

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 18 OCTOBER 1917

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

“1. No. The Government undertook to provide the necessary labour to discharge and reload the vessel in Sydney.
“2 to 7. See answer to No. 1.”

DRYSDALE BROTHERS AND INKERMANS ESTATE REPURCHASE.

Mr. COLLINS (*Town*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“Was any agreement entered into by the Government at the time the Inkerman Estate was repurchased by which Drysdale Brothers were compelled to crush all the cane grown on the estate by the selectors?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hunter, *Maranoa*) replied—

“The agreement merely stipulated for the erection of a mill with a capacity of 12,000 to 15,000 tons; the erection to be completed not later than 1st July, 1913, but, unfortunately, nothing is contained in the agreement to compel the owners to crush selectors' cane.”

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 18 OCTOBER, 1917.

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

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed:—

Annual report of the Commissioner of Public Health.

Forty-first report of the Secretary for Public Instruction.

QUESTIONS.

CHARTER OF S.S. "HOPEWELL."

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*) asked the Chief Secretary—

“1. Did the s.s. 'Hopewell' recently sail from Maryborough to Sydney under charter to the Queensland Government?”

“2. Was there any arrangement made between the Queensland Government and the owners of the s.s. 'Hopewell' as to the rates to be charged upon general merchandise between—(a) Maryborough and Brisbane to Sydney; (b) Sydney to Brisbane?”

“3. Is he aware that the Commonwealth Government by regulation of 16th May, 1916, laid down the rates of freightage on general merchandise between Sydney and Brisbane at 16s. per ton, unless special permission was given to charge rates in excess of that figure?”

“4. Is he aware that the owners of the s.s. 'Hopewell' are demanding 35s. per ton as freightage on general merchandise, carried from Sydney to Brisbane?”

“5. Is he aware that the s.s. 'Hopewell' is now loading in Brisbane for ports north of Brisbane, and that the owners are demanding freights double those allowed by the Commonwealth regulations?”

STATEMENT MADE IN LAND COURT.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) gave notice of his intention to ask a question with regard to certain charges made by a member of the Land Court, and was proceeding to read the statement made—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is reading a long statement while giving notice of a question. He must simply ask the question.

Mr. MORGAN: There are only two more lines.

The SPEAKER: If I ask the hon. gentleman later on to revise his question he will know that I reminded him of it when he was giving notice.

Mr. MORGAN: I thought it better to read the whole statement; I did not want to suppress anything.

STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

The SPEAKER: In the absence of the Chairman of Committees, I call upon the hon. member for Mundingburra to take the chair.

Mr. FOLEY took the chair accordingly.

The PREMIER, in moving—

“That it is desirable to introduce a Bill to authorise the establishment, continuance, and carrying on of State iron and steel works and other industries, and for other purposes,”

said he did not propose to enlarge upon what he had said yesterday in connection with the Bill.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You might tell us something about “other industries.”

The PREMIER: He went fully into the contents of the Bill yesterday, although it was rather unusual at that stage, but he did it to save discussion when the Bill was being initiated in Committee. Consequently he would confine himself to moving the motion.

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HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): There were two points he would like to get some information on—namely, what “other industries” were referred to, and what “other purposes” were proposed. He knew that the Premier went fully into the details of the measure so far as they related to iron and steel works, and he was not asking for any more information on that point, but he would like some information about the other industries.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Make it “other industries connected therewith.”

THE PREMIER: It is better to have a comprehensive wording.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: That shows it is loaded. It is loaded like everything else.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Opposition were afraid that the Bill was loaded when it proposed to include “other industries” and “other purposes.” He was sorry that the Premier could not see his way to give any further information.

THE PREMIER: I will give you that information.

Mr. PAYNE interjected.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He heard the hon. member for Mitchell interjecting. He seemed to come into conflict with that hon. member on this Bill, but he hoped that the cordial relations which had always existed between them would continue to prevail. He hoped the Premier would give some information on the two points he had raised, because the Premier on more than one occasion had said that he made pitfalls into which members of the Opposition had fallen.

THE PREMIER: No; you said it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman gloated over the fact that the Opposition fell into a pit, and that being the case they wanted to make it clear that there were no such pitfalls in this case.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) pointed out that the words “other industries” appeared in another Bill before.

THE PREMIER: What Bill?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Sugar Acquisition Bill.

THE PREMIER: No, they did not.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, the words “other commodities,” which was practically the same, appeared in the Sugar Acquisition Bill. If they allowed the words “other industries” to remain in the Bill, then the Government would be able to take over any industries. They had it from the Premier himself that they could take over anything under the Sugar Acquisition Bill. He did not object to the spending of a few thousand pounds in establishing steel and iron works, even if they failed.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS interjected.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He was not like the Minister for Lands and did not shuffle and give two or three meanings to everything he said. He always said what he meant. It was a good thing to develop the resources of the State, because if it succeeded the whole State would benefit.

Mr. GLEDSON: Your leader is opposed to it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, he was not opposed to it, because the whole of the country would benefit. They had asked the Minister for Agriculture to subsidise agents

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to go to the East to open up markets for the primary producers, but he laughed at the idea and would not give them £1 of subsidy. They were prepared to send a representative of the Co-operative Company to the East to open up markets if the Minister would assist them. He thought it was a good thing to open up any industry in the State, and if the Bill now before them had the result of establishing successful works the whole of Australia would benefit.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*): We heard the Premier say the other day that he was the leader of a party of conciliation. The whole of the members of the House were in favour of this measure, and all they asked was that after the words “and other industries” in the motion, the hon. gentleman would insert the words “connected therewith.” If the hon. gentleman would do that it would save a great deal of useless debate.

THE PREMIER: He thought he had explained yesterday what the “other industries” were, but if it was any assistance to hon. members, he would repeat what they were. The hon. member would probably agree with him that they were connected with the iron and steel industry. As he stated yesterday, the Minister representing the Crown—

“is hereby authorised and empowered to establish, undertake, maintain, and carry on the business of searching for, mining, getting, winning, reducing, and smelting iron and iron ores, and any metal, mineral, earth, ore, or product used or for use in such business, and the manufacture and production of iron and steel with all or any associated trades, processes, industries, or enterprises, and the manufacture, preparation, and production 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.”

Those were the other industries that were specified particularly in the measure; they were connected with the iron and steel industries, and this was the usual form of words in the title of such a measure as this. “Other purposes” was also a common form of intituling a measure, and they referred to the incidental powers that were necessary for the carrying out of the main purpose. There was also power given to the Governor in Council to extend the operation of the measure to other industries they thought desirable, as, for instance, building ships, as he was reminded by his friend the Secretary for Railways.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The PREMIER presented the Bill, which was read a first time, and the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

MOTION OF CENSURE ON THE
HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR DALBY.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the adjourned debate on the Premier's motion—

"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."

The SPEAKER said: I should like to point out to the hon. member for Dalby that it is the practice, on a occasion like this, for a member charged to withdraw from the House. Standing Order No. 125 says—

"A member against whom a charge has been made having been heard in his place, shall withdraw while the charge is under consideration."

"May" also lays it down, at page 310 (12th edition), that—

"It is a rule in both Houses that when the conduct of a member is under consideration, he is to withdraw during the debate. The practice is to permit him to learn the charge against him, and, after being heard in his place, for him to withdraw from the House. The precise time at which he should withdraw is determined by the nature of the charge. When it is founded upon reports, petitions, or other documents, or words spoken and taken down, which sufficiently explain the charge, it is usual to have them read, and for the member to withdraw before any question is proposed. But if the charge be contained in the question itself, the member is heard in his place, and withdraws after the question has been proposed, as in the cases of Mr. Secretary Canning in 1808, and of Lord Brudenell in 1836. If the member should neglect or refuse to withdraw at the proper time, the House would order him to withdraw."

My opinion is that it is for the House to say whether the hon. member should be allowed to remain during the debate, and I now ask is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be allowed to remain?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The hon. member for Dalby here withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): By this motion the Government wish to condemn the hon. member for Dalby and to pass unanimously a vote of censure on him. We know perfectly well that the motion is a deliberate attempt to victimise the hon. member for Dalby for doing his duty to the country. The hon.

member for Dalby wants nothing from the Premier or the Government, and since they could do nothing else than allow him to remain in the Chamber, I am very pleased that the hon. member has left the House, rather than accept anything from those who are trying, in a dirty way, to victimise him in the eyes of the electors of Queensland. The hon. member has done nothing but his duty, as a member of Parliament. The Premier knew from the mouth of one of his own colleagues of the rumour which was abroad, and yet he took no notice of the matter. This inquiry was brought by the Premier and the Government with the deliberate intention of whitewashing themselves, and cleaning off the slate actions that they have done during their term of office. The hon. member for Dalby asked for an extension of the scope of the commission, so as to enable the judge to inquire into other matters, but the Government deliberately refused to extend the scope of the commission, even to the extent of including one more matter for inquiry. The Government merely placed the small toe of their foot in this inquiry, and left their boot on, so that the hon. member for Dalby could not get at it to wash away the dirt that was covered up. During that inquiry the Government stirred up so much muck, that they think it necessary now to try to deceive the people of Queensland as to the real meaning of the statement made by the member for Dalby, and the impression that should be gathered from the report made by the judge. Fortunately, there is a bigger judge to deal with this matter, and those hon. gentlemen will have to answer to that judge. The electors of the State will be the judges as to whether the hon. member for Dalby did his duty in the interest of the country, or whether the Premier has narrowed down the inquiry to suit his own political purpose. This scheme of the Premier's to victimise the hon. member for Dalby is part of a plot which was made to catch somebody. In selecting the hon. member for Dalby, the Premier chose somebody that he desired to frighten off the Opposition benches. (Government laughter.) The Premier said the hon. member for Dalby was aspiring to the leadership of the Opposition, and that he was doing something to try to secure that leadership and get into power. When the Premier made that statement, he thought the hon. member for Dalby was likely to succeed in his aspirations, and with that impression in his mind he waited to catch the hon. member and laid his trap for that purpose. How did he lay the trap? The Labour member for Flinders came to Brisbane, and in his evidence at question 418, we get this information—

"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."

From that it appears that at that time the Premier of Queensland knew that that statement had been made, and that it was made by one who had secured it from [4 p.m.] a Mr. Gannan. From that time out the Premier had at his disposal the possibility of tapping the whole of the evidence that this gentleman could

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put forward to prove the statement which was carried to him by Mr. May. What happened after that? Mr. May says—

“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.”

Then there is question 434—

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

The Premier said, “Yes, decidedly.” Then at question 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.”

He left it in hands better than his own to make inquiries—in the Premier's hands. From that time out the Premier had at his disposal the possibility of securing the whole of the evidence in this case which was known to Mr. Vowles. I ask the Premier, did he take advantage of the opportunity to prove it or otherwise?

The PREMIER: I knew it was a lying slander all the time.

Mr. CORSER: That is not an answer to my question. Did the Premier from that time try to secure from these people the truth or otherwise of the statement?

The PREMIER: Do you think that I inquire into every lying scandal that is started through the country?

Mr. CORSER: The Premier is not saying that he did not find from Mr. Gannan and those who made those statements whether there was anything in them or not. I will say that during that time the Premier did make inquiries as to the possible truth of that statement. On that hinges the victimisation of the hon. member for Dalby—on the silence of the Premier. He drew from Mr. Vowles a case that he (Mr. Ryan) as Premier has built up, designed to catch somebody, and he wished to get the man whom he thought was aspiring to be the leader of the Opposition. When Mr. Ryan had this intimation he used it pretty well. He got the hon. member for Dalby in this House to say that he could prove this statement. The Premier knows perfectly well that by his interjection the hon. member for Dalby said, “I can prove it, and my witness is Mr. Gannan.” That was what the hon. member for Dalby expected to be the proof—this Mr. Gannan was the man who had made the statement. Did the Premier leave it at that?

The PREMIER: Whoever made the statement was a wilful and malicious liar.

Mr. CORSER: That is not going to draw me off. That statement was shown you by a Labour member. When the Premier got

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the hon. member for Dalby to make that statement he knew that he had investigated the whole of the evidence and that Mr. Vowles, when he told him the strength of his case and gave him the name of his principal witness—Mr. Ryan knew perfectly well that he had crawled right round the evidence that this gentleman could give, and that he had established a case that would make a boom for his political party, whitewash them of political sins, and make it bad for the Opposition and the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. KIRWAN: Did not Mr. Vowles say that he was out for political capital?

Mr. CORSER: Mr. Vowles was out for the interests of the State, and further he was out to show that he has been an honest man to his electors in making this statement. We will go a little further. On absolutely the very same lines the next thing we come to is the evidence of Mr. Vowles. On page 4, Mr. Vowles, speaking of the witnesses he wanted, said—

“One, I understand, Mr. Gannan (who is one of my chief witnesses in this matter)—is very, very ill.”

Mr. Vowles desired that that witness's evidence should be secured in case the unfortunate gentleman might pass away. A few minutes after that the Premier's barrister—who was there for the victimisation and the proving of a case that the Premier had established for himself—made this statement—

“For instance, Mr. Vowles mentioned Mr. Gannan—”

Innocent Mr. Vowles, thinking that he was dealing with an honourable gentleman—one who would at least give a man a fair sporting chance—a man who would not only stoop to the appointing of a committee, but a man who decidedly and deliberately attempted to victimise him by selecting his own time, his own judge, his own umpires, and also the grounds on which this battle should be fought, and also drew up the rules as to when and how the game was to be played, and decided as the game progressed when he should blow the whistle to take them off the field! Mr. Feez said—

“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.”

That was known to the Premier when he secured from the hon. member for Dalby the name of his witness, and decided that he was to be victimised by this inquiry.

The PREMIER: That is untrue, and you know it.

Mr. CORSER: That is true, and before a tittle of evidence was gathered on page 4 of this report—before the inquiry started—the chief counsel of the Government—of the Premier—made this statement in the court, showing that the hon. member for Dalby's principal witness was not to be called to give evidence at all. I will say this: that the Chief Commissioner for Police in Queensland,

Mr. Urquhart, received a telegram from the police that Mr. Gannan was not in a state to give evidence, and he was therefore debarred from Mr. Vowles, and that was known to Mr. Vowles in the court. All that information was collected by the Crown from the hon. member for Dalby's chief witness.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You could have got some documentary evidence long before that.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman will have documentary evidence before he has finished. All that was done was, the hon. member knew perfectly well, that the hon. member for Dalby was right out in the public interest, and the whole of it was to be done at the country's expense, to whitewash this Labour Government so as to try and put upon the slate at the next election a clean political sheet in their own interests.

The burning of the evidence made it a very hard thing for Mr. Vowles to prove his case. The bad memory of Mr. Barnes suited the Government's purpose, and the suppressing of the evidence that the Crown had at their disposal also went against the interests of Mr. Vowles. Mr. Vowles, then cross-questioned by counsel, admitted that the wire that he had sent, and which was in the hands of Mr. Vowles, had previously been sent by him and conveyed to the other side, and was in court in the hands of Mr. Feez at the dying hour of the inquiry.

Mr. MORGAN: And they call that honourable?

Mr. CORSER: And this is an honourable inquiry—the Premier was making the commission that he appointed to extract the whole truth. They were suppressing it and were hiding in the papers information that showed that Mr. Barnes had given his property to another agent, and which Mr. Barnes could not remember anything about. Mr. Barnes, of course, could not substantiate it, nor could Mr. Suter, because he also had not got his papers. One hon. member speaking last night, claimed that the papers of Mr. Suter were not destroyed. I find that Mr. Suter was asked—

“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.”

Then Mr. Suter is again asked—

“You said you would not have destroyed anything?—I said not myself, my clerk might have. They are not in my office.”

If that is not the destruction of papers, what is the use of the papers if they cannot be produced.

The PREMIER: You know that our contention was that these papers never existed, and he was your witness. That man—

Mr. CORSER: Unfortunately for the Premier, that witness was the Premier's witness.

The PREMIER: He was not the Premier's witness.

Mr. CORSER: By confusing the name Fowles with Vowles, the information came to the hands of Mr. Vowles, and it was not until the inquiry that Mr. Suter himself said that he thought that he was communicating with Mr. Fowles, the Under Secretary for the Treasurer.

The PREMIER: I say that Suter was Mr. Vowles's witness.

Mr. CORSER: When the telegram came to Mr. Vowles that gentleman thought he was securing information from a man who had communicated with himself, whereas he was getting evidence through the Crown which the Crown suppressed, and the telegram received by the Crown had to be exhibited in court, when by accident it was drawn from Mr. Suter that he had made the communication that the property was under offer for practically £20,000 less than what the Government purchased it for. At the inquiry the Crown deliberately suppressed this information that they had got. This does not whitewash the Government. We heard something of running up a score at a country inn in the old days, and the amounts being put up on the board, and we find that the debts of the various people who had patronised a particular inn might be chalked against them on the board. It reminds me of a little poem, not something composed by the parliamentary poet, but something that is in many ways better. It is a little piece called “The Irish Fire Brigade.” It runs—
“How convenient it was, to have a fire brigade like that, to clean the slate from time to time.” Then, after the brigade visited the various portions of the town, it continues—

“Then we tried the Pig and Whistle, though it had not got alight;

But we went inside the taproom, to be there in case it might.

They said there was no danger, but we thought at any rate

As a precautionary measure we would play upon the slate.

And when we'd washed the slate quite clean and wiped out all the score,

We spent the night in boozin', and in running up some more.

And when the score we're running now has got a little higher,

We'll bring the old engine round again and have another fire.”

Mr. WEIR: That sounds like “The Wreck of the ‘Hesperus.’”

Mr. CORSER: It is a pity you were not there with your brothers. Now, it will be quite possible that on another occasion, when the political score has gone up again on the slate, the Government will attempt again to whitewash it; to bring the old engine round, to try and clean the slate—their political consciences; and it will be seen by the electors of Queensland what score they have run up to the detriment of the people of this country.

Mr. FOLEY: Why don't you put the fire out?

Mr. CORSER: Well, we unfortunately are not there to put the fire out; and if we were, we would have had more evidence. Now, no witness of the member for Dalby was questioned by him, and the whole thing was carried out to the honour of the gentleman who gave the information to this House. But can it be said from the other side that the Government did not suppress information? Last night the hon. member for Gregory—Mr. Pollock—claimed that he had given information to the Crown Solicitor—Mr. Webb—and that on that information he was not called as a witness.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was no use.

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Mr. CORSER: No use to the Government?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No use to the inquiry.

Mr. CORSER: And because it was probably of no use to the Government, it probably might have been of use to the other side. Information has been suppressed. The Premier knows perfectly well that when the statement was made in the House he allowed that statement to go in the pocket-book throughout the State. That statement was shown to the hon. member for Dalby in that pocket-book. Was it right for the Premier to allow—probably to encourage—that statement to go out so that some men—probably the member for Dalby—could be shown this evidence so that he might make the statement in the House in good faith, after the Premier had secured all the information as to the strength of Mr. Gannan—that he could not give information?

The PREMIER: I never heard of Gannan until Vowles used his name in this House.

Mr. CORSER: I think the thing is too apparent to anybody.

The PREMIER: I never heard of Gannan's name until Vowles mentioned it here. I made no inquiries whatever.

Mr. CORSER: I will accept your statement. On the 12th September the Minister for Lands mentioned that these papers were burnt. Knowing all these things, the Premier attempts to victimise a gentleman. He builds up a big court, he makes a great fuss, and then he comes along with this victimisation by throwing out these insinuations in the House, and bringing this amendment that he cowardly moves on the member for Dalby.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. CORSER: He could do nothing else.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must inform the hon. member that "cowardly" is not parliamentary language.

Mr. CORSER: I thought I was moderate, after hearing the Premier and Government members speaking last night. Now, the Premier deliberately, in charging the member for Dalby, tries to get political kudos out of the statements made in the Press here. He misrepresented the position of a fire insurance meeting the other day. He misrepresented it by the letter that he read from the "Worker"—and he would not acknowledge the "Worker"—that a certain national political organisation was receiving certain funds, when that circular was addressed and was referring to a national union that has not yet been formed in Queensland, and which none of us know anything about. (Government dissent.)

Mr. PAYNE: Don't be silly.

Mr. CORSER: It was the National Union, and not the National Political Council. Thus the Premier, with his loud voice, in this House, tries to uplift—as he claims—the tone of the debate of Parliament, after so many years of scandalous victimisation by his party of hon. members on this side of the House. Does he forget the cement inquiry? Does he forget the statements that have been made with regard to Mr. Macartney—the Macartney Expulsion Bill? Does he forget the statements that the American Meat Company were palm-oiling the Minister's of the then front Treasury benches, that there were moneys coming to the political organisations

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of the then Government because of the establishment of American meat trusts, that these meat cormorants were providing money for their political funds?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is out of order; he is not discussing the motion at all.

Mr. CORSER: I am sorry. I was rather replying to the Premier.

The PREMIER: And the Premier can afford to treat your speech with the contempt which it deserves.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: I am not going to deny that the Premier to-day cannot afford to do a lot of things. I don't know the strength of his pocket at all; I am not questioning that.

Mr. KIRWAN: You know the strength of his lash. (Government laughter and Hear, hear!)

Mr. CORSER: Well, after the next election he will know the strength of the lash of the country; and by the look of his face, by his actions in the past and by those of his Government, they are beginning to feel it. Now, by this inquiry—by the remarks of the Press, by the innuendoes that are thrown out—the people of Queensland are led to believe that the hon. member for Dalby made the statement that the Treasurer secured £5,000 out of this deal; and that is allowed to go forth; and last night the Premier referred to it.

Mr. MORGAN: He insinuated it.

Mr. CORSER: He insinuated deliberately that the hon. member for Dalby had made the statement that the Treasurer had secured £5,000 out of this deal.

Mr. COOPER: Will you deny that you ever said it?

Mr. CORSER: I deny that I ever said it, except in this House just now. The Premier tried to cause that to be sent out and circulated through "Hansard," when he knows—and every right-minded man knows—that the member for Dalby did not make that statement. But the Labour member for Flinders—Mr. May—brought that statement to him in this House, and showed it to the people in this House—as was admitted in the evidence that was taken before the inquiry; it was the Labour member for Flinders that brought a statement here, written in his pocket-book, given him by one Connor, at Cloncurry.

Mr. FOLEY: And what does Connor say now?

The PREMIER: He brought it as an example of the slanders you were using.

Mr. CORSER: It was he who brought it, and not the member for Dalby. That is the point. Never mind where they picked it up from; never mind where they were muckraking; it was a Labour member that brought that here, and not the member for Dalby, as was insinuated by the Premier's remarks and the "twistocracy" of hon. gentlemen opposite. No one with a fair mind will say that Mr. Vowles did not do his duty to his country, and no one can say that he is not the victim of a very vicious attack by the Premier; and no one who is fair will say that that inquiry was carried to the limits it could have been in the interests of anyone, and that the Government closed that inquiry—blew the whistle, took

the teams off the field—just when things favoured them—just when the wind was blowing their way.

The PREMIER: If you like, I will reopen it.

Mr. CORSER: When the wind was blowing their way, the Premier allowed Government witnesses to go on; but when the wind changed—when he had to kick against the wind—he called his crowd off the field and cried it “off,” so that he could bring about the victimisation of a gentleman who had done his duty to the State—which the Premier should have done when he received the information that he had that day.

The PREMIER: I will reopen it if you like; and I will include your speech of this afternoon.

Mr. CORSER: That won't help either side. Last night he informed us that the people of Queensland and the members of the Opposition in the country were not in accord with the statements, or with the part Mr. Vowles took in this; that they would not stand by him; and yet he has repeatedly received the congratulations of men who are unknown to him, and letters have been received by him from time to time.

The PREMIER: Imaginary persons.

Mr. CORSER: This is an imaginary person that the hon. gentleman must know something about sooner or later. Mackay National Political League, 15th October, 1917: I have the honour, by direction of my executive, to convey to you—

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the hon. member reading a private letter?

Mr. CORSER: No, I am reading one from a council—a resolution.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member led off by saying he was going to read a letter.

Mr. CORSER: Well, it is—

“A resolution passed by the National Political Council, expressing their very keen appreciation of the stand you have taken up in connection with the present inquiry, and trust your laudable efforts will not remain unrewarded.”
(Government laughter.)

The PREMIER: What is the date?

Mr. CORSER: It is dated 15th October, and was received this morning. Last night the hon. gentleman would not have it that the hon. member for Dalby had pleased his own side and those gentlemen who are reasonable in the community.

The PREMIER: That letter only proves it was done for political purposes.

Mr. CORSER: That letter shows distinctly that the reasonable people in the community recognise that, at any rate, the member for Dalby has done his duty to the State.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Who are they?

Mr. CORSER: I don't know who they are; I am reading it as I got it from them. If I read a letter or two I would be called to order, so that I am not going to infringe on the Standing Orders to any degree.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member can read a letter if he lays it on the table of the House afterwards and allows it to be inspected by other hon. members.

Mr. CORSER: I am not ashamed of it. It is very awkward for the Government when we can produce these documents that are asked for. (Government laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: They show who your friends are.

Mr. WEIR: Was it not they who abused the Governor last night?

Mr. KIRWAN: Disloyalists.

Mr. CORSER: When we find that this great purchase of Wando Vale was brought about by a subordinate officer who inspected it, when we had the services of one Mr. McGugan, who was selected out of 250 applicants, we must say that the State Government has not done its duty. This huge purchase, amounting to so much to the State, in which so much capital was invested, was inspected by a subordinate officer when we had the services of Mr. McGugan; and yet we find that four or five pens of cattle yesterday were put in the Enoggera saleyards, and Mr. McGugan was there to see that they were properly sold. Is not that a glorious position? There were 149 cattle [4.30 p.m.] sold in the Enoggera yards, and

Mr. McGugan sitting there to see that they are sold in the interests of the State, yet a subordinate officer is allowed to inspect a property worth £85,000.

The PREMIER: He was there in the interests of the consumer.

Mr. CORSER: He wanted to see that the cattle realised a good price, so that the meat would not be sold at too high a price. There were 149 bullocks sold at £21 5s. 9d. apiece.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the motion altogether.

Mr. CORSER: I have been drawn aside by the interjections of hon. members opposite. In conclusion, I would like to put into “Hansard” a few lines from the “Daily Mail” of to-day's date—

“The published evidence at the Wando Vale inquiry has been of real benefit—”

The PREMIER: The person who wrote that article ought to be ashamed of himself.

Mr. MORGAN: The “Daily Mail” is doing its duty.

Mr. CORSER: It goes on to say—

“It has enabled the people generally to understand how these Government purchases are made and on what sort of recommendation they are based. This is the kind of information that Ministers have been religiously keeping to themselves. Had Mr. Vowles not ventilated the matter—had there been no public inquiry—it would never have been known, for example, that on the report of one isolated individual, not in the public service and not responsible to anybody, the huge sum of £82,000 could be casually expended.”

They might have added that Mr. McGugan was brought to Enoggera to see the cattle sold and to see that the price paid was not too low.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. PAYNE (Mitchell): The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat, the hon.

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member for Burnett, has become more notorious than the hon. member for Dalby. The hon. member for Burnett has no regard for anything he says. He has not the slightest regard for facts. He has no regard for the evidence taken on oath before the Royal Commission when he comes into this House and makes a deliberate misstatement. Why, he sets out to tell this House that the Premier has moved this motion to victimise Mr. Vowles, the hon. member for Dalby. Unless the Premier was a worm he could do nothing else but move this motion after the slanderous statements that have been made here for some months past.

Mr. MORGAN: It shows that he is a worm.

The SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for Murilla to withdraw that expression.

Mr. MORGAN: I withdraw it.

Mr. GILLIES (to Mr. Morgan): Go on, you mongrel.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Eacham to withdraw that expression.

Mr. GILLIES: In deference to your ruling I withdraw it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Mitchell in order in saying that the hon. member for Burnett made a deliberate misstatement?

Mr. GILLIES: So he did, and everyone knows it.

The SPEAKER: So far as parliamentary practice is concerned, the hon. member for Mitchell is not out of order. While the statement might be distinctly parliamentary, still, when statements like that are made, they are not likely to help to preserve order in debate. I think myself that hon. members on both sides of the House should conduct the debate in a better manner than they have adopted in the last day or two. I hope hon. members will be able to deal with any question that comes before the House without any heat at all. Hon. members have all got the evidence before them, and they can quote any portion of that evidence, without calling anybody names. It is not the desire of the Speaker to interfere with an hon. gentleman when he is trying to put his case before the House, but in this case members on both sides have used expressions which, although they might be parliamentary, are not in the interests of quietness and order in debate.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAYNE: So far as the language used by hon. members opposite is concerned, I have never heard anything like it since I have been in the House. I say that the hon. member for Toowong has made deliberate misstatements in this House. Then we had the hon. member for Burnett rise in his place using the same arguments as the hon. member for Dalby, and sheltering himself behind a dying man. That is the most cowardly thing that I have ever seen in my life. The whole of the argument of hon. members opposite was that they only wanted to get Mr. Gannan's evidence. We know all about him. Why did not the hon. member for Dalby get a statement from Mr. Gannan sixteen months ago, before he made the statement in this House? He should have got that statement from Mr. Gannan before he made the charges in this House. Hon. members opposite talk about looking after the interests of the country. If they did, why

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did they not get a statement from Mr. Gannan? The Premier could do nothing else but move this resolution after what has occurred. I read in this morning's "Courier" a telegram stating that a member of the New South Wales Parliament was expelled on the motion of the Government for saying very much less than Mr. Vowles did in this House. I am not in the habit of using unparliamentary language, but I claim that Mr. Vowles condemned himself by the words which came from his own lips. If anyone reads the evidence which he gave on oath in the witness-box he will see that he made those remarks about Wando Vale from a political point of view, and in order to gain political kudos. If the hon. member for Dalby has any manhood about him he should make an apology in a manly way and let the matter drop. He tells us in the witness-box that he made the remarks from a political point of view, and he comes along to this House and says that he is not satisfied with the result of the commission. He says he does not want to cast any reflection on the judge, but he is not satisfied with the result of the commission. He is sheltering himself behind Mr. Gannan, who is a dying man, whereas months and months ago he could have got the facts from Mr. Gannan, and there would have been no necessity to bring up his name in this House. The hon. member for Toowong and the hon. member for Dalby have both had a legal training, and one would naturally expect them to be able to sift evidence better than a lay mind. Both of these gentlemen, however, have deliberately misrepresented the evidence that was taken. The hon. member for Toowong rose in his place in an excited way last night and, striking his hand, he said that Mr. Cox, in his sworn evidence, never contradicted the statement that Wando Vale was in Mr. Gannan's books in 1916. That is a most deliberate misstatement. The hon. member for Dalby said the same thing. Let us analyse the evidence in reference to that particular point and see what was said. On page 107 it will be found that Mr. Cox was asked the following question by Mr. Feez:—

"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."

We have had evidence to prove that Gannan had this property in 1910 and 1912 at a certain price. Then Mr. Feez asked another question—

"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."

We will see now what Mr. Barnes said, on page 28. It will give you an idea how these legal minds will try to twist a thing. Mr. Barnes was asked the following questions:—

"Did you know Mr. Gannan at all?—Yes: I knew him personally.

"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.

“And that Mr. Gannan had instructions not to refuse offers?—A ridiculous suggestion.”

That is what Mr. Barnes said. Mr. Cox was a partner with Mr. Gannan for twelve years, and he had the highest opinion of him, but he said that at times drink got the best of Mr. Gannan, and then he did not know what he was doing. I am sorry to say that that has happened to a lot of good men. Mr. Cox knew Mr. Gannan thoroughly, and he distinctly states in his evidence that Gannan had no proof that he had this particular property in his hands for sale since 1912. Yet we have two legal men in this House pointing out that Cox said he was not certain whether the property was in Mr. Gannan's books in 1916. I have heard a good deal of discussion of this question, and I have heard a good deal of unnecessary talk. The Premier could not do anything else than what he has done. After the slanderous statements that have been made about this Government, I have come to the conclusion that the most honourable man on the Government side of the House is liable to have a slanderous statement made about him by a member of the Opposition, and unless he has a good deal of money he will not be able to see the thing through, and it will place members on this side in an awkward position. That is a state of affairs that should not exist in any country, particularly it should not exist in a deliberative assembly of this kind. The hon. member for Dalby should do the manly thing, yet he comes along here and shelters himself behind a dying man. Why did he not get the evidence from Mr. Gannan himself months ago before he made those ridiculous statements? Suppose Mr. Pym did tell him that Mr. Gannan made the statement. Would it not have been a fair thing for him to have got into communication with Mr. Gannan before he made the statement here? If Mr. Vowles did not make the statement directly that Mr. Theodore got £5,000 out of this transaction, he said indirectly that someone got a lot more than £5,000 out of it. The hon. member suggested that the Government gave £82,000 for Wando Vale when it could have been bought for £45,000. What would the average man or woman reading a statement of that kind think? Why, that the Government are a pack of thieves. If that is the way members of the Opposition are prepared to get political kudos—by deliberately accusing the men sitting on the Treasury benches of robbing the taxpayers of the country of the sum of £30,000 odd—for, boiled down, that is exactly what it means—no man's character will be safe in this House. We hear members opposite saying, “I never said that anyone got £5,000 out of it; I never said this, and I never said that.” If these kind of statements are to be allowed to go broadcast throughout the country, I would not care about sitting in the House. I certainly would not care about associating myself with any party who allowed that kind of statement to be circulated without challenging it. The hon. member for Dalby has condemned himself. He has taken up a very bad stand by defying everyone in the House, and by saying that he does not regret one word of what he said; and he makes the same charges

indirectly against the Government. The hon. member still charges the Government with having done something wrong. A man of the kind should get no consideration from hon. members. He has not the slightest conception of fair play or manly action, and he includes the whole of the Government supporters in his condemnation, because we know very well that if you charge a Ministry with corruption the supporters of that Ministry are placed in a very awkward position. Both the hon. member for Dalby and the hon. member for Toowong, gentlemen who have legal training, deliberately set out to misrepresent the evidence. It is not necessary for me to say that they do not understand the evidence which was given before the commission.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is not necessary for you to misrepresent what they say.

Mr. PAYNE: I say that the hon. member for Toowong got excited the other night, and said that Mr. Cox never said that Wando Vale was not in the hands of Mr. Gannan in 1916. I was surprised at that statement, because Mr. Cox distinctly stated in his evidence that Wando Vale was not in Mr. Gannan's hands at that time. Mr. Cox did not say an unkind word against Mr. Gannan, any more than to honestly admit that liquor had got the best of him and that he was not responsible for his actions at times.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Why don't you read the question.

Mr. PAYNE: If the hon. member wants me to read the question and expose his ignorance, I will read the question; but I cannot for the life of me think that it was through ignorance that the hon. member made that statement. Both the hon. member for Dalby and the hon. member for Toowong deliberately set themselves out to misrepresent Mr. Cox's statements.

Mr. MACARTNEY: You misunderstand deliberately.

Mr. PAYNE: Mr. Cox gave evidence at some length, but there is not a statement in his evidence which justifies what the hon. gentleman says.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Read question 2740.

Mr. PAYNE: I have read questions 2756 and 2757, and questions 497, 498, and 499. Mr. Cox, in his evidence, spoke in a way that could not be misunderstood, and I was surprised to hear such an interpretation given to his evidence. The hon. member for Dalby, instead of withdrawing the statement he made, comes along here and reiterates the statement that there is something wrong. I say that kind of man is not a fit man to be a member of this House, and if a motion for his expulsion was moved, I would readily vote for it.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat was not prepared to read question 2740, where this evidence was distinctly given by Mr. Cox—

“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

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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."

From that evidence it would appear that Wando Vale was in the hands of Mr. Gannan for sale at £45,000. The report also states that Mr. Pym gave that information to Mr. Vowles, and when under cross-examination before the commission Mr. Pym confirmed his statement, and said that Mr. Gannan told him that he had Wando Vale in his hands for sale at £45,000.

Mr. PAYNE: Mr. Barnes distinctly denied that.

Mr. FORSYTH: Then, it is simply a question of one man's evidence against another man's evidence.

The PREMIER: The judge found what is the fact.

Mr. FORSYTH: He further said that if Mr. Gannan stated that such was the case, he would say it was true. Mr. Cox said he did not think Mr. Gannan had it in his hands for sale.

The PREMIER: He did not say "he did not think"; he said Mr. Gannan had not got it in his hands for sale.

Mr. FORSYTH: When a reference was made to the price being low, he said he was not quite sure what it was worth. I do not know whether the Premier wants to victimise Mr. Vowles, but there is one thing that is absolutely certain, and that is, that whether the statement made by the hon. member for Dalby is true or not, it will not have the slightest effect on the people throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. I do not think it will have any effect on Mr. Vowles's constituents; in fact, I think it will probably strengthen his hands.

The PREMIER: You know perfectly well that he has not been victimised.

Mr. FORSYTH: Coming to Mr. Suter's evidence, we find that he had the property for sale at £65,000.

The PREMIER: What is the date? It all depends upon the date.

Mr. FORSYTH: Mr. Suter said emphatically that he had it for sale at £65,000.

The PREMIER: When?

Mr. FORSYTH: I think it was in 1916. Here is what the judge says on this point—

"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."

The PREMIER: When was that?

Mr. FORSYTH: He does not say when.

The PREMIER: That is the important point.

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. gentleman is a barrister, and can twist statements to suit his purpose. The statement of the judge is

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that Mr. Suter had a firm offer for Wando Vale in 1916—not 1912—at £65,000, and that he was of opinion that Mr. Barnes did inform Mr. Suter of his willingness to sell at the price stated.

The PREMIER: You are trying to prove two things—that it is true that it was offered for £45,000, and also that it is true that it was offered for £65,000.

Mr. FORSYTH: Not at all. I am speaking about what Mr. Suter said.

The PREMIER: I heard Mr. Suter in the box.

Mr. FORSYTH: The judge says that Mr. Peel evidently had this offer made to him, and that was in May, 1916, not 1912.

The PREMIER: I am not suggesting it was 1912.

Mr. FORSYTH: The judge says he believes that Mr. Barnes did give the offer to Mr. Suter at £65,000, which [5 p.m.] meant that Mr. Suter could get a firm offer at that price. His Honour says—

"I am of opinion that Mr. Barnes did inform Mr. Suter of his willingness to sell at the price stated."

Mr. PAYNE: Mr. Barnes said he could not entertain the idea.

Mr. FORSYTH: Mr. Barnes said he would not deny it, if Mr. Suter said he had it under offer. The judge sums up the matter, and says he believes Mr. Barnes had placed the property under offer to Mr. Suter.

The PREMIER: What month?

Mr. FORSYTH: In May, 1916; that Mr. Barnes gave Mr. Suter's firm the offer of Wando Vale in May, 1916, at £65,000, which meant that Mr. Suter could get a firm offer at that price.

The PREMIER: Who said that?

Mr. FORSYTH: Judge O'Sullivan. He said—

"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)."

Mr. KIRWAN: Finish it.

Mr. FORSYTH: It is quite evident, although Suter could produce no written evidence, that the judge, after listening to the whole of the evidence, was under that impression. I, therefore, say that as far as Suter is concerned it was placed under offer to him in 1916.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Read the next two sentences of the judgment.

Mr. FORSYTH: There has been a great deal of fuss made about this matter.

The PREMIER: Did you see what they did in New South Wales with a member who did this kind of thing? They expelled him last night.

Mr. FORSYTH: When the hon. gentleman was speaking the other night he made allegations against members on this side. He said that, if the Liberal party went back to power, the public servants would be retrenched and the poll tax would be imposed. What right had the Chief Secretary to talk like that?

The PREMIER: Because it is true.

Mr. FORSYTH: Such wild statements as that are not likely to lead to the amicable

feeling which should obtain in this House. That is the kind of statement which the hon. member is always making.

The PREMIER: There is a tremendous lot of kindly feeling showing to the Premier! You need only read the papers to see it.

Mr. FORSYTH: I have no unkindly feeling towards the Premier. I do not believe in being personal to any member; it is a most detestable thing to do. We have enough to do here without descending to those things.

The PREMIER: We are here, too, to prevent slanders being made in this House against anyone.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is quite right. The hon. gentleman often makes statements that are not true.

The PREMIER: That is not so.

Mr. FORSYTH: Have I slandered you?

The PREMIER: I did not say that you had made slanders.

Mr. FORSYTH: Why say the whole of hon. members opposite, then?

The PREMIER: I did not say the whole; I said some members of Parliament.

Mr. FORSYTH: You spoke about the whole. I do not believe in slandering anybody. If the hon. gentleman will do the right thing in connection with this particular vote of censure he will withdraw it. He should be quite satisfied that there has been nothing proved with regard to the statements made.

The PREMIER: In New South Wales last night they expelled a member for the same sort of thing.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not true. It is not for the same thing.

Mr. FORSYTH: They may have or may not have. That is not the point.

The PREMIER: If I am making any mistake, it is by being too lenient.

Mr. FORSYTH: This sort of thing is not likely to lead to that good temper which the Premier should help to bring about.

The PREMIER: I am not going to preserve good temper at the expense of having slanders made in this House continually.

Mr. FORSYTH: I do not think that the hon. member for Dalby had the slightest intention of bringing this matter up at first. I do not believe there was anything in the statement about the £5,000 being paid to a Minister. I am sure no one ever believed it, still Mr. Connor made the statement.

Mr. PAYNE: Mr. Connor said he did not make the statement.

Mr. FORSYTH: As there appeared to be something suspicious about it, it was better to have a commission. It has been proved, as far as the evidence goes, that there has been no corruption on the part of the Government.

The PREMIER: And still members of your side are trying to say there is corruption.

Mr. FORSYTH: If there really was anything in the matter, and he could bring evidence to prove these things, the hon. member for Dalby would not have been justified in not opening his mouth.

The PREMIER: He admitted himself that he was trying to make political capital.

Mr. FORSYTH: Is it not a fact, as proved in the evidence, that the hon. member for Flinders told the Premier that Mr. Gannan stated that Wando Vale could be got for £47,000.

The PREMIER: Gannan's name was not mentioned till Mr. Vowles mentioned it.

Mr. FORSYTH: Did Mr. Connor tell the hon. member for Flinders where he got the information? Of course he did.

The PREMIER: He did not.

Mr. FORSYTH: It was there in black and white, he said. That is in Mr. Connor's own evidence.

The PREMIER: It is not in Mr. May's evidence. I know what Mr. May told me; the welter of slander that was being carried on by your supporters in North Queensland.

Mr. FORSYTH: I understand from the evidence that Mr. Connor had told Mr. May at Cloncurry that Mr. Gannan had offered this property at £47,000.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. FORSYTH: Then, I will withdraw that statement. In any case, whether he said it to Mr. May or not, he said it in evidence. The point I want to get at is this, that while Mr. Connor may not have told the hon. member for Flinders that Mr. Gannan was the man who gave him the offer, yet, on the other hand, Mr. Connor had told Mr. May that the place was under offer at £47,000.

The PREMIER: Yes, and in telling Mr. May that he told him a lie. That is the point.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is not the point. The point is that he did tell Mr. May that this place was under offer for £47,000. This is Mr. May's evidence on the point—

“He said Wando Vale had been in the market for £47,000, a fortnight before the Government had bought it for £32,000?—Yes, that is what he said.”

That was the statement, and it was made in the month of May. Why did the hon. gentleman not find it out?

The PREMIER: Do you think I gave any credit to such a lie as that, for one moment.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is not the point. The hon. member made no effort to ascertain the facts in connection with this matter. Mr. May's evidence further shows—

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

There is not much in that.

Mr. POLLOCK: It proves you were not telling the truth when you said that Mr. Connor got it from Mr. Gannan.

Mr. COOPER: The hon. member for Murrumbidgee has already withdrawn that statement.

Mr. FORSYTH: I knew, as far as my memory served me, that Mr. May had the information from Mr. Gannan that the place was put under offer for £47,000, and that is the reason why I mentioned it in that particular way.

The PREMIER: That is why you made a mistake.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes; and I will withdraw it, as I am in the wrong. But that

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does not alter the fact that the hon. gentleman knew about it when Mr. May came down with this statement with regard to Mr. Theodore—which I am sure no one believes for one minute is correct.

The PREMIER: Do you think I believed it for a moment?

Mr. FORSYTH: No, I do not.

The PREMIER: I scouted the idea; treated it with contempt.

Mr. FORSYTH: I don't think that you believed it for one minute. But the hon. gentleman later on knew that these rumours were going about about the station being offered at a less price—it does not matter whether it was to Mr. Suter or to Mr. Gannan. If he had wanted to get more information, in case this question should crop up, why didn't he get in touch with Mr. Gannan?

The PREMIER: I never heard of Gannan's name until Vowles mentioned it here; I never heard of it in connection with the matter.

Mr. FORSYTH: You could have heard from Connor, who had got the information from Gannan.

The PREMIER: I knew perfectly well that if Connor said that, it was a deliberate lie.

Mr. FORSYTH: That may be so.

The PREMIER: And Connor admits that. Do you think I have nothing else to do than to chase up the lies anybody tells about the Government?

Mr. FORSYTH: This is a question which has been so much talked about—whether there was any truth in it or not.

The PREMIER: Part of the plan of campaign against this Government is a campaign of slander and lies.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. gentleman's statement is not correct. I have quoted from his own speech on the very same question and shown how he slanders this side of the House. He knows it is not true, and he has no right to say it.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FORSYTH: By the way he speaks, one would think that there was not an honourable man on this side of the House.

The PREMIER: I would be very sorry to say that.

Mr. FORSYTH: Now, when we come to the question of Mr. Barnes's statement with regard to the £65,000, we find that it is not by any means clear. Even the Premier has confessed that the statement made by Mr. Barnes is not by any means clear, when he was asked distinctly if he would say he had not put the property in the hands of Mr. Suter, and he said he would not say so.

The PREMIER: But he did say—you will admit this—that, whether he did or not, he would not have sold it for £65,000.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is not the question.

The PREMIER: That is the question.

Mr. FORSYTH: No. I should imagine that if one man goes to another man and simply states, "I have a property for sale for which I am prepared to take £65,000," he would be prepared to sell it at that figure. What would you think of him if he afterwards said, "I am not prepared to take that," when he got it under offer. When Suter had it in the first place he offered it

to Mr. Peel, and Peel declined to take it. If he had not done so, surely Mr. Barnes would have carried out his promise which he made when he put it in the hands of Mr. Suter for sale. If there had been a period of several months, or a year, between them, it would be another matter.

The PREMIER: Do you suggest that the Government paid too much for Wando Vale?

Mr. FORSYTH: I think myself they paid quite enough. Of course, one thing which helps the Government a good deal is that there is a great deal more stock on the place than it was anticipated there would be. I hope they will make money on it.

The PREMIER: You know perfectly well that we will make money on it; we will make thousands, and tens of thousands, of pounds out of it.

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. gentleman is making too sure. If he will only go back and read Mr. Barnes's evidence—

The PREMIER: You would like to have the speculation.

Mr. FORSYTH: If he will read Mr. Barnes's evidence he will see that he told them a couple of years ago he lost 9,000 head through the drought. If a drought were to come along now the hon. gentleman, instead of making money, would lose a great deal. Mr. Barnes had the place under offer a few years ago with 17,000 or 18,000 head of cattle, and after the drought was over he himself reckoned there were only 10,000 head. Therefore he reckoned he had lost 50 per cent. of his stock; and 50 per cent. of a man's stock, upon a basis of, say, £8 per head, would mean a loss of £40,000, instead of a gain.

The PREMIER: If any man had bought Wando Vale for £82,000 he could have retired now.

Mr. FORSYTH: I am sure we all hope that the Government will make money out of it.

The PREMIER: Don't you think the Government made a good deal?

Mr. FORSYTH: No, I would not say the Government made a good deal. I believe myself that the Government paid a fair price. The price of cattle is going up; there is no doubt about that. I will also say that Barnes would take it back and give them interest on their money.

Mr. KIRWAN: You don't deny that Barnes was willing to pay us back £94,000?

Mr. FORSYTH: I don't deny it at all. I think hon. gentlemen will agree that Wando Vale is not what you would call a first-class property.

The PREMIER: It was a cheap property.

Mr. FORSYTH: I don't remember any sales having been made in Queensland upon the basis of 10,000 head of cattle at £8 per head. There may be some. I am only telling you that I don't know of one single station—a big station like that—with a big number of stock which has been sold upon the basis of, we will say, £8 per head.

The PREMIER: Well, I know of some that were under consideration by the Government at the time.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is a different thing.

The PREMIER: They would not sell under £10 a head.

[*Mr. Forsyth.*]

Mr. FORSYTH: That may be. I know nothing whatever about Wando Vale, but I do not think it would be considered a first-class cattle station. However, I hope and trust the Government may make plenty of money out of it. I only want to mention this—that I think it is a great mistake that big transactions running into hundreds of thousands of pounds should be taken by the Government into their own hands without ever taking Parliament, or this House, into consideration at all.

The PREMIER: The information was given to the House on 17th July—the price.

Mr. FORSYTH: I would not restrict the Government to a few thousands of pounds; but big transactions running into hundreds of thousands of pounds—like Wando Vale and all the others—should be brought before the House and have a vote of the House before they are dealt with.

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

Mr. FORSYTH: Well, I have finished, if you will allow me to make this statement. I have no desire to say any more; but I want to call attention to the fact that during the last two years unforeseen expenditure has been £1,250,000. Does the Premier think it is a fair deal, whether it is in connection with the purchase of Wando Vale, the buying of cattle—

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to continue on that subject. He will have an opportunity of discussing it on the Estimates.

Mr. FORSYTH: With regard to this matter, I think it would be a very nice thing if the hon. member would withdraw it. He has the findings of the commission, and he is completely exonerated.

The PREMIER: I pointed out, in moving the motion, that if the hon. member would withdraw it that would be an end of it.

Mr. FORSYTH: He is satisfied with the verdict, and he knows exactly the whole position from beginning to end. I say that instead of bringing this on he should have been satisfied with that, and allowed the matter to drop. By doing that he would have been doing what I call an honourable thing; but by doing this sort of thing—whether he thinks so or not, there is not the slightest doubt about it—the general impression is that he is trying to victimise, as far as he possibly can, the hon. member for Dalby, just the same as the hon. gentleman did last year when he tried to victimise the hon. member for Toowong.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): The hon. member for Murrumba, in his justification of the member for Dalby, reminds me very much of the father of a son. The son had been found guilty of murder upon unmistakable evidence; but despite the verdict of the jury and judge, the father protested that his son was innocent. So it is with the hon. member, who is trying to castigate the House in the conduct of its business as far as it relates to parliamentary privilege, and at the same time he is trying to whitewash the hon. member for Dalby. Now, it was stated here,

that there has been no precedent established whereby Parliament could act. We have not to look back very far in order to obtain a precedent. As has already been pointed out this afternoon, we see that the New South Wales Parliament has, at any rate, established a precedent, of which this Parliament can very well take notice. What occurred there? Mr. Price, the member for Gloucester (who happens to be a Liberal member), made certain insinuations against Mr. Ashworth (the Minister for Lands). Just the same as Mr. Price had a vendetta against Mr. Ashworth down there as Minister for Lands, so we have had in this House a vendetta by three hon. members who have tried, time and time again—by inference, by insinuation, and by public statements—to bring the Minister for Lands into the line of corruption. Now, what happened in the New South Wales Parliament? Mr. Price—whose strictures against Mr. Ashworth were not nearly so bad as the strictures which have been levelled by Mr. Vowles and other members—

Mr. MACARTNEY: What were they?

Mr. PETERSON: Time will not allow me to go into the details of Mr. Price's case; but it is here in the "Telegraph," showing what Mr. Fuller did there.

Mr. KIRWAN: The strong man of Australia.

Mr. PETERSON: This gentleman, who has charge of the Parliament of New South Wales, deemed that Mr. Price was worthy of expulsion. Now, we are not proposing to expel the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Do it.

Mr. PETERSON: I do not believe that this motion would ever have been tabled had it not been for the audacious effrontery of the hon. member for Dalby the other night, after the judge had given his decision, in trying to get up here and whitewash himself. If the hon. member had taken his gruel in a manly spirit this motion would never have been heard of. The hon. member for Burnett has stated that the Government were afraid to extend the functions of the court. It was not the duty of the Government to extend the functions of the court. It was the duty of the Government to take notice of the charges which the hon. member for Dalby made on 12th September last.

Mr. STEVENS: They should have kept the inquiry open.

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. member says the Government should have kept the commission open. Once a Royal Commission is established, that Royal Commission is in the hands of the judge, and it is for the judge to say when the commission should be closed. No Premier has the right to go to a judge of a Royal Commission and say when he should blow the whistle—as the hon. member for Burnett impudently suggested.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Don't find fault with your own Premier.

Mr. PETERSON: I am not finding fault with the Premier, nor will I find fault with your supporter, Judge O'Sullivan—not the slightest. Now, the hon. member says that this commission was so close that they could not discuss anything else. Now, it is not the

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function of the Government to discuss anything else. There was a specific charge made here by Mr. Vowles, incriminating the Government. This is what he said—I will read it, even to the extent of wearying the House. I am quoting from "Hansard" No. 17. In the course of his speech, Mr. Vowles stated—

"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. 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."

Now, I want to draw the attention of the House to this fact: Mr. Pym in his evidence, stated that he had met the member for Murilla and the member for Dalby some twelve months ago, and he had given them some statement of which he has now a hazy recollection. I want the House to take this into consideration. Mr. Morgan stated that the difference between the price at which it could have been got and that which the Government paid, was £5,000. Mr. Morgan said he got that information from Mr. Pym. Mr. Vowles goes into the witness-box—although he was there at the same time that Mr. Pym gave that evidence to them verbally—and he states that Mr. Pym told him the price the station could have been procured at, was £45,000, making the difference £37,000. Why, when the hon. members are organising a conspiracy to try and damn this Government, they ought to be a little more careful of their facts. Just imagine their meeting Mr. Pym, no doubt, down there in the Albert Hotel, where Mr. Pym said it was, and no doubt having a glass of whisky and discussing this matter. You would think they would remember Mr. Pym's statement; and yet of both those hon. members who stated they got their evidence from Mr. Pym, one says there was a £5,000 difference, and the other says there was a £37,000 difference. It is upon the evidence of men like that that this Government stand to be condemned. Hon. members say, "Why take notice of it once the commission has given its verdict?" I say, with the Premier, that this is only part and parcel of a scheme of slander which has been inaugurated to try and defeat the present Government. I am one of those who say that parliamentary privilege to my mind, as long as I have been able to understand it, is merely a refuge for scoundrels. The member, whether he sits on this side or on the other side of the House, who is not game to say outside what he says in here, is not a man at all. That is my opinion about it, and the sooner that members are willing to say outside what they say in here, the better it will be for our parliamentary procedure.

MR. STEVENS: Are you apologising for Ferricks?

MR. PETERSON: No, I am not apologising for Ferricks or anyone else. Under the privilege of Parliament, any member can get up here and slander anyone he likes. He can slander them morally or politically and there is no redress against him in a court of law. It is preposterous that a man can go on insinuating anything in Parliament in order to try and incriminate the Government. That is what the hon.

[*Mr. Peterson.*]

member for Dalby did, and he did it very ignobly, as we have seen from the decision of the judge presiding over the Royal Commission.

MR. MACARTNEY: The master of innuendo is over on that side.

MR. PETERSON: The hon. member for Toowong said that the master of innuendo is on this side, but from my experience of the hon. gentleman, he is pretty good at innuendo himself. In fact, it is pretty hard to catch what he means by his innuendoes. Probably he has "an axe to grind." I am going to continue with the case before the Royal Commission, and I will show how those notable witnesses, Messrs. Vowles and Morgan, differed.

MR. KIRWAN: You should say "notorious."

MR. PETERSON: They differed notoriously in the figures which they gave regarding the conversation they had with Mr. Pym. Mr. Vowles went on to say—

"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."

I remember the night when the hon. member made that speech. He roared out so loud that he could be heard up in Queen street. He wanted to infer that the Government, in buying that station, were paying away the public money to such a degree that it demanded immediate consideration. The Premier interjected to the hon. member for Dalby when he was speaking, "You are prepared to say anything," and the hon. member for Dalby continued—

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

The hon. gentleman said that he could prove it; he got his opportunity to prove it, and failed. Now he states that the commission was circumscribed in the questions it had to deal with, and he wanted other matters dealt with. What had we to consider in regard to Mount Hutton? The hon. gentleman wanted to bring in something irrelevant to the subject under discussion. The commission sat for the purpose of determining whether the Government, rightly or wrongly, had done a wise thing in connection with the purchase of Wando Vale. Therefore, when hon. members opposite say that the scope of the commission was circumscribed, they are saying something that is totally irrelevant to the subject under consideration. What did His Honour Judge O'Sullivan say? The judge, after carefully summing up, said—

"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."

MR. STEVENS: Offers for a less amount.

Mr. PETERSON: No. It does not say that at all. I am quoting exactly what the judge said. The hon. gentleman cannot trap me. The judge also said—

“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 Company, but could find no later record of the property being in Mr. Gannan’s hands.”

Yet the hon. member for Murrumba said this afternoon that it was in 1916. When the hon. member was on his feet, we challenged him to show anything in the evidence to prove that it was placed in Mr. Gannan’s hands in 1916. The judge, in his summing-up, has said clearly that it was not so. The judge also said—

“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.”

What is all this talk about? The judge, after hearing all the evidence submitted to him in connection with the purchase of Wando Vale, found that the evidence of Mr. Cox showed that Gannan did not have Wando Vale on his books since 1912. Yet hon. members opposite get up in their places and try to whitewash the hon. member for Dalby, and in doing that are casting a serious reflection on His Honour Judge O’Sullivan. I just wish to hark back to what the hon. member for Murilla said in connection with this matter, because it has a bearing in connection with the charges made by Mr. Vowles. The hon. member for Murilla, on page 1087 of “Hansard,” said—

“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.”

What was the implication? The implication was that the Treasurer had received £5,000 as graft, and the hon. member for Dalby admits that in his evidence. That is the only inference that can be taken from the hon. member for Murilla’s statement. As I have already pointed out, there is a contradiction between the two hon. members. I advise them next time they hatch a plot with such material at their disposal to be more careful of their facts. One says that there was £5,000 mentioned and the other one mentioned a sum showing a difference of £37,000. I think the public will refuse to take any notice of these hon. gentlemen in future.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They are two different statements and have no relation to each other.

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. member for Drayton does not know what he is talking about. If he only read the evidence he would see that Mr. Vowles corrected Mr. Morgan. They relied upon the evidence of Mr. Gannan, and the hon. member for Dalby said that the Premier was not game to take any action in the matter until Gannan was too ill to appear. That is a most unfair statement. How could the Premier or the Government take action until a specific charge

had been made in this House? We got a specific charge from the hon. member for Dalby. The hon. member for Dalby said that he could produce the proof, and when a man says he can prove a thing is not the onus on him to produce that proof?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Was not the statement made to the Premier twelve months before?

Mr. PETERSON: No. The statement was made to the Premier in August last, only a couple of months ago. The hon. member for Burnett laid great stress on the fact that Mr. Barnes had burnt a lot of letters. I do not know what object he had in burning a lot of letters, because so far as that gentleman is concerned he had sold his property, and changed his residence to another property he owned. I personally heard him give his evidence, and I came to the conclusion that like everyone else who shifts from one house to another, that he burnt a lot of old papers. I know myself that when I shift from one house to another there is always a lot of burning of papers. So far as Mr. Barnes is concerned, it is only natural that like any other man, when he sold his station, he would burn up his old papers because they would be of no more value to him. Hon. members opposite seem to have relied on the evidence of Gannan. Who is Gannan? I do not know him myself, but from the evidence given by other witnesses it was proved that Gannan was only a whisky soaker. He was never sober. That was the evidence that was given, that he was a whisky soaker. Why, Pym had to caution Gannan to be careful about his statement.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are abusing your parliamentary privilege now by calling a man a whisky soaker.

Mr. MACARTNEY: And a dying man, too.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why don’t you make that statement outside?

Mr. PETERSON: I am making it here. I am giving you the evidence that was submitted to the commission. The chief witness which the hon. member for Dalby relied on was Mr. Gannan.

The PREMIER: There is no proof that Gannan ever said it.

Mr. PETERSON: No, there is no proof at all.

Mr. STEVENS: The Premier knew that Gannan could not be called.

Mr. PETERSON: Mr. Cox was called in his place. Mr. Cox was a partner of Gannan’s, and we will see exactly what Mr. Cox said in his evidence. They could not get Gannan to bolster up their charges, so we will see what the partner had to say. When Mr. Feez was examining the witness, he asked—

“Well, do you remember Wando Vale being in the hands of Mr. Gannan?”

To that the witness replied “Yes.” Then Mr. Feez asked him—

“When was that?”

And he replied—

“Well, the only particulars we have were in 1910 and 1912.”

How does the hon. gentleman square his statement in regard to that? Then we have question 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.”

Would you not think with a huge transaction

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like that involving a sum of £80,000, that an up-to-date land agency like this would have a record in their books? Mr. Cox was permitted to search through the books, but he could not find any trace of this property being in the hands of Mr. Gannan for £45,000 in 1916. There is not the slightest evidence of that. Then we have this question—

“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.”

There is no proof whatever in the whole of the correspondence that Gannan had the property in his hands in 1916. The whole thing boiled down proves that the hon. member for Dalby and the hon. member for Murilla are simply going on hearsay evidence, and it was on this hearsay evidence that they were going to rout the Government out of office. Instead of that, what have they done? They have brought down contempt upon themselves. I think it is up to this Parliament to see that the privileges of Parliament are not abused. As I have already stated, no member should make a statement inside this House that he is not prepared to make outside. Yet the hon. member for Murilla, the hon. member for Dalby, and the hon. member for Burnett have repeatedly done it in this House. I hope that before long there will be a Bill introduced to do away with this so-called parliamentary privilege. I do not intend to claim any privilege for anything I say here. I think that every member who says anything in this House should be prepared to say it outside. Personally, I will not rely on any privilege myself. (Hear, hear!) Boiled down, the whole thing comes to this: That Mr. Vowles was told by somebody, who was told by somebody else, that somebody had this property in their hands for sale at £45,000. Mr. Feez asked Mr. Vowles, “Do you understand the law of evidence with regard to hearsay evidence?” “Yes,” said Mr. Vowles. The hon. member came into this House and made a statement that he could not corroborate when given an opportunity to do so. Mr. Vowles has repeated the statement that he has not imputed corruption to the Government in any shape or form.

Mr. STEVENS: Neither did he.

Mr. PETERSON: What have all the questions in connection with Mount Hutton and Wando Vale been asked for? The hon. members who put those questions know that if you can get a rumour started and going round the backblocks, it will do the Government a certain amount of harm, and that is the motive which actuated hon. members in putting those questions. The hon. member for Dalby and the hon. member for Murilla have taken up their present attitude because they had an edge on the Minister for Public Lands. Since the last election there has been a vendetta of three members on that side of the House against the Minister for Public Lands, and everything they could possibly do has been done to bring that hon. gentleman into disrepute. However, the Government appointed a Royal Commission, which consisted of a gentleman who was formerly a member of the Opposition

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party, and that gentleman, on the evidence submitted to them, decided that the Government had made a good bargain in the purchase of Wando Vale. And I believe that when the people are appealed to, they will say that the charges made by the hon. member for Dalby and other members on that side of the House are not warranted, and that the Premier and his colleague have a clean character as far as their public life is concerned. I also believe that when those members go back to their own electorates their constituents will have something to say about their base conduct in this House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I regret that this House has not been given sufficient information on many subjects—this one included. If we had been given sufficient information, the statements which have been made would not have been made. I know the Wando Vale Station and all the stations adjoining it, and I know that the sudden rise in value of those stations was commented upon by practically the whole of the people of the State. One of the reasons for the rise in values of cattle and station properties was that it was known that the Government were going to purchase such properties. The Minister for Public Lands made the statement that the Government were unlimited buyers. If the Government state that they are unlimited buyers of properties or products, will not the prices of those properties and products go up? We know quite well that people will hold back for higher prices. It is only a few years since I was in that district, and I know two stations which were bought for £160 each, including the brands of cattle and everything connected with them. I cannot say what stock was on those stations, or what improvements have been made on them since. I may state that one station of 500 square miles within 20 miles of Emerald, and having a frontage of 14 miles to the railway, was offered to me at that time for £500. Another station on the Dawson was offered to me. I went right across from Rockhampton to the Western line, and I can inform hon. members that at that time you could travel hundreds of miles and never see a single head of cattle on those stations which were offered for sale at from £160 to £500. Palm Creek Station was bought for £300, and the cattle were given in. When people find that those stations have advanced in value from a few hundred pounds to £82,000, can you wonder that they are excited and that they think the Government paid too much for Wando Vale? The Government have gone into the business and have bought bullocks, and the people of Brisbane have had to pay more for their meat because the Government have bought stations and sent their cattle into New South Wales. So long as the price in the Sydney markets is the highest, so long will the Government sell their cattle to New South Wales buyers. The week before last—the very first week that the price in the Brisbane market exceeded the price in the Sydney market—the Government brought down cattle to the Brisbane market, whereas before that they sent their cattle to Sydney. The members of the Opposition have always told the Government that they should bring their cattle here and sell them here, and not sell them to New South Wales buyers.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should deal with the motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I think the values of stations have something to do with the motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have to deal with the motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will, and I think this has something to do with the motion. It has something to do with the price paid for the station. When we find the Government going out and commandeering other people's meat—

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member will read the motion he will see that it is a motion of censure on the hon. member for Dalby for a statement made by him in this House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am giving reasons why the motion should not be passed, and why the hon. member made that statement in the House, also the reason why the public were so excited, because of the price paid by the Government for this particular station.

The SPEAKER: Order! I trust the hon. member will read the evidence. He will then find out on what grounds the hon. member for Dalby made the statement.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I know as much about the evidence as the men who gave it. I have been on the station and I know the property; I know a good deal more about it than some of the men who gave evidence.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may have all that knowledge, but he is not in order in giving it on the motion now before the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Those are some of the reasons which led to the hon. member making the statement he did make. Whatever may be the opinion of the majority in this House, we have our own opinion of the matter, and the country have their opinion, and that is, that the principle of Prussianism, that might is right, is ruling in this House, and that the Premier has made this a political matter against men who come into contact with him in his own business. If the hon. member for Toowong and the hon. member for Dalby were not in the same profession as the Premier—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: They are not.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We should probably not have had this motion brought before the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is out of order in imputing motives.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I think they are on the surface, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is the opinion of the public, whatever may be done under an arrangement which has been made in caucus. Worse statements than the one referred to have been made by members on the other side of the House. The hon. member for Dalby stated that this particular property could have been bought for a good deal less than was paid for it,

[7 p.m.] and I am of the same opinion, notwithstanding the fact that prices have gone up abnormally. The principal witness who could prove that it could have been bought at the lower price was never called. The principal witness was the person mentioned by the hon. member for Dalby in the House, and he was never

brought forward. The commission was appointed at a time when it was well known that he could not be brought forward.

The PREMIER: You know that the inquiry was held as soon after the slander as possible.

Mr. STEVENS: As soon as you knew that Mr. Gannan could not give evidence.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A great deal has been said about the statement of the hon. member for Dalby—that he used his information for political purposes. Political means are really the only means we have of changing the Government of this country.

The PREMIER: Slander.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, absolutely no! I pointed out that the Government itself had been the cause of the extreme rises in value of station property and station cattle, for which they themselves, as well as the public, were compelled afterwards to pay hundreds and thousands of pounds.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question before the House is not the price of cattle stations or the price of stock.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There are certain causes which lead up to certain results, and it is necessary to explain those causes. Then, again, the fact of the Government paying an unreasonable price for the station—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have told the hon. member repeatedly that the question of the price of the stations has nothing to do with the motion, and I ask him not to argue that matter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Dalby made a statement in the House, and I am giving the reasons why he made it. These were things which were in the public mind. The statement that he made may not have been correct, and may not be borne out by the judge's report, and I do not say that it was correct; but I say that the hon. member had a good deal of reason for making it. There was an abnormal rise of values, and enormous rises were taking place, not only in cattle, but in station properties.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member might be in order in discussing that question on the Estimates, or he might have dealt with it on the Financial Statement, but it has nothing to do with this motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If I am not allowed to discuss that matter, then I am not allowed to give my reason why I think the hon. member made the statement, and it is exactly on the same principle that the chief witness in the case was not called that we cannot now give an explanation why the hon. member made the statement. In the first place, the chief witness relied upon to prove the hon. member for Dalby's case, that the property was on the books, was not called, and now we cannot give the reasons why the hon. member made the statement, so the public will know that to a certain extent things are being covered up, and are being narrowed into a channel, so that the public will not have the opportunity of judging upon them. The only reason that I believe in party Government is that it will prevent grab, and it prevents things happening which may happen, and which we know do happen in private businesses. In party Government one side is watching the other, and that is a preventive of any of these things occurring.

Mr. Bebbington.]

So long as the Government were not dealing in these things, up to that time the public had not the opinion that such things would or were likely to occur.

Mr. COLLINS: You have an evil mind.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I see from the evidence that the Minister for Lands classes himself as a commission agent—

“Would you say that you had experience in station properties?—I deal in stock.

“Before you became a Minister?—Yes; in the business of commission agent.”

The Minister is a commission agent, and has had experience in commission agency, and he has a good many stores as well—

Mr. GUNN: He must be a middleman.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. I think he takes the biggest part of the middle, and that there is very little left of the two ends when the Minister has had the middle. (Laughter.) As the Minister for Lands puts himself down as a commission agent, he must know that commission agents are looked upon with suspicion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He does not say that he is a commission agent; he says that he was.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Then the evidence goes on—

“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.”

I am only quoting this to ask why the Minister for Lands, knowing that commission agents have always been under suspicion, did not give his evidence in a straightforward way. It was something like it is in this House. Everyone here knows that when the Minister makes a speech two meanings can be placed upon it. If somebody says he said one thing, the Minister says he meant something else, and will contradict him. I want to show that the hon. member for Dalby had some reason for making the statement, although it may not be true, because the public look upon commission agents with a good deal of suspicion, and I say they have reason to do so. It is only a short time ago that there was a Royal Commission down South inquiring into secret commissions. Anyone who has anything to do with business knows that when a middleman inspects a thing he usually asks, “What am I to get out of it?” I do not want these evils of secret commissions to be extended into public matters.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is arguing on wrong premises altogether. This has nothing to do with the motion before the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It has to do with the hon. member for Dalby, who made certain statements.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member raises a question about the Minister, and the commission agency business, and then proceeds to discuss commission agents. As long as he uses that to support his argument on the motion, he is in order, but he continually drifts away from the main question altogether.

[*Mr. Bebbington.*

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If we are not going to be allowed to bring these matters forward before the House and make inquiry into them, we are at a disadvantage.

The PREMIER: You are allowed to do that, but you are not allowed to make false statements and say you can prove them.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Dalby said he had reason to believe, and that he could prove, that the station could be bought for that price. If you look back ten or twelve years before that time you will find that these stations could have been bought for, perhaps, £400 or £500.

The PREMIER: If he said that, there would be no objection, but he said on the same day that we bought it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, he made a misstatement; that is all.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh! Oh!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Perhaps Mr. Gannan could have proved that the statement was correct. We have any amount of things appearing in the Press from day to day. Nearly every storekeeper in Brisbane advertises things long after they have sold them out. They appear to have a running advertisement which continues to appear after the goods are sold. An advertisement appears in the newspapers that a certain article can be bought at a stated price, but when you go to get it you find that the storekeeper has sold out. The Government simply advertised one day that the price of galvanised iron would be a certain price, but they bought it up themselves and no one else could get any. That is only a misstatement on the same level with some that hon. members opposite have been responsible for themselves.

Mr. CARRER: The hon. member for Dalby said he could prove it

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I could prove that galvanised iron was advertised to be sold at a certain price, but when I went to buy it I could not get any. That is exactly the same as this station business. When the hon. member for Dalby made that statement he believed from his information that it was correct, and he believed that he could have got that station for that price, but when he went to get it he could not get it, just the same as I could not get the iron.

The PREMIER: When he found out that he was wrong, could he not have apologised?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I would state that I was wrong in saying I could get it, because I could not get it. Now, the whole thing is simply a storm in a teacup. As the hon. member for Burnett stated, the Government simply want to use it to wash out all the rest of their sins; they want to blind the public, thinking they will get something in at all events. Here is the whole thing. He says—

“I find that the information then in Mr. Vowles’s possession was not sufficient to justify him in making the allegation in sub-paragraph (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.”

Now, on those grounds I would certainly advise the Government to have nothing more to do with this. I would certainly advise the Premier, independently of the Government, to withdraw it. I will give you the

reason why I ask that; and if the Premier will do so I will have the pleasure of moving that it be withdrawn. Whether he believes it or not, whether he accepts it or not, whether he is guilty of anything at all, the public have the opinion that the Premier is simply persecuting two rivals in his own profession. (Government laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: What about the persecution of the Premier?

The PREMIER: How are they rivals in my profession?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will tell you why they are rivals in your profession.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not intend to allow the hon. member to pursue that line of argument.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I was giving a reason why this motion was brought against the hon. gentleman.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: On those grounds, if the Premier would agree to accept the withdrawal of the motion I would have very much pleasure in moving it. I think everything has been gained that may be. There is no need to persecute anyone; there is no need to give an object lesson in crushing militarism—that might be right in this House. I think the Premier should start on a new course to-night and use reason and justice. Because he has might on his side he should not use it quite so often as he does; but he should use reason and justice more often.

The PREMIER: It is because I have right on my side.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We differ on those matters.

The PREMIER: I happen to have both; it is a very good combination to have.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There is nothing more I would like to refer to; except that the unsatisfactory evidence given by the Minister for Lands practically on behalf of the Government almost justifies the member, not in the statement that it is true, but that there was something wrong. Now, look here, if a man gets up in this House to read a letter and he omits part of that letter in order to mislead this House—

The PREMIER: Oh, no, he did not do it to mislead this House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Is not that sufficient to make people think there is something wrong in the whole matter?

The PREMIER: He did not purport to read the whole letter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, it did not suit his purpose; the Premier is right.

The PREMIER: No; I said "he did not purport."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I know he did not, because it did not suit his purpose, and he admits it.

The PREMIER: It was all before the Royal Commission.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: When you get a portion like that omitted it makes people suspicious; especially when a Minister goes into court and "hums and hahs" and almost contradicts himself, and in the beginning of his evidence admits that he is a commission agent. Like the Premier, I would ask the

Minister to start on a fresh course and let us have straight dealing. I think the Premier would be justified in withdrawing this now.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member withdraws the statement and apologises, I shall be very pleased to do so.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

The PREMIER: In view of the attitude of the Opposition, I am going to put all the evidence in "Hansard."

Mr. MACARTNEY: Good man!

WAYS AND MEANS.

The CHAIRMAN presented the resolutions from the Committee of Ways and Means.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: I beg to move—That the resolutions be received.

Question put and passed.

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

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. A. FIELLY: I beg to move—That the resolutions be agreed to by the House.

Question put and passed.

A Bill was brought in founded on these resolutions.

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

This Bill was read a first time, and the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

INCOME TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

This Bill was read a first time, and the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

MANY PEAKS TO NEW CANNINDAH RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Question stated—

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

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway extension from Many Peaks to New Cannindah, in length 27 miles 53 chains.

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

On which Mr. Corser had moved—

"That the question be amended by the omission of all words after the initial word 'That,' with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words—

“ The consideration of the plan, section, and book of reference of the 27-mile Many Peaks to New Cannindah Railway, at a cost of £470,000, be postponed, with the object of full inquiry being made by a non-political tribunal into the question whether the interests of the State and Upper Burnett would not be better served by the construction of the 32-mile Mundubbera through Eidsvold Railway, passed in 1914, at a cost of £146,000; and the interests of the State and Port Curtis by the construction of the 10-mile Mount Larcom to Bracewell Scrub line at under £35,000, and other agricultural lines.”

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): In speaking on this amendment, I regret that the mover, in moving the amendment, shows that the same old spirit is apparent. Some members of the Opposition have always adversely influenced the railway policy of Queensland. They have not taken into consideration the way in which a line should be built so as to serve the best interests of the district and the country; but they take into consideration, in too many instances, how it will affect the capital of Queensland, or the cities adjacent to the capital. That is what the amendment of the hon. member for Burnett means—the breaking right across of the railway policy—a well-conceived and sound policy of railway construction in Queensland—that there should be three systems of railways, the Southern, the Central, and the Northern. That has been the system of development in railway construction that has held place in Queensland for a long time. It has not always been adhered to: in many instances interests of Southern constituencies have been more often considered. I am very pleased that at the present time there is a Government in power which will see to the impartial development of the State, irrespective of those considerations. Now, that has always been held to be a sound policy by most of the statesmen of Queensland—that Queensland should be divided into three districts financially. It was brought forward first by Sir Samuel Griffith, in his Financial Districts Bill of 1887, and as far as the finances of the State are concerned, and as far as the present railway administration in regard to revenue and expenditure is concerned, it is still adhered to, and the classification still appears in the Estimates under the heading of three divisions. I think that that should not be a policy that should be lightly departed from. The hon. member, in moving his amendment, has not shown any good reason why it should be departed from. The ports along the coast of Queensland should be the head of a railway line. If any hon. gentleman will take the trouble to consider the geographical features of the country and the district through which it is proposed to send this line, it will follow, just as night follows day, that the natural terminus of the Cannindah-Many Peaks line is at the port of Gladstone. There can be no question—as the hon. member for Port Curtis pointed out very strongly—that Gladstone is one of the finest ports on the Australian coast, perhaps, with the exception of Sydney; and it has all the facilities of a big shipping port. So that it is only just to the people of that district, to the pioneers and to the producers both in the mineral field and in the agricultural fields, that they

[*Mr. H. L. Hartley.*

should be able to get their produce to port by the nearest and the cheapest route; and when you compare the distance from New Cannindah to the various ports with which it might be connected, it is easily seen that Gladstone is the most favourably situated. Now, the hon. member for Burnett wants to bring it down to Mundubbera; and naturally, if it came to Mundubbera, all the produce that was sent down—all the materials, timber, mineral ores—would have to come to Mundubbera. Now I want to point out the different distances to show what an unwise policy it would be to construct a railway along the route that the hon. member for Burnett's amendment would necessitate.

[7.30 p.m.] The distance from New Cannindah to Gladstone is 86 miles, and from New Cannindah to Maryborough 184 miles. That shows that it is 98 miles further from New Cannindah to Maryborough than from New Cannindah to Gladstone. If you take Bundaberg into consideration, then from New Cannindah to Bundaberg it would be 139 miles, or 53 miles in favour of the route to Gladstone. If hon. gentlemen opposite will take those distances into consideration they will see what it means to the producer or anyone sending material along that line, and they will come to no other conclusion than that the best line for the development of the country should be along the route chosen by the Secretary for Railways and shown in the plans now before the Committee. I have heard someone objecting to this line on the score of expense—because it would be a very expensive line to build. If anyone will consider the extra distance to Mundubbera, that argument will not hold water for a moment. Even if the natural features of the country between New Cannindah and Many Peaks are a little more mountainous, and if there are some greater engineering difficulties to overcome than by the other route, it stands to reason that 100 extra miles would practically double the cost of that line as against the line to Many Peaks. Hon. gentlemen opposite were not so concerned about the cost when they recommended in this Chamber the building of the *via recta* or the line from Mount Edwards to Maryvale.

Mr. STEVENS: Do you know what the majority was on that occasion?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I am not concerned how it was carried. I am not worrying whether the line will be built or not, but I want to point out that they did not consider the expense of the building of that line when they passed it through this House. The *via recta* was estimated to cost, in 1914, £389,384. If it were built at the present time that estimate would have to be increased by 40 per cent. on account of the increased cost of steel rails, fishplates, and all railway material, and increased cost of labour. With that 40 per cent. added, therefore, the *via recta* would cost £544,000 as against £470,000 for the line from Many Peaks to New Cannindah, or £74,000 for the lesser distance. The *via recta* is 27 miles 73 chains in length, and the line from Many Peaks to New Cannindah 27 miles 53 chains, or 25 chains shorter than the *via recta*. The argument that it is an expensive line, therefore, falls flat. The other proposal from New Cannindah to Maryborough would involve a far bigger expenditure, because there is 100 miles of extra mileage to

Maryborough. The hon. member for Warwick and the hon. member for Wide Bay supported the building of the via recta. Did they take into consideration the expensive nature of the line for the short distance it was going to run? No; they took into consideration the advantage it would be to the district in that particular part by having a shorter route through to Warwick. The same attitude should be taken by hon. members on this occasion. The late hon. member for Maryborough, the father of the hon. gentleman who moved this amendment, also supported the via recta.

MR. KIRWAN: He supported the via recta because he wanted them to support the Tinana deviation, but they did him in.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: Is that what happened? If they supported a line like that, then on common ground they ought to be able to support a line like this, where more particularly it has been shown that Gladstone is the natural port. All the country to the west of Gladstone is rightly in its hinterland, and the railway should run to bring produce to the seaboard at the quickest time it can be done, and at the least cost. The Hon. Mr. Dunn, in another Chamber, supported the via recta, but he opposed this line. I cannot understand the hon. gentleman supporting one line and trying to defeat this proposal. This district, as has been shown by the hon. member for Port Curtis, is one of the richest mineral districts we have in Queensland. The Glassford Creek mine has been hung up for a very long time on account of the inability of the promoters to get the ordinary requirements of mining there at anything like the cost that would make it profitable to turn out copper. If this line had been built when the Government first came into power, then it is very probable that two big mines—the New Cannindah mine, which the mining reports show is turning out some very valuable ore, and the Glassford Creek mine would be turning out big quantities of copper at the present time, and be finding a good deal of employment for many miners and copper smelters. I now want to further emphasise another point. Suppose the amendment of the hon. member for Burnett is carried, what will be the financial effect on the people of the New Cannindah district, who will have to use the line under his proposal? There is about 100 miles extra carriage, and everyone knows that in developing a mining proposition it has now become a question of whether you can carry the ore and conduct smelting operations at a cost sufficient in price to enable you to get a certain price over cost of production, and 100 miles of extra carriage would make a great deal of difference between profit and loss in many mining ventures like that. I have just taken the trouble to find out the rates that would be charged on each of the routes. The special mineral rate for ore and minerals is 8s. per ton for 84 miles. The rate from New Cannindah to Gladstone on mineral ore and minerals would be 8s. per ton, and on the route from New Cannindah to Maryborough, via Mundubbera, it would be 14s. 8d. The effect of the amendment of the hon. member for Burnett would be to impose a penalty on all mining propositions between New Cannindah and Mundubbera of something like 6s. 8d. per ton. That difference would be sufficient, so far as the low-grade propositions were concerned,

to keep them barren and idle for many years to come. The hon. member poses as the friend of the agriculturists and producers from the land. I want to show what effect his proposal would have on the farmers and producers in the vicinity of New Cannindah, and on the northern and north-western side. The special rates for agriculture on the railway from New Cannindah to Gladstone would be 12s. 11d. per ton, and from New Cannindah to Maryborough £1 2s. 11d. per ton, or a penalty on the farmers of 9s. 5d. per ton. See what that would mean in the case of 10-ton lots. It would mean that the rate to Maryborough would be £4 14s. 2d. more than to Gladstone. In other words, if the amendment is carried, it will have the effect of penalising the farmer and producer to the extent of £4 14s. 2d. per 10-ton lot, in getting their produce to the nearest port. I would like any hon. gentleman who studies the interests of the farmers to tell me if that would be a good thing for the farming community along that railway. It stands to reason that the natural route of the line is to Gladstone. I consider the amendment moved by the hon. member for Burnett is a special piece of logrolling on behalf of himself and the Tory candidate-elect for Port Curtis at the next election. They seem to be a very happy couple at the present time. It is only a couple of weeks ago that the hon. member for Burnett visited the Port Curtis electorate and addressed a meeting there with the Tory candidate-elect, Mr. Kessell. They seemed to have had a very happy time. I just want to quote something in regard to this amendment of the hon. member for Burnett that will show how the line was regarded up there by the hon. gentleman, and show where the suggestion for this amendment came from. I am quoting from the "Daily Standard" of Wednesday, the 10th October. It says—

"PORT CURTIS POLITICS.

"CANDIDATE WITH PLENTY OF MONEY.

"A Mount Lacom correspondent, writing on 6th October, records that Mr. Corser, M.L.A., accompanied by Messrs. Macfarlane and Kessell, motored out and delivered a series of speeches on Saturday night. Mr. Kessell, who was introduced as the Tory candidate selected to oppose Mr. Carter, M.L.A., spoke of the interest he had always taken in Mount Lacom Hall, and stated he would be pleased to pay off the existing debt, which he understood amounted to £50."

MR. KIRWAN: Political graft.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: We have heard a lot about inducements in this House, but if that was not a substantial inducement to the electors there, I would like to know what it is. I will finish the paragraph—

"Mr. Corser eulogised Mr. Kessell's munificence, and hoped they would reward him for it when the time came round. Mr. Corser, after the usual attacks on the Labour party, on stereotyped subjects, strongly condemned the Many Peaks-New Cannindah railway proposal. He intimated that in the Assembly he would oppose that line, and advocate instead the Mount Lacom-Bracewell and Coulston Lakes lines. It was noticeable that Mr. Kessell sat and listened without demur to the condemnation of the Mount Cannindah line, so

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what will his Gladstone supporters now think of their champion?"

There was the inspiration to the amendment that has been moved by the hon. member. The 10-mile line he refers to is the line from Mount Larcom to Bracewell, and the 22-mile is the line from Mundubbera to Eidsvold. It simply shows in the light of the meeting there, and his utterances there, a pretty little piece of work that was put in by the hon. member. The Mount Larcom residents should be grateful for the offer of £50 to pay off the debt on their hall and the promise of a 10-mile railway from Mount Larcom to Bracewell. A good portion of that line, I understand, would go through the Tory candidate's property. What the Mount Larcom people will get out of it is very problematical, and what the Gladstone people will think of it I cannot say. If the Gladstone people realise that the Tory candidate-elect, Mr. Kessell, for the sake of a 10-mile line from Mount Larcom to Bracewell, is prepared to knock out what appears to be a splendid paying proposition—the New Cannindah Railway—I believe they will tell the Tory candidate that they do not want him to represent that district.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Do you say it will be a splendid paying line?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I say it promises to be a splendid paying line—that is, the railway from Many Peaks to New Cannindah.

Mr. FORSYTH: It will be seven years before it is built.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: The hon. member must be reckoning on the "go slow" tactics of his friends in the Legislative Council when he says that. I notice that they propose to go to bed at 9 o'clock at night. The New Cannindah district is one of the finest mining districts in the State outside Cloncurry, and it has languished for many years. It is a district which ought to give employment to 4,000 or 5,000 miners, and at the present time it is little more than a cattle-producing district, simply because of the apathy and jealousy of the past Government with which many members opposite were associated. In a time like the present, a mining line with the fine prospect this line has ought to be constructed. The district contains, as the hon. member for Port Curtis has said, many deposits of mineral ore. It only requires a short study of the "Queensland Mining Journal" to see the value of those ores, which are practically undeveloped for want of railway communication with a seaport.

Mr. MURPHY: Your own Public Works Commission turned down a similar proposition a short time ago.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I am not concerned with any other proposition at the present. My concern is that at a time like the present, when there is a great necessity for opening up all avenues of industry that can be opened up, and when copper is so urgently required for war purposes, this line should be held up as long as it has been by the friends of members opposite in the Legislative Council. I hope the House will consider that this line is part of the general railway development policy of the State, and that it is due to the people in Gladstone and the people in the district which will be

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served by the railway that they should be given the rightful outlet for their own hinterland. I trust that the motion will be carried, and that as soon as the railway is approved of the Minister will lose no time in putting on as many men as possible to push on with the construction of the line.

At ten minutes to 8 o'clock,

Mr. BERTRAM, Chairman of Committees, relieved the Speaker in the chair.

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): I desire to say a word or two in connection with this line before it goes into Committee. As a general rule, I do not oppose railways, because I believe in the building of railways into country which can be settled, so that they will open up the country and give settlers the means of communication with a port. It is to be regretted that this railway is introduced in the way it is year after year by the Government without giving better reasons for its introduction than they have given up to the present time. You are aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we passed legislation during the first year the present party were in power to enable the Government to appoint a roving commission for the purpose of investigating railway proposals and other works. As a matter of fact, it is laid down in that legislation that no proposition involving a greater outlay than £20,000 shall be undertaken until a report has been obtained from that commission. I think you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were one of the first members appointed on that roving commission, and you know something about it. You know that the commission is starving for want of work. You know that they have exhausted all their avenues of employment, and were practically unemployed until they were sent to the far North to report on a 6-mile line. This railway, it is said, is going to cost £470,000. Let us put it in round numbers at £500,000, because it will probably run over that amount by the time the line is completed. Although this line has been before the Chamber on three different occasions, yet no effort has been made to employ the energy of the Public Works Commission to examine the country the railway will travel and report upon it. Is that on the face of it not a very suspicious thing? What is wrong? Is it that the commission is wrong, or that the railway is wrong? There seems to be something about it that requires fuller explanation than has been given up to the present time. We are asked to spend £470,000 upon a line which it is said will be the means of developing a new copper-field called Mount Theodore. I do not know whether that name has come into existence within recent times. But I have not seen in the Press or anywhere else any very great demand made by the general public for the development of this particular mine.

Mr. CARTER: You have not read the "Mining Journal," and you show your ignorance.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I may not have read the "Mining Journal," neither do I read the "Government Gazette" when I am looking for general news. If this Mount Theodore mine contains ores of the quality and quantity which necessitates the construction of a line at a cost of £470,000, we should have seen more about it in the columns of the newspapers circulating in the district. It

was only when I heard the Minister for Railways speaking the other night that I became aware of the fact that there was such a district as Mount Theodore awaiting development by the construction of a line which will cost £470,000, and which will not go within 6 miles of the place, because the country is so precipitous that it is not possible to take the railway there. They tell me that the mountains there are so steep that even kangaroos have to wear breechings in going down the hillside. I know something of the district, and I know the great need there is for the opening of the Burnett district, but if we are to open the Burnett district in the most effective way we must proceed from Mundubbera.

MR. CARTER: Through 40 miles of desert.

HON. J. TOLMIE: No.

MR. CARTER: Forty miles of poor country.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am not going to accept any such statement from the hon. member.

MR. CARTER: You read your own report.

HON. J. TOLMIE: As a matter of fact, I refreshed my memory by reading it a few moments ago.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So that you will not contradict yourself.

HON. J. TOLMIE: A very good thing, too. I want to point out that there is desert country in the Burnett district, and it ought to have been developed before now, but the developmental process should proceed from the Mundubbera end.

[8 p.m.] If you look at the map that is placed before us you will see the Central line running from Gladstone right down to Many Peaks, and then it proceeds across the Dawes Range. It crosses the Dawes Range just 15 miles from Many Peaks, and comes into New Cannindah at 27 miles, so that the construction of that line will only take you 12 miles over the range, and 12 miles over the range will only serve a limited number of selections, and those selections are grazing farms. If my memory serves me correctly, they have about 25 years yet to run before they can be utilised for the purpose of close settlement. We are told that before you get to New Cannindah this line will deflect to the west and open up the country about Clonwell, which is all beautiful country, and will then cross the range to Rawbelle. Between New Cannindah and Rawbelle you hardly realise that there is a range, and when you get on the top of that you have a beautiful vista stretching all the way in the direction of Taroom. If that country is to be opened up, it cannot be opened up by the line we are speaking of now, because before it gets into Clonwell or Cania it has got to get through a range, not as difficult as the one it comes up in the first place, but nevertheless over a range that is going to cost many thousands of pounds to get over, and until it does that it is not going to open up hardly a single acre, as far as the Lands Department is concerned. If the Lands Department want to open that country, then they will have to proceed from Mundubbera and through Eidsvold, and at a distance of eight or ten miles from Eidsvold passing Dalgangal, Old Cannindah, and on to New Cannindah, up in the direction of Splinter Creek. In that area there is beautiful country, and the railway would pass through the Holywell Scrub. The Holywell Scrub has been settled within the last three and a-half

years by settlers who have taken up from 80 to 160 acres. There is at present a large population a long distance from railway communication—all small men on good scrub land—and by constructing the line from Mundubbera you give them their opportunity, but by building this line spoken upon by the hon. member for Port Curtis you only deal with the Clonwell Brothers' selection and a few other grazing selections, and as they have long periods to run, there cannot possibly be any close settlement there for a long time. On the other hand, the line that would go to the left and ultimately pass on to Rawbelle would traverse country that is watered by Three Moon Creek, the Nogoia, and the Burnett rivers, all fine streams with permanent water, and with very substantial streams running into them. That line would tap all the good country I have spoken of. And all through that area you are within a few miles of good scrub land. Some of the foothills of the ranges there are clothed with beautiful scrub, and have rich soil ready for agricultural purposes, and being well watered as it is, it would well repay any Government to build that line. In building that line you are not traversing great mountain ranges, costing a very considerable amount of money to cross. Then, when you have built the line through these ranges you have only advanced a very small distance indeed, and you are not going to tap any settlement of an extended nature nor any area that is likely to be quickly developed.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: Settlement will follow the mines.

HON. J. TOLMIE: All we can say with regard to settlement following the mines is that the mine has not provided very much for settlement at the present time. This line appears to be for one purpose, and one purpose only; that is to secure the seat of the hon. member for Port Curtis. In order to secure his services we are to build a line costing £470,000. He should be very proud of himself to think that his services are of that worth to the State.

MR. CARTER: Fortunately, the Government have a broader mind than yours. They are building it for national purposes.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It may be an excellent thing to nationalise the hon. member, but notwithstanding that, the price we are to pay for the construction of this railway appears to my mind to be altogether too great. I would like to see the Burnett opened up, and it ought to be opened up, but if it is to be opened up in the most effective way, it should be opened up in the direction I have referred to. I have gone over the country and I can see it in my mind's eye now. I know the beauty of the country; I know the wealth of the country, and I know the parts that are suitable for developmental purposes, and I know that the railway as outlined before us now is not going to tap any country that is suitable for settlement. We have the myth placed before us that it is going to be a great timber railway. Nothing is further from the truth than a statement of that kind. Where that railway crosses the mountains it is all ring-barked country. It is not milling timber at all. It is country that has been ring-barked for pastoral purposes, and that is so on the Burnett side as well. If you read the report of the Commissioner for Railways, you will find he says that on the other side of the range it is cattle country, too, and is used for pastoral purposes. That is the

country through which we are asked to build a railway costing £470,000, with gradients of 1 in 33, and when the railway is constructed the Commissioner tells us that the most we can expect from it, after paying working expenses for three days a week, is 10s. per cent. If the Government can get money at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the purpose of building that line that means a loss of £4 per cent. on £500,000; that is £20,000 to be lost every year for we do not know how many years. It may go on for twenty years before that railway would pay even the interest on the cost of construction.

We are asked to bear this loss of fully £50,000 at a time when the Government find themselves in a position that they do not know how to finance the country. I appeal to the common sense of hon. members, as to whether they think that the outside public who have a knowledge of the conditions are going to give any credit to a Government which is going to build a line which the Commissioner says for many many years will only pay 10s. per cent., which means a loss of 4 per cent., or £20,000 on the cost of construction. It is going to open up no new settlement, because, up to the point where it terminates, it is passing through grazing selections, and then it gets into the pre-emptives or freeholds of the New Cannindah property, and it is only when it gets further south than that, and passes old Cannindah, and gets into land round about Dalgangal, that the country can be utilised for settlement.

Mr. CARTER: You do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I am afraid I know a little bit too much for the hon. member with regard to the country I am speaking of. I know that the hon. member does not know it. If he does, then he is suppressing his knowledge and not allowing the House to get the benefit of it. Is he acting rightly by his party and his country when he suppresses the knowledge that he ought to have with regard to this land. It is a very undesirable thing to build this line at the present time when it is not going to be a paying concern, as there is beautiful country waiting to be developed there which can be developed at a much less cost to the State than by building this line, and on which a large population can be settled. We are told that this is for the soldiers, but we know that, unless the Government resume the selections; and I am prepared to admit that the selections are good grazing country and fairly well watered—they are good to the Dawes Range, but they are not so well watered when you get down to Splinter Creek. Nevertheless, the country is good, and I have seen beautiful crops growing on some of the selections, but the country is practically used for grazing purposes only. The leases have twenty-five years to run, and you know that you have to pay to resume land like that.

Mr. CARTER: There is not an acre with twenty-five years to run, and you know it.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: It will increase the purchasing price to the soldier selectors. I should be very glad if I could heartily advocate the construction of the line, because I am not one of those who are opposed to the construction of railways. I believe in the construction of railways.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: As long as they come to Brisbane.

[Hon. J. Tolmie.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Either in that district or any other district in Queensland. I think there is a greater necessity for railways in the Burnett district, with its good scrub and forest land and well watered areas, but we are starting at the wrong end, and that is the reason why I think that this motion should not be accepted.

Mr. MURPHY (*Burke*): The hon. member for Fitzroy gave us a dissertation this evening upon the railway policy of the Government. He pointed out that it was desirable that a certain amount of money should be spent yearly in building railways in the North, the South, and the Central districts. Does the hon. member realise the position of the finances, not only of Queensland, but the rest of Australia? He is asking this House to consent to the expenditure of half a million of money on the construction of a railway at the present time, which the Railway Commissioner strongly advises the House, in his report, to leave alone.

Mr. CARTER: He does not do anything of the kind.

Mr. MURPHY: What more can the Commissioner say against the construction of a railway than that it is going to cost half a million of money, and that there is going to be a loss of £20,000 a year on it? We find that the Treasurer has had to go to Melbourne to interview the Federal Treasurer with regard to loan money. The amount mentioned in the agreement entered into some time ago between certain Treasurers of the States and the Federal Government, has had to be broken, and Mr. Theodore has been informed that next year the Federal Government will not be in a position to give the loan money which was previously agreed on. Sir John Forrest has told not only the Treasurer of Queensland, but the Treasurers of other States which have been a party to the agreement, that they must expect a very large reduction in the amount which has been promised.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What did the Treasurer of his own native State say about it?

Mr. MURPHY: The Treasurer of his own native State would probably say about Sir John Forrest what the Treasurer of Queensland and other State Treasurers in Australia are saying to-day. Like Oliver Twist they want more. The State Treasurers are continually looking for money, but anyone who gives the most casual attention to the world's finances to-day must know that every country at the present moment is being pushed for money. Yet this House is asked to casually agree to the expenditure of £500,000 upon a railway to Mount Cannindah. I listened to the hon. member for Port Curtis the other evening, and he delivered a speech similar to those which have been delivered in this Chamber in connection with the passage of every railway that we have been asked to deal with. Has not every member for a district in which it was proposed to construct a railway told us that the railway would pay from the start—that it would open up timber resources, and there would be mining propositions which would give employment to large numbers of men, and add to the wealth of the State, and that if

the timber failed, and the mining propositions were unpayable, then there would be an opportunity of settling people on the land?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: What did you say when you borrowed that £18,000 for Croydon deep sinking?

Mr. MURPHY: I am continually taken to task because, out of its beneficence, the State has decided to expend £18,000 in prospecting the deep levels of the Croydon Goldfield, which, like Charters Towers and Gympie and other goldfields of the State, has returned revenue to the State amounting to thousands of pounds.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: How does the Croydon line pay?

Mr. MURPHY: Better than the Cooktown line, which is in the hon. gentleman's district. Yet the hon. gentleman, who is continually referring to £18,000 which the Mines Department is spending in the Croydon district, stands up in his place in Parliament and glibly asks us to spend half a million of money in building a railway to Cannindah, and to place the State in the position that it will lose £20,000 a year for a good number of years to come.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: You are a very poor judge of mining if you think that.

Mr. MURPHY: I know more about mining than the hon. gentleman, because I have done my "dough" in mining.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: That shows you don't know anything about it, then.

Mr. MURPHY: Well, my experience in mining, and the experience of most men who have lived for any length of time upon mining fields, is that it is the amateur who, as a rule, makes money. Now, the hon. gentleman has advised us to agree to the expenditure of half a million of money in building a railway to some copper mines at Mount Cannindah, and he has assured us that, with railway construction, those mines would not only give employment to a large number of men, but will return thousands of pounds in dividends, and not only add to the prosperity of Queensland, but make that particular part of Queensland flourish "like the green bay tree." Now, let me just traverse some of the remarks that have been made in connection with this proposal. First of all I want to refer to the statement of the hon. member for Fitzroy with regard to some electioneering "stuff" or "guff"—whatever was the term he applied to it—that was recently delivered in the Gladstone district. There was a rich man there evidently—a Mr. Kessell—who, it is stated, is likely to be a candidate for the electorate at the forthcoming elections. The hon. gentleman tells us that in a fit of benevolence—

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I did not say "in a fit of benevolence."

Mr. MURPHY: He presented £50 to some institution. He said that the hon. member for Burnett and other gentleman who were assisting, in the company of Mr. Kessell, at that particular meeting cheered him to the echo and asked the electors to remember his kind action on polling day and send him into Parliament.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: No, I did not say that.

Mr. MURPHY: Well, practically. I say that you said Mr. Corser and those who were

with him made use of those remarks. I merely refer to that matter with the idea of pointing a moral and adorning a tale. Now, we have heard a great deal about this £50; yet what is the proposal in connection with this railway? That the State of Queensland shall, at a time when its finances are in a bad state, find half a million of money with the object of again returning the hon. gentleman who represents that electorate in Parliament.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He is worth it.

Mr. MURPHY: I am not going to argue with you on that. Supposing the hon. gentlemen who are sitting on that side of the Chamber were sitting on this side of the Chamber, and a Liberal Government came down with a proposal to spend half a million of money at the present time when money is dear, and proposed to saddle the State with a loss of £20,000 a year, does anyone for a moment suppose there would be unanimity of opinion upon that side with regard to its passage through this Chamber? I don't think there would be. I referred recently to some remarks which the hon. member for Port Curtis had made in connection with his advocacy of the passage of this line. We have heard all those stories before, and what has been the result so far as Queensland is concerned?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: A lot of bad-paying lines on the Downs.

Mr. MURPHY: The loss on our railways last year of considerably over three-quarters of a million.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: On the agricultural lines of the Darling Downs.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Name one.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: All bar the main line.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr. COOPER: Warwick to Goondiwindi.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MURPHY: Some of those gentlemen who, to-night, are advocating the expenditure of this huge sum of money in the construction of a railway which is not likely to pay for quite a number of years to come were with me on this side of the Chamber when we vigorously opposed the expenditure of money in the construction of the *viâ recta*. Why, then, should a change from one side of the House to the other make all this difference in their opinions on railway construction?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Was that principally owing to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Rosewood?

Mr. MURPHY: My recollection does not enable me to reply to the Secretary for Railways, but I would like to put this question before the Secretary for Railways: We know there have been quite a number of deputations since he assumed command of the Railway Department in connection with pushing on the construction of certain railways which already have been passed; and what has been invariably the reply of the hon. gentleman? He has pointed out that the Government has to be particularly cautious with regard to the expenditure of its loan money; that it is difficult to obtain material; and he has asked them to be sympathetic with the Government in the position in which his Department now finds

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itself. Now, would not it be wise for this Chamber to postpone the consideration of this railway? I know absolutely nothing about the country through which it is going to pass.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: It does not matter about the country; you want to know about the mine.

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. gentleman again dwells upon the mine. Who owns the mines? Are the mines the property of the State, or are they the property of private individuals? And are we at this time of war—when money is difficult to obtain, when unemployment is rife—are we to agree to the expenditure of half a million of money in order that owners of certain copper mines in the Cannindah district may be able to make money out of them? We have to consider the general taxpayers; we have to consider the great mass of the working people in Queensland.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: That is what we are considering.

Mr. MURPHY: Well, if hon. gentlemen are considering the welfare of the mass of the people of Queensland, they can utilise loan money better in the construction of a railway going from Blair Athol to Charters Towers—the premier goldfield of Queensland—which would enable mineowners in that locality to give more employment than is likely to be given by the construction of this railway to open up certain copper propositions at Mount Cannindah.

[8.30 p.m.] There is no justification for the introduction of this proposal. There is no justification on the part of the Government for asking this Chamber to agree to the expenditure of this huge sum of money upon a non-productive work. What has been the stand taken by the Government during this session with regard to the expenditure of loan money. They have pointed out the necessity of husbanding their resources. They have pointed out that it is desirable that the Government should be in a position with the money at its command to give employment to the working classes. They have pointed out to us on more than one occasion that so many railways have been passed in Queensland that it will take years to construct them. Are there not some railways passed the immediate construction of which would be more likely to assist in the development of Queensland than the construction of this proposed railway? Amongst the dozens of railways passed by this Chamber and which are awaiting construction, surely to goodness the head of the Railway Department and the Government can pick some line on which the expenditure of money could be carried out with the object of giving the employment which hon. members opposite talk so much about. I am not going to vote for the construction of this railway, because I am not going to saddle the people of Queensland with a burden of half a million of money for an unproductive work. I do not think it is the duty of the Government to pass a single railway proposal at the present time. Why are we doing it in the last session of a dying Parliament?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: We have done it in every session of this Parliament.

Mr. MURPHY: What has been the attitude taken up by hon. members opposite?

[Mr. Murphy.

They told past Governments that they were passing railways for the purpose of bribing the electors.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: They passed sixteen railways at once.

Mr. MURPHY: What did the hon. gentleman's party do? They went out into the country and told the people that those sixteen railways were passed with the object of bribing certain electors. They told the people there was no desire on the part of the Government to construct any of those railways, that they were mere political fireworks, and were only put through with the object of trying to induce the electors to return the sitting members to Parliament.

Mr. CARTER: That was so with the via recta.

Mr. MURPHY: If the via recta were passed to help certain representatives of Downs constituencies back into the House, then the Government never started that railway.

Mr. CARTER: They did not get the chance. The public would not trust them.

Mr. MURPHY: This Government has not carried out the instruction of Parliament to build that railway. There are hon. gentlemen opposite who supported the construction of the via recta.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Very few of them.

Mr. MURPHY: There are some. What has been the policy of railway construction in the past? Every railway that was brought down was purely a non-party measure, and every member was privileged to vote as he pleased on every railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why are you going back on that now?

Mr. MURPHY: I am not making it non-party. Have we heard one hon. gentleman opposite say one word against this railway since it has been introduced into the Chamber, although when they were in opposition they were continually talking about the wasteful expenditure, not only in connection with the consolidated revenue, but on account of the loan money? Yet they make no protest at all against this railway. This is the third time that it has come before the Chamber. Recollect that we will be doing a financial injury to Queensland if we pass this railway. There is another phase of the question. An arrangement has been made between the Treasurer and the Federal Government with regard to the amount of money that can be borrowed each year. About £5,000,000 is divided among the different States. How can this Government place a loan on the local market and ask the people to subscribe to a Queensland loan if they introduce a proposal like this to wipe out that money? Fancy asking the people of Queensland for a loan of £1,000,000 and asking them to put their hard-earned money into the loan when half of it will be taken for the construction of a line which the Railway Commissioner tells us will not pay, and for which the consolidated revenue will have to find something like £20,000 a year. In the interests of financial honesty, in the interests of the great masses of the people, every member should turn his attention to that aspect. If a division is called on every stage of this proposal, I shall record my vote against it, because I believe it to be wasteful expenditure of public money.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowoong*): I approach the subject of this motion with a considerable amount of fear and trembling. In view of the new parliamentary instrument brought to bear upon the freedom of speech in this House, I am somewhat afraid that if we give expression to our opinion as to the object for the introduction of this railway, a vote of censure and expulsion might possibly be brought to bear upon us. Nevertheless, hon. members ought to be somewhat straightforward in the interests of the country in saying what they think about a proposal of this kind. I am of opinion that the hon. member who has just resumed his seat is right when he says that the object of the introduction of this railway at the present time is merely to secure the seat of the hon. member for Port Curtis.

Mr. STOPFORD: That is not necessary.

Mr. CARTER: You are not game to come up and contest it with me.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We know that the passage of this motion will have no immediate effect, if any at all, because we recognise that, even if passed, there is no chance whatever of the Government being able to construct it. We know from the position of the finances at the present time that the Government have not got the means to proceed with the construction of the line. We know that it would be criminal on the part of the Government to make any attempt to build it, in the present state of the finances. The people of Port Curtis must realise what the passage of this railway means. On the preachings of hon. members opposite, it only means the passing of the railway as a matter of form, and does not necessarily mean the construction of the railway. The electors of Port Curtis will be able to judge for themselves of the true meaning of this proposition at this particular stage. But apart from that, the construction of this railway is by no means justified. A single glance at the map is enough to convince any hon. member that the construction of this line is not in the best interests of Queensland. For years the opening of the Upper Burnett district by a railway has been well discussed; it was discussed by a special committee of experts appointed for the purpose, and I am in a position to say, as one who had a special opportunity of having it discussed by the land settlement experts of the State in connection with the land policy of the State, that the construction of a line from Mundubbera is more in the interests of the State than this railway would be, as it will more readily open up the land required for the purposes of settlement. Everyone knows the nature of the country over which the proposed railway will have to pass, and everyone realises what its construction means in money, and how little it will do to accomplish the result that is claimed for it. I think it is a waste of the time of hon. members to put this railway before the House. It is simply political fireworks, as everyone must know who realises what is the condition of the finances of the State at the present time. The Minister knows perfectly well that he has not the money to spend one single pound on the construction, or the commencement of the construction, of this line, unless he is prepared to take it from moneys which have already been voted by Parliament for specific purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Don't you know that it will be some months before

this Parliament will meet again, and that there may be any amount of money before that?

Mr. MACARTNEY: Are the Government going to introduce a Loan Bill during the present session?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You had better ask the Treasurer that.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman is not prepared to give the House any information regarding the construction of this line, for the simple reason that he does not know how it is going to be built.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There are quite a number of ways in which the Government can get moeny.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Government can only get money from loan trust funds. Large sums of loan moneys have already been diverted to purposes other than those for which they were appropriated. Until we have some information as to what provision is going to be made for building this line, or some undertaking that moneys already appropriated by Parliament for specific purposes will not be diverted from those purposes, we should not pass this motion. Surely there is enough to be done by the House without wasting time over such a motion just now.

Mr. HODGE (*Nanango*): It seems to me that this is a motion which I ought not to allow to pass without some comment, more particularly as prior to the representation of the Burnett by the member who is responsible for the amendment, I represented that part of the Burnett electorate. There is no doubt that at that time—1912—the question as to how the Burnett district should be developed was a moot question. I advocated very strongly a proposition which would have been carried through were it not for the finding of an expert committee which was appointed by the Government to inquire into the matter of building a line from Wolca to Dalgangal. That line was necessary if we were to maintain the principle of decentralisation. Bundaberg has a perfect right to the trade of its own hinterland. That proposition, however, was turned down, and another proposition was made which the bulk of the people seemed to be perfectly satisfied with, and that was a proposition to extend the line from Bundaberg to tap the line which is at present in operation between Mundubbera and Maryborough.

Mr. CARTER: It is nearly the same as the one you advocated.

Mr. HODGE: I can understand the position the hon. member has taken up, seeing that he represents Port Curtis and that they have a splendid port at Gladstone, but why do not the Gladstone people go Westward Ho? If you look at the map, you will see that the line which it is now proposed to build runs due south.

Mr. CARTER: It is going to the nearest deepwater port.

Mr. HODGE: This matter was hung up when I was member for the Burnett, when an extension was proposed from Wolca to Dalgangal, and it was hung up on the evidence taken by an expert commission. At that time we had no Public Works Commission in operation. The Public Works Commission have not been asked a question about the line proposed by the Government. All

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the amendment means is that the proposition should be placed before the Public Works Commission in order that they may examine the district, take evidence, and report on the proposal. If they do, I am perfectly satisfied that this line will not go through. But the Government are not game to refer it to the Public Works Commission which they themselves appointed. The Premier took exception the other day to the constitution of a Select Committee appointed by the Upper House on the ground that the members were partisans. The members of the Public Works Commission have been appointed from the Government side of the House, but I am not prepared to say that they are partisans. Is it because the Government are afraid of the verdict of the Public Works Commission that they have not referred this line to them?

The PREMIER: That is only a suggestion to delay the proposal.

Mr. HODGE: Well, it is just as well that it should be delayed.

The PREMIER: That is what you are trying to do.

Mr. HODGE: No. The House has passed another proposal to construct a line from Mundubbera to Eidsvold. Why is the construction of that line not gone on with? You have the evidence before you that the people who were in a sense objecting to the construction of the line from Wolca to Dalganal are perfectly satisfied. I do not say that the hon. member for Port Curtis is not perfectly within his rights in advocating the claims of his constituency.

Mr. CARTER: I am advocating what is right in the interests of the State.

Mr. HODGE: You are taking a very parochial view of it when you advocate the construction of this line, because it is coming down and robbing the hinterland of Bundaberg. If you look at the map on the wall you will see that the railway is coming due south and robbing the hinterland of Bundaberg. This railway should be submitted to the Public Works Commission. Why should this proposition be held up?

The PREMIER: That is what we want to know.

Mr. HODGE: You are holding it up, because you ought to submit it to the Public Works Commission and ask them to report on it. Have they been asked to give a report on it?

Mr. MORGAN: No.

Mr. HODGE: All we ask is that it be submitted to the Government's self-appointed commission—they cannot claim that it is a partisan commission in any shape or form—to make a report on it. I am personally interested in the development of the Burnett, and I have been very much longer associated with the district than the hon. member for Port Curtis. No matter how much he might be looking forward to the carrying of this proposal for the development of the Northern Burnett, it must be remembered that there are other proposals which will serve the people very much better than the one before us now. Why does not the Government accept the amendment moved by the hon. member for Burnett, who is infinitely more concerned in this matter than the hon. member for Port Curtis? It is his business, and he only asks what he has a perfect

[*Mr. Hodge.*

right to expect at the hands of the Government—that is, a report by the Public Works Commission which the Government cannot possibly say is a partisan commission. It is an awful pity that this proposition has cropped up at this time, and that other proposals that have been advanced in connection with the opening up of the Upper Burnett have not been given effect to. At one time I took exception to the extension of the line from Mundubbera to Eidsvold, advocating, as I did at the time, an extension from Wolca to Dalganal. Dalganal is the objective.

Mr. CARTER: Look at the range of mountains it would have to cross.

Mr. HODGE: The mountain that would have to be crossed is nothing in comparison to the Dawes Range that has to be crossed by the present proposal.

Mr. CARTER: Yes it is; you look at Phillips's report.

Mr. HODGE: I have read Phillips's report. I challenge the Premier or the Minister for Railways to say that the Public Works Commission has been asked to give a report on this matter. They have not, and that being so, why not submit this question to them when it has been submitted to investigation on two other different occasions and turned down? I have read the reports of that commission in connection with other proposals in the Burnett district very carefully, and I must say that their reports have been most fair. Then why not give them an opportunity of bringing in a fair report on this proposal? They have not been asked to inquire into the matter, but the Government are going to ram the proposal down our throats and bludgeon it through with their brutal majority.

The PREMIER: That is not the position.

Mr. HODGE: That is the position. The Government should certainly keep to the conditions laid down when this commission was appointed, when they said any proposition involving the expenditure of over £20,000 would be submitted to the Public Works Commission. If that were done, I am perfectly satisfied it would meet with the approval of hon. members on this side.

Mr. BARNES: It is difficult to believe that the Government can possibly be serious in bringing down a proposal of this nature for the third time when one can find nothing to really recommend the proposition.

Mr. CARTER: You do not know anything about it.

Mr. BARNES: It would be a good deal better for the hon. member for Port Curtis if he understood a little more about it. I notice that less than five months ago he quoted an authority, confirming his ideas, he thought, regarding the construction of this line. He quoted Mr. Phillips. I happen to have before me at the moment a report from Mr. Phillips regarding this very matter. On the 28th February, 1910, Mr. Phillips stated that—

“He had been over the Dawes Range from Many Peaks to Cania and Cannindah, and found it very difficult country, rising 1,000 feet or more above the terminus of the Many Peaks Railway. Therefore the line would be very expensive to build and would have no country to serve. As his original

instructions were to see if a railway could be got to connect the North Burnett with the North Coast Line, he paid particular attention to this route and was quite satisfied that it was out of the question."

Mr. CARTER: They paid him to do that.

Mr. BARNES: It is all very well for the hon. member to sit on that cushion there and make statements which cannot be supported, but which can be contradicted by the very authority he appealed to. The singular thing regarding this matter is this: the hon. member for Fitzroy might have [9 p.m.] been a statesman a short time ago, and just for a short time he was a statesman, because he dealt with matters that should receive attention by this Chamber, but which have not received the attention of this Chamber. The hon. member expressed the opinion that one of the things that should receive the attention of Parliament was the question of developing our varied producing interests. Surely we should give our attention to that matter. But almost immediately he forgot he was a statesman and became a veritable man.

The PREMIER: You admit he is a statesman, but he forgot it for a moment.

Mr. BARNES: He forgot it for a moment, and I expect he will forget it for all time. He forgot himself for the moment and adopted a regrettable attitude in regard to Mr. Kessell, who was presented with a sum of £50 on a recent occasion. According to the "Gladstone Observer" of Wednesday, 10th October, we find that Mr. Kessell said—

"He predicted a great future for Mount Larcom and Bracewell when the scrub lands were thrown open and developed under sane legislation. He had been speaking to the trustees of the hall and he (the speaker) had now decided to release them from all financial responsibility, which amounted to about £45, by making the trustees of the hall a present of this sum for the sake and in honour of the brave boys from the Bracewell district who had gone to the front."

The hon. member became very little indeed when he spoke in the way he did.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I have little opinion of Mr. Kessell.

Mr. CARTER interjected.

Mr. BARNES: The hon. member who interjects so continuously, when speaking on the subject last night, dealt in a very practical way, according to his own showing, with the timber and mineral resources of the district. Apparently, from what we can hear, according to the Commissioner's report, the timber will form—

Mr. CARTER: You believe in the Commissioner because he gave you £5,000 for land worth £300.

Mr. BARNES: He never paid me a penny for that.

Mr. CARTER: Yes, he did. You know all about it.

Mr. BARNES: If the hon. member can prove that he paid me a penny for the land, I will retire from this Chamber at once.

Mr. CARTER: He gave you value; that is the same thing.

At ten minutes to 9 o'clock,
The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. BARNES: The value of the hon. member's noisy interjections, who advocates the line on account of the great quantities of ore and immense areas of timber which will provide traffic, may be discounted when you remember two things: first, according to the Commissioner's report a great deal of the timber has already been ringbarked; and, secondly, when you come to the matter of minerals, the hon. member himself, on 21st September, 1915, referring to some of the lodes there said—

"I may say that these copper lodes are small shows of rich copper, and would be worked by small parties of men who would take their ore to a smelting works as they are doing at the present time. If a line were built near to them they would send copper ore there at a much lower percentage."

You find that the hon. member, when speaking before the Select Committee, indicated that there were certain small lodes.

Mr. CARTER: In addition to those there are certain small lodes.

Mr. BARNES: You understand better the hon. member's advocacy of a line which is not going to pay. Last night he said the timber was going to be a considerable asset. However, we can understand now that there is not much in that. Is it a fair thing to come down at a time like we are passing through, with any number of railways still unbuilt, and with obligations arising out of promises made to the people in the Mundubera district alone that if they settled there the railway would be built. Have not this Government, because they were parties to the passing of that line when they were in Opposition, the right to honour the promises of previous Parliaments in this way?

The PREMIER: The late Government passed sixteen railways on the eve of an election.

Mr. BARNES: Just now someone made light of that wonderful railway proposition, the *via recta*, and yet several hon. members on the opposite side who now support the Government voted for that line—namely, Messrs. Land, Bertram, the late respected David Bowman, and Mr. John Adamson, who was then a member of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Mr. Adamson apologised in doing it.

Mr. BARNES: In these days of stress, when the exchequer is practically empty and we can scarcely see further in front of us—as far as loan expenditure goes—than our hand, is it fair to ask this House to pass a railway which, according to the Commissioner, will pay $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the cost of construction? Is it a fair thing, when railways are going to the bad and earning only £2 per cent., to be asked to pass a railway which will only earn $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.? I will give the Commissioner's concluding words—

"The country is good and should in time provide a good traffic to the railway. Unfortunately, owing to the character of the country, the cost of construction is very high. It will, therefore, be many years before the traffic will be

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sufficient to pay working expenses and interest unless it is extended into and develops the Upper Burnett country, which will bring the traffic of this extensive, rich district to its natural port—Gladstone; and for this reason I recommend it.”

That is not a sufficient recommendation to lead the Committee to vote half a million of money for the construction of a railway that is going to pay one-half per cent.

Mr. CARTER: How much would the via recta pay? The Commissioner would not recommend it at all.

Mr. BARNES: The via recta had £117,000 worth of traffic to start with. It would have been a paying concern from the jump. There is no proposition in Queensland which is better than the via recta. I take it that the first duty of this Government, or any Government, is to honour the obligations which exist in regard to railways which have already been passed. The real business course for any Government to follow is to complete lines already in course of construction, or to connect them with the nearest point at which there is construction, so that they may be paying concerns.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why was the Mount Sylvia not built after being passed?

Mr. CARTER: How about the railway to Maryvale? There is nothing in that now.

Mr. BARNES: That is part and parcel of the Warwick to Maryvale and Mount Edwards to Munbilla proposal; simply waiting to complete a length of line of about 400 miles.

Mr. CARTER: The Commissioner would not recommend it.

Mr. BARNES: The proposal is not a fair and reasonable one, and those to whom they apply for money will have little confidence in people who have the audacity to come down and table railways which, according to the very best and most conservative showing—if you like to put it that way—will only pay one-half per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why will it only pay that?

Mr. BARNES: I would like to ask the hon. gentleman that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because it is going to open up new territory.

Mr. BARNES: The Commissioner states that it will only pay one-half per cent.

Mr. CARTER: The Commissioner stated that the via recta should not be built.

Mr. BARNES: It is just as well to save the Government from facing, in connection with Cannindah and these places, what we are facing regarding other railways. The Mundubbera people were promised a railway, and they are not getting it. These people are going to be promised a railway in order to help, possibly, the constituency of the hon. member for Port Curtis; and they will ask you to come down and fulfil your promise, which you have not done.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY: A scandalous suggestion.

Mr. Barnes.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Corser's amendment*) stand part of the question—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 29.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. May
„ Carter	„ McLachlan
„ Collins	„ McPhail
„ Cooper	„ O'Sullivan
„ Coyne	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Pollock
„ Forde	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Ryan, T. J.
„ Gladson	„ Smith
„ Hardacre	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Weir
„ Hunter	„ Wellington
„ Kirwan	„ Winstanley
„ Lloyd	

Tellers: Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Weir.

NOES, 16.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Murphy
„ Babbington	„ Petrie
„ Corser	„ Roberts
„ Gunn	„ Somerset
„ Hodge	„ Stevens
„ Macartney	„ Stodart
„ Moore	„ Tolmie
„ Morgan	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Gunn and Mr. Roberts.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Huxham, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Free.

Noes—Mr. Bayley, Mr. Grayson, and Mr. Appel.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Original question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Bertram, Mares, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I beg to move—

“1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway extension from Many Peaks to New Cannindah, in length 27 miles 53 chains.

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

I have sat here and listened very patiently to the arguments used by the hon. gentlemen on the opposite side of the House in connection with this railway; and it appeared to me that they approached the question altogether from a very parochial point of view. It has been the custom of this House—as has been stated by one hon. member on the opposite side—that all these matters should be approached from a national point of view. It is from that point of view that I propose to approach this question to-night. A good many statements have been made by hon. members that do not bear strict investigation. This thing is not a new question to the House; this has been a fair time before the House, and on two occasions it was passed by this House. On the last occasion it was passed by the House and submitted to the Legislative Council, and they appointed a Select Committee to inquire into it by calling evidence, and they decided unfavourably towards the proposition. Four days afterwards the matter was remitted to the Select Committee, and further evidence was called, and then the majority of the Select

Committee decided in favour of the railway. However, it was fired out by the Legislative Council. Now, Mr. Bertram, notwithstanding what hon. members on the opposite side have said about this railway, in my opinion—looking at it from a national point of view—it will be a good thing for Queensland if this railway is constructed.

The mineral belt that it would tap is a very rich one, and I have got proof of that. Before going any further, I may say that I have not been over this route myself, but I have gone to some trouble in getting facts and data that I propose to put before the Committee this evening. I have proof of the mineral wealth of the district, about which there is no gainsaying. The line will go within 6½ miles of the Glassford Creek mines. The companies mining on Glassford Creek propose to build a tramway 6½ miles in length to connect with this line. That will mean that the spasmodic mining which has been going on there for a long time, owing to the expense of conveying their ores to Many Peaks, will be stopped, as this railway will give a stimulus to mining, which will be carried on there on an extensive scale. The cost of carrying the ore over the 12 miles from Glassford Creek to Many Peaks is £1 10s. per ton. That is a very serious impost on ore of a low quality, and therefore many thousands of tons of low-grade ore are lying on the fields. That ore is not being utilised at all, owing to the high cost of carriage, but when the tramway is built to connect with this line it will mean that hundreds of thousands of tons of ore will be conveyed over the line and brought to a point where it can be smelted and utilised, and bring an immense amount of wealth into the district. The Mount Cannindah mine has been referred to by hon. members as not being of much account. This line will pass within 1¼ miles of the Mount Cannindah mine. At present the distance of the mine from Many Peaks is 17 miles, and the cost of conveying the ore there is £2 10s. per ton. That is also a big impost on the low-grade ore there. It is only the higher quality ore that is conveyed by teams to the railway to be carried away to be smelted. I have got the latest copy of the "Queensland Mining Journal," dated 15th October. No hon. member present will question the accuracy of the statements made in this journal. In speaking of the New Cannindah lease, it states—

"MOUNT CANNINDAH.

"This district, during the quarter, gave employment to some forty miners, and consignments of ore were despatched from the Mount Cannindah, Apple Tree, Mount Theodore, and Myra mines.

"Twenty-nine men are employed on this property. During the quarter 124.75 tons of ore were treated from this mine for a return of 23.52 tons copper, valued at £2.705, and 13.3 ounces gold, valued at £56."

The hon. member for Warwick said there was no land for close settlement. The Mount Cannindah mine is capable of such development that it will employ a large number of men indeed, and produce a great amount of wealth. The ore body is extensive and rich in parts. With regard to Glassford Creek, there have not been many men employed there, but, to show the faith and confidence that mining investors have in Glassford Creek, I need only point out that

£3,000 has been expended by the Southern option holders in connection with this property over and above the amount received for the ore despatched for treatment. That shows the confidence they have in this field. There is also a zinc lode within four miles of the line. It is a large and extensive zinc lode. It has been developed and gives promise of producing a large quantity of rich ore. The appearance of the lode is such that it will produce a large quantity indeed. A Select Committee was held by the Legislative Council on the 21st December, 1915, and the Under Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. Graham, in giving evidence before that committee, referred in very glowing terms to the large quantity of timber that would be tapped by this line. With regard to land, the leader of the Opposition said, during this evening, that there was very little land to be tapped by this line, but I have proof of the opposite. Only twelve months ago the Under Secretary for Public Lands, who knows his business, gave this evidence before the Select Committee of the Legislative Council—

"The Many Peaks-New Cannindah extension of 27 miles 53 chains is the first step in the way of opening up the famous Northern Burnett, than which there is no better land for close settlement in the State."

It has been said that we have not got very much timber in that locality. The line terminates within a quarter of a mile of the edge of Mount Cannindah pine scrub, which is estimated at 17 miles long by 3 miles wide, carrying 10,000 feet of timber to the acre; this is a low estimate—probably it may yield double the amount. There is also No. 2 scrub, known as Pine Mountain, within easy reach of this line, which is estimated to contain 70,000,000 feet. There is also a very large area of open forest country, on which it is estimated there is at least 10,000,000 feet of hardwood, comprising some of the best varieties, such as ironbark, spotted gum, etc.

The Under Secretary for Lands, in his evidence before the Select Committee, amongst other things says—

"Hundreds of thousands of acres can be made available by further extension to this line, but the present proposal, besides opening up copper deposits at Cannindah, will bring within reasonable distance of a railway for settlement purposes 206,432 acres of land immediately available for selection, besides 58,240 acres held under lease, and 128,900 acres held under grazing selection, which could be resumed, and 14,157 acres of timber lands within proclaimed State forest reserves. It may possibly be argued that this is an expensive line to construct, but, again, this must be borne in mind—that it is the shortest route from the Northern Burnett to Gladstone, the best natural port on the Queensland coast. This alone will be an inestimable benefit to the settlers for all time, as it will give them excellent shipping facilities for their produce and also be a considerable saving to them in railway freights. I inspected all that country nearly two years ago. There is nothing better for close settlement that I have ever seen, and I have seen a good deal of Queensland, within the Northern Burnett. It may be said, in rough figures, that in the

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Northern Burnett there are 4,000,000 acres of land that could be made suitable for close settlement—that is, land that could be profitably occupied in areas of about 160 acres. There is no part of Queensland that I know of where there is such a vast tract of excellent country in one block that could be more profitably developed for close settlement than the Northern Burnett. As I pointed out in the statement that I have put in, Gladstone is the natural port for the Northern Burnett."

Then later on he says—

"There is no country that I know of that is better adapted for close settlement. It is beautifully watered, and all the creeks are running streams. There are small scrubby ridges and beautiful rich scrubs running right through it. Other ridges are beautifully grassed and good grazing country, and sloping down to beautiful river flats that will grow lucerne on all the running streams. On 'Clonmel,' which will come within the influence of this railway, I never saw more ideal country for general farming and closer settlement. It is beautifully watered and you could make most ideal farms there; you could give grass land and scrub land with lucerne flats that will grow anything."

That is pretty definite as to the area and the fertility of the land that can [9.30 p.m.] be made available there. The leader of the Opposition, the late Secretary for Public Lands, also gave some evidence. He was asked—

"Is this the best route by which to open that country?"

And he replied—

"It is the nearest route to the natural port."

That is quite fair and honest, and it is because of some of this evidence that the Government have been prompted to bring this railway forward again. The Hon. Mr. Tormie also said—

"Gladstone is a magnificent port, and I am told by residents of the Northern Burnett that the country behind the range is just as good as I saw in the Northern Burnett. I had anticipated that another opportunity would be given me of visiting that country; but, from the information that has been given to me, I am of opinion that some day we must extend the proposed line from Gladstone to New Cannindah further to the West. We are building a railway to Taroom, and look at the distance the people between Taroom and the Divide have to travel to reach Brisbane. Some day a line must be built from Gladstone through to Taroom for the sake of providing these people with cheap communication with a port."

Everything that was said in evidence on that occasion goes to show the great necessity for and the wisdom of building this railway. It is not going to be merely a branch. I take it that if this line is built—and I have no reason to think otherwise just now—it will be one of the great railway arteries extending right into the centre of Queensland and bringing freight to one of the best, if not absolutely the best port in Australia, a

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port that ranks amongst the very highest in the world. Experts have said, when comparing it with Sydney, that, good as Port Jackson is, Gladstone is even better for developmental purposes, because it can be better worked. Sydney Harbour is rocky and it is very hard to deal with that class of bottom, whereas in Gladstone you have deep water surrounded by soft muddy flats that can be utilised for numerous purposes in navigation.

The estimated cost of this line has increased since it was last before the Chamber by £65,755. That is due to the increased cost of material owing to the war, to the increase in the rates of wages of construction workers, and to insurance of labour and other privileges. We are not alone in that position. Hon. members who looked at the paper this morning saw the great difference between the estimated cost of the East-West Australian Railway and the actual cost. The estimate was about £4,000,000 and the actual cost—and it is not nearly ballasted—something in the vicinity of £8,000,000, or nearly 100 per cent. more.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A very bad estimate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member does not understand what he is talking about. Since that railway was commenced, the cost of material, of labour, of everything in connection with it has risen so enormously that no human being could have accurately estimated what the cost would be. And it was the same with all railways that were commenced before or shortly after the commencement of the war. Matters go through my hands every week which show me that careful estimates made twelve months ago have been considerably increased, so much so that on two or three occasions I have sent them back to ascertain if there was not a mistake.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And yet your unions want food at pre-war rates!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member is doing very well out of war rates. I do not want to drift into that subject at the present moment; I shall have the opportunity of dealing with it later on. The one great argument used by members against this railway was that the Commissioner said it could only earn 10s. per cent. The Mungar Junction to Mundubbera line, which it was proposed by the amendment of the hon. member for Burnett to extend, is only now paying 8s. 2d., and the leader of the Opposition, in giving his evidence here less than twelve months ago, said—

"We had reports with regard to opening up the country around Moon Creek and Splinter Creek from Maryborough, but there is 20 miles of bad country between Mundubbera and Eidsvold."

And yet the hon. member wants to extend it another 20 miles over bad country that would produce next to nothing, and make the producing part of the line worse than it is to-day. This is a far better proposition. We had the evidence of the leader of the Opposition, of the Under Secretary for Lands, and of all our experts that the country west of New Cannindah in the direction of the Lower Dawson, which could be tapped by an extension of this line, is absolutely the best and richest and most fertile part of Queensland.

Mr. MURPHY: There is no doubt that you are very eloquent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not profess to be eloquent, but I do think that any hon. member who looks at this from a national point of view—as I am endeavouring, I think, successfully to look at it—must agree that when we have such possibilities in the hinterland of the beautiful port of Gladstone, and when, some day—I hope in the not distant future—we will not only be producing sufficient of a number of our products for our own requirements, but a large quantity for exporting purposes—I think every member must agree that this is a good proposition. Can you find any better spot on the coast of Queensland for such trade as that than Gladstone? We have the evidence of the maize-producing qualities of the soil near Cannindah and further west, and that is a product we can profitably export.

Mr. BARNES: You cannot export maize.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Sometimes there is a great scarcity in New Zealand and other countries, and you can profitably export it, and I believe that this war will ensure a greater consumption of maize by reason of the numerous ways in which it is manufactured.

Mr. MORGAN: It will not keep unless you tank it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Meat will not keep unless you have refrigerating space, but we find such things provided for transporting these products over the sea. Considering that the fine port of Gladstone has been criminally neglected by previous Governments, I think it is only right that we should now take a hand in giving it its due, and at the same time try to improve the position of Queensland—because we will be improving it if we can find a deepwater port at the nearest port to the Panama Canal, the entrance to the great waterway of the world. This is a port second to none in Australia, and surely it is worth our while to do something to develop it and its hinterland, and not to put any penalty or impost on the people who engage in industry there by making them go a roundabout way to a port or put extra freights on their produce when we can get it to the port of Gladstone, which will be navigable to the largest ships to take it to any part of the world.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Does not Gladstone rob Rockhampton?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think it robs it very much at all. Rockhampton has its own hinterland, and Gladstone should have its own hinterland. It has been robbed of it in the past. I think that when the facts I have placed before the Committee are taken into consideration, if they can only divest their minds of parochial feeling and approach the question from the Australian national point of view, they must agree that it is a good proposition, not only for the port of Gladstone, but for the whole of the people of Queensland and for the people of Australia. I want to refer to an argument which was used a little while ago with reference to the great expense of constructing this line over Dawes Range. The average cost of this line will be between £16,000 and £17,000 per mile, according to the latest estimate. If that is an argument why the line should not be built, then the Toowoomba line over the Dividing Range

should never have been constructed, because it cost twice that amount. The Toowoomba Railway and the Cairns Railway cost a little over £29,000 per mile, and that was a good many years ago, when the cost of railway material was nothing like it is at the present time, and the cost of labour was only about one-third of what it is in the North to-day. Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, and Mackay have railway communication with their hinterland. For what reason has the port of Gladstone been robbed of its rights in that respect up to the present time? I say that the Government are deserving of all honour for bringing forward this proposition once more, and endeavouring to give an opportunity to the people in the hinterland of Gladstone to reach that natural and valuable port. I have much pleasure in moving the motion. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. MURPHY: I think we must congratulate the Secretary for Railways upon the speech which he has delivered on this railway with the meagre information at his command.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have heaps of information here.

Mr. MURPHY: And the information which is available to the hon. gentleman was available to the Commissioner for Railways, and what does he say about this proposition? Did he recommend the construction of the line? Not at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Use your own judgment; never mind the Commissioner for Railways.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is only the opinion of one man.

Mr. MURPHY: I am using my own judgment, and my own judgment tells me that at this particular time, when money is so scarce and so dear, and when many railways already passed are waiting to be constructed, if I were to vote for this line at the present time I certainly would not be dealing with the question from a national standpoint. The hon. gentleman says we ought to deal with it from a national standpoint. What is the national standpoint at the present time?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: To open up more land.

Mr. MURPHY: I am glad of that interjection from the Secretary for Public Lands. To open up more land, to settle more people on the land, and the finances of Queensland show that we have already expended something like forty millions of money in railway construction and have got a population of 650,000

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This is our own land—Crown land.

Mr. MURPHY: Let me deal with that phase of the question. Members opposite have been assuring the House and the country that this proposal will have the effect of placing millions of acres of land on the market cheaply for settlement. Our railway receipts last year show a loss of £780,000 odd, and I say it is the duty of the Government to bring under settlement the land along the railways which have already been constructed, and to make those railways payable before they agree to expend another

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half-a-million of money in building another railway with a prospect of some time later enabling some settlers to take up land in this particular district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The land tax will do that.

Mr. MURPHY: If the land tax is going to bring so much land under settlement, what necessity is there, at a time when money is so dear, for building a railway like this? We are told that millions of acres of land are available for settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where are they?

Mr. MURPHY: I do not know. The Secretary for Lands ought to know where the lands are to which reference is made in the directory which is published under his own control.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I want you to indicate in what districts this land is available.

Mr. MURPHY: If the hon. gentleman is particularly anxious to know where settlement can be brought about, let him inquire of the hon. member for Eacham, Mr. Gillies, the chairman of the Public Works Commission. Let him learn from that hon. member that there is plenty of land for settlement in the Atherton district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Near market?

Mr. MURPHY: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no better land in Queensland than the land which this railway will open up.

Mr. MURPHY: I have never been over the land, and I am not qualified to express an opinion about the quality of the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The only thing approaching it is Mount Hutton.

Mr. MURPHY: I am not going to argue the question of Mount Hutton, as I do not profess to be a land expert. We are told that there is a considerable amount of land in the Atherton district that would be selected if the Government would fulfil its promises and continue the Millaa Millaa Railway. The hon. member for Eacham has repeatedly told us that, and he used to say it time after time when he was in opposition. We know the Atherton district is excellent country. Then I have heard the hon. member for Bowen refer to the land in his own district which is available for settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: All freehold land.

Mr. MURPHY: How many millions of acres of freehold land are there in Queensland to-day? About six per cent. of the land has been alienated.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You cannot get Crown lands without building railways.

Mr. MURPHY: What is the good of the Secretary for Public Lands asking us to believe in one policy one day, and then, to suit the convenience of the Government, tell us that we must build railways to get Crown lands. One day they assure the House and the country that the introduction of the land tax is going to put millions of acres

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into occupation and bring about a large population; and next day they ask us to spend thousands of pounds on a railway at a time like this, at war time, at a time when the Treasurer has had to go to Melbourne to interview the Commonwealth Treasurer on financial matters, at a time when the Commonwealth Government has announced that next year, owing to financial stress in the world, they will be unable to complete their agreement with the State Governments.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is not so.

Mr. MURPHY: The Commonwealth Government have notified the States that next year they are only going to give them half the amount that they had previously agreed upon.

The PREMIER: They have not officially notified us.

Mr. MURPHY: They may not have officially notified the Government, but we saw the notification in the Press, together with some criticisms of the Treasurer in regard to the action of the Commonwealth Treasurer. In dealing with the proposition the Minister never told the Chamber whether—if we pass this railway—there is a possibility of it being commenced, or whether it will be added to the long list of unbuilt railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What you have to consider is the utility of this railway, and leave the finding of the money to the Government.

Mr. MURPHY: We are to vote "on the blind," and add another railway to the long list of railways already passed by this House which have not been commenced, and which cannot be commenced, because, on the authority of the head of the Railway Department, there is neither money nor material for their construction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This railway is part of a proposal for the settlement of returned soldiers. It was arranged at the Premiers' conference last January. The settlement of 5,000,000 acres of land is depending on the construction of this railway.

Mr. MURPHY: Every proposal for the expenditure of huge sums of money in Australia to-day—we are told—is "in the interests of the returned soldier." Put the returned soldier into the outback districts seems to be the motto of Governments.

Mr. CARTER: This is not an outback district. It is within 80 miles of Gladstone.

Mr. MURPHY: Yes, when the line is constructed. If we are to look at it from a national standpoint, no one could honestly vote for the construction of the line.

The PREMIER: We are bound to vote for it; it is to make land available for returned soldiers.

Mr. MURPHY: It is a remarkable thing that this is the first occasion, so far as I am aware, that the soldier has been brought into it.

The PREMIER: No. I referred to that matter when it was turned down by the Council previously. I can show it to you in "Hansard."

Mr. MURPHY: The soldier goes away and fights for us, and in Parliament, and out of Parliament, we use the soldier to

cover a multitude of political sins. This ought not to be done. I think the best thing Australia could do in the interests of the soldiers, at a time like this, when money is dear and so difficult to get, would be to see that it was properly expended. We should utilise the lands which are already opened up by railways to form soldier settlements. That would be a much better proposition than asking this Chamber to expend half a million on the construction of a railway at a time when, the Secretary for Railways has pointed out, no expert can properly estimate the construction of any line. How can you build a half million pound railway without money and without material? The Cabinet cannot explain that. I believe that the continuation of the North Coast Railway would settle more people on the land than this line is likely to settle.

Mr. CARTER: Absurd.

Mr. MURPHY: If I were to turn up the speeches of the hon. member for Mundingburra, and the speeches of some other hon. members who supported that railway, the hon. member would not regard it as an absurdity.

The PREMIER: Let them all come.

Mr. MURPHY: It is all very well for the Premier to say "Let them all come." I would just like to point out that the Public Works Commission refused the construction of a railway in the Cloncurry district, which would have given more employment, and which would have gone into better copper country than this railway is likely to open up. What does the Commissioner tell us?

Mr. CARTER: What does the Commissioner know about it?

Mr. MURPHY: If the Commissioner knows nothing about it, what do we know about it?

Mr. CARTER: What do you know about it?

Mr. MURPHY: Absolutely nothing. We are asked to vote for this railway "on the blind." The Government will not even ask its own Commission to report on it. They will not risk putting the question of the construction of this line to its own Commission.

Mr. CARTER: They had sufficient evidence without it.

The PREMIER: The railway was decided on before the Royal Commission was appointed.

Mr. MURPHY: There were other railways that were decided on before the Royal Commission was appointed, but they were submitted to the commission for consideration.

Mr. CARTER: Political railways.

Mr. MURPHY: I say this is a political railway.

The PREMIER: They were railways passed by other Governments.

Mr. MURPHY: If the Premier objects to political railways that were passed by other Governments—

The PREMIER: I object to them being passed by any Government.

Mr. MURPHY: So do I, and that is why I am opposing this railway.

The PREMIER: We will take care that there will be no political railways passed by this Government.

Mr. MURPHY: In connection with this railway there is going to be an expenditure of £500,000, and an annual loss of £20,000; and, although every member on that side of the Chamber is going to get behind the Secretary for Railways and vote for the line, yet the Premier says it is not a political railway. Well, the hon. gentleman is entitled to his opinion, and I also claim the right to be entitled to mine.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): I think the Secretary for Railways made a very good argument out of a very bad case; but I agree with the hon. member for Burke that this is no time to waste the time of

[10 p.m.] the House or the country in discussing a railway which we have no money to build, which we have no intention of building, and which we have no material to build. When the present occupants of the Treasury benches were on this side, they used to say, "How can we vote for this or that railway when we have no report from a Royal Commission?" Now that they have this wonderful Royal Commission, they make no use of it, but bring forward this railway proposal, and say it is the best line in the whole lot. Before we go on with any more railways, and before I support any more railways, I want to see a start made on a railway that was passed unanimously by this House two or three years ago—the railway from Inglewood to Texas. The Railway Commissioner reported in favour of that railway in these words—

"Seeing that it is expected this railway will from the start practically pay working expenses and interest on capital invested, and that it should induce further settlement, I recommend its construction."

Here is a railway that the Commissioner says will almost pay right off, that will develop a lot of mineral country, and produce metals that are wanted on the other side of the world; yet those minerals are allowed to remain in the ground, and the Government now propose to construct another line that will cost £500,000. The railway of which I speak would only cost £165,442, and there are 173 square miles of leasehold ready to be cut up for the returned soldiers. The district has the finest climate in Queensland, and the returned soldiers could rear families there and do well there, and they could be settled there at much less cost than in any other part of Queensland. Why not build that line instead of bringing in wild-cat schemes, and proposing to spend large sums of money on lines when there is no intention of building those lines?

The PREMIER: Why not build both?

Mr. GUNN: Why not build the line that this House passed unanimously some years ago before proposing to build political wild-cat railways?

Mr. McPHAIL: How many railways did your Government pass before they went out of office? About sixteen!

Mr. Gunn.]

Mr. GUNN: The mineowners in the district to which I allude offered to build that railway, but the Government of the day thought it was such a good thing that they said they would build it as a Government line.

The PREMIER: Do you prefer both or none?

Mr. GUNN: The deficit in the working of our railways this last year was about £750,000, and I think we should cease to build railways until they are nearer the paying point than that. If we are not careful, we shall find ourselves insolvent over our railways. When we started to build railways in Queensland they were supposed to be built to get the farmers' produce to market. Now the railways are not built for that purpose at all. They are built nowadays to get some particular individual elected for a particular electorate, or for the benefit of some navvies whom the Government are inducing to come from some other country in order to get their votes at election time. Instead of railways being built for the people, the people are being made use of for the railways. I decidedly object to that, and I am going to vote against all railways until some of the lines, like the Texas railway, which have been passed for years, are built.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I notice that in the remarks made by the Secretary for Railways about this line he sensibly did not introduce the returned soldier. Unfortunately, that individual has been introduced by the Premier and the Secretary for Public Lands.

The PREMIER: "That individual has been introduced"! That is your opinion of the returned soldier!

Mr. MORGAN: My opinion of the returned soldier is much higher than my opinion of the Premier. I am one of those who object to the Premier continually slinging the returned soldier across the floor of this Chamber in order to get certain measures passed. In my opinion, the Premier knows little, and cares nothing, about the returned soldier.

The PREMIER: What is your opinion about the man who was warned off the course at Surat?

Mr. MORGAN: My opinion is that it is an absolutely lying statement made by a man who is not game to make the statement outside this House. The same individual refers to slanderous statements coming from this side of the House, and yet he makes a deliberate slanderous statement now which I defy him to make outside the House. If he does, I will give him an opportunity of proving it.

Mr. POLLOCK: The embargo has been removed now.

Mr. MORGAN: I have only been at one race meeting in Surat in my life, and that was a picnic meeting, and I was asked to present the trophy, which I did. I have never been at a race meeting there since, unfortunately, because I have not been able to attend. I have nothing against me in

[*Mr. Gunn.*]

any shape or form so far as Surat or any other racecourse in any part of Australia is concerned.

The PREMIER: I never suggested you had, but I heard it suggested by someone else in this House.

Mr. MORGAN: I will give an opportunity to the Premier—who is a legal man—to make the statement in any other place than this House, or, if he will consent not to allow the privileges of this House to apply to the statement he made to-night, I will give him an opportunity in the law courts of proving his statement.

The PREMIER: I have not made the statement. I accept the hon. member's denial; but someone else in this House made the statement.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, and it is like the lying statement that was made regarding the purchase of horses for military purposes. That was a statement originated by the Under Secretary—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the motion.

Mr. MORGAN: I think I have a right to protect myself in connection with statements made by the Premier.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have allowed the hon. member some latitude in replying to the Premier's interjection. I cannot allow him to continue to discuss that matter further.

Mr. MORGAN: I will accept your ruling in that particular respect. But, as you know, somebody can interject in this Chamber about a certain thing, whether there is any truth in it or not.

The PREMIER: I do not say it. The hon. member denied it, and I accept his denial. That is the proper way to deal with it.

Mr. MORGAN: The Premier's interjection has given me an opportunity of denying this charge once and for all, and I challenge any persons if they desire to continue making these insinuations to do so in such a manner that I will be able to take the course which is necessary to protect myself.

We are told that this line is going to open up a large quantity of land for the returned soldier. It will open up very good land, but we have unanimously passed other lines in this House, in connection with which the report of the Commissioner is more favourable than in regard to this line. I might mention the line from Tara to Surat. The Minister for Railways knows that there is no better land in Queensland from a grazing point of view for the settlement of soldiers, and for general agricultural and dairying settlement, yet the Government are not able to go on with that line. They have spent a certain amount of money in formation. They have cleared the scrub a certain distance, and the money is wasted.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I told you that I did that for the special purpose of relieving distress.

Mr. MORGAN: I know what it was done for. It was done during the period of Mr. Adamson's administration.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did it. You came, and I gave you that concession.

Mr. MORGAN: I have nothing to say about that. A certain amount of clearing was done from Tara towards Surat, first of all by the late Minister, Mr. Adamson, and continued by the present Minister. I agree with the hon. gentleman that they went on with a certain amount of work for relief purposes, but the line is all overgrown again with—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must deal with the motion.

Mr. MORGAN: I am giving this as a reason why there is no necessity at the present time to pass this line. We have already passed a great number of lines on which a certain amount of work has been done, but we cannot go on with them because the Government have not got the material or the money. There are ten or twelve lines already passed which the Minister would construct if he had the material and the money, but he is unable to do so. The Government come along with this proposition, not because they think the line is likely to be constructed within the next twelve months, but because an election is coming on shortly, and if the line is passed a certain number of votes will be gained. We have the same thing in the Roma district. A line was passed from Oralla to Injune Creek.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Injune Creek is Mount Hutton.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. The returned soldier was introduced in respect to that line. When it was turned down by the Upper House we were told that the Upper House had no respect for the returned soldier, and had turned down a line which would open up country for the returned soldier. The line from Juandah to Taroom would open up as much land for the returned soldier as the line from Oralla to Injune Creek, and land equally as good, if not better, than Mount Hutton. The Minister condemned this line, in my opinion, when he said that the land which it was going to open up was some of the best land in Queensland, and that it was only next to Mount Hutton. Surely the Minister would not compare Mount Hutton to the best land in Queensland for closer settlement. From a grazing point of view Mount Hutton is a good proposition, but not for the settlement of soldiers in small areas. It would be the same failure as Jimbour is at the present time. Mount Hutton is a grazing proposition, and if the Minister thinks he is going to gull this House—

Mr. CARTER: What has this to do with this railway?

Mr. MORGAN: It has this much to do with it; if the land is no better than Mount Hutton the line has no right to be built. This railway is not required at the present moment, and there are others which have been passed and which should be gone on with and completed. When the Government are desirous of bringing lines before the House for the purpose of opening up new country would be the time for bringing forward this line, but this railway is being given preference, simply because it is a political move on the part of the Government supporters. It is not that I do not desire to see this land given railway communication, but I hope the Council will throw this proposal out, as they will be doing a benefit to the people of

Queensland by so doing, because it has no right to be placed in front of other lines which have already been started. After those lines have been finished this proposition will receive my support.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hunter, *Maranoa*): It is to be regretted that the Committee have not caught the spirit of the Minister for Railways in introducing this railway to the Committee. He asked the Committee to regard it from a national standpoint. If ever there was a time in the history of Queensland when railways of this description should be treated from a national standpoint it is to-day. It is true that a certain amount of land will be made available on account of the land tax, but there will not be sufficient land, I am afraid, for the requirements of Queenslanders after this war is over, and it will be too late after the war is over to start building railways into our Crown lands to make them available for the influx of settlers which will take place. We will have a large number of our soldiers returning to Queensland, and there are also a large number of men coming up from the South looking for land in Queensland, a comparatively large number, considering the number of men who are going on the land at the present time are Southern men. One of the first things that was done when this Government came into office was to take areas of land, such as Mount Hutton, and land such as this railway will serve, as well as the land at Bowen and along the North Coast line. The whole of the lands were carefully estimated as to their value for dairying, fruitgrowing, sugar-cane growing, or whatever purpose they were suited for. They were carefully picked out to ascertain the number of selectors that could be put on those areas. Negotiations were opened up with the Imperial Government when Earl Grey was in charge of that department, and he was asking the various parts of the British Empire to consider the question of absorbing the ex-service men of the Empire who are fighting in France. This Government immediately took the matter up, and, among other lands submitted, was this particular land. I say positively that there is no area of land of the same dimensions, of the same quality as this land which this railway will open up to be found in Queensland. I will undertake to say that a new Darling Downs closer to a port, and a better port, will be opened up if this line is constructed. It is time we began this work, because the line cannot be built in a day. The time will come when a big demand will come on us and we will not have the land ready. At the Premier's conference last January this land was brought under the notice of the conference and an amount of money was set apart at that conference for the purpose of constructing this particular railway to open up the land for returned soldiers. This has not been sprung on the Committee to-night. From the first day this Government came into office, they took up the question of providing land for the returned men. We have within sight 9,000,000 acres of land. The plans have been prepared and there is an estimate of the cost of building the line. How that land will be subdivided and how the land will be settled on is all tabulated in the Lands Office to-day. It is not sprung on the Committee for the first time to-night.

Hon. J. M. Hunter.]

This Committee have had this proposal before them twice before and the Upper House have had it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is like the old cry of "wolf." We don't know when to believe it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not know if the hon. member, when Minister for Public Lands, cried out "wolf" and pretended that his department were going to do something that they did not want to do.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I did not trade on the soldiers like you do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not going to charge the hon. gentleman with anything, but it is not correct for him to charge me, as Minister for Public Lands, with coming to this House and urging it to do something which I think should not be done. I tell this Committee that they will be failing in their duty to this State if they do not pass railways and assist the Government in obtaining money to build them for the inrush of settlement that will take place after the war. Large numbers of men will be looking for new homes from France, England, United States, Canada, and elsewhere, and if we are prepared we will be able to increase our population, extend the prosperity of our State, increase our production, and correspondingly our wealth. I hope that the parochialism, particularly that shown by the hon. member for Murilla, will not exert itself to the extent of refusing to pass this railway.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions, and they were agreed to.

OPTICIANS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill with amendments, in which they invited the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

Ordered that the message of the Legislative Council be taken into consideration in Committee on Tuesday next.

WAGES BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message returning this Bill with amendments, in which they invited the concurrence of the Assembly.

Ordered that the consideration of the message in Committee be made on Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That the House, at its rising, do adjourn till Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-nine minutes past 10 o'clock.

[*Hon. J. M. Hunter.*]