ £10/- per head				...	...	...	800
5,000 females at £4/7/2 per head				...	...	...	21,800
2,000 mixed @ £4/4/- per head				...	...	...	8,400
12,330				...	...	...	£69,900
350 horses @ £6/-				...	...	...	2,100
(2 entires, 1 dft., 1 saddle)				...	...	...	<u>£72,000</u>

[Enclosure No. 5.]

Hotel Daniell, Brisbane, 10-8-1916.

WANDOVALE IMPROVEMENTS.

Yards	...	£1,785
Fencing	...	1,520
Buildings	...	525
Wells	...	937 (about 9 wells)
Windmills	...	630 (about 9 mills)
Tanks	...	670
Troughing	...	270
Engines	...	230
Hyd. rams	...	25
Concrete dam	...	25
Watering place	...	25
		<u>£6,642</u>

[Exhibit 54.]

Townsville, 21st August, 1916.

A. McGugan, Esq., Pastoral Inspector,
Lands Office, Brisbane.

DEAR SIR,—I now confirm your wire of the 14th instant, which I received at Wando Vale, reading, viz.:—"Endeavour complete inspection by 18th and meet me Pentland midday nineteenth." I now also confirm my conversation with you of the 19th instant in reference to the Wando Vale country that I have inspected since my last report.

Page's Creek Country.—Third-class country; very poor; sandy surface, with rock at shallow depth; stunted silver-leaf ironbark timber; narrow-leaf box flats; limestone; rough ridges. Most of the timber is in a dying state; lot of poison heart leaf bushes on the best quality country towards the Broken River. There is about 100 miles stretch of this country; could be fenced off with about 6 miles of fencing—that is, by running the line of fence from Gorge to range to range across the Gap's Clarke River; sandy; no permanent water-holes on the surface, but water easily procurable in bad times by sinking in the sand a few feet. I should say from about 8 to 10 feet deep to get a good

supply. There is a good permanent spring in Brandy's Creek, which runs the creek down into the Clarke River about quarter of a mile, filling some good holes. The Broken River is a splendid river for water, although in most cases it is bad to get at, and requires a lot of climbing for weak cattle to get out again. This I consider is the cause of the losses being so heavy in a bad time, as there seems to be always plenty of dry feed on the back country, which is so far away from the water at present. It would be advisable to put down more wells in this country in the event of your purchasing this property.

The rest of the country, with the exception of this 100 mile strip of bad, is good, sound, healthy country; basalt ridges; blacksoil flats and sandy loamy soil.

Grasses.—Spear grass on the basalt country; blacksoil flats blue grass; small patches Mitchell grass; mostly light kangaroo grass and blue grass and spear grass.

Timber.—Narrow-leaf ironbark ridges; narrow-leaf box flats; patches of sandalwood; black ti-tree flats, with coolibah, bloodwood, cabbage gum, and one or two small patches poplar gum, and a few gravel ridges.

The main watering places.—Broken River at present; the Clarke River; Brandy's Creek; spring and well; hut; windmill; tank and troughs; good supply. This well is 72 feet deep; the water rises when full to fifty feet—22 feet from the surface.

The number of cattle estimated on the place is 12,000. According to their book they have square-tailed 5,000 breeders to date, and on the country they have already mustered they have missed about 30 per cent., and about 10 per cent. of the calves are still unbranded on this country. They have branded 1,400 calves this year up to the present. They will only brand about 25 per cent. this year on account of the last year being so dry, the bulls being too poor to work. There are about 252 horses on the place.

I gave you a list of the improvements, &c., also the list of cattle and the ages that they sent in on their last returns—December, 1915. I have included in these the 1,400 calves branded this year.

They have allowed 7 per cent. for their losses since 1912. Each year, with the exception of last year, they wiped off 12½ per cent. when sending in their returns, which left, roughly, about 17,000 head. Mr. Barnes cut this down again to 10,000 when he gave you the offer. In this I am sure they have over-estimated their losses.

Yours faithfully,

STANLEY H. FERRY.

P.S.—I think this is a good proposition.—S.H.F.

[Enclosure.]

WANDOVALE, PENTLAND.

CATTLE.

Males, ages No. 5 and older	...	...	6,000
Females, ages No. 5 and older	...	...	6,000
Total	...	...	12,000

(Small branding for 1916, about 25 per cent. Bulls being too poor to work 1915.)

BULLS.

80 head on the station at present time.

HORSES.

All descriptions ... 352 head.

STATION IMPROVEMENTS.

	Rooms.
Head Station	10
Office room	1
Bath room	1
Kitchen	1
Store, harness, feed room under one roof	3
Meathouse	1
Laundry	1
Men's hut	4
	22 Rooms.

DESCRIPTION.

Head Station.—Ironbark slabs in walls, and flooring boards all rough bush timber. All the out buildings similar, with the exception of the men's hut, and all without floors.

Men's hut galvanised iron throughout; four rooms 12 feet by 12 feet; walls, 8 feet high; window and one door in each room; water tap close handy.

The head station leaks through the roof in places in wet weather; this requires altering. The iron could be replaced on new rafters. The buildings are all very old, but still with very little expense they could be made very comfortable, and would last a number of years.

The blacksmith shop and buggy-shed will have to be rebuilt as it is about worn out; the iron will come in again for use. Two drays, 5 sets harness, 1 buckboard buggy, 1 wagonette, 5 sets buggy harness, 7 riding saddles, 8 pack saddles.

1917—6 H

FENCING.

Boundary fence 90 miles. Two barbed wires, posts 15 feet apart. Division fences 87 miles. Three wire fences, two barbed, one plain.

STOCKYARDS.

	£	s.	d.
Page's Creek—small yard	90	0	0
Head Station—big yards, old	140	0	0
Craigy—good, big yards and dip (no water)	200	0	0
Twelve-mile Yards—good, small	150	0	0
	£580	0	0

Eleven small receiving yards, top rail, 4 barbed wires, at £60 each ... £660 0 0

WATER CONSERVATION.

Ten wells, average depth about 50 feet.

One of these is a duffer; the rest are all very good. There is one 72 feet deep; this is the deepest well on the place, and a good supply. Craigy is the duffer.

Windmills	9
Engines (strength, 2½ horse power; makers: 3 of Coopers, 1 Fuller and Johnson)	4
Hot-air engines	1
Hydraulic ram's head	1
	6

Three cement dipping places—

Head Station dip	300
Craigy dip	300
Twelve-mile	400
	£1,000

[Exhibit 55.]

TELEGRAM FROM MR. MCGUGAN to PASTORAL ESTATES, TOOWOOMBA.

Homestead, 19th August, 1916.

Please get fortnight's extension Wandovale offer seems favourable.

McGUGAN.

[Exhibit 56.]

URGENT TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to MR. MCGUGAN, RAVENSWOOD.

Owner prepared to do anything reasonable regarding extension but thinks should have decision early. Wire longest extension necessary will try meet you at same time he understood if Ferry's report favourable that whole thing would be settled without delay reply.

PASTORAL ESTATES,

Toowoomba, 19-8-16.

[Exhibit 57.]

URGENT TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES to MR. MCGUGAN, RAVENSWOOD.

Barnes wires considers McGugan's request quite unreasonable you will remember our conversation when he distinctly stated business could proceed on receipt inspector's report this I presume he now holds will extend offer until Saturday next. Reply.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 21 Aug. 1916.

[Exhibit 58.]

URGENT TELEGRAM FROM MR. MCGUGAN to
PASTORAL ESTATES, TOOWOOMBA.
Charters Towers, 19 Aug., 1916.

Ferry reports favourably think business
will result ring Brisbane office Thursday get
longest extension possible reply Ravenswood.

MCGUGAN.

[Exhibit 59.]

Market street,

Toowoomba, 21st August, 1916.

A. McGugan, Esq., care of Dalgety and Co.,
Townsville.

DEAR SIR,—We appreciate your wire reading
“Ferry reports favourably think business
will result ring Brisbane office Thursday get
longest extension possible reply Ravenswood”;
and at once got in touch with Barnes,
with the result that we wired you
urgent on Saturday night as follows:—
“Owner prepared do anything reasonable
regarding extension but thinks should have
decision early. Wire longest extension necessary
will try meet you at same time he
understood if Ferry’s report favourable that
whole thing would be settled without delay
reply.” This message we now confirm.

We had the following reply from you this
morning:—“Please get fortnights extension
Wandovale offer seems favourable”; and at
once wired Mr. Barnes, with the result that
we wired you later:—“Barnes wires ‘Consider
McGugans request quite unreasonable
you will remember our conversation when
he distinctly stated business could proceed
on receipt inspectors report this I presume
he now holds I will extend offer until Saturday
next’ Reply.” This message we also
confirm.

We trust that the time granted will be
sufficient and that we shall have the pleasure
of doing business with you. We wired to you
at Homestead as per enclosure.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 60.]

TELEGRAM FROM PASTORAL ESTATES, TO
MCGUGAN CARE OF DALGETY’S TOWNSVILLE.

Barnes wires consider your request quite
unreasonable you will remember our conversation
when McGugan distinctly stated business
could proceed on receipt inspectors report
this I presume he now holds I will extend
offer until Saturday next Wires Ravenswood
undelivered Reply.

PASTORAL ESTATES, 22-8-16.

[Exhibit 61.]

URGENT TELEGRAM FROM MCGUGAN to PASTORAL
ESTATES, TOOWOOMBA.

Townsville, 23 August, 1916.

Say fourteen days after contract signed
wire me Tuesday only Hydes Hotel Cairns
afterwards Mount Molloy.

MCGUGAN.

[Exhibit 62.]

24 August, 1916.

A. McGugan, Esq., care of Dalgety and Co.,
Townsville.

DEAR SIR,—We rung up the Brisbane office
this morning, and they had not knowledge of
a letter from you.

We asked them your address and they told
us Ravenswood Junction. We can only conclude
that your wire which you asked us to
reply to Ravenswood was incorrect, and
should have read Ravenswood Junction.

We therefore repeated the wire to you at
Ravenswood Junction:—“Barnes wires consider
request unreasonable you will remember
our conversation when McGugan distinctly
stated business could proceed receipt
inspectors report this I presume he holds I
will extend offer until Monday next. Two
wires Ravenswood undelivered Reply.” This
message we now confirm, and you will see
how the mistake occurred, and why so many
wires dealing with the same subject-matter
have been sent you. It was purely neglect
on the part of the Telegraph Department,
and we are inquiring into it.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 63.]

28th August, 1916.

A. McGugan, Esq., care of Messrs. Burns,
Philp and Co., Cairns.

DEAR SIR,—We wired you to Townsville
this morning as follows:—“Endeavouring get
owners Kamilaroi and Hamilton Downs
accept bulk purchase money, debentures
cabling home will advise later.”

This message we now confirm. We also
wired you a line of bulls at Kamilaroi, and
trust to hear that you are interested:—
“Offer hundred fifty Kamilaroi bulls fifteen
guineas. Station bred advise wire promptly
if dispose inspect.”

Re Wandovale.—We are not sure when you
would require delivery, should the Government
purchase this property, and have raised
the point with you by urgent wire this morning,
in case we cannot get in touch with you
for a few days:—“Should sale Wandovale
take place when do you take delivery.”

This message we also confirm.

Yours faithfully,

FRED. E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Exhibit 64.]

URGENT TELEGRAM FROM UNDER SECRETARY FOR
LANDS to ALEX. MCGUGAN, HYDE’S HOTEL,
CAIRNS.

Have closed for Wandovale eighty-two
thousand pounds. Wire urgent earliest date
you can arrange for delivery. Matter employment
manager and staff left to you. Advise any special
terms you consider necessary for insertion in agreement.

UNDER SECRETARY LANDS 29-8-6.

[Exhibit 65.]

URGENT TELEGRAM FROM MR. MCGUGAN to
UNDER SECRETARY FOR LANDS, BRISBANE.
Kuranda, 30 Aug., 1916.

Arranging Bowman retain management Wandovale he will give and take delivery on seventh September. Endeavour have some clause guaranteeing numbers.

MCGUGAN.

[Exhibit 66.]

Croydon, *via* Cairns, 31st August, 1916.

The Under Secretary, Lands Department,
Brisbane.

SIR,—I have the honour to state that I received your wire advising the purchase of Wandovale late on Tuesday, 29th night, and replied from Kuranda at 9 o'clock on 30th morning as follows:—"Arranging Bowman retain management Wandovale he will give and take delivery on the Seventh September. Endeavour have some clause guaranteeing numbers."

I do not expect Mr. Barnes would guarantee the numbers, but he may. I do not know any special clause to be inserted.

I have engaged Mr. Bowman at the rate of £250 per annum, and instructed him carry on until I see him. He will send you specimen copy of signature. I will visit "Wandovale" upon my return from the Gulf, and will arrange to have the muster completed at once.

Vanrook, &c.—I note that you expect to get a month's offer of these properties; if so, I will inspect the cattle there first, but you will require, I think, to get extension of time.

Dotswood, &c.—I note what you wired and am going on with the inspection. Dotswood cattle are good quality, and if the numbers stated are there, is worth buying. I am now at Brooklyn. Mr. Ferry will go on North to York Downs. I will send you the report as soon as I can.

Address.—I will leave Brooklyn on the 6th morning and reach Almaden that evening, and arrive Forsayth on the 7th evening and reach Croydon on the 9th evening. For the present until further notice my telegraphic and postal address will be Croydon, *via* Cairns. I will advise you my address as I go along.

I am, &c.,
A. MCGUGAN.

[Exhibit 67.]

Hughenden, 23rd June, 1917.

A. McGugan, Esq., care of Messrs. Dalgety
and Co., Limited, Townsville.

DEAR SIR,—We regret to find that the particulars we held of Wando Vale were destroyed when they became of no use to us, on the Government purchasing, but the main particulars were:—Price £65,000, with 10,000 head of cattle, walk in walk out.

We never offered it under this price, and consider you made a good deal for it, when the terms of payment, &c., are taken into consideration.

Yours faithfully,

J. V. SUTER AND CO.,

J. V. Suter.

[Exhibit 68.]

Margaret street, Toowoomba,
19th July, 1917.

A. McGugan, Esq., Molloy.

DEAR SIR,—We wired you to-day as follows:—"Posted copy Barnes letter Molloy also Graham no foundation statements made Barnes gave offer nineteen thirteen forty-two thousand pounds before considerable amount spent improvements considering preponderance male cattle owing drought debentures rise in values least ninety centum considers price paid fair value."

This message we now confirm, and enclose copy of letter received from Mr. Barnes, which explains itself. You will see there was no foundation for the statements made.

Yours faithfully,

FRED E. BENNETT,

Managing Director.

[Enclosure.]

(Copy.)

Lyndhurst, Cairns, 9th July, 1917.

The Manager, The Pastoral Estates, Toowoomba.

DEAR SIR,—Subsequent to writing to you a day or so ago, I received your letter of the 26th June, and note contents. As I have destroyed all books, &c., in connection with Wando Vale, I cannot give you a definite answer to your inquiry; but, so far as my memory serves me, I did give the offer at, I think, £42,000 in about 1913. This was before considerable sums had been spent in improvements. However, taking into consideration the fact that Wando Vale was sold with a preponderance of male cattle occasioned by drought, that cattle had appreciated fully 90 per cent. on '13 values, and, furthermore, that I was accepting Government debentures at par, which at the moment were only worth 95 in the open market, and, above all, *not negotiable* for five years, I do not think the agent you allude to has much reason for talking. Personally, all I can say is, that with the reports, &c., current at the time regarding the corrupt business methods of the Government, I was agreeably surprised to know that, so far as the sale of Wando Vale was concerned, no fault could be found.

Yours faithfully,

J. H. S. BARNES.

[Exhibit 69.]

*Extract from "Votes and Proceedings,"
Legislative Assembly, 13th September, 1917.*

5. Mr. VOWLES to ask The Secretary for Public Lands—

- (1.) Will he place on the table of the House all reports, documents, and writings connected with the inspection of, negotiations for purchase of, and purchase of Wando Vale by the Government?
- (2.) Will he also place on the table of the House the letter referred to by him in this Assembly on Wednesday, 12th instant, which refers to the destruction, by fire, of certain documents connected with the purchase price put on the above property by the owner thereof?

- (1.) The number of cattle estimated to be on Wando Vale on date of purchase?
- (2.) The number of cattle actually on the run when taken over?
- (3.) The number of cattle at present, exclusive of those since purchased?
- (4.) The number of cattle since purchased (giving description)?
- (5.) The amount of money paid by the Government for Wando Vale property?
- (6.) The estimated value of Wando Vale with stock and improvements at present?

Answers:—

- (1.) "10,000."
- (2.) "12,711."
- (3.) "15,367, and 500 unbranded calves."
- (4.) "130 Archer stud bulls."
- (5.) "£82,000."
- (6.) "£138,490."

[Exhibit 70.]

*Extract from "Votes and Proceedings,"
Legislative Assembly, 18th September, 1917.*

1. Mr. VOWLES to ask The Secretary for Public Lands—

- (1.) Will he place on the table of the House all reports, documents, and writings connected with the inspection of, negotiations for purchase of, and purchase of Wando Vale by the Government?

- (2.) Will he also place on the table of the House the letter referred to by him in this Assembly on Wednesday, 12th instant, which refers to the destruction, by fire, of certain documents connected with the purchase price put on the above property by the owner thereof?

2. Mr. WINSTANLEY to ask The Secretary for Public Lands,—

- (1.) The number of cattle estimated to be on Wando Vale on date of purchase?
- (2.) The number of cattle actually on the run when taken over?
- (3.) The number of cattle at present, exclusive of those since purchased?
- (4.) The number of cattle since purchased (giving description)?
- (5.) The amount of money paid by the Government for Wando Vale property?
- (6.) The estimated value of Wando Vale with stock and improvements at present?

[Exhibit 72.]

*Extract from "Votes and Proceedings,"
Legislative Assembly, 20th September, 1917.*

1. PURCHASE OF WANDO VALE STATION.—

Mr. Corser, for Mr. Vowles, pursuant to notice, asked The Secretary for Public Lands,—

- (1.) Will he place on the table of the House all reports, documents, and writings connected with the inspection of, negotiations for purchase of, and purchase of Wando Vale by the Government?
- (2.) Will he also place on the table of the House the letter referred to by him in this Assembly on Wednesday, 12th instant, which refers to the destruction, by fire, of certain documents connected with the purchase price put on the above property by the owner thereof?

Answer:—(1 and 2.) "So many false statements have been made by the Honourable Member and some of his colleagues with respect to the purchase of Wando Vale, that the Government has decided to have an inquiry, by evidence on oath, into the truthfulness or otherwise of the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member made a most specific statement in this House recently with regard to the purchase of Wando Vale, and, moreover, it was a statement which he declared he could prove. He will be given that opportunity through the medium mentioned. The papers will be made available for that investigation."

[Exhibit 71.]

*Extract from "Votes and Proceedings,"
Legislative Assembly, 19th September, 1917.*

1. STOCK ON WANDO VALE.—

Mr. Winstanley, pursuant to notice, asked The Secretary for Public Lands,—

[Exhibit 73.]

TELEGRAM FROM MR. LIVINGSTONE, HUGHENDEN, to MR. SUTER, QUEEN'S HOTEL, TOWNSVILLE, 8TH OCTOBER, 1917.

Peel remembers us offering him Wando Vale in May sixteen at sixty-five thousand with ten thousand cattle.

LIVINGSTONE.

[Exhibit 74.]

URGENT TELEGRAM FROM MR. SUTER to MR. BARNES, HOTEL CECIL, BRISBANE, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 1917.

Believe it was June or July nineteen sixteen you gave me Wando Vale's price at sixty-five thousand with ten thousand cattle.

SUTER.

[Exhibit 75.]

TELEGRAM FROM MR. SUTER to MR. FOWLES, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, BRISBANE, 2ND OCTOBER, 1917.

Barnes gave us Wando Vale at sixty-five thousand in June or July sixteen with ten thousand cattle.

SUTER.

[Telegram marked "For Mr. Fowles. M.L.A."]

[Exhibit 76.]

Lyndhurst, Cairns (Queensland),

26th June, 1916.

Messrs. J. V. Suter and Coy., Hughenden.

DEAR SIRs,—I am in receipt of your wire reading: "Thanks letter, our buyer Hon. Frank Bond of Tasmania please send full parts."

I now enclose pars., which I hope will suffice. I could not give rent, &c., of Rangestead, but you could ascertain same from last *Govt. Gazette* (dist. Nth. Kennedy). I might mention the brandings for the past three (3) years are as follows:—1913, 4,679; 1914, 4,869; 1915, 4,850; and have branded about 3,000 to date this year, with a further 1,000 to come, this notwithstanding a drought last year.

I estimate $3\frac{1}{2}$ and older bullocks on station at 2,500 to 3,000 head.

The stud herd will compare favourably with any in Ql. or N.S. Wales. And I make this statement without fear of contradiction.

I value the stud herd and horses at £8,000. Lyndhurst has never changed hands from the Barnes family; was taken up in the early 60's, and is considered a particularly safe run.

The water supply in bores and wells has been obtained from depths of 40 to 80 feet.

Please treat particulars as strictly confidential and not disclose offer property elsewhere.

Hoping to receive your advice asking for firm offer, and that business will result,

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. S. BARNES.

[Enclosure.]

LYNDHURST.

Situated about 70 miles from Einasleigh Railway Station, adjoining Carpentaria Downs.

Area—

Lyndhurst lease, 939 sq. m. Rent 14/3 for period ending 31/12/16. Lease expires 31/12/48.

South Downs lease, 43 sq. m. Rent 10/- for period ending 21/12/17. Lease expires 31/12/37.

Dyraaba lease, 54 sq. m. Rent 15/- for period ending 31/12/16. Lease expires 31/12/48.

Rangestead lease, 25 sq. m.

Country.—Ironbark chocolate ridges, black soil plains.

Watered by Einasleigh River and numerous creeks, 3 dams and about 15 sub-artesian bores and wells, about 10 of which are fitted with windmills, engines, tanks, and troughing.

Improvements.—Good homestead, with all necessary outbuildings, 4 cattle dips, 5 working yards, and about 5 herding yards. Numerous paddocks. Improvements valued at about £12,000.

Stock.—20,700 (more or less) well-bred Herefords, including a stud herd of about 250 head, being the progeny of the Dyraaba, N.S.W., stud herd. 350 horses (more or less), including about 50 stud-book mares, 3 thoroughbred stallions, 2 draft stallions, one (1) imp. English hackney stallion.

Price.—£125,000, walk in walk out.

Terms.—Half cash, balance in three equal annual instalments, plus interest at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. p.a., payable half-yearly; all payments to be made free of exchange in Sydney.

Three stud bulls (now in Brisbane) lately purchased at show sales in Sydney to be taken at cost price.

J.B.

[Exhibit 77.]

F. A. BRODIE & COY.,

STOCK AND STATION AGENTS.

Lombard Chambers, 107 Pitt street,

Sydney, 19th April, 1912.

DEAR SIR,—We have much pleasure in enclosing you the latest particulars of Wando Vale, received direct from the owner to-day, which are as follows:—

WANDO VALE.

Situated in the North Kennedy District, Queensland, about 80 miles from the Northern Railway Line.

Area.—755 square miles. Tenure from thirty to thirty-five years.

Country.—First class cattle country.

Water.—Permanently watered by the Clarke and Broken Rivers, besides numerous creeks and springs and wells.

Improvements.—A comfortable homestead, well built, surrounded by a good garden and orange grove, abundance of water raised by two hydraulic rams, and hot-air engine. The run is fenced on three sides and subdivided into three portions. There are also 4 branding yards, with weaning paddocks at each, six herding paddocks—five at homestead.

Wells.—Three have lately been put down on the driest portion of the run, and wind-mills and troughing have been erected at two of these sites, whilst another is on the ground for erection at third site.

Dip.—A splendid concrete dip has been erected at the head station.

Stock.—Cattle, about 17,600 head, principally Hereford and Shorthorn cross. Details are as follows:—

Males—	Bulls, 100.	Females—	
Oxen	8's and older	6's and older	1854
	9's	7's	923
	0's	8's	632
	1's	9's	1498
	2's	0's	1845
		1's	1130
		2's	994
	Total ...	Total ...	9876
	7776		

Which makes a total of 17,652.

About 350 horses.

Price.—£45,000 (forty-five thousand pounds), walk in walk out. Terms may be arranged.

Remarks.—There are over 350 bullocks, No. 9 and older. The first 1,200 have already been booked to the meatworks, at 17/- per 100 lb., the proceeds of which go to the purchaser.

For firm offer or further particulars, apply to F. A. Brodie and Co., Lombard Chambers, 107 Pitt street, Sydney.

E. and O.E.

[Enclosure.]

P. T. GANNAN & CO., Stock and Station Agents, HUGHENDEN, Q.

Have for sale:

WANDO VALE.

Situated in the North Kennedy District, Queensland, about eighty (80) miles from the Northern Railway Line.

Area.—Seven hundred and fifty-five square miles. Tenure from thirty (30) to thirty-five (35) years.

Country.—First class cattle country.

Watered.—Permanently watered by the Clarke and Broken Rivers, besides numerous creeks, springs, and wells.

Improvements.—A comfortable homestead, well built, surrounded by a good garden and orange grove, abundance of water raised by two (2) hydraulic rams, and hot-air engine. The run is fenced on three sides, and subdivided into three portions. There are also four branding yards, with weaning paddocks at each. Six herding paddocks, five at homestead.

Wells.—Three have lately been put down on the driest portion of the run, and wind-mills and troughing have been erected at two of the sites, while another is on the ground for erection at the third site.

Dip.—A splendid concrete dip has been erected at the head station.

Stock.—Cattle, about seventeen thousand six hundred (17,600) head, principally Hereford and Shorthorn cross. Details are as follows:—

Males—	Bulls, 100	Females—		
Oxen	8's and older	1937	6's and older	1854
	9's	1581	7's	923
	0's	1948	8's	632
	1's	1159	9's	1498
	2's	1011	0's	1845
			1's	1130
			2's	994
	Total ...	7776	Total ...	9876

Which makes a total of 17,652.

Horses.—About 350.

Price.—Forty-five thousand pounds (£45,000), walk in walk out. Terms may be arranged.

Remarks.—There are over 350 bullocks, No. 9 and older. The first 1,200 have already been booked to the meatworks, at 17/- per 100 lb., the proceeds of which go to the purchaser.

For further particulars or the firm offer, please apply to P. T. Gannan & Coy., Hughenden.

30th April, 1912.

ALLEGATIONS RE PURCHASE OF WANDO VALE STATION.

VOTE OF CENSURE.

The PREMIER, in moving—

"1. That this House deprecates the conduct of the hon. member for Dalby (Mr. W. J. Vowles) in abusing the privileges of Parliament by making, in the course of a speech in this Assembly as recorded in 'Hansard' of the 12th September, 1917, false allegations in regard to the purchase by the Government of Wando Vale Station, which allegations a Royal Commission, after judicial inquiry, found to be untrue, and that the hon. member was not justified in making;

"2. That this House deems it to be a duty to record its severe censure of such conduct, inasmuch as it is subversive of

the public interests, and calculated to lower the standard which should be set by the elected representatives of the people, and generally to damage the reputation of this honourable House,"

said: I regret the necessity that devolves upon me of moving this motion.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Where is the necessity?

The PREMIER: Well, I conceive it to be the duty of this House to record its displeasure at the action of one of its members who deliberately made a statement in this House which has been proved to be untrue, and which he deliberately stated he could prove. In this House we are all protected by what is known as "the privilege of Parliament"—parliamentary privilege. We can rise in our places here and say what we think fit, provided, of course, we are within parliamentary language and within the Standing Orders; and there is no liability attaching for the speaking of defamatory matter. The reason for that is that it is desirable in the public interest that there should be the utmost freedom; that there should be no restraint upon hon. members in the statements which they make in Parliament with respect to the public business of the State or with respect to any other matter; and, fortunately, in the experience of this Parliament very few instances have occurred in which that privilege has been abused. I regret to say that in this case I conceive that the hon. member for Dalby has been guilty of a very gross breach of his duty; he has done something that is not befitting a member of this House.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He has made a statement which has been proved to be untrue; and the judge who inquired into the matter has found that he was not justified in making that statement.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Not only was it not true, but the information upon which he spoke was such that he was not justified even in suggesting that there was truth in it. I would like to refer to the history of the matter, and I hope, in discussing this question, that hon. members will approach it in the spirit in which it ought to be approached.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: There is no need for heat in a debate of this sort. For my own part, I should much have preferred it had the hon. member for Dalby taken the honourable and manly course of coming forward and saying, "Well, I said it; I said I could prove it; I find I could not; I was wrong; I am sorry; I apologise."

Mr. VOWLES: Apologise to whom?

Mr. MURPHY: You didn't say that in regard to Denham.

The PREMIER: That would have been the manly thing.

Mr. VOWLES: What about the member for Fortitude Valley?

The PREMIER: I don't want any comparisons at all with what other hon. members did.

Mr. VOWLES: He was your leader.

The PREMIER: You will find there is no more honoured man who has ever sat in this House than the late David Bowman.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I am sorry that the hon. member for Dalby has drawn in his name as he has done.

Mr. MURPHY: You can blame me for that.

The PREMIER: It is the hon. member for Dalby who brought in the name of the late David Bowman, and said that he was my leader. He was an honoured leader.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: More than you are.

The PREMIER: He was a credit to this House; he was an ornament to this House.

Mr. VOWLES: Did he apologise?

The PREMIER: The late hon. member for Fortitude Valley offered to have a committee of this House to investigate what he said, but his offer was refused time and again.

Mr. MORGAN: The court investigated it.

The PREMIER: I remember the late hon. gentleman came to my room—I was leader of the party at that time—and discussed the matter with me—as to the formation of a committee to investigate that matter; but the then Premier refused it. But in this case we have a Royal Commission consisting of a judge, who has investigated the matter, who has taken an oath to give an impartial decision; and he has found that what the hon. gentleman said was not true; and, moreover, he has found that the hon. gentleman was not justified in saying what he did.

Mr. VOWLES: He said "then."

The PREMIER: "Was not 'then' justified"? Does the hon. gentleman suggest that he is now justified? Does he suggest that the finding of this court was not an impartial finding; that it was an improper finding, an incompetent finding?

Mr. VOWLES: We will leave it to you to criticise the judge.

The PREMIER: Well, I content myself with relying upon the report of the judge.

Mr. MORGAN: When it suits you.

The PREMIER: Now, this inquiry was asked for by hon. gentlemen opposite. As you know, Mr. Speaker, for many months past certain hon. members on the opposite side of the House—and I speak advisedly when I say "certain hon. members," because I am sure there are hon. gentlemen over there who would not stoop to the suggestions that emanate from some other hon. gentlemen—have been making suggestions and innuendoes that there was something wrong.

Mr. VOWLES: The public are doing that all the time.

The PREMIER: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it is because hon. gentlemen over there have been suggesting it; but after Wando Vale inquiry there will be no more suggestions among the public.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: You ask the people of Roma what they think about it.

The PREMIER: However, as I say, hon. members opposite—or some of them—have been carrying on a campaign of slander—because I can only describe it as a campaign of slander—against the Government with regard to the transactions in which the Government were concerned. Now, I have listened on this front bench patiently night after night and month after month to these vague innuendoes, to the suggestions thrown out from which a sinister conclusion may

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be drawn; and because no action was taken by the Government in the way of appointing a Royal Commission to investigate the matter at public expense, hon. members became bolder—more particularly the hon. member for Murilla and the hon. member for Dalby—and instead of making innuendoes, suggestions from sinister conclusions might be drawn, the hon. member for Dalby marches in here—after having heard the very vaguest of rumours, making no inquiry into the truth or otherwise of them—he comes in here and what does he tell the public of Queensland under the privilege of Parliament and from his place in the House? He says—

“I am in a position to say”—

This is in regard to Wando Vale—

“that it could have been bought on the same day with all the stock on it for £45,000 and less.”

Now, he said that from his place in the House deliberately. I interjected—

“You are prepared to say anything.”

“Mr. VOWLES: I am not only prepared to say it, I am prepared to prove it. I can give the Premier the name of the agent.”

And so on. Now, he made a deliberate and specific statement, and he went beyond the vagueness that had characterised previous slanders, and he said: “I can prove it”; and he believed that the Government would still go on and put up with this campaign of slander, and that they would not appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into it. The hon. member for Murilla, let me tell you what he said in reference to Wando Vale.

Mr. VOWLES: What has that got to do with this?

The PREMIER: I am pointing out that this inquiry was asked for by hon. members opposite. It is not an inquiry that has been forced upon them; it is an inquiry [7.30 p.m.] they have asked for and invited, and they thought it would not be granted. The challenge was accepted, and the commission was appointed; and the judge makes his report, and says “You slandered the Government,” and they say that this is malevolent! The leader of the Opposition actually referred to my malevolence to the hon. member for Dalby.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: It was most pointed.

The PREMIER: Was it malevolence in appointing, as a Royal Commission, a judge who was a member of the late Government to investigate the statement made by the hon. member for Dalby which he said he could prove, and which I was challenged to have investigated? The hon. member for Murilla said—

“I infer there ought to be a proper inquiry.”

Mr. VOWLES: I rise to a point of order. Will the leader of the Government be in order in dealing with any other statements than the statements made by himself and contained in this notice of motion?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is quite in order in tracing the history of the matter. The hon. member for Dalby will have an opportunity of replying. The hon. member will be called to order if he goes outside the rules of the House.

Mr. VOWLES: The accusation was made by me and by nobody else.

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The SPEAKER: The application to the case by the Chief Secretary is quite in order.

The PREMIER: I was dealing with the fact that the hon. member for Murilla had specifically, on the same evening that the hon. member for Dalby spoke, invited an inquiry to be held into this matter. On page 1087 of “Hansard,” the hon. member for Murilla said—

“I infer that there ought to be a proper inquiry into it. I know that the typewritten list of properties for sale which I obtained shows, in round figures, that that property could have been purchased at £5,000 less than the Government actually paid for it. We want to know why did the Government pay £5,000 more for that property.”

Then later on, after the Secretary for Railways interjected, the hon. member for Murilla said—

“I challenge the Minister to have an inquiry made into that matter.”

There is the position. I had gone for months previously simply denying these charges and refuting them.

Mr. VOWLES: You did nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman may say that, but hon. members need only look at the pages of “Hansard” to see. We do not often get this opportunity where an hon. member specifically states that he can prove it. On previous occasions they had opportunities of wriggling out of it by saying “I heard it,” or “Someone said so.” But the statement was made so boldly by the hon. gentleman, under the privilege of Parliament, when he was prepared to get up and say that the Government could have bought it for £45,000 but they paid £82,000 for it, and he added that he could prove it. What would people think who read that statement in “Hansard” if the Government did not accept the challenge and investigate it? We had to investigate it, and what is the result? The result is the report made by the learned judge who was appointed to conduct the inquiry. The judge finds—

“That in 1916 the property was not in Mr. Gannan’s hands at £45,000, and that he had not instructions to sell it for that or any other sum.”

There is a direct finding. It is a finding that the statement made by the hon. member was absolutely untrue. The judge also states—

“I find that the information then in Mr. Vowles’s possession was not sufficient to justify him in making the allegations.”

It is possible to conceive that an hon. member may make a statement, and that an hon. member may be misled in making it. An hon. member may have some justification for making a statement because someone misled him, but the judge finds specifically, because he was directed on that question, whether or not the hon. member was justified in making that statement. The judge says he was not justified, because of the casual nature of the conversation and the length of time that had elapsed. The judge finds—

“I find that the information then in Mr. Vowles’s possession was not sufficient to justify him in making the allegation, because of the casual nature of the conversation and the length of time that had elapsed.”

He also finds—

“Mr. Pym’s statement that Mr. Gannan had the property on his books for £45,000, even if correct, would not prove that the property could have been bought for £45,000, as the agent’s authority would only extend to obtaining and submitting offers.”

Mr. VOWLES: What do you think of that last sentence—even if correct?

The PREMIER: I think that the finding is absolutely correct, and I think, moreover, that by the hon. gentleman’s interjection he is endeavouring—now, at this moment—to suggest that there is something in his charge that that property could have been got for £45,000 on that day. That sum of £45,000 was mentioned right back in 1912—some four or five years before the property was purchased by the Government. Everyone knows that properties have doubled in value in that time. As a matter of fact, on the day that Wando Vale was bought it was a splendid deal, as the judge found. It was an excellent deal. The judge finds that the price paid was a fair and reasonable price. He finds that the rumour—that malicious, vile suggestion against my colleague the Treasurer—he finds that that rumour was entirely without foundation.

Mr. VOWLES: Who made that rumour?

The PREMIER: Who made that rumour? Someone outside this House made that rumour. But there was someone inside this House who asked the question of the Treasurer wanting to know where the £5,000 went to.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Someone on your side.

The PREMIER: It was the hon. member for Murilla.

Mr. MORGAN: Not in reference to that at all.

The PREMIER: Of course it was. Does the hon. gentleman think we have no intelligence? Does he think that the people of Queensland are fools that they cannot connect the two things? The hon. member gets up and talks about a rumour of £5,000 getting into someone’s pocket. To what did he refer?

Mr. VOWLES: What has that got to do with it?

The PREMIER: It has this to do with the hon. member for Dalby: that the evidence in this case shows that he and the hon. member for Murilla were in collaboration before he made his speech.

Mr. VOWLES: No, it does not.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Murilla spoke first, and the hon. member for Dalby spoke after him. He admits that he had spoken to the hon. member before he addressed the House, and he admits that they were both present at this conversation.

Mr. VOWLES: Eighteen months before.

The PREMIER: It was eighteen months before that he spoke to Mr. Pym. Imagine an hon. member in this House having that casual conversation eighteen months before—

Mr. VOWLES: Twelve months before.

The PREMIER: Well, twelve months before, and then twelve months afterwards coming to this House and charging responsible Ministers of the Crown with what is tantamount to corruption by saying that that

property could have been bought for £45,000 on the same day that the Government paid £82,000 for it. Only a fool could come to any other conclusion than that there had been corruption. If you give £82,000 for a property that you can get for £45,000 there is something wrong.

Mr. VOWLES: Bad management.

The PREMIER: Is there any elector in Queensland that will believe that the hon. gentleman was justified in coming into this House and deliberately saying that he could prove a thing and make a charge of that nature without having any foundation for it? Would it not be a manly thing for him to-night to get up and say, “I was wrong. I made a mistake. I am sorry”? I am sure that the public of Queensland would hold him in much higher estimation if he did that than they will if he adopts any different course. The hon. member has said that there is no one talked about more than he is to-day. I do not envy him his notoriety at all. He is not talked about in the way that hon. gentlemen should desire to be talked about, and it is certainly not a way that reflects any credit on Parliament. It is with Parliament that I am mainly concerned to-night. What was the motive behind the hon. gentleman’s mind in making that deliberate statement? He admits it under cross-examination. He admits, when he is pressed if he was not trying to make political capital, and says, “I was, as a matter of fact.”

Mr. VOWLES: Exactly.

The PREMIER: His own sworn testimony on oath was that he came and made that statement which is untrue, which he said he could prove in this House, and he did it—

Mr. VOWLES: To show you up.

The PREMIER: To make political capital. Now the hon. gentleman says it was to show me up. Does he intend suggesting that there is anything in his charge, and that there is any foundation for it? Is he doing that? No, he said he did it to make political capital. I am using his own words, and they were that he made the statement in order to make political capital. That is his evidence in cold print, and it is evidence that any elector will be able to read.

Mr. VOWLES: Would it be said for any other purpose?

The PREMIER: I understand from the statement made by the hon. member when he went before that Royal Commission that he was doing it in the public interest.

Mr. VOWLES: So I am.

The PREMIER: The hon. member asked me to have counsel briefed for him at the public expense because he was defending the public interest, and outside the responsible Ministers of the Crown in whose interests were they made? In whose interests was I acting when I appointed that Royal Commission?

Mr. VOWLES: Your own.

The PREMIER: If the hon. gentleman persists in that way he will only lower himself further in the estimation of the people of Queensland. I am sorry that, after the finding of the Royal Commission, the hon. member does not freely and frankly admit that he was wrong.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: To get you out of a difficulty?

The PREMIER: It will not get me out of a difficulty, because I am in no difficulty.

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I am sorry indeed that the duty devolves upon me of moving the motion I am. I consider I would be failing in my duty, as leader of this House, if I failed to move the motion I am now doing. I remind the hon. gentleman that if he were in some other Parliament with a majority as large as I have, it would not be a motion of censure that would be moved but a motion for expulsion. He would have to face the electors then whether he liked it or not. I think the hon. gentleman ought to take the course of going before the electors and allow them to investigate the matter.

Mr. VOWLES: You come along with me.

The PREMIER: You put in your resignation and you will see what will happen.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Where is your precedent for such a suggestion? You cannot find one.

The PREMIER: I hope the hon. gentleman will not continue to pursue the course which he has taken from the beginning.

Mr. VOWLES: You resign, and I will resign.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman has said that he could prove a thing, but he was not able to prove it. He then pretended that he was doing it in the public interest. He wanted counsel to defend him in the public interests, but in the witness-box he said, "I was trying to make political capital." Compare the two things. In whose interests was he trying to make political capital? We all know that the hon. gentleman has been angling, because we cannot help hearing what is abroad; he was angling for the leadership of the Opposition, and that was why he said he could prove that the Government were doing these things. Even since this inquiry took place the hon. gentleman has come into this House and made a speech on the Financial Statement. In that speech on the Financial Statement he refers to Wando Vale.

Mr. VOWLES: I referred to the Estimates.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman referred to the Estimates. He knew what the finding of the judge was, and he knew that the station was bought for £82,000—£10,000 in cash and £72,000 in debentures.

Mr. VOWLES: There was no finding on that.

The PREMIER: If the hon. gentleman says there was no finding on that I can show him in the papers of this House where that information was here in July. On the 17th July there was laid on the table of the House, pursuant to a question, a return showing a detailed list of stations purchased by the Government, the number and description of stock on each station when purchased, the price paid for each station separately, how the payment was made including the amount in debentures and the amount in cash. The table is as follows:—

	STOCK.		Purchase Price.	PAID IN—	
	Cattle.	Horses.		Cash.	Debentures.
Mount Hutton ...	10,243	280	£ 73,500	35,000	£ 38,500
Wandovale ...	12,730	350	82,000	10,600	72,000

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That information was in the possession of hon. members of this House on the 17th of July, before the hon. member for Dalby made his speech in this House, and before he made his speech on the Financial Statement. And yet, on the Financial Statement—after the evidence at the inquiry was concluded—he comes in here and says—

Mr. VOWLES: Read what I said.

The PREMIER: I am going to read what the hon. member said. He said—

"The report is not before us, but everything has been disclosed. You will find on page 15, 'Purchase of Wando Vale, £72,000,' which we know to be correct, and in unforeseen loan expenditure, on page 9, you will find 'Purchase of Wando Vale Station, £28,620.' The only reason I am referring to that is this: That the evidence shows that item is £10,000. There is £18,620 unaccounted for. The information elicited the other day by a question by the hon. member for Winton shows that the only stock purchased in addition to those taken over with the station were 130 stud bulls, and yet that item shows a difference of £18,620. Probably it has something to do with the cost of management and upkeep, but, dealing with this document as a document, how can I, apart from that inquiry, intelligently discuss that matter when you have a bare figure like that, and when we know the figures are £18,620 more than was actually paid in cash. I say that in passing to show how necessary it is that we should have every detail when we are discussing these matters, so that we can go into them properly. If not, we cannot criticise them as we should."

Mr. VOWLES: What do you see wrong in that?

The PREMIER: I will tell the hon. gentleman what is wrong in that. The hon. member suggested by his speech that there was a sum of £18,620 which was not accounted for; and that the Government had given no information in regard to it, whereas the fact is that on the 17th July the Government had placed all the information on the table of the House. Yet the hon. member comes in here and makes a statement of that kind, trying to continue his slander, because that is all it is!

Mr. VOWLES: I asked for an explanation of certain figures in your statement.

The PREMIER: There are ways and means of obtaining information. You can get up and ask for information, and at the same time, suggest, by innuendo, that there is something wrong—that you cannot intelligently follow the figures.

Mr. VOWLES: Can you?

The PREMIER: I can

Mr. VOWLES: How?

The PREMIER: By my intelligence; by the intelligence that God has given me.

Mr. VOWLES: Can you make £72,000 and £28,000 into £35,000?

The PREMIER: No. The £72,000 and the £28,000 are not to be added together. If the hon. member will study the Auditor-

General's report, he will find that the £82,000 paid for Wando Vale is made up as follows:—

Loan fund, debentures	... £28,620
Trust fund, debentures	... 43,380
Total debentures	... £72,000
Trust fund, cash	... 10,000
Total amount of purchase	£82,000

The total amount paid from the loan fund was £23,620.

Mr. VOWLES: That is all I asked.

The PREMIER: The suggestion made was that there was something wrong.

Mr. VOWLES: Nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: The attitude taken up by the hon. member is that there was something "smellful" about the transaction. That is the word he used. What are we to understand by "smellful"? Some corruption, some underhand business—that someone is getting something out of it. Yet the hon. member says now that all he meant was that he wanted an explanation from the Government, although we had previously given that information to the House. First, he invents the statement that we would not give the information, and then he says: "Because you did not give the information, I am justified in slandering you." There is one thing that hon. members ought to bear in mind, and that is that when they are members of this House they should not endeavour to take away the good name of other hon. members. (Hear, hear!) They are here protected by the privileges of Parliament. There is no one who would be more ready than I would be to accept the hon. member's disclaimer, if he got up in his place and said he was wrong, and that it had been proved that he was wrong. No one would be more pleased than I would be if the hon. member adopted that course. But the attitude he is taking up leaves me only one alternative. It is a course I object to take, but it is one which I am inclined to think is much more lenient than would be likely to be taken in New South Wales if a member there made such reckless charges against a Minister. There is no doubt that these are wanton and reckless charges.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I feel certain that the hon. member will yet regret the position he has taken up in this matter. Hon. members opposite must not run away with the idea that the public of Queensland are a lot of fools. It may be very easy to make a statement to the effect that there is something wrong—to say that large sums of money have been handled, that properties are being dealt with, and that somebody is getting something out of them. It is very easy to say you may be sure that someone is getting a commission out of the business, with a view of trying to make the people suspicious. But when the people realise that, instead of there being anything in such a statement, it is only a corrupt method to gain political capital, they will visit the members who have been guilty of such conduct with the punishment they deserve. I am sorry to say that it is not only the hon. member for Dalby who is associated with statements of this kind, but he is the only member I am able to deal with at the present moment. We have a specific finding of a Royal Commission who inquired into the matter, and I

feel that I would be wanting in my duty if I did not move the motion of which I have given notice, and which I hope will be carried. I hope that the Opposition will take up the attitude which ought to be taken up by an Opposition in circumstances of this sort. If they do not, they will brand themselves with the same brush as brands the hon. member for Dalby; they will be branded as members who make suggestions similar to those made by the hon. member for Dalby. Such tactics will not go down with the public. At all events, I, as a member of this Assembly—and particularly as leader of the House—am not going to allow such things to pass by without censure. That is the least we can do in a matter of this kind, and I hope the motion will be carried unanimously.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): I cannot allow a motion of this kind to pass without some comment. The Premier told us that he desired to deal with this motion in a calm and collected manner.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Which he did.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It was quite evident to hon. members that he entered into the discussion of the matter in such a way that his physical strength could not bear the strain.

The PREMIER: If you had the work to do that I have, you would perhaps not be able to bear the strain.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Perhaps hon. members will recollect that when the great Richard Brinsley Sheridan was dealing with speakers of the same character as the Premier—speakers who relied upon the use of loud-sounding phrases and inflated words to impress their audience—he referred to them in these terms—

“With blood-red moon
In the blaze of noon,
And the wolf cries out
With glittering shout
Too whitt, too whitt, too whoo!”

Those lines apply to the grandiloquent style adopted by the Premier in dealing with this motion. The hon. gentleman must have felt, when he was speaking, that he could not justify his arguments by the findings of the court or the evidence submitted to the court. The hon. gentleman spoke of the privilege that members enjoy in this House of bringing under the public gaze all the actions associated with public men, in order that the bright light of public criticism may shine on all those actions. Because hon. members in this House have endeavoured to do their duty by the public, and because in the doing of that duty they have had to deal somewhat severely with members sitting on the other side of the House, the Premier takes advantage of this opportunity to tyrannise over a particular member of the Chamber. Action of that kind is not foreign to the hon. gentleman. We know that on a former occasion he introduced a Bill in this House for the purpose of trying to secure the expulsion of certain members because in their ordinary business they ran counter to the wishes of the hon. gentleman. On the 12th September a discussion took place in this Chamber, and the hon. member for Dalby on that occasion referred to the extreme difficulty that members experienced

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in ascertaining what the Government were doing with a very considerable amount of public money.

The PREMIER: Although he had the information on the 17th July.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Not only the hon. member for Dalby, but other members on this side of the House, on many occasions drew public attention to the condition of things that prevailed. The Press of the city of Brisbane also took similar action, and all for the purpose of trying to discover what the Government were doing with very considerable sums of public money. It was not money that had been voted by this House, but trust funds with

[8 p.m.] which the Government had absolutely no right to deal, in the manner they were doing. Certain portions of those funds might be dealt with for certain purposes, but those purposes are distinctly laid down, and they are called gilt-edged securities—securities which he believed to be absolutely safe. But what security is there in the purchase of a station on which all the assets of the station may be destroyed in one summer, or at the most two summers, of continued drought, where the whole of the bones of the cattle of the station might represent the assets which had cost many thousands of pounds of trust funds?

Mr. COLLINS: No wonder we do not get land settlement when people read your speeches.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The public Press have endeavoured to show the Government the enormity of their action in this respect, and in doing so they were not actuated by animus against the Government, but as watch dogs of the public interest they have carefully watched the actions of the Government in this respect? Just as the Press experienced a difficulty so we experience a difficulty in endeavouring to ascertain where this three-quarter of a million came from and under what authority and conditions it was being spent.

The PREMIER: You had all the information.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We endeavoured to get that information by questions, but wherever it was possible to turn the questions down and refuse to answer them the Government did so. Hon. members sought to obtain information which it was desirable the public should know, but the Government endeavoured to prevent them on all possible occasions.

The PREMIER: Give an illustration. This is all generalities.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We find a speech in "Hansard" made by the hon. member for Dalby, in which he dealt very specifically with the question for the purchase of these stations, and spoke of the difficulties that he and others had experienced in getting information in regard to the matter. He was most specific in dealing with one property not so many miles from his own electorate.

The PREMIER: Did he not say he could prove that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: He spoke in connection with that property all the way through, and pointed out that the public were not receiving the information with regard to the purchase of it, and that statements had

been made broadcast throughout the country that the Government were making a bad bargain in relation to it.

The PREMIER: That is just as false as this.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He took occasion to point out that the Minister for Lands had made certain statements with regard to the value that he had got for the station, not taking into consideration that for fifteen months no account had been kept of the increase of cattle that had been sold, and pointing out other difficulties in connection with this station. He also referred to the purchase of Wando Vale, and from the knowledge that this Chamber possesses he stated that the purchase of that property had left in the minds of the people the impression that things were not what they ought to be, more particularly when he heard statements made by individuals outside this House in relation thereto, and when we had statements made by an hon. member opposite who, when he heard the statement made, was astonished at it and took the precaution next morning—

The PREMIER: He did not believe it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I mean the hon. member for Flinders, who had the courage to stand up to the statements that he made and not to go back in the slightest degree upon them.

Mr. MAY: I said it was purely hearsay.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And he took the precaution to note down in his pocket-book what he had heard and to take a Minister of the Crown and an Under Secretary representing the department as witnesses the next morning to the individual who made the statement, and there obtained the statement afresh from that individual. When he came down from his electorate he went to the Chief Secretary and laid before him the statements he had heard in connection with one of the members of the Government and the purchase of this particular property, and although the Chief Secretary had heard that direct statement by the hon. member for Flinders, verified in the manner indicated, he took no notice of it.

The PREMIER: I said that it ought to be treated with contempt.

HON. J. TOLMIE: When these statements were circulated through the country that the hon. member claimed he had been advised in relation thereto—

The PREMIER: Of course, I know there was a campaign of slander going on against the Government.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Was it possible to believe anything else, when the hon. gentleman would take no action to protect himself or the fame of his colleagues or the fame of his Government, that there was possibly something in connection with it?

The PREMIER: The judge proved that I acted right.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In dealing with these matters the hon. member for Dalby was endeavouring to bring before this Chamber, and he could bring them before no other place, the rumours he had heard.

The PREMIER: He did not say they were rumours; he said they were something he could prove.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In regard to one thing he made the statement that he could prove

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what he had said. The possibility is that he may be able to give some explanation of that himself.

The PREMIER: That is too much for you.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In connection with the statement that has been made, we have here the finding of His Honour the Commissioner who was appointed. He set it out in three special findings. He says—

“I find that the information then in Mr. Vowles's possession was not sufficient to justify him in making the allegations in sub-paragraph (a), because (1) of the casual nature of the conversation and the length of time that had elapsed.”

The conversation was casual—he had been informed by a certain individual. Probably that was casual. Later on he had got the information through a member on the other side that that statement was made by a person who was a buyer in relation to the station, and that buyer came up and gave his evidence afterwards. Then, in the second place, Mr. Gannan's evidence was necessary to prove the allegation, and he had been communicated with. As a matter of fact, he had been communicated with by the Crown before an opportunity had been given to the hon. member for Dalby to do it.

The PREMIER: He had twelve months to do it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And the Crown, even though Mr. Gannan, who was a man very likely to be able to prove this charge, was in such a condition—

The PREMIER: Shame!

Mr. VOWLES: That is why you held the commission—because you knew he could not come.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He was in such a condition that he could not give evidence.

The PREMIER: Shame!

HON. J. TOLMIE: Another thing in relation to this: It was stated in this House that the books and papers in connection with the purchase of this station had been destroyed. Those are two most important factors.

The PREMIER: You are still slandering. The people of Queensland can sum up your party.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Let us see what was the character of Mr. Gannan. On page 20 of this report there are a series of questions put to Mr. Pym. He related his conversation with Mr. Gannan—

“What was it Mr. Gannan said?—Well, he said it is a rather funny thing the Government paid such a price for it when he could have sold it for so much less. He talked in that strain.

“Do you know how much the Government had agreed to pay for it?—No, I did not know at the time.

“And did you know how much less it was that he could have sold it for?—Yes; he told me I could have bought it for £45,000.

“Did he say when you could have bought it for £45,000?—No; he just said, ‘If you had wanted to buy Wando Vale you could have bought it for

£45,000; if you did not like it at £45,000 you could probably have got it for a little bit less.’

“Did he say anything about having it on his books at that price?—Yes. I got interested a bit in it then. I know the old man so well that I suggested to him, in a friendly sort of way, that if he were not quite sure of what he was talking about, he had better not say anything more about it. He got very emphatic then. He said he had it from Mr. Barnes for £45,000, with instructions not to let a buyer go past. I jumped him up again on that. I said, ‘Are you quite certain of that?’ He said, ‘Yes, I am absolutely certain; I have it on my books at that price.’”

Then, at question 310—

“Did you accept it as a fact; did you believe Mr. Gannan?—Oh, yes, I always believe Mr. Gannan.

“At that time you were telling Mr. Vowles what you believed to be true?—Oh, yes; I had no reason to think anything else.”

Now, we will take the evidence of Mr. Barnes, the owner of the station, which will be found on page 25. I am giving all this to show what the character of Mr. Gannan is.

The PREMIER: There is no reflection on Mr. Gannan's character. That proves that the others were telling lies. It was on Gannan's books five years before that for £45,000, and that is what you suppressed. You made out that it was the same week and the same day. The property more than doubled in value the last five years. That is the little link that you left out.

Mr. VOWLES: It proves that Pym was telling the truth.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Then, question 704—

“Pym said he thought Gannan a very honourable and upright man?—He is a very honourable man.”

Now, we turn to the evidence of Mr. O'Connor—

The PREMIER: He is the man who said it was a wicked lie if he said it.

Mr. VOWLES: He said he never said anything about the £5,000 in reference to Mr. Theodore; not about the price of the station. Mr. Connor was asked—

“Is Mr. Gannan a man of good repute?—Yes, he is very highly respected.”

Then we turn to the evidence of Mr. Cox, question 2737—

“Cross-examined by Mr. Feez: What sort of man is Mr. Gannan? I don't mean in appearance. Is he a reliable man?—Yes.”

The PREMIER: The judge has found that Gannan had not it in his hands in 1916. He had it five years before. It was in 1912 that he had it in his books.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am dealing with the evidence which was adduced in connection with the inquiry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You are trying to shuffle.

The PREMIER: You are trying to bring the £45,000 that was five years before on to the

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same day we bought the station; and it is a scandalous shame that you are trying to do that in face of the evidence. The public will sum it up in that way.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Mr. Cox is being cross-examined, and at question 2737 he is asked "Is he a reliable man?—Yes." Now, there are statements made with regard to Mr. Gannan—the principal witness, or who would have been the principal witness in this case if his physical condition had been such as to allow his evidence to be taken, even on commission at his home in Hughenden, or if he had been brought down here—

The PREMIER: If he had come down we would have proved our case better.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In regard to whether Gannan had this property for sale, Mr. Pym, on page 20, says—

The PREMIER: You are trying to prove that the judge is wrong. Now you are fighting the judge, not the Government. It is just as well that the public should know whom you are fighting.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I think I have quoted this evidence before—in relation to what Pym said concerning Gannan. These questions might, however, go in again for the information of the Chief Secretary, because he seems to be enjoying it. At question 301—

"And did you know how much less it was that he could have sold it for?—Yes; he told me I could have bought it for £45,000.

"Did he say when you could have bought it for £45,000?—No; he just said if you had wanted to buy Wando Vale, you could have bought it for £45,000; if you did not like it at £45,000 you could probably have got it for a little bit less.

"Did he say anything about having it on his books at that price?—Yes; I got interested a bit in it then. I know the old man so well that I suggested to him, in a friendly sort of way, that if he were not quite sure of what he was talking about, he had better not say anything more about it. He got very emphatic then. He said he had it from Barnes for £45,000, with instructions not to let a buyer go past."

Then Mr. Connor, at page 64 of the report, in relation to the same matter, says—

The PREMIER: The public are looking to what the judge said.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Are you trying to tell us that he had it for sale at £45,000 on the day we bought it?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am trying to prove—and I am proving—that Mr. Gannan had it on his books, if the statements of these men are to be believed.

The PREMIER: Five years before.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Question 1614 was—

"Mr. May wrote a note of what he said took place. He wrote the note down at the time or the next day that 'Mr. Huxham called in at Cloncurry on the 18th May, and a gentleman named Connor, a buyer of stations and a station-owner, said that Wando Vale was offered for sale for the sum of £45,000 a fortnight before the Government bought it for £82,000, and that Mr. Theodore got

£5,000.' Do you remember whether you made such a statement?—I remember saying that Mr. Gannan said it was under offer before it was sold to the Government for £47,000."

The PREMIER: How long before?

HON. J. TOLMIE: He said that that offer could have been secured—that is the offer at £47,000. Then he is further asked by Mr. McGregor—

"Had Mr. Gannan said that to you?—Yes.

"Can you tell us when and where Mr. Gannan said it to you?—Yes. Mr. Gannan said it to me about August or September of the previous year—about the time the sale took place, I think."

Mr. FOLEY: He was the most shuffling witness ever I heard in my life.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That may be your idea; but here are the statements.

Mr. VOWLES (to Mr. Foley): Did you hear Mr. Barnes give his evidence? He destroyed his books.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is so far as concerns Mr. Gannan having it for £47,000. Then we have another offer. Mr. Barnes is stated to have put the property in the hands of another firm for £65,000 only a few weeks before—or it was in their hands only a few weeks before the Government purchased it for £82,000.

The PREMIER: Does not that show that the £45,000 was an invention, if that were so? Those two different stories show they are both lies.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It does not.

The PREMIER: They can't both be true.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Because the vendors of the station admit the fact that the station was placed in the hands of Suter for £65,000—

The PREMIER: No, he does not.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Just a short time before the Government bought it, and paid an additional £17,000 for it. The country want to know why the Government paid £17,000 more for it?

The PREMIER: Tell us where he said that.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I listened while the hon. gentleman was speaking, and did not interrupt him all the way through. But he is showing that bad manners are becoming quite characteristic of him within recent times.

Mr. KIRWAN: I would sooner be guilty of bad manners than telling untruths, at any rate.

HON. J. TOLMIE: At page 36, Mr. Suter writes to Mr. McGugan as follows:—

"Dear Sir,—We regret to find that the particulars we held of Wando Vale were destroyed when they became of no use to us on the Government purchasing, but the main particulars were: Price, £65,000, with 10,000 head of cattle; walk in, walk out. We never offered it under these particulars, and consider you made a good deal over it when the terms of payment, etc., are taken into consideration."

The PREMIER: That shows that it was a good deal for the Government at the price paid.

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HON. J. TOLMIE:

"Will you, or will you not, swear positively that Suter had no authority to sell?"

This was a question to Mr. Barnes. Mr. Barnes said—

"I am not going to swear anything I am not sure of. I am here to tell the truth."

There was the distinct admission on the part of Mr. Barnes.

The PREMIER: Barnes swore he would not have sold for £65,000. I heard him say that myself.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Then, to return to Mr. Barnes's evidence, at page 35.

Mr. KIRWAN: Read where Barnes said he would buy it back from the Government at the price he had sold it for.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Page 86 shows what I require from Mr. Barnes.

The PREMIER: Are you trying to say that the judge was wrong?

HON. J. TOLMIE: Mr. Barnes was recalled, and he was asked (question 2239)—

"If Mr. Suter says you put Wando Vale in their hands at £65,000 in June or July, 1916, with 10,000 cattle, will you deny it?—I told you before that it would be very improbable."

The next question is—

"Will you deny that you put Wando Vale into Mr. Suter's hands for sale at £65,000?—I won't deny it."

The PREMIER: Suter himself afterwards denied it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There you have the evidence given by Mr. Barnes himself with regard to the price at which Wando Vale could have been bought. Now, the statement in the public mind was that the Government paid more for Wando Vale than they need have paid for it; and that statement grew in the public mind because the Government—the members of the Ministry associated with the purchase of this property—took every possible precaution to keep the public in ignorance of what had been done.

The PREMIER: That is not true.

HON. J. TOLMIE: They knew they were financing the station in an illegal way, that they were using loan money for other purposes—for the purpose of purchasing these stations, and that loan money should not be utilised for that particular purpose. Loan money is obtained for the purpose of carrying on reproductive works, and the Government were using this loan money for speculative purposes.

The PREMIER: The suggestion was that they were using it for their own purposes.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I say the Government were using it for speculative purposes; and, because they were using it for speculative purposes, they would not give the public an opportunity of knowing exactly what was being done. If they endeavoured to clothe themselves in mystery, is there any wonder that a cloud of suspicion grew up round about them? Now, I made the statement that there was a difficulty in obtaining information.

The PREMIER: That is just as false as this is.

HON. J. TOLMIE: All we have to do is to turn the the evidence given by the Hon.

the Secretary for Public Lands in regard to this. It will be a real pity to keep this evidence out of "Hansard," particularly seeing that we have not an opportunity of getting the whole of the evidence put in, so that the public might see for themselves. We have the statement made by the Secretary for Public Lands.

The PREMIER: I will supply you with free copies for all your electorate. That will settle your seat.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There was a statement made that all these stations were purchased after very close investigation, more particularly as public money was being utilised. We knew, from the experience that we had, that such was not the case—that there was a degree of looseness and slackness about the purchase of these stations that was absolutely reprehensible, and that is what we have been trying to sheet home to the Government whenever we have had the opportunity.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Which you failed to do.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Yes, we failed to do it; and I am going to show why we failed. Because the Government refused to answer questions, or, when they did answer them, they answered them in such a manner as to convey no information at all. But when the Hon. the Secretary for Public Lands got into the witness-box, he was in quite a different position; he had to answer the questions that were put to him.

Mr. MORGAN: And he told a lot of falsehoods.

HON. J. TOLMIE: One of the statements made by him was that there had been a thorough inspection. Speaking the other evening, I pointed out that when there was a £20,000 job in connection with railway construction, the architect, the engineer, the Commissioner for Railways, and a special committee had to report upon it in regard to the expenditure of that money; and that was money that was voted by Parliament out of the consolidated revenue. But here, money that was not voted was used. There was no safeguard with regard to its expenditure at all. All that it was necessary to do was for the Minister to intimate that he wanted to purchase a certain station, and the price he agreed upon being satisfactory, the purchase was made, irrespective of whether there was a thorough investigation or whether there was not. Now, the Secretary for Public Lands, in all the statements he made in regard to this particular property, stated that a Government representative had been for months on the station.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. That is not so.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Months on the station and in the district obtaining information in relation thereto.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not say anything of the sort.

HON. J. TOLMIE: When you take into consideration that the Government have had Mount Hutton Station over eighteen months, and during the whole of that time they have not been able to make a muster of the cattle, and that a great many more cattle were involved than were thought to be on Wando Vale Station, you would think it would be necessary under those conditions to have

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proper inspection. Let us hear what the hon. gentleman says himself. This is an answer to a question put to the Secretary for Public Lands—

“What is more, before we bought the cattle, we had a man up there for several months.”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Three months.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And yet two minutes ago the Secretary for Public Lands denied that.

The PREMIER: You said “on the station.”

HON. J. TOLMIE: What is the use of this quibbling by the Premier when he says I said “on the station.” If he was up there for the purpose of inspecting this property and learning what the value of it was, would he go to somebody else in another part of the country for the purpose of making discoveries? Is that the way in which properties are bought?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He inspected Dotswood at the same time.

Mr. MORGAN: He didn't.

HON. J. TOLMIE: “Do you still stick to that?” was asked the Minister for Lands. He said, “Yes.” We will see later on how he shuffled out.

“You had a man there?—Yes.

“Who was it?—Mr. Ferry. He was up in the district two or three months.”

Then, at question 2191 there is the question—

“You say, ‘before we bought the cattle, for several months.’ You actually signed the agreement on 31st August, 1916. How long before that do you say he was in the district on the station?—A few weeks.”

It was “months” before; now it is down to “a few weeks.” The hon. gentleman said that he was in the district. What was the use of being in the district unless the statements made by the Minister for [8.30 p.m.] Lands was to lead the people to believe that for several months he was engaged in inspecting station properties and making discovery whether it was a good property. If it was made for any other purpose, it was made to mislead the public.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Read my answer to that.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am reading the answers. To show the morality of the Government—they question the morality of the hon. member for Dalby—but to show the morality of the Government, just listen to this—

“2200. I suppose with your pastoral experience if you knew that there were 12,000 head of cattle on the station, and you knew that the man believed that there were 10,000, would you tell him that there were 12,000?—Would you?”

The Minister for Lands, instead of answering the question, replied, “Would you?” The barrister then followed with the next question—

“2201. I believe I would. I do not deal in stock. I would say, ‘You think you have 10,000; I think you have more.’ Would you do it if you knew that a man had 12,000 cattle and you knew that he thought he had only 10,000? Would you tell him that he had more?—It was a book muster that we bought on. We

satisfied ourselves of the book muster—that the cattle were there, and we paid on that.”

Then question 2202—

“If you knew that he had 12,000 and you knew that he thought that there were only 10,000, would you tell him?—No.”

Then the barrister followed with the following questions:—

“2203. You read a letter to the House. You asked him if there was any truth in it. Did you suppress any part of that letter?—Yes, because it was irrelevant to the whole matter.

“2204. You didn't tell the House that you were suppressing anything—everyone would believe that you read the whole letter—everyone in the House?—Not necessarily.

“2205. Everyone except those on your own side of the House?—That part of the letter that I read dealt exclusively with the subject under review.

“2206. You deliberately suppressed it?—Yes, that part.

“2207. Without telling the House that you were suppressing a part of the letter, you avoided presenting that letter to the House, didn't you?—No.

“2208. Mr. Vowles asked on the 12th September, ‘Will the Hon. the Minister for Lands place that letter on the table?’ You never did place that letter on the table of the House, did you?—No; the reply was that it would be made available with other documents at this inquiry.

“2209. In the meantime you got Mr. Winstanley to get up and ask questions about Wando Vale?—Yes.”

The PREMIER: You know that that letter was made available to the judge at the inquiry.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Minister for Lands was asked that night to table the letter, and he declined to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not so.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is no doubt that everybody in the House believed that the hon. member read the whole of the letter, with the exception of the hon. member for Dalby, who was suspicious. We know that the hon. member for Dalby asked questions about Wando Vale, but he was asked to postpone his questions. In the meantime, the hon. member for Queenton, Mr. Winstanley, got up and asked a question. The barrister, Mr. Macgregor, then asked the Minister for Lands—

“It is a serious matter for you, though?”

And the Minister for Lands replied—“I don't think so.”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are not reading it properly. Read what I said before that.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Question 2213—

“You thought that you would have a little fun on your own?—There is no fun in this matter; it is serious for Mr. Vowles.”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You suppressed that.

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HON. J. TOLMIE: I wanted the whole of this evidence to be put into "Hansard." Later on—question 2218—the hon. gentleman was re-examined by Mr. Feez.

"You were asked about a letter quoted by you, or read by you in the House, and you were asked whether you did not suppress a certain part of it. I think you said, 'Yes; a part had been suppressed'—is that a fair word to use, 'suppressed'?—I perhaps omitted the letter."

The PREMIER: You read that wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You should be ashamed of yourself.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Mr. Speaker, under the rules of the House I ask you to read the statement if the hon. gentleman thinks I have read it wrong. I will read it again (reads it again). The Minister for Lands was also asked what portion of the letter he omitted when he read it in this House, and he replied that the words he omitted were "with the reports current at the time regarding the corrupt business methods of the Government I was agreeably surprised to know that."

The PREMIER: Those were the slanders that were going about.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is the Government's way of doing business.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I have endeavoured to put the facts before the House, in the time at my disposal. Perhaps some other hon. member can carry on the discussion.

MR. VOWLES (*Dalby*): As the hon. member of this House chiefly interested in the motion before the Chamber, I think it is only right—as one more in touch with the details of the evidence of this commission—that I should speak on this matter. In doing so, I am not doing it in defence of myself. I am not coming here to plead to hon. members opposite to vote for me, because I know that the whole thing is cut and dried. We know very well that they have a party opposite, and that my position in this matter has already been decided in caucus. There is not a man on the other side of the Chamber, no matter what he thinks, who would have the temerity to come here and vote on this side in connection with this motion. So far as the motion is concerned, it is a personal attack on myself by the Premier.

MR. FOLEY: You are used to making wild statements.

MR. VOWLES: If you would ask the hon. member to keep quiet, I will give you some home truths before I have finished. When this case was brought before the commission, it was brought hurriedly. I spoke in the House and I got home on the Saturday night. I was served with a subpoena that night to come and give evidence. It was impossible for me to do it. When I got down on the Wednesday I discovered why this commission was brought about at all. The Premier and the Crown Law Office were in the possession of information that Mr. Gannan was in such a state of mentality that it would be impossible for him to give evidence.

The PREMIER: Shame! Shame!

MR. VOWLES: To my mind, that is why the Premier brought the proceedings. He knew full well who my authority was—because I mentioned his name in this Chamber—and he knew it was not possible for Mr. Gannan to give evidence. That is why he rushed it.

The PREMIER: The judge had the whole matter before him.

MR. VOWLES: That is why it was stated my statement was not proven, because Judge O'Sullivan said my allegation failed because I was not in a position to produce Mr. Gannan to bear out what both Mr. Connor and Mr. Pym said he had told them.

The PREMIER: You ought to be ashamed to say such a thing.

MR. VOWLES: I am ashamed of the Premier as a professional man trying to place me in such an invidious position when he knew it was impossible for me to defend myself by producing Mr. Gannan.

The PREMIER: I will refer it back to the judge again if you like.

MR. VOWLES: You can do what you like. We know the tactics of the hon. gentleman—we know how generous he is to his opponents. When he saw it was impossible for me to bring certain evidence, and to bring the man whose name I had given him, he took these proceedings. I gave the name in the House—I said that my author was Mr. Gannan, of Hughenden. The hon. gentleman had the whole information.

The PREMIER: Your author was not Mr. Gannan. You never saw Mr. Gannan.

MR. VOWLES: It came from Mr. Pym.

The PREMIER: It is like "A woman told me that a woman told her." (Laughter.)

MR. VOWLES: I do not care what a woman told you. There has never been a motion similar to this moved in this House in the annals of Parliament. I am unable to find any similar proceedings taken here. There is a record of a case in which a similar proceeding might have been adopted, but it was not. The case was referred to to-night, but I do not propose to go further with it, seeing that the gentleman interested is now dead. But there was another case brought under a previous Act of Parliament, and it is in connection with a statement made by a member of this House and a Minister of the present Government, then a private member. It is referred to in the "Walsh and Tinaroo Miner." That was the subject-matter of a commission. The question was as to whether the hon. gentleman said certain things, or if he did not say them. A police magistrate was appointed. As my time is limited I do not propose to read the whole of these two paragraphs, but I will briefly read the conclusion. There is a Mr. McCormack mentioned in this matter. If you are the gentleman referred to, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to have to introduce it, and I hope you will not think that I am introducing it for the purpose of having a stab at you. This is the statement—

"To all whom it may concern.

"Whereas a dispute has arisen between the 'Walsh and Tinaroo Miner Newspaper' and Edward Theodore, M.L.A., as to whether the said Edward Theodore, at the conference held at Stannary Hills on 25th January, 1909, made the following statement—that is to say, 'Could we come to some arrangement whereby we

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could twist our consciences a little and make our men believe they were only working forty-four hours, and you do the same and make your shareholders think you were paying for forty-eight hours.”

You will see there that it refers to twisting our consciences. That was emphatically denied by Mr. Theodore. Then the police magistrate gave this finding—

“Whereas special parties appointed me to be arbitrator in respect of the matter aforesaid, and whereas I have heard the evidence tendered before me by both the said parties at Stannary Hills on the twenty-third day of June, 1910, and read the minutes of the said conference: Now I do hereby find, on the evidence and minutes so tendered, that the words alleged to have been used by the said Edward Theodore were so used by him.”

The PREMIER: There is no suggestion of corruption there.

Mr. VOWLES: The result of that commission was not put into “Hansard,” and the question was not brought before this House, although it was a similar proceeding to the one now before that House.

The PREMIER: It is an entirely different matter.

Mr. VOWLES: The Premier said that there it was not a charge of corruption in that case. I defy the Premier or any member of this House to point out any word in my speech of the 12th of last month that can be construed into corruption.

The PREMIER: Your own evidence stated that you made the statement for political capital.

Mr. VOWLES: I said nothing of the sort. The hon. gentleman has got plenty of time at his disposal, and I ask him to look it up again.

The PREMIER: What do you mean by the word “smellful”?

Mr. VOWLES: You will find that in clause (2) of the matters referred to the commission.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member just now said that he was going to read something where my name was mentioned, and that he did not want to have a stab at me. I do not know if it has anything to do with the matter now before the House, but the hon. member mentioned my name in connection with it, and I did not hear him read out anything where my name was referred to.

Mr. VOWLES: I will read it.

The SPEAKER: Having mentioned my name, the hon. member puts me in an awkward position if he does not read it.

Mr. VOWLES: I said there is a Mr. McCormack mentioned, but that I did not know if it referred to you.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman said he did not intend to have a stab at me. It has nothing to do with the question before the House.

Mr. VOWLES: It has.

The SPEAKER: It seems to me that it has nothing to do with the question before the House. But the hon. member will observe that he puts me in rather an awkward position by having mentioned my name.

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Mr. VOWLES: I will read the extract—

“Mr. McCormack, evidently forgetting Shakespeare’s warning about the man that protesteth too much, repeatedly denied signing minutes containing the phrase under notice. That denial has been his undoing. He challenged the editor of this paper (and incidentally spoke about ‘punching noses’) to put up £50 in regard to his ‘honesty’ over the affair; and the £50 being put up, Mr. McCormack promptly left the town next morning, and apparently through a lapse of memory forgot to put up his £50.”

The SPEAKER: I ask the hon. gentleman now, does he argue that the extract has anything to do with the matter before the House?

Mr. VOWLES: It is a statement in a newspaper. I did not want to refer to it, because there is a Mr. McCormack mentioned, and I did not know whether it referred to you.

The SPEAKER: I want the hon. gentleman to understand that in using my name he placed me in an awkward position before the House. I had no objection to his reading the extract, but he must recognise the awkward position he places me in. He has some sinister motive for introducing the matter.

Mr. VOWLES: Well, you compelled me to read it.

The SPEAKER: I did not object to the hon. gentleman reading it. Were I on the floor of the House I would have the opportunity of replying. If the hon. member states that it is a statement made in a newspaper article, he will clear up any misconception that may arise.

Mr. VOWLES: The statement is made in the newspaper, and I deliberately omitted to read it because it mentions a “Mr. McCormack,” who may be another Mr. McCormack.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Look at question 136, page 13, and you will see that you made a reference to graft in this transaction.

Mr. VOWLES: Question 136 reads as follows:—

“I asked you before whether you intended to convey that there was something in the nature of graft in this transaction?—Yes.”

And in the next question I asked the examiner, “What do you describe as graft?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is a quibble.

The PREMIER: He is as simple as a boy; he does not understand the meaning of words.

Mr. VOWLES: I want to point out that the Premier made a personal attack on me to-night, and that he engaged counsel to do the same thing when the case was before the commission. The counsel who appeared for the Crown, Mr. Feez in particular, professed the whole time that they were not there as partisans, but that they were there only to elicit the truth in the public interest. Well, if ever a man held a brief for the Hon. the Premier or for some other member of the Government it was Mr. Feez. He always referred to “the other side” when

addressing the court. Apparently it was necessary that Mr. Macrossan and Mr. Feez should be paid out of the public purse to bring out what the Premier said. After having suppressed the information that I am going to refer to presently, the hon. gentleman urged the counsel who were representing him to try harder and harder to make the case more personal, so that, if possible, he could put me in a false position. In fact, at the instance of the Premier, he asked the commission to find, as a fact, that no conversation took place between Mr. Morgan, Mr. Pym, and myself.

The PREMIER: I never asked him to do that; I never suggested such a thing.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman was all the time asking Mr. Feez to get Mr. Macgregor to agree to that.

The PREMIER: You will say anything; there is no dealing with you at all.

Mr. VOWLES: And now, as soon as the Premier gets the opportunity, he must have his knife into me, and he brings forward this motion with a view of trying to belittle me.

The PREMIER: You don't want any hitting; you will fall down yourself without anybody hitting you. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. VOWLES: If there is any person who does not come too well out of this matter, it is the Minister for Lands. I should like to point out the misrepresentation of that hon. gentleman when referring to a letter from Mr. Barnes respecting Wando Vale. I asked the hon. gentleman to have a commission of inquiry into the purchase of Mount Hutton, but he very carefully side-tracked that. When this commission was originated, I asked that Mount Hutton should be included in the scope of the inquiry, but there was no reply to my request. I shall now refer to the remarks made by the Minister for Lands when speaking about Wando Vale on the occasion I have mentioned. He said—

“I have no desire to shirk my responsibility as a Minister, but members must know it is not the Minister entirely, and often not at all, who is responsible for some acts of administration. With regard to the statement made about the purchase of Wando Vale Station, I may say that the Government appointed Mr. McGugan as general manager, and made him absolutely responsible for the purchase, control, and general management of those properties. There were some 250 applications for the position. Mr. McGugan was chosen, not for nationality reasons, and not for political reasons, but because of the outstanding qualifications he seemed to possess, according to the testimonials he submitted.”

Further down the hon. gentleman said—

“Mr. McGugan invariably consults the Under Secretary for Public Lands, and also refers to me in connection with the purchase of property and other matters of importance. All station properties that are to be purchased have first of all to be inspected by him, and the Under Secretary for Public Lands and myself are consulted before final approval is given for the purchase of the property and cattle, and the purchase finally ratified by the Cabinet.”

What do we find? We find that Mr.

McGugan never saw the property or the stock until after the deal was completed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are not so simple as to suggest that Mr. McGugan should see all the stations?

Mr. VOWLES: You have appointed a man as general manager of station properties, a man who was the choice of 250 applicants, and who was selected on account of his special ability, and now we are told by the Secretary for Public Lands that it is impossible for Mr. McGugan to inspect all station properties. We did not discover that information in this House. We got it when the papers were put before the commission, and we find that, not only did he not inspect Wando Vale, but that he did not inspect three other properties, which involved the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He recommended their purchase, though.

Mr. VOWLES: The sworn testimony shows that Mr. McGugan did not inspect Wando Vale. But you would imagine that he carried out the usual procedure, and we were told that he had a man up at Wando Vale for several months. But what do we find when he gets into the witness-box? We find that he had a man there for ten days. If you will remember, when the Secretary for Public Lands was reading that letter which he held nervously in his fingers and twisted about, I said he was not giving us the whole of the contents of the letter.

The PREMIER: You said that to yourself?

Mr. VOWLES: No, I said it to members on this side of the House, and next day I asked for the letter to be tabled, but it was not tabled. Thus the matter was side-stepped by the Government.

The PREMIER: There was no sidestepping.

Mr. VOWLES: I got that information in the witness-box. If hon. members will look at the words which were omitted by the Minister when reading the letter, they will see that a charge was being made, and that there were some ugly rumours going about to the effect that Wando Vale was purchased for a larger sum than it could have been bought for. Mr. May, the hon. member for Flinders, had just come down from the North, and he had another story from a man named Connor.

Mr. MAY: It was hearsay.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, but it was taken very seriously in this House. We know that the hon. member for Flinders had that story confirmed in the presence of a Minister of the Crown, and that he came down to Brisbane with a statement in his pocket-book, which he produced to the Premier three months before this thing occurred, and that no action was taken by the Premier or the Treasurer in regard to it.

The PREMIER: Because I knew it was a slander. Do you think that I take notice of all the slanders that you people spread about? If I did, I would be doing nothing else.

Mr. VOWLES: I did not start this yarn. It came from the North, and was reported to members by a supporter of the Premier. That rumour was current all over Brisbane. Everywhere I went I heard reference to it.

The PREMIER: Of course, you were spreading it all over Brisbane.

Mr. Vowles.]

Mr. VOWLES: I have heard it in trains, I have heard it in this Chamber, and I have heard it in the smokeroom.

The PREMIER: And you have helped it along.

Mr. VOWLES: I have not helped it along. I had an opportunity of inspecting the notebook of the hon. member for Flinders, and I refused to look at the note that he had made of the rumour. But I was dealing with the remark made by the Minister for Lands. There are the words which he omitted from the letter he read to the House on the occasion referred to. The words omitted are—

“With the reports current at the time regarding the corrupt business methods of the Government, I was agreeably surprised to know that—”

Those words were not read out to this Chamber by the Minister for Lands. Why? Simply because Mr. Barnes, the gentleman who sold his property to the Government, was referring to rumours about the corrupt practices of the Government.

The PREMIER: You and the likes of you make those reports.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman has had his chance.

The PREMIER: You tried to get into power on slander.

Mr. VOWLES: Fancy the hon. gentleman talking about slander! If ever a man got into power through misrepresentation, it is the Premier.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: That letter was dated 13th June, 1917. I referred a little while ago to certain suppressions. We have the suppression of a portion of the letter by the Minister for Lands. There is one [9 p.m.] little incident in connection with the proceedings before the commission which is worthy of note. On the 27th of last month, Mr. Barnes, who gave evidence two days later, was in possession of and received a wire from Mr. Suter similar to the wire that I got, and mine was purely by accident, informing him that you gave him particulars of Wando Vale—£65,000, and 10,000 head of stock, about June or July, 1916.

The PREMIER: And in the box he admitted that that was not true.

Mr. VOWLES: This is the point I wish to impress upon the Attorney-General—that the Crown Law Office were in possession of that information.

The PREMIER: They were not.

Mr. VOWLES: Mr. Feez had that telegram, and it was only on the 12th of the next month, fourteen or fifteen days after, when, by accident, again Mr. Suter is being re-examined, just before leaving the box he is asked how he came to send that wire. He said that he sent it to Fowles, believing that it was going to the Under Secretary.

The PREMIER: E. W. H. Fowles he thought it was.

Mr. VOWLES: He said this: “This was only similar to the wire I sent to Mr.

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Barnes on the 27th.” To our astonishment, we learned that there was another wire with the same information. We applied for it, and where did it come from? It came from the paper in possession of the Crown Law Office; and it had not been for an accident the Commission would not have got it.

The PREMIER: It has nothing to do with the case.

Mr. VOWLES: It has a lot to do with the case. Look at the findings of the judge. He says on page 6—

“I am of opinion that Mr. Barnes did inform Mr. Suter of his willingness to sell at the price stated (that is, to consider a ‘firm’ offer), probably in conversation, but did not formally place the property in his hands in the ordinary business way.”

That is referring to a sum of £65,000.

The PREMIER: Read all that the judge said.

Mr. VOWLES—

“as he did in the case of Lyndhurst, of which he gave the usual written particulars in June 1916 (Exhibit 76).”

Mr. Barnes's evidence throughout the whole of that case was most unsatisfactory. Mr. Barnes was giving evidence in a Chinese fashion. He destroyed his books—a most unusual proceeding, more particularly in connection with station and stock books, because they go with the station to the new purchaser.

The PREMIER: You know that he had shifted from North Queensland to live at Canning Downs, near Warwick, and could not carry all his books with him.

Mr. VOWLES: In the ordinary course of affairs the station should take the books over. Mr. Barnes was not able to show whether the station sold 1,500 bullocks before the sale. He would not definitely say that he had not given Mr. Suter those particulars; in fact, when pressed for it he said if Mr. Suter said so he would say that it was correct in effect. Remember this, that it was agreed that, as far as the time Suter was given those particulars was concerned, if it was not in June or July it was not later than May. If there was any proof in the statement, all you have to remember is that when Barnes put the property in Bennett's hands to sell at £85,000 he came to Suter's office to tell him about it. Suter had the property on his books for £65,000, and the property was not withdrawn or revoked. There was simply the bare statement, “Until I speak to you again have nothing to do with the sale.”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The judge said that was untrue. He said that Gannan had not the station on his books at any time during 1915.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not referring to Gannan. Connor was there at the time the property was sold. He was in Suter's office. See what the evidence of Connor comes to. Connor tells us that he happened to turn up in Hughenden, I think, from Richmond. Being a buyer of big properties, the agents were chasing him about, as they generally do, and he was in conversation with Suter

and went into the office. Who should walk out but Barnes—

The PREMIER: Suter says Barnes was not there at that time.

Mr. VOWLES: This man says he never saw Barnes before or after that in his life. Suter said, "That is the owner of Wando Vale, and he sold his property to the Government for £85,000."

The PREMIER: Suter says he does not remember it.

Mr. VOWLES: That fixes the time that Barnes was there. The incident is correct. It fixes the time that Connor had his conversation with Gannan, when Gannan told him he could have sold him the property for £47,000. When information is given to hon. members of this House, are we to go looking up a man's pedigree to see whether he is to be believed or not? If a reputable man comes and tells me that a reputable agent has made a statement to him, and that he is prepared to support it, and I make use of it in this House, after hearing from a member of the Government party that a similar statement was made by Mr. Connor, who also interviewed Gannan, in Hughenden, about the same time, that he could have got the property for a similar amount, is there anything remarkable in a man saying, when he has those facts, that he is able to prove it?

The PREMIER: The judge found against you.

Mr. VOWLES: He found against me because I am unable to produce Mr. Gannan.

The PREMIER: Oh, no!

Mr. VOWLES: I had the proof, and I have the proof yet, if Mr. Gannan could come and give evidence. He says—

"I find that the information then in Mr. Vowles's possession was not sufficient to justify him in making the allegations in subparagraph (a), because (1) of the casual nature of the conversation and the length of time that had elapsed; (2) Mr. Gannan's evidence was necessary to prove the allegation, and he had not been communicated with; and (3) Mr. Pym's statement that Mr. Gannan had the property on his books for £45,000, even if correct, would not prove that the property could have been bought for £45,000, as the agent's authority would only extend to obtaining and submitting offers."

He finishes up by saying—

"I find that in 1916 the property was not in Mr. Gannan's hands at £45,000, and that he had not instructions to sell it for that or any other sum."

The PREMIER: There is a direct finding of fact against Mr. Vowles.

Mr. VOWLES: He finds that because he tells you that I have been unable to prove my allegation, as Mr. Gannan cannot be produced. Mr. Feez put me in that position. The questions were framed in such a way that the scope, as far as I am concerned, was limited. The judge was not able to say this, as he should have been asked to say in the first place, "Did Mr. Pym tell Mr.

Vowles so-and-so?" When I made the statement to the House, was I acting in good faith? No; the whole question was whether the statement was true or otherwise? The judge found that the reason, and Mr. Feez said I was in the nature of a plaintiff—that the onus was on me to prove the whole of my charge up to the hilt. My case was not proved, and why? It is just the same as any plaintiff if he could not produce his chief witness to give evidence. That is the sum and substance of the finding.

With regard to the other portion, I am only concerned about the statements I made. I gave my authorities, and I have no regret for what I have said. I still believe them to be correct, and I am positively certain as to the character of Mr. Gannan, as testified to by several witnesses, knowing that he is a reputable and honest man. If Mr. Gannan could give the evidence now—

The PREMIER: The proper treatment for you is expulsion.

Mr. MORGAN: You are not game to bring it forward.

Mr. VOWLES: He would say that the statement made by me is correct. (Interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. VOWLES: If he were in a position to give that evidence, then he would, on account of the character which had been given to him by every witness, including Mr. Barnes, no doubt tell us that he did have a conversation with Pym and with Connor. The judge was asked to find that he did not have those conversations, but he did not come to that conclusion at all. He simply summed up that the case was not proven, because I was unable to produce my chief evidence. What was the reason for the indecent hurry about the matter? I subpoenaed Mr. Gannan, and he remains subpoenaed to-day. The commission was closed. Why was it not kept open for a reasonable time to enable Mr. Gannan, in case he recovered, to give evidence, or his evidence taken on commission?

The PREMIER: What do you say he would prove?

Mr. VOWLES: The commissioner says that it was the desire of the Government that his decision should be given as soon as possible. The Government knew they would be in a corner as far as Gannan was concerned, and they wanted to get out of it probably before Gannan could sufficiently recover to upset their plans.

The PREMIER: Some of your colleagues are surely self-respecting; they cannot back you up in that.

Mr. VOWLES: They would not have anything to do with you. I have been called to account for something I said the other night. This strikes me as being one of the most modest criticisms that any member of the House could make on finance. I showed how necessary it is that detailed information should be given to members of this Chamber, giving an instance in point where I was able to produce two items in the Auditor-General's report that I could not understand. I quoted the figures; I made no innuendo; and concluded by saying—

"Probably it has something to do with the cost of management and upkeep;

Mr. Vowles.]

but, dealing with this document as a document, how can I, apart from that inquiry, discover anything."

If I had not been at that inquiry, I would have been in the dark, because I would have known nothing about the particulars—

"intelligently discuss that matter when you have a bare figure like that, and when we know the figures are £18,620 more than was actually paid in cash."

I was then referring to "unforeseen expenditure," and, if members will look again at the Auditor-General's report, they will find that on page 9 he says—

"The total loan expenditure during the year 1916-17 amounted to £2,267,961."

Then in clause 20 he talks about repayment of loan, and in clause 21 he says that the unforeseen loan expenditure in 1916-17 amounted to £123,507. Now, if you will look a little lower down you will find "Purchase of Wando Vale Station." That is "Unauthorised Expenditure"; it is £28,620. If you will look a little further on page 15 you will find that the debentures which have been issued in respect of Wando Vale total £72,000. According to the evidence given before the commission that figure is correct. How, then, on these figures, am I to know how the £28,620 is made up? I was simply asking for further information. I go so far as to say it might possibly have been in connection with the purchase of bulls. We got that information on the commission—that they cost about £3,000. Then there will be the cost of upkeep. At one time I thought possibly that interest might have been charged up against it. But there is a figure of £28,620 unexplained, and I venture to say there is not a man in the House to-night who understands those figures or who could give the necessary details of that such as I asked for.

The SPEAKER intimated that the time allowed the hon. member under the Standing Orders had expired.

On the motion of Mr. GUNN, the hon. member was granted an extension of time in which to complete his speech.

Mr. VOWLES: Now, I notice that I have come in for some rather adverse criticism on the findings in certain newspapers. There is a very important newspaper published in Brisbane known as "The Patriot." That says that "Vowles should apologise or resign." Now, when I saw that I thought what excellent advice that would be to the Premier as far as some of the appointments to the Upper House are concerned—to either apologise to the intelligent people of Queensland or to resign his position as leader of the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! That has nothing to do with the question before the House.

Mr. VOWLES: It applies to me—that I should either apologise or resign.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in referring to the members of the Upper House in a disrespectful manner.

Mr. VOWLES: Now, the Premier last night attacked me in this manner: In fact, he was so keen that he got out of order altogether, and got on to Wando Vale. He has had another go at me to-day in that domineering, pseudo-political, bluffing, bounding way of his, throwing his arms

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round his head and castigating the whole House, screaming out to the people of Queensland—"the intelligent electors of the State"—electioneering and trying to score off everybody here. Let me tell the hon. gentleman that the general public can see through it all. This petty partisan way in which he is treating me is going to do him no good. The public of Queensland are not going to allow anybody to be victimised; they are not going to allow him to abuse his position to try and belittle me or any other member here. Only quite recently he tried to belittle another member of this House, and shortly after that some of his legislation went before the people of Queensland; and how did the people treat it? If ever a man got a censure from the public it was the Premier on that occasion.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about the Rockhampton by-election?

Mr. VOWLES: We are constantly hearing about that Rockhampton by-election; but the hon. gentleman, when he speaks of Rockhampton, does not tell you that the Labour vote of the previous election was reduced by 50 per cent. at the last by-election.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: And it was 100 per cent. over the referendum figures.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not talking about the referendum. I am talking about the State by-election. It was a 50 per cent. reduction; it dropped from 1,300 down to about 730.

Mr. KIRWAN: If we can have forty-five victories like that at the next election we will be doing lovely.

Mr. VOWLES: After the next general election a lot of hon. members opposite will not be here at all. Now, the Premier has not given us any information at all as far as these public transactions are concerned. There is a Select Committee sitting here at present on the premises, and I see by the papers that the Premier has been interfering there, and preventing them getting information. For what purpose? All they are trying to do is this: There were rumours floating round in reference to these transactions—that they are unbusiness-like and other things. The Select Committee is trying to clean up these rumours, and trying to get at the truth of them; and here we have the Premier stepping in and interfering, and putting every impediment he possibly can in the way of these men. You must have noticed, in this House, more particularly in reference to Mount Hutton—a property to which I have given particular attention—that I have asked question after question; and on every occasion they have been scientifically and skilfully evaded. I have not been given any information to date; although I asked for it twelve months ago, I cannot get particulars of the muster.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order, and he knows he is not in order.

Mr. VOWLES: I am dealing with public enterprises. (Government laughter.)

The SPEAKER: The motion as it appears on the business-sheet is the business before the House.

Mr. VOWLES: Exactly. At an earlier stage you told me you would give me every latitude when I was dealing with a matter that I said was outside the scope of the motion.

The SPEAKER: I referred to Mr. Morgan's statements made in connection with Wando Vale; that the hon. member could deal with anything in connection with Wando Vale.

Mr. VOWLES: I submit I am entirely in order. In my speech I was dealing more with Mount Hutton than with Wando Vale. That is the very thing I am talking about; it is part of the proceedings. They are in "Hansard." However, I don't want to waste time.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member's argument is correct, he could deal with every other purchase made by the Government.

Mr. VOWLES: There is my speech—[Exhibit 1.]—It refers to Mount Hutton.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member would be in order in discussing those matters in the speech; but he will not be in order in discussing them on this motion.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Premier discussed it, anyhow.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is treated the same as every other hon. member.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He discussed the fact.

The PREMIER: He discussed Wando Vale.

The SPEAKER: If he discussed it, he was out of order.

Mr. VOWLES: Well, he did.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman did not discuss it to my knowledge.

The PREMIER: No, I did not discuss it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He specifically stated he did not say in reference to it that he could prove it; and he did say it.

The PREMIER: That was a passing reference.

Mr. VOWLES: And you don't expect me to reply to it on an occasion like this. You cast aspersions on me, and I am not to reply.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is again getting out of order.

Mr. VOWLES: Well, I don't propose to delay very much further. I want to say that, as far as the findings are concerned, I am not satisfied. I am not satisfied in this direction: I am not going to criticise the judge like the Premier did. He took advantage of his position to throw aspersions. There is a lot said about people slandering others and taking advantage of parliamentary law here. The Attorney-General made a statement here in this House under parliamentary privilege which, had he made it in the Supreme Court, he would have been struck off the roll.

The PREMIER: Nonsense!

Mr. VOWLES: He took advantage of this House.

The PREMIER: What are you referring to?

Mr. VOWLES: You accused the Chief Justice of not knowing the law.

The PREMIER: No; I suggested he had an imperfect knowledge of the law.

Mr. VOWLES: And of course you had a perfect knowledge?

The PREMIER: I did not suggest that.

Mr. VOWLES: Oh, no; you are just a little bit too modest. At any rate, I am not going to criticise the judge.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is quite in order in criticising the findings of the judge, so long as he does not impugn his honesty.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not going to impugn his honesty, or discuss him in any way, except to say that if that is his opinion, it is the opinion of one man. There are hundreds of other men who have read the same evidence and who have formed different conclusions. I have had not one but dozens of letters sent to me, congratulating me on the good I have done the State of Queensland in ventilating this matter.

Mr. PAYNE: I don't believe it.

The PREMIER: Produce them; put them on the table.

Mr. VOWLES: Would you like to get the names and addresses, and victimise them? Some of them come all the way from up near Hughenden. Everywhere I go, people are congratulating me on ventilating this matter and forcing the Government into the position of having to give evidence which previously they refused to give. Now, in conclusion, we know very well that it does not matter what is said by myself or by any other hon. member on this side of the House, there will be just the same old vote. We knew before it started how it was going to finish. There are twenty-eight Government members, and they are going to vote against me. We could have told you this morning, if we had known how many Labour members were in town, how the voting is going to go. It is a pity we cannot pick the Melbourne Cup so easily. Whether they vote for me or against me, I don't care "tuppence" for their opinions. The only persons I am answerable to are my electors.

Mr. PAYNE: They will turn you down.

Mr. VOWLES: We will see whether they will turn me down. I have asked the Premier to come out to Dalby and fight the next election against me.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Contest the Premier's electorate.

Mr. VOWLES: He says I will go down. Well, let him come up and see how he will get on. I don't care what hon. members opposite say or think. The only persons I am responsible to, outside my party, are my electors. The party agree that I did the correct thing. If I had evidence given to me, I would not be doing my duty to the party or the public if I did not bring that matter before the House and clean the trouble up, whether it be right or whether it be wrong. And remember, these statements that I made in this House were made *bonâ fide*, believing them to be true; and I still believe them to be true. They were confirmed by a member of the Government, who distinctly said that a charge of corruption had been levelled against one of the members of the Government.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He didn't believe it.

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Mr. VOWLES: He said he didn't believe it; and so did I, because I said I could scarcely realise it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You said you could prove it.

Mr. VOWLES: That is just characteristic of the Minister for Lands. I said nothing of the kind.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You said you could prove that statement.

Mr. VOWLES: What statement?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That you made here.

Mr. VOWLES: You are not telling the truth, and you know it. I never referred to the £5,000. I never referred to Mr. Theodore. I never referred to corruption, and the only reference that I have to corruption and the bringing in of Mr. Theodore's name into this House, was the occasion when a member of the Government made the statement; and further, when he said he had reported the matter to his Premier, and his Premier had taken no action—if, under those circumstances, having the knowledge and waiting to see developments, and finding that neither the Treasurer nor the Premier were going to take action in the face of statements such as this, if I had sat back and ridiculed it, knowing that the rumours were current, not only here in Brisbane, but in every one of the towns I have gone into—I heard it in every one of them—I say I would not be doing my duty as a member of this Opposition, I would not be doing my duty as a citizen of Queensland, nor would I be doing my duty to myself.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I desire to have a few words on this question, because I realise that the motion contains a censure on the hon. member for Dalby for one of the gravest charges that has been made in this House, and one which the hon. member—according to an independent tribunal—utterly failed to substantiate. Now, the Hon. the leader of the Opposition, in the course of his speech, soared into the heights of poetry. I may be permitted to give the views of the parliamentary poet on this matter. I think the leader of the Opposition quoted from some such high-

[9.30 p.m.] falutin poet as Homer or Omar Khayyam. I do not intend to go outside this House to get my quotations for this particular matter. The parliamentary poet has suggested to me that the hon. member for Dalby and the hon. member for Murilla have, for some time, been walking about together within the precincts of this House, hatching a little plot that they were going to put up in this Chamber. The parliamentary poet refers to their little plot in this way—

"Absolute evidence have I none,
But my aunt's chauffeur's sister's son
Heard a blitherer, name of Pym,
Say to a barmaid, known to him,
That he had a cousin, who heard a tale
Of bribery, bullocks, and Wando Vale:
And strike me, I can prove it."

Then they came into the House. When the hon. member for Murilla was making his vague charges the hon. member for Dalby

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was sitting listening to them. After hearing the hon. member for Murilla stealing his thunder, and realising that there was going to be a plebiscite in the Dalby electorate for the selection of a candidate to run in the Nationalist interests, the hon. member for Dalby decided that he would have to strike some sensational note in order to make good and carry all before him. So he came forth with another bit of poetry. The parliamentary poet puts it this way—

"That Wando Vale sale was the limit in jokes;

And the Government, as I can prove to you blokes,

Gave twice as much almost as should have been paid,

Enabling a squatter the public to raid.
I have evidence here to show beyond doubt

That Queensland should empty the Government out."

The fat was in the fire then. He said he could prove these charges, and the Opposition looked for the opportunity to prove them, and the Government was not slow in giving them that opportunity. A commission was appointed, which, in the words of hon. gentlemen opposite, was in every way temperamentally fitted. I do not intend in any way to reflect on the judge, nor on any of the counsel who were engaged. I believe they did their duty and should be thanked for doing a public duty, and the judge should be thanked for giving an unbiassed report. Let me read over the personnel of the court itself, and we will find that in every way they were temperamentally fitted. There was a temperamentally-fitted judge and temperamentally-fitted counsel to look after the interests of the hon. member for Dalby. Even counsel for the Government were temperamentally fitted. Mr. Feez and Mr. Macrossan—the two counsel of the Government—are both defeated Liberal candidates for various seats in Queensland, and Mr. Feez is the trustee of the Liberal party's election fund. That should make them both temperamentally fitted. Mr. Macgregor, the counsel for the hon. member for Dalby, is to be the Liberal candidate for Merthyr this coming election, and the President of the court, Mr. Judge O'Sullivan, was the Attorney-General in the late Liberal Government, and the leader of the Government in the Upper House. So that in every way the hon. member for Dalby had temperamental fitness on his side. In addition to that, his witnesses were also temperamentally fitted, as I shall presently prove. Before doing that, I may say that the leader of the Opposition, in quoting the extracts he did this evening, did not do the fair thing by the Government. He picked out questions here and there, and left out other questions which were entirely relevant to the issue. That is not a fair thing to do, and I propose to submit some other questions which will more than evenly balance the scale and prove to the House why the court found that the hon. member for Dalby was unjustified in the statements he made, and which he said he could prove. Take the case of Mr. Suter. I know Mr. Suter rather well, having been in the Hughenden district for some years, and I know he is one of the bitterest Liberals there. In fact, he takes pride in saying that he is an ultra

Conservative in the west of Queensland. In his finding the judge makes use of these words—

“Some question has arisen as to whether Mr. Barnes placed the property in Mr. Suter's hands in February or March, 1916. Mr. Barnes has no recollection of having done so, but Mr. Suter thinks he did, although he had no personal recollection and no written record of the matter.”

That is a rather peculiar thing. I am going to give the exact evidence which the hon. member for Toowoomba left out. On being re-examined by Mr. Macgregor, the following questions were asked:—

“2645. I suppose from what you know, of your own dealings with Wando Vale, you can say you don't believe it could have been in anyone's hands for sale in 1916, at £45,000, shortly prior to the sale—I know that if there was any cut in price, Mr. Barnes would have given it to me.

“2646. You could not believe, from what you know, that it was in anybody's hands at £45,000?—No; it is absurd,”

was Mr. Suter's reply. Here we find that the witness the hon. member for Dalby relied on said it was absurd to think it was in anybody's hands at £45,000. Then again—

“Re-examined by Mr. Macgregor: You have no doubt whatever that Mr. Barnes did put Wando Vale in your hands during 1916, at £65,000?—No; although I cannot remember the date or place, I am satisfied he did.

“If a property is put into your hands at £42,000, and at £65,000 later, that is an implied withdrawal of the £42,000?—Yes.”

Mr. Suter said he did not know, and the judge said that Suter did not know, what he had done with the commission that was given him. There was no record on his books of the station having been on offer or in his hands. Do you think that any man carrying on business as a commission agent and stock and station agent would not have some record of a station valued at £65,000 in his books? Bear in mind that Mr. Suter's books were not burnt, although we have heard that other books were burnt. He could produce no record of it at all, although he is the right shade of political colour to help the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. HODGE: How do you know?

Mr. POLLOCK: I know his political opinions even better than I know the political opinions of the hon. member for Nanango. I have had cause to know it as an organiser of the Australian Workers' Union. I know that his affection for the Labour party is somewhat akin to the affection of a flea for a dog. Then in question 2551 Mr. Suter was asked—

“And you never heard whether Gannan had it in his hands or not?”

And to that he replied—

“I am pretty certain that he never had it for £45,000.”

So that the chief witness for the hon. member for Dalby fails to substantiate the hon. member's charges.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That discounts your political suggestion.

Mr. POLLOCK: It does not discount anything of the sort. Again, the hon. member for Dalby said that Mr. Gannan, through Mr. Pym, was his informant. I had heard myself that some money had been made by the Government in connection with Wando Vale when I was in North Queensland during the Federal elections. I represent the town of Hughenden in this House, and I knew when I heard the rumour that there could not possibly be any truth in it, because the departmental officials had the handling of the money. However, I thought I would take no risks and I said, “I will go to the gentleman whom common report said had that station in his hands for sale.” I met Mr. Gannan in the street and asked him. I cannot recollect his exact words, but he said to me either, “I cannot tell you anything about it,” or “I am not going to tell you anything about it.” It was not of much importance to me at the time, as I did not believe the rumours and did not ask him anything further. We parted then and he walked away.

Mr. HODGE: Very vague.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is not vague, but an actual statement of fact.

Mr. MORGAN: Why didn't they call you to give evidence?

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr. Webb, Crown Solicitor, called on me and I gave a statement to him, and that statement I gave to him is the statement I am making to the House to-night. If the hon. gentleman wants to see that statement I will get it for him. I gathered from Mr. Gannan's statement to me that he knew nothing about it, and assumed that he never had the place in his hands for sale.

Mr. VOWLES: Why didn't you give evidence?

Mr. POLLOCK: I was prepared to give evidence and said so. I am still prepared to give evidence if the inquiry is reopened.

Mr. VOWLES: That is suppressing evidence.

Mr. POLLOCK: My evidence was not given because I had no evidence to support what I said, and for that reason I was not called. However, I have been drawn off the track. Mr. Barnes, the owner of the station, said he thought he never put the property in the hands of Mr. Suter for sale, but he would not swear it. He also said that, so far as he could recollect, he never put the station in the hands of Mr. Suter. Listen to these questions when Mr. Barnes was in the witness-box—

“496. Did you ever, at any time, place the station in the hands of Mr. P. T. Gannan?—I have no recollection of it; I don't think I ever did.

“497. Did you know Mr. Gannan at all?—Yes; I knew him personally.

“498. Is there the slightest shadow of truth in the statement that it was in Mr. Gannan's hands in August, 1916, for £45,000?—I am positive there is no truth in it.

“499. And that Mr. Gannan had instructions not to refuse offers?—A ridiculous suggestion.

“500. Well, so far as your memory carries you, you never placed it in any other agent's hands but those of Messrs. Dalgety and Brodie?—That is so.

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"501. Did you ever place it in the hands of Mr. Suter?—I have no recollection."

That is the reply of the gentleman who owned the station. If that is not sufficient proof, I am prepared to go a little further, and say that at page 41, Mr. Barnes was asked this question—

"At what price? Would you rather pay £94,000? Do you say you are prepared to pay £94,000 now for Wando Vale?—Yes, I would buy Wando Vale to-morrow."

"At £94,000?—Yes."

He further said that he would inspect it at a higher price, over £100,000. Let us look the question fairly in the face. The hon. member for Dalby made the specific charge that on the same date as that on which the station was bought by the Government, Wando Vale was in the hands of Mr. Gannan for £45,000.

Mr. VOWLES: Mr. Gannan said so.

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr. Gannan, fortunately for the hon. member, is not able to give evidence. If the hon. member wanted to prove his case, why did he not call on the employees of Mr. Gannan, and get them to go through Mr. Gannan's books and see if there was any evidence of what he said.

Mr. VOWLES: There is the evidence of Mr. Cox.

Mr. POLLOCK: He is not in partnership with Mr. Gannan.

Mr. VOWLES: He was in July, 1915.

Mr. POLLOCK: He would know if Mr. Gannan had any property of that sort for sale on his books. Yet the hon. member failed to take the obvious course, and go to Mr. Gannan's employees, and get them to go through his books and find out the truth or otherwise of the allegations he made. The hon. member knows that on those books there was no actual record of Wando Vale being in the hands of Mr. Gannan, and I am convinced that he knew this when he made his charges. At question 2723 the following evidence was obtained from Mr. Cox:—

"You say you searched through the papers in the old office?—Yes, in the old office. We have all the old correspondence dating right back from when I started with Mr. Gannan—that is, the outward correspondence—and there is nothing to show there were any letters about the property itself; it is about stock."

Even supposing the inward correspondence had been destroyed, and they only had the outward correspondence left, it is reasonably certain that a stock and station agent, who was given properties like Wando Vale for sale, would write a letter of acknowledgment, yet no letter of acknowledgment was found in this case, which is a proof that there was no ground for the hon. gentleman's allegation that the property was in Mr. Gannan's hands. I am much obliged to the hon. member for Brisbane for directing my attention to Mr. Gannan's character. I am not going to say anything against his honesty. I believe he is as honest as the majority of men; I am even prepared to grant, for the sake of argument, that he is more honest. But here is a little evidence

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regarding Mr. Gannan's character, which will be found at from question 2741 to question 2745—

"Mr. Gannan drank a good deal, didn't he?—Yes.

"I mean to say, for years past?—Oh, yes, for a good number of years.

"That was really the cause of your leaving him?—That was the main trouble.

"When he was drinking, was he responsible, or did he talk wildly?—Oh, he did, at times; yes, he talked a bit wildly.

"And I suppose, Mr. Cox—I have to ask you—it was a well-known fact that Mr. Gannan was drinking for years past?—Oh, yes, there is no use denying it.

"I mean to say everyone—a man like Pym, for instance, must know it?—Yes."

I, too, know that he drank. I know that Mr. Gannan has a reputation, and I know that it is a well-deserved reputation, that he drinks more whisky and spirit than any man in Hughenden, and that his drink bill on most occasions is over £1 or £1 10s. per day: that he is very seldom in a condition of strict sobriety. And this is the individual who is the chief witness of the Opposition in a charge like this against the Government. Let me now go back to the question of the sale of the station for £45,000, or, as it is alleged, the offer of the station at that price. We know that the owner is willing to buy back the station at £94,000 without inspection, and to inspect it at over £100,000, so that during the past few months the station has more than doubled in value. The hon. member for Dalby, in order to prove his case that Wando Vale was on sale at £45,000 at the date when the Government bought it for £82,000, will have to prove that the station has increased in value by £49,000 in the course of twelve months. In other words, he will have to prove that the value of the station has increased to more than twice its original value. If the hon. member will stand up against those facts, and try to brazen them out, he has sufficient hide to ask the people of Dalby to put him into this House again. If the hon. member for Murilla had made a true charge instead of the hon. member for Dalby, I could have understood the necessity for appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the reason why he made a true statement. If ever he made any true statement in this House, we should appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter. Summing up the matter, the parliamentary poet has a little allegory, which runs as follows:—

"This is the charge that Vowles made:

"This is the rumour that caused the bloomer that led to the charge that Vowles made:

"This is the bloke who cracked the joke that led to the rumour that caused the bloomer that led to the charge that Vowles made:

"This is the whisky that made so frisky the mate of the bloke who cracked the joke that led to the rumour that caused the bloomer that led to the charge that Vowles made:

"This is the rot that was spread a lot in drinking the whisky that made so

frisky the mate of the bloke who cracked the joke that led to the rumour that caused the bloomer that led to the charge that Vowles made:

"This is O'Connor who swore on his honour that he'd heard the rot that was spread a lot in drinking the whisky that made so frisky the mate of the bloke who cracked the joke that led to the rumour that caused the bloomer that led to the charge that Vowles made:

"This is Ted Pym who spent half-a-jim in toasting O'Connor who swore on his honour that he'd heard the rot that was spread a lot in drinking the whisky that made so frisky the mate of the bloke who cracked the joke that led to the rumour that caused the bloomer that led to the charge that Vowles made. (Laughter):

"This is the Barnes who denied the yarns that were heard by Pym who spent half-a-jim in toasting O'Connor who swore on his honour that he'd heard the rot that was spread a lot in drinking the whisky that made so frisky the mate of the bloke who cracked the joke that led to the rumour that caused the bloomer that led to the charge that Vowles made. (Laughter):

"This is the thought that moved the court when it said that Theodore wasn't bought and that our friend Vowles really didn't ought to slander Barnes who denied the yarns that were heard by Pym who spent half-a-jim in toasting O'Connor who swore on his honour that he'd heard the rot that was spread a lot in drinking the whisky that made so frisky the mate of the bloke who cracked the joke that led to the rumour that caused the bloomer that led to the charge that Vowles made. (Renewed laughter.)

"These are the howls that came from Vowles when he heard of the thought that moved the court when it said that Theodore wasn't bought and that our friend Vowles really didn't ought to slander Barnes who denied the yarns that were heard by Pym who spent half-a-jim in toasting O'Connor who swore on his honour that he'd heard the rot that was spread a lot in drinking the whisky that made so frisky the mate of the bloke who cracked the joke that led to the rumour that caused the bloomer that led to the charge that Vowles made." (Continued laughter.)

Mr. MACARTNEY: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in reading such matter as that to the House?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member who reads it is responsible. I am not responsible.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am at one with the Premier in saying that there is a good deal of room for regret at the fact that this motion has to be moved. But I would remind the hon. member for Dalby—I should not have done so had he not brazened this matter out—that in 1893 he was election secretary for the late Hon. J. T. Bell, that a £200 cheque was sent from an old college chum in Victoria, Mr. Fairbairn, to help to assist Mr. Bell during the election period, and the letter which contained it intimated that it was sent at the request of Mr. Bell as from one old college mate to another.

Mr. MACARTNEY: This is relevant, is it?

Mr. POLLOCK: Yes, it is one reason why this motion should be carried. Twelve or

fourteen years after that the hon. member stood for Parliament against Mr. Bell, and he was responsible for sending round the vile slander—I call it a vile slander—that the late Hon. J. T. Bell had received a £200 cheque from the Pastoralists' Association of Victoria to be added to the Liberal funds in Queensland, and that the late Hon. Mr. Bell had misappropriated that money and used it for his own purposes.

Mr. VOWLES: That is an absolute fabrication; it is absolutely untrue.

Mr. POLLOCK: Parliamentary procedure is rather a funny thing. You know a thing to be a fact, and yet if a member denies it you must accept his denial.

Mr. VOWLES: I was certainly secretary of Mr. Bell's committee on one occasion, and I opposed him on another occasion. All the rest of the facts are wrong.

Mr. POLLOCK: All the rest of the facts—the hon. member is right in calling them "facts"—are right. I remember reading of a gentleman who saw another man throw something through a window, and

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Parliament he was asked to withdraw his statement, and accept the member's denial. "Very well," he said, "I accept the hon. member's denial, but I saw him through the window doing it." So while I know that what I am saying is true, I accept the hon. member's denial.

Mr. VOWLES: Would you like to have the true facts? I will give them to you.

Mr. POLLOCK: If the hon. member does not prevent me from reading these facts out I will give him some more of them.

Mr. VOWLES: Read it out.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member made that alleged exposure at Chinchilla.

The PREMIER: The day before the poll.

Mr. POLLOCK: The day before the poll, when it was too late for Mr. Bell, his opponent, to reply to him; at the last possible moment when Mr. Bell had not a chance of replying through the papers.

Mr. VOWLES: I rise to a point of order. That statement is absolutely incorrect. I never referred to Mr. Bell at Chinchilla in my life.

Mr. POLLOCK: I accept the hon. member's denial, and I will give him some more facts, in connection with which I will accept his denial later on if he chooses to give it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Gregory in order in repeating his statement with regard to the hon. member for Dalby?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Gregory has accepted the denial of the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I have a right to rise to a point of order. I have exercised that right, and I am quite content to take your decision. I would like to have it recorded. The hon. member is making a double-barrelled exhibition of himself.

The SPEAKER: I called the hon. member for Gregory to order.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am losing a certain amount of valuable time. The hon. member for Toowoomba is always a double-barrelled exhibition of ignorance and futility. The hon. member for Dalby made these statements at Chinchilla.

Mr. VOWLES: I denied that.

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Mr. POLLOCK: Yes, and I accepted your denial. The late Hon. J. T. Bell had to call a special meeting to remove the misrepresentation that the hon. member for Dalby had made regarding him. The hon. member admits that he was political secretary to the late Hon. J. T. Bell, and afterwards ran against him. The rest of the facts I am prepared to vouch for, and the hon. member, when he denies these things, knows that, in view of the judge's findings on that committee, denials from him are useless. Nobody takes much notice of a man who has been convicted of telling falsehoods.

Mr. VOWLES: Nobody believes you.

Mr. POLLOCK: On those grounds I can be assumed to be representing the case fairly, because my truthfulness has not been called into question in this House. Regarding the motion for the censure of the hon. member, I say that he is remarkably lucky. Few men have levelled such charges against a Government as he has done without having been in some measure called upon to pay a greater price than he is being called upon to pay now in receiving the disapproval of this Chamber for the action he has indulged in. I hope that the motion will be carried, and that it will act as a warning in future to members who are inclined to make rash and untrue statements, and to attempt to create an impression in the minds of the people that they can prove those statements. If it only has that effect, the motion of censure on the hon. member will be well worth while.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move—That this House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the resumption of the debate on the censure motion, to be followed by Ways and Means, then the consideration in Committee of the Legislative Council's amendments on the Popular Initiative and Referendum Bill; the Public Works Land Resumption Bill, second reading and Committee stages; the Pharmacy Bill, the Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill; and the State Children Bill; afterwards, the rest of the business as it appears on the sheet. If we make reasonable progress to-morrow, I shall be quite prepared, if the leader of the Opposition desires, not to sit on Friday this week.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If we vote on this motion it will be all right.

The PREMIER: It is a matter of indifference to me how you vote on this motion.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The Chief Secretary has intimated that he will adjourn to-morrow night if reasonable progress is made. I take it that he cannot say that there has been any obstruction.

The PREMIER: I am not suggesting that there has been any obstruction this week.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: If you are content to proceed on the lines on which we have been dealing with important matters, I can assure the hon. gentleman that, as far as I am concerned, I am willing to adjourn.

The PREMIER: Very well, then we will not sit on Friday; I will take that assurance.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past 10 o'clock.

[*Mr. Pollock.*]