

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 1917**

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of Sidney Kidman, and fifty-nine pastoral holdings in that of Edmund Jowett. Mr. Angliss is not the registered lessee of a pastoral holding.

"2. The total area of the holdings held in the name of Mr. Kidman is 23,901½ square miles, and those in the name of Mr. Jowett, 13,415½ square miles.

"3. No.

"4. Yes.

"5. Twenty years' extension of lease was granted in respect of an area of 7,685 square miles, and ten years' extension of lease in respect of 1,304 square miles. The extended leases carried special conditions for the improvement of the country, such as the sinking of bores, etc."

#### GOVERNMENT LOANS SINKING FUND TEMPORARY SUSPENSION BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

On the motion of the TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), this Bill, read a third time, was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

#### CLOSER SETTLEMENT ACT AMEND- MENT BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, this Bill, read a third time, was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER, 1917.

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

#### APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 3.

##### ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Deputy Governor conveying his assent to this Bill.

##### QUESTION.

STATIONS OWNED BY MESSRS. KIDMAN, JOWETT,  
AND ANGLISS.

Mr. POLLOCK asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. What is the number of stations owned by Messrs. Kidman, Jowett, and Angliss in Queensland?"

"2. The total area of these stations?"

"3. Are these men bonâ fide residents of Queensland?"

"4. Did the late Government grant extension of leases to Mr. Kidman?"

"5. If so, for what area of land and over what period of time?"

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

"1. Forty-five pastoral holdings in Queensland stand registered in the name

[*Hon. A. J. Thynne.*

#### BRISBANE TRAMWAY FARES BILL.

##### INITIATION.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*), in moving—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to regulate the fares in respect of the traffic on the Brisbane tramway,"

said: The leader of the Opposition is asking for information respecting this Bill, and I am pleased to give it. In the first place we recognise that the sections on the Brisbane tramways, and the fares paid for same, should be put on a different basis, because at the present time the Brisbane people are not getting an adequate return for the money they pay. It is proposed to make the sections 1 mile in length, and provide that it shall be the maximum fare for each section. It will not interfere with the present double sections. For a long time past it has been recognised that the company have been making large sums of money out of the tramways, and they have added a large amount of money to their reserves. At the present time there is an Act which makes provision that the Tramways Company shall provide proper accommodation for the travelling public. Those who travel on the trams will know that in coming from their homes and going to their homes it is very difficult to get accommodation in the trams.

Colonel RANKIN: The same thing occurs on the railways.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not to the same extent.

Colonel RANKIN: It is much worse on the railways.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Tramways Company should do the fair thing by the travelling public of Brisbane. The company make large sums of money every year out of the people of Brisbane, and it is only right that they should provide adequate accommodation in return. That is an outline of the Bill, and I think it should commend itself to hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House.

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): I called "Not formal" to two motions that appear on the business-paper, one of which is to regulate the fares of the Brisbane tramways and the other to purchase the Brisbane tramways. It seems to me to be a remarkable thing that the House should be asked to regulate the fares of the tramways when the Government propose to purchase those tramways. If the Government intend to purchase the tramways, then there is no need whatever to regulate the fares. We are going to be asked to sit an extra day in order that the Government may hurry their business through the House for reasons better known to the Government, but certainly not known to the Opposition, yet we are called upon to discuss a question of whether the fares charged now for 1,700 yards should not be the fare charged for 1,760 yards. It seems to me that the measure is a sort of deathbed repentance on the part of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION interjected.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It's a wonder the hon. gentleman did not ask me if there was a war on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You went part of the way, and came back.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I came back all right. We have got a lot of measures on the business-paper requiring attention, and I am willing to facilitate the Minister getting through those measures. We have a Pharmacy Bill, which has not been read a second time, and which has been on the paper for weeks. We have also a Bill dealing with State children. It has been on the stocks for months, and although we are ready to co-operate with the hon. gentleman, and are trying to see it passed, it remains there. We know that hon. members on the other side talked the measure out, and it is now at the bottom of the business-paper. Evidently there is no desire on the part of the Government to see the measure carried. On top of all the legislation we have here, the Home Secretary introduces a Bill which does not reveal to me any very serious necessity. The hon. gentleman says that he is going to regulate the rates, and see that the section is 1 mile, and that is the section for which the people will have to pay 1d. If my memory serves me right, there are many sections in Brisbane that are more than 1 mile in length, and, consequently, the Minister is going to reduce the length over which the people can be carried at present for 1d.

Mr. MURPHY: And consequently increase the price.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Yes. At the present time people can travel right from North Quay to Ascot for 3d., but if the Minister alters the sections it might mean that those people will

have to pay 4d. instead of 3d. That might be putting an additional burden on to the citizens of Brisbane. The Minister says that he is also going to provide for greater accommodation on the trams in various parts of the city. For a couple of hours in the morning and a couple of hours in the afternoon we know that the trams are overcrowded.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is the time when the people need them most—when they are coming from their work.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We know that for hours during the day the trams scarcely pay for the electricity used to provide their motive power. My impression is that in the busy hours of the day additional trams are run for the purpose of accommodating passengers. If all the passengers in Brisbane elect to go home within a quarter of an hour of the same time every day, it must lead to inconvenience. I ask the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill if he has not already got full power to deal with the matter of overcrowding in the trams? The Act deals with that, and the hon. gentleman has full control over the tramways in that respect. On a former occasion, when a complaint was made about sufficient tramway power not being provided for the accommodation of passengers, the late Home Secretary intervened, with the result that an increased number of trams were put on. If the hon. gentleman would only put into force the powers he possesses under the law at the present time, there would be ample opportunity for him to satisfy the needs of the people of Brisbane without the introduction of legislation of this kind. Legislation is being introduced for reasons which do not exist to-day. The Tramways Company charge what may be regarded as a fair price for a section quite as long or longer than is proposed in this Bill. Consequently, the hon. gentleman has ample power to see that a sufficient number of trams are run at a particular hour of the day to satisfy the needs of the people of Brisbane. Why, then, should the country be put to the expense of dealing with a Bill of this kind? In the dying hours of Parliament, we are asked to deal with this measure. It makes us suspicious of the legislation which is being introduced, and we begin to inquire the motive for its introduction. We are here for that purpose—to ascertain the motives for introducing this legislation, especially when the legislation is introduced not to serve any definite purpose.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, the purpose is very definite.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I say it is not going to serve any definite purpose, because that purpose can be served definitely under the legislation at present on the statute-book. It looks to me that it is only kite-flying, like the other Bills introduced by the Government. We know that the Government stands discredited in the country, and they desire to make themselves appear in the best possible light. I do not blame them for that. They are like the shopkeeper who puts the rosy side of the apple on the outside so that the public may see it. Most of the legislation introduced appears to me to be of that character. We want the Government to deal with matters that are grave and of deep concern, and for the welfare of the State in its most trying hour. The Government should be devoting all their strength of mind, and all the powers which they possess, to develop the State in order to help the country

*Hon. J. Tolmie.]*

through this trying period. None of that sort of legislation has been introduced. The Government have not introduced anything of a constructive character, and nothing that is going to build up the industries of the State. They are introducing nothing that will give confidence to the people of Queensland at a juncture when that confidence is very much needed. All this legislation is introduced so that the citizens of Brisbane may be told that the Government have a great regard for their welfare, and will see that they are not overcrowded in the trams.

Mr. MURPHY: Yet they propose to increase the fares by 50 per cent. on the Chillagoe line!

HON. J. TOLMIE: We will come to that later on. The proposition, to my mind, does not appear to be a reduction of the charges at all, although they evidently desire the people to believe that.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the hon. member that he leave that for his speech on the second reading.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is no need to go into Committee to consider this question for the reasons that have been assigned by the Minister. When we are asked to go into Committee we must have [4 p.m.] certain definite and clear reasons for doing so, and those reasons have been stated. I submit that the question is, whether we should go into Committee, and if reasons can be shown against going into Committee it is our bounden duty to show them. The reasons for going into Committee to consider this proposal are not manifest in the proposal itself, nor in the explanation as given by the Minister.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out that, if the information given by the Minister on the introduction of a Bill is going to be discussed at this stage, it will only tend towards preventing that information being given, because it is out of order to argue the merits of a Bill on the information given, except on the second reading.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I would not like to clash with you, Mr. Speaker, on this question, although I hold the opinion that it is laid down in the Standing Orders that a motion of any kind is discussable on all occasions, and that any Bill can be discussed to the fullest extent.

The SPEAKER: Order! Not at this stage. The hon. member will be out of order in discussing the contents of the Bill now.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I hold that a Bill from its very incipient stages can be discussed.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is quite in order in discussing the motion, but he is not in order in asking for information, and then proceeding to argue on the information received, and I do not propose to allow him to do that.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do not want you to allow me to do anything that is out of order. I want to observe the dignity of the Chair in every possible way, but it has been pointed out to me that I am out of order, on some occasions, because I desire to exercise to the fullest the rights that I possess, and nothing beyond. In relation to this motion, there is a specific intimation

for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for a clear and definite purpose, and that is to consider a Bill to regulate the fares that are now being paid on the tramways, and I am endeavouring to point out that these fares at the present time are reasonable, and that they do not need regulating in the direction indicated; and if they do not need regulating then the necessity for the Bill ceases to exist. It is only taking up time uselessly and in a wasteful manner to ask that this motion should be referred to a Committee for consideration.

Colonel RANKIN (*Burrum*): I do not think it is desirable that the House should resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider this question at all. We have just had an intimation from the Treasurer this afternoon that he desires the House to sit on Mondays, owing to the congested state of the business-paper.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are paid for 365 days.

Colonel RANKIN: I am quite willing to sit on seven days a week if the Minister wishes it. I will sit all day and all night if the Minister wishes it. I am not taking any exception to coming here. The leader of the Opposition expressed some doubt as to the intentions of the Government with regard to this measure. I have no doubt at all with regard to the intentions of the Government. It is simply a sop offered by the Government on the eve of an election to the town and city electors. They have a desire to put something in their window, as somebody has expressed it. There is no business in it. Speaking as a country member, we have had sufficient indication of their desire to help the townsmen.

The TREASURER: We have had quite enough opposition to it.

Colonel RANKIN: I have no doubt you have. We have had quite enough evidence of the sympathy and kindly regard which the present Government has towards the city, and it is about time that we had some concrete indication of their regard for the men in the country. We have been told by the Minister in charge of the Bill that one provision in this measure is to give better accommodation on the trams. I would suggest that the Government, before they begin to interfere with the accommodation on the trams, should put their own house in order. Let them go into the country and see the accommodation provided for the people there. I submit that the line on which I live is a disgrace to any railway system. Speaking here some time ago, I referred to the fact that coming down from Childers I and other passengers—

Mr. STOPFORD: You were Minister for Railways. Why did you not make a start?

Colonel RANKIN: They had excellent accommodation when I was Minister for Railways, and they had a splendid train service. What do we find now? The hon. member for Mount Morgan, when he travelled down, had to travel in one of those box arrangements.

Mr. STOPFORD: I had to travel in them when you were Minister for Railways.

The TREASURER: There was only one notable thing you did as Minister for Railways, and that was to reappoint the Commissioner.

[*Hon. J. Tolmie.*]

Colonel RANKIN: I will say this: that it took the Railway Commissioner to size up the present Administration, and the attitude of some of the railway workers, in his report this year.

The TREASURER: Is that why you re-appointed him?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Colonel RANKIN: I called attention to the fact that people were compelled to travel along that line in the dark. Not even lights were provided by the Railway Department. Later on they provided a hurricane lantern.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member had an opportunity of dealing with railway grievances on the Estimates.

Colonel RANKIN: The Minister has pointed out that this Bill is necessary in order to provide better accommodation on the trams, and I say they should first put their own house in order. The accommodation provided on the railways is infinitely worse. In the case I referred to they put a hurricane lantern on a nail, and in the swaying of the carriage the hurricane lantern fell down and nearly set fire to two ladies. The Minister for Justice and the Treasurer laugh. They think it is a huge joke.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: Give all the harrowing details.

Colonel RANKIN: It was harrowing, and it was just the merest chance that when the hurricane lantern smashed on the floor the fire was extinguished.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: That was because the Commissioner was illegally reappointed.

Colonel RANKIN: That did not happen when a Liberal Administration was in power. It was the result of the pettifoggery retrenchment of the present Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will not pursue that argument further.

Colonel RANKIN: I wish to point out that the accommodation on the trams is infinitely better than the accommodation we have in the country districts, and we find no anxiety on the part of the Government to ameliorate the conditions obtaining in country districts at the present time. I say it is a standing disgrace. Now we come to the question of fares. The Minister says he is going to reduce the fares on the tram-lines in and around the city of Brisbane, and he told us that he proposed to obtain sections a mile in length. What is the distance at the present time?

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss details of the Bill at this stage. The information given by the Home Secretary was out of order, and I do not intend to allow any discussion on it.

Colonel RANKIN: I have no desire to get out of order. I am merely pointing out that the information given to us is not borne out by the facts as we find them. Under the proposal of the Minister, the fare for a 3-mile journey will be 3d., but the George street to Ascot line is in the neighbourhood of 4 miles.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do not talk about it.

Colonel RANKIN: There is no business in this proposal. It is a sop to the metropolitan people. It is just another indication of that

kindly regard which the Government have towards the townspeople while they are utterly indifferent to the sufferings of the people in the country. There may be occasions during the busy hours of the day when the traffic is somewhat congested, but has the hon. gentleman never travelled on the railways during a busy time of the day?

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Colonel RANKIN: Then he has not travelled on the railways as much as I have, else he would have seen just as great a congestion on the railways as there is on the trams, and he would have seen that on various occasions people had to stand up during the whole of the journey. I confess it is very difficult for any Railway Department to avoid congestion at certain hours, but before we begin to set other people's houses in order, it is a perfectly reasonable and just thing for the Government to set their own house in order. If the Minister will come up with me this week-end he will see what we have to put up with, and see the accommodation we have, and I am sure it would open his eyes.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have never had any complaints.

Colonel RANKIN: I have complained on every opportunity I have had during this session.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the question. We are not dealing with the railways.

Colonel RANKIN: I am only dealing with the railways in a comparative manner.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has been dealing with the railways during the whole of his speech.

Colonel RANKIN: I think you will admit that the subject is quite relevant to this motion. I hope before the Government go in for any scheme of this sort that they will turn their attention to the conditions existing in their own department.

Mr. McPHAIL (*Windsor*): I wish to refute the argument that has been raised that measures of this description are continually being brought in for the benefit of the city. In the first place, the hon. member for Burrum should remember that the city of Brisbane contains nearly one-fourth of the population of Queensland, and, therefore, the people of this city have a right to some consideration. To say that the introduction of a Bill of this description for the regulation of fares with respect to traffic on the Brisbane tramways is simply a sop to the metropolitan area, seems to me to show a certain amount of petty jealousy. So far as the district which the country member represents is concerned, he seems to think it should receive more consideration than the metropolitan area. Now, I think that if the work of this Government were taken into consideration it would be found that an equitable distribution has been made throughout the State right from the North of Queensland to the South—that each portion receives its fair and just share of attention from this Government. This little measure here, I think, is one which is justifiable and necessary. It is to regulate the fares in respect to the traffic on the Brisbane tramways. I believe every member—even the hon. member for Burrum—if he gives the matter a little careful attention, will see there is something necessary that needs to

*Mr. McPhail.*]

be done in this particular regard. There are some sections along the tramway that it is really almost taking money out of people's pockets to charge them for, and those are the special sections on which the tramways are making the most money. The hon. member must realise that the short section from George street to Petrie's Bight is the best paying section that the Brisbane tramway has; for this reason, that the bulk of the business of the town is done on that section. It may be only a distance of 100 yards that a person will go, and he will pay a penny for it. If they go from the top of the street to Petrie's Bight they pay a penny, and it is hardly half a mile. Now, I think that it must appear to hon. members that something is necessary to make a more equitable distribution of the distances for which fares are charged. Take the Kedron Park line. There are three sections on it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I pointed out to the hon. member that he should wait for the second reading of the measure to go into details on these matters.

Mr. McPHAIL: Well, I will leave that until the second reading. I wanted to point out to the hon. member that there was reason for the introduction of this Bill, and that the Minister was justified in bringing it in, not so much from the standpoint of the metropolitan area, but from the standpoint of seeing that justice was done to a big section of people who live in the metropolitan area. I feel quite satisfied that the hon. member, on second thoughts, will realise that this is not introduced with a desire of giving special favours to the metropolitan area, but simply for seeing that what he desires in country districts is also desirable in the town areas—that the townspeople shall receive fair and just protection from those who are running interests which they are using for their own benefit, but for which the people have to pay.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I would like to suggest an amendment to the Minister that he alter the words "Brisbane Tramways" to "Government Railways," and, if the Government members show any support of such a suggestion, I feel sure the country will be benefited by the moving of such an amendment from either side. I think the Government might well see the desirableness of enabling a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill for the regulation and altering of the fares and freights on our railways. Such an amendment would be of immediate benefit to the great majority of the people of the State, and certainly the great portion of the State. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat states that this Bill affects one portion of the population of the State, and that it does not give special favours. Now, I don't think the Bill is going to give any special favours.

Mr. McPHAIL: I never said it was giving special favours at all.

Mr. CORSER: I don't either. I claim the hon. gentleman does not hold that it is going to give special favours. I don't say it is going to give special favours, because I don't think it is; it is only a bit of window-dressing.

Mr. McPHAIL: To give justice.

Mr. CORSER: Where are we getting justice more than on the tramways of

[*Mr. McPhail.*]

Brisbane? Do an equal distance in the country; go six or eight miles on the country railways; you cannot do it decently under a couple of "bob," and that in a pretty hard seat. Here you will do it for 3d. or 6d., with a good service. Give the conveniences that are in Brisbane to any of the country towns in Queensland and see if they would not be prepared to pay twice the amount the Brisbane people paid to-day. The tramways of Brisbane and the fares, as far as I have seen them, compare more than favourably with the fares of any tramways in Australia in the sections, taking into consideration the distance of the trams. (Government dissent.) Of course, we know that in the old service of Sydney, where the Government run the trams, and where they have a big deficit on their trams and railways, they do things which probably a company here cannot afford to do, because they have not got the people of Queensland to come back on to pay a deficit; they have not got the Government to fall back on.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: The Tramway Company have the people of Queensland to come back on to pay dividends for them.

Mr. CORSER: The people of Queensland that use them and get something out of them pay a dividend; and it is a pity our Queensland railways could not pay a dividend. The trams are entitled to pay a dividend; the money that is invested in those trams is worthy of a dividend. It is a pity that our Queensland railways could not pay a dividend without calling upon people, who are not enjoying railways at all, to help to pay deficits by increased burdens and increased taxation. The conveniences of the Brisbane tramways, and the charges of those tramways, are nothing to cavil at at the present time with the increased cost of everything, and nobody can justly complain at the cost. I don't think that this Bill is going to provide anything tangible, except an appeal to the minds of the people so as to try and secure something at the ballot box as a return. I think it is only a ballot box Bill to try and assist the Government, and not the people.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why don't you support it, and it will help you?

Mr. CORSER: If it is a matter of supporting things here to help us at the ballot box, I hope the Minister will some day realise that we have a higher and nobler duty to perform. I think that the suggested amendment would be serviceable to the community at large.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: I think that not only the people of Brisbane, but the people of Queensland, can quite understand the factious opposition which has been shown on the introduction of this measure. The trouble with the Opposition is not that we are legislating for the people of Brisbane at all, and that the country people are being overlooked; otherwise they would specifically quote the legislation that has been introduced that affected the country and the legislation affecting the city. The trouble is that we are going to exercise some supervision over a very powerful corporation.

Colonel RANKIN: The Speaker would not allow it.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: The Speaker allowed the hon. member to digress a good deal, and probably while he was speaking

about the hurricane lamp he would also have allowed him to mention something in regard to the legislation which I am referring to now. It is idle to say that measures this Government have introduced have been for the benefit of the city. Members of the metropolitan area have been rather moderate in making their demands to the Government during this Parliament. (Hear, hear!)

MR. BERTRAM: Too long-suffering.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: The last Ministry certainly was in danger of becoming a Queen-street Ministry. We are purely a Queensland Ministry looking after the interests of the State. The factious Opposition here to-day conceals something more significant. The desire of the Opposition is to entrench the Brisbane tramway monopoly in their present position. I know that during my term in the Justice Department I came across an extraordinary measure calculated to give the tramways unusual benefits, and to put the matter of goodwill actually beyond doubt. That measure was in draft. I won't say it would have received the approval of the Government; but the policy of the Government in regard to the tramway monopoly has been shown in the past. The policy of this Government, of course, is known. The policy of the Opposition has been shown and can be seen at any time. The present Tramways Company is a menace to the community. It does nothing at all to open up the fine suburbs of Brisbane. (Hear, hear!) It only follows the population. In Sydney there is a real attempt made to give rapid and cheap communication to working people.

Colonel RANKIN: You have been three years in office now; has it taken you three years to find that out?

HON. J. A. FIELLY: "Better late than never." If I had had my way, it would have been one of the first measures submitted to the House. As I remarked previously, metropolitan members are too prone to give concessions when they hear the clamouring of country members, and more particularly to give ear to the noise made by country members on the other side. The present tramway monopoly is a real living danger to the people. The other day the Municipal Council had occasion to protest because Mr. Badger simply commandeered one street. A metropolitan bushranger, a highwayman, commandeered one street and closed it to traffic, and the municipality had no power to interfere. Is not that an outrage? In electric light matters it does what it wishes. Where the City Electric Light Company have to obtain Orders in Council to erect posts and construct various channels and so on for their lighting apparatus, even for overhead wires, the Tramways Company comes along, and, without hesitation or without seeking the Government's consent, does what it wishes right round the metropolitan area. It gives a poor service, and it gives bad accommodation. It is the rule rather than the exception for people to have to stand up in the trams going home. They cannot possibly convey the people home.

MR. ROBERTS: The Brisbane tramways are spoken very highly of outside the State.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: By a narrow-minded lot of people who have not travelled. Anybody who goes to Sydney and appreciates the thoroughly good travelling and

sees the well-organised system there has no time for Brisbane. The Brisbane Tramways Company makes too much profit. Its proprietors are absentees.

MR. ROBERTS: You know the tramways in Sydney are run at a loss.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: If the hon. member were better informed he would realise that a slight increase in fares in Sydney turned the Government's deficit in New South Wales into a surplus the year following. (Hear, hear!) On the second reading I will seize the opportunity of giving the hon. member some figures which will educate him, or at least improve his lack of knowledge, as exhibited here at the present time. I welcome the measure. The only fault I find with it is that mentioned by the hon. member for Burrum—it has come too late. I trust the measure will become law. We badly want some sweeping reformation in the tramway system of Brisbane. It would be better if we could have municipal or governmental control, but if we cannot have that, at least we should have reasonable regulations, better service, cheaper and more rapid transit. I support the proposal.

MR. MURPHY (*Burke*): It seems to me that the criticism of the proposal submitted by the Home Secretary has arisen from the fact that in connection with the Brisbane tramways the Government seems to be like the memorable "Jack Jones"—they don't know where they are. It has been pointed out already that the Government have power to deal with the questions contained within the four corners of the motion submitted by the Home Secretary. If they have had that power they should have exercised it. If they are doubtful of the power given to them in the Tramways Act and require the Legislature to make proper provision to [4.30 p.m.] enable them to deal with the Brisbane Tramways Company, then I am one, although I represent a far-distant part of the State, who is prepared to see that they get that power. I think it is the duty of any Government to be in the position to deal with a monopoly such as the Brisbane Tramways Company. The Assistant Minister for Justice has referred to certain things, but there is one thing which he omitted to state. Some years ago there was a proposal that the municipal authorities in Brisbane should take over the tramways, and the Government of the day drafted a Bill and submitted it to the consideration of the local authorities, and also furnished members of the House with copies. It was to come on for consideration, but owing to some difference of opinion between the members of the various local authorities nothing further was done in the matter.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: A very poor Bill, too.

MR. MURPHY: It may have been a poor Bill. I trust that if the hon. member is going to draft a Bill he will see that all the difficulties contained in that Bill are omitted. With regard to fares, I think it is right that the Government should have the power to fix them in the metropolitan area, and I would suggest that the best way to assist the wage-earners of Brisbane would not be in fixing the mile fares, but in insisting that upon all lengths of tramway a maximum fare should be charged, say not more than 3d.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: It would hardly get over the real grievance, that is, extensions.

*Mr. Murphy.]*

Mr. MURPHY: You might be able to provide for that in the Bill.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: You notice that the Water and Sewerage Board take the water everywhere, but gas you cannot get anywhere, and trams you cannot get. Settlement must come first.

Mr. MURPHY: If the Government can take power under the statute to deal with fares, surely they could take power to deal with extensions?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: How can you make a man spend money on extensions?

Mr. MURPHY: Well, then, on the authority of the Minister for Public Instruction, our proposals to deal with the company are not going to extend very far. According to the information given to us by the Home Secretary, we are simply going to say to the Brisbane Tramways Company that they must not charge more than 1d. a mile, and we are going to tell them that they must put on more cars at certain hours of the day. I say that, having had so long a time to consider the proper method of dealing with the company, the Government should have been able to come down with a complete scheme.

The HOME SECRETARY: We have submitted a scheme now.

Mr. MURPHY: The Home Secretary will pardon me for saying that the worst critic of the scheme is his colleague, the Secretary for Public Instruction, who immediately points out all the difficulties which are in the way of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have not said anything of the kind.

Mr. MURPHY: The duty of a Government is to try to sweep those difficulties out of existence. If they have power to deal effectively with the Brisbane Tramways Company, they should go the whole hog and do the thing properly.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is a very complete Bill.

Mr. MURPHY: I am very glad to hear it, and so far as I am concerned I am going to support it, because I believe it is the right of the Government to have the power to deal with fares and to insist that any monopoly should deal fairly by the general public. I might ask the Home Secretary whether he will not take into consideration the desirability of fixing a maximum fare. I think that is the best protection that can be given to the public, because we want to see wage-earners in the metropolitan area get air-space, to be able to live outside the city. It reduces the price of rents, it gives them better opportunity to obtain a dwelling of their own under the workers' dwellings provisions, and it is healthier for them.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Bill makes provision for that.

Mr. MURPHY: I am glad to see that. We want to see that these wage-earners get out to their homes at reasonable rates. If they have to pay heavy tram fares, they are unable to reside at any distance from the city, and in dealing with this matter the Government should not say, "Well, here is a Bill; you must take it as it is." It would be much better to introduce a Bill as a purely non-party measure, the Minister and his supporters having open minds, and then let us

[*Mr. Murphy.*

try to do the very best we can, not, of course, deliberately to injure those who have invested their money in the Brisbane Tramways, but in order that the general population in the metropolitan area shall be treated fairly and squarely by that corporation.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I am not going to oppose the adoption of this resolution, but I am somewhat surprised at the fact that on the business-sheet we have two notices dealing with the same company. The Minister says that this is going to be a very complete Bill, and I suppose it is complete so far as only one subject is concerned—that is, fares.

The HOME SECRETARY: Fares, sections, provisions for extensions, and accommodation—a very comprehensive measure.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is very different from the wording of this motion. That is how the Government generally get these things in. Evidently this is going to be almost a Tramways Bill. As I read this, it was simply a matter of the fares. Dealing with the complaint that the Minister has made as to overcrowded trams, I would like to know whether the Government have made representations to the company?

The HOME SECRETARY: I have made two applications myself, one about a month ago.

Mr. ROBERTS: I have not seen any statement that the Tramways Company were approached, or any report where they have turned the hon. member down. What occurs to me is that the Government, first of all, propose to introduce a Bill to take away the earning power of the Tramways Company, and then follow it up with another Bill to buy the company out as a non-paying concern. That is the only conclusion I can come to.

Mr. CARTER: You think they should increase the earning power?

Mr. ROBERTS: No, I do not; but I think the most important of the two Bills, and the one I would be inclined to support, would be the second one.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you agree with the company making 20 per cent. per annum for a period of years?

Mr. ROBERTS: I cannot say I do, but my experience of the company is that they give reasonable service for the fares charged. In Sydney we know that the tramways, which are run by the Government, are overcrowded at the same times as those the Home Secretary mentions, and we know that our suburban railway service is the same. Go and see the train coming from Ipswich about 8 o'clock in the morning, and tell me if there is reasonable accommodation there. The first difficulty with which the company have to deal is to have sufficient rolling-stock to deal with traffic at certain times of the day, if they are going to make a profit, and my opinion is that the people are prepared to put up with a certain amount of reasonable inconvenience in order to get the privilege, and I certainly think that if the proposal of the Home Secretary, to fix a maximum of 1d. per mile, is carried, the people will find their privileges reduced. I know many sections in and around Brisbane where you travel considerably more than that for 1d. I think the distance from the Customs House to the bridge would be nearer one mile than half a mile.

The HOME SECRETARY: Nonsense! About half a mile.



Mr. ROBERTS: From the Customs House to the railway gates must be fully a mile, and we shall have to watch very carefully to see that the travelling public do not lose some of the privileges which they enjoy.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*): The introduction of this Bill seems altogether unnecessary in the light of that which is to follow, and, although some surprise has been expressed by hon. members at the opposition shown, yet it is the duty of this side of the House to show the hollowness of the Government in attempting to introduce two measures of this kind. Either one or the other is not needed. If real business is meant by the second measure, there is no need whatever for the introduction of this. Those who travel by train, I think, generally realise that the charges are moderate.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: If you lived where I do, you would see yourself standing every morning.

Mr. BARNES: I see people standing in trains, and that evil exists at different hours of the day, but the Government have power and authority to deal with it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Every time I have appealed to them they have given some excuse why it should not be done.

Mr. BARNES: Not very long ago the Minister received a deputation on this very score, and I believe relief followed the representations which were then made by the Minister. If he was then able to secure a better service, so he is able to do so now. The truth is that this is a sort of flashlight effort at the end of the session, a kind of last try to show to the people of the metropolis that, "although we have been lax, after all the matter is not forgotten, and we flash out now; we are going to bring some redress to you if you have a grievance in connection with tramway matters."

The HOME SECRETARY: You indicate that the people want it by your remarks.

Mr. BARNES: Evidently the burden has not been felt very much by Ministers, or they would have given attention to the matter earlier than the dying hours of this Parliament. There may be need in some directions. This Bill, standing by itself, may be a perfectly right and just thing in the interests of the people, but in the light of the Government acquiring the tramways in the near future the matter might be delayed until they show the more excellent way. Either one proposal or the other is hollow. Perhaps both of them are, and they are merely a matter of flashlight business.

However, I scarcely think the people are going to be gulled into the belief that an effort is being made by this Government to put things in order before this Parliament ends. Another thing is very singular, and that is that during these later days of this session we are witnessing the efforts made by one Minister in supporting another. Only the other day we had evidence of the Minister for Education supporting his colleague the Treasurer in the direction of his measures, and now to-day we have the Acting Minister for Justice coming along and supporting the Home Secretary in the big effort he has made in the introduction of this measure. No doubt, the measures are of considerable importance to the Government; but surely the weight of two Ministers is scarcely necessary in order to give the House

a true assurance and insight into the necessity for the introduction of a Bill of this kind.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): As a country member, I do not see any particular objection to this question as it is stated here. It seems to me that by the wording it is simply the intention to regulate the fares on the Brisbane tramways, and there is no doubt there are some anomalies in regard to those fares. But if it has any bearing on the next motion—

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the hon. member confine himself to the motion before the House.

Mr. SWAYNE: When we come to the next motion I will not be in order in referring to the previous one, but the two must be read together if we are to get at the full meaning of those introducing the Bill. I have always taken the stand that where a monopoly exists it is the duty of the State, if need be, to step in and see that that monopoly does not abuse its strength. But, while we are talking about monopolies, I think the monopolies we are suffering most from in Queensland at present are not monopolies of capital, but monopolies at the other end of the social scale. The monopolies I speak of are the cause of considerable loss to the consumers and the public of Queensland generally, and the Government has shown no desire at all to deal with those monopolists. However, I know I would not be in order in referring further to these, but where a monopoly exists one cannot object to the State supervising and seeing that it does not take undue advantage. At the same time, as far as the Brisbane tramways are concerned, those who have been in the other States of Australia know that, on the whole, they give a very fair service. But I do think, if there is any intention on the part of the Government to utilise this as a means to ruin the assets of the company as a preparatory step to reduce their value before, acquiring them, it is a different matter altogether, and I hope that nothing of that kind is in view, because not only would its bad effect apply to the company, but it would have a very detrimental effect on the affairs of Queensland as a whole if it were once known that as a preparatory step to acquiring any property the first thing is to depreciate the value of that property. That would be nothing more or less than confiscation, and as such would have a very bad effect on investors, and no one in Queensland wants to discourage the investment of capital in the State. As far as the regulation of fares is concerned, it is quite possible there is room for legislation, but I am anxious to see the Bill and to see that it is limited to duties of that sort. I think also the next question is one that will be entitled to attract considerable attention from members from country electorates, but as far as this is concerned it has not much bearing on the question of town versus country.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): I have just a few words to say before this motion is put. As far as I am concerned, I will vote for anything that will assist the public of Brisbane so far as the travelling facilities are concerned. But, at the same time, I think it is very strange that a matter of this sort should be brought in at the tail end of what I might call a dying Parliament. Whether it is for any particular purpose or not that

*Mr. Petrie.*

it is being introduced at this time, I am not prepared to say. However, so far as the tramways are concerned, there is no doubt that probably a lot of improvements might be made in the direction of doing away with the grievances of the travelling public. But I also want to point out, and I do not want to digress and be called to order, that I am quite in agreement with the hon. member for Burrum that it is the duty of the Government to put their own house in order before attempting to interfere with other people—that is, so far as the railways are concerned. When the second reading of the Bill comes on I shall have a little more to say regarding that. I would just like to correct a statement made by the Minister for Justice with regard to these tramlines only being constructed where the population existed. I know that, so far as the Toowong line is concerned, when that line was constructed there was not the population, so far as Auchenflower is concerned, and other parts out there such as the Wienhoit Estate, that there is now. After the trams were extended in that direction houses went up, I might say, like mushrooms, and there is no doubt if the trams have done nothing else they have done a lot so far as the city of Brisbane is concerned by the extension of their lines to make conveniences for the people to live out of town.

The HOME SECRETARY: And the travelling public pay for it.

Mr. PETRIE: We had to pay considerably more in the old bus days. I remember they travelled pretty cheaply, and even then people were not satisfied so far as the buses were concerned. With regard to the sections, some of the sections that have been mentioned to-day are very reasonable. Of course, there are other sections which might not be. I do not know how, under the Bill, it is proposed to divide up the sections.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing the details of the Bill.

Mr. PETRIE: I just dwelt on that in connection with an interjection made by the Home Secretary. So far as the Bill is concerned I am sorry it was necessary to introduce it at this time, and that the Government did not do so when they first came into office. I think at a time like this, when we have so many other things to attend to, more important things than a matter of this sort, it would have been just as well to have delayed both these measures until the new Parliament came in, at all events. So far as the acquiring of the trams is concerned I will not be allowed to discuss that now, but I may when the next motion is moved. If anything can be done for the public I am with any Government, or with anybody, that will make conditions for the travelling public better, and give all the facilities possible. But, at the same time, I think up to a certain point the Brisbane Tramways Company have done good work, and have been a great convenience. Although they say the trams here are not as well run as they are down south, I do not agree with that, because I have heard people from southern States praising our trams and saying they were as good as any. That is all I have to say at the present time, but probably I shall have more to say when the second reading of the Bill comes along.

Question put, and passed.

[*Mr. Petrie.*]

## BRISBANE TRAMWAY PURCHASE BILL.

### INITIATION.

The HOME SECRETARY: I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the purchase of the authorised tramway in the city of Brisbane, the city of South Brisbane, and their suburbs.”

The franchise held by the present company falls in on the 20th September, 1920, and this Bill is to make provision that, when that takes place, the tramways will be vested in His Majesty. The Government will take the trams over in trust for the local authorities until they get the necessary money to take them over from the Government, but the Government is first purchaser, and simply stand as trustee for the local authorities.

Colonel RANKIN: Is it necessary to pass an Act three years in advance?

The HOME SECRETARY: It is advisable. It is just as well that when the present Government is in a position to put through an efficient Bill we should take advantage of it. This thing has been hanging on for a very long time. Past Governments have taken it in hand, and when it came to preparing the necessary legislation, as my colleague, the Minister for Justice said, a draft Bill was prepared of such a character that it seemed to give the tramway company the monopoly for all time. (Opposition dissent). I hope that is not the case, but I feel satisfied that my colleague would not make a statement of that sort if it were not true.

Mr. ROBERTS: It would have no chance to pass this House—a Bill like that.

The HOME SECRETARY: I feel perfectly satisfied that this Bill, as framed, will pass this House. Of course I can see by the attitude of hon. members opposite that we are not likely to get very much sympathy. (Opposition dissent.) I do not want to do any injustice to hon. members, but their remarks on the previous motion gave me that impression. This Bill is a corollary of the other, but although the trams are to be purchased three years hence, when the franchise falls in, there is nothing like “taking time by the forelock,” and that is what we are doing, and I sincerely hope that this Government, or the party which occupies these benches at the time, will have an opportunity to see the tramways taken over not only for the benefit of the people who live in the city, but also of visitors from outside. The measure is to cover the purchase of these trams, and we are making provision for the issue of Government debentures, which will have a currency of twenty-one years. The measure has been drawn up to protect the public interests as much as possible, and the rights of the local authorities under existing Acts. I think I have given hon. members the information they need on this motion. The two Bills make a complete whole. The former one I have already discussed, and I think I have given sufficient reason why this should have a speedier passage than the previous motion.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I desire to thank the Minister for going so fully into the matter. There is one point on which we all agree,

and that is that the Minister is never backward in supplying information in regard to the legislation he desires to introduce. Sometimes it does not hasten the introduction of the measure, but I am sure that before it goes through this House the hon. gentleman is more than compensated for his courtesy,

because if we discuss it at this [5 p.m.] stage there is no necessity for further discussion. I have no objection to the acquirement of the tramways by the Government if they run them in connection with their railways, because the power-house is so situated that it could be utilised for electrifying our railways at any time, and it would be of advantage in that direction. But where I do join issue with the Government is in regard to incurring liabilities at the present time, when they are unable to meet them. A Government should pay its way. This Government is not in that position, and not being in that position it should not take upon itself a liability such as this. If this liability were to be met by the Government during the time they were in office there might be some justification for it, but they are postponing the obligation. They may be in office when the time matures to meet them, but the probability is that they will not. I might even go further than that and say that it is a certainty that they will not. I do not know what the Government anticipate they will have to pay for the tramways, but a little investigation will show that the administration of the late Government facilitated the purchase of the Brisbane tramways. The legislation that was first introduced in this House in regard to the tramways had certain loopholes which gave the Tramways Company a continuity of franchise beyond what was anticipated. To the late Government must be given the credit of bringing the matter within bounds so that the tramways can be acquired on the termination of the franchise. But we require some information as to what the cost is likely to be. I have no doubt that the Government have gone carefully into the matter and will be able to say that they have made some arrangement with the Tramways Company for the purchase of the tramways, and that they will be able to give us some idea of what the cost will be. The hon. gentleman told us quite candidly that it is immaterial what the cost will be, because they are not going to find the cash; that they are going to offer debentures at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. It may be that these debentures will have a currency of quite a number of years, or it may be that they will have a short currency, like some of the other debentures they are issuing now, and that the obligation will fall, in a very short time, on the people of Queensland to redeem the promises made. We know what they are: £600,000 for cattle stations, £700,000 in relation to the matter we were discussing the other day, and then there is the £254,000 in connection with which we passed a measure through the House the other day in order to indemnify the Government, not against maladministration, but against improper administration. Now, on top of that comes another large order, probably £2,000,000 at the least. The public outside does not recognise the fact that this £2,000,000 will be added to the national debt of Queensland at a big interest.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: The Brisbane people are paying Badger 12 per cent.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We are not talking about what the people of Brisbane are paying Badger; we are talking about what the people of Queensland will have to pay for employing the present Government. The rate of interest will probably be  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. If those debentures will extend over any length of time, see what an immense amount of accrued interest there will be. It is unfortunate, when the Government have to go on the money market for loans for public works, that they should be undermining the ground on which they stand. They are in the position of the little boy who climbed a tree, got out on a limb, and then proceeded to cut the limb between himself and the parent stem. Before very long down he comes with a smash, and that is exactly the position of the present Government. They are going to come down with a smash. It would not so very much matter, perhaps, although we might regret it personally, if the Government, when they came down with a smash, did not bring other people down with them, but the unfortunate position is that the credit of the country is wrapped up in the credit of the Government. I think it is most inappropriate that a measure of this kind should be introduced on an occasion when we require all the money that can be raised for a specific and definite purpose, and it is no use saying that we are going to get over the difficulty by issuing Treasury bills to the company bearing interest at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. or perhaps a greater percentage than that. I take it that the Tramways Company is not bound to accept the terms of the Government unless arrangements have already been made and the Government are prepared to come down with an agreement, attached to the Bill, such as the agreement that was presented here yesterday. Apart from the iniquity of doing this thing at this particular time, I see no need for the Government to purchase the tramways on behalf of certain local authorities. Probably it would be better for the Government to retain the running of the tramways in their own hands and work them in connection with the railways. I do not think it is a proper time to launch out in a large expenditure by which the public debt is increased in an insidious manner not recognised by the public, but which will be recognised later on when they have to pay the heavy interest bills that must naturally come from the present way of carrying on business. £2,000,000 at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. means another £85,000.

The HOME SECRETARY: What about the profit?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The profits are problematic, and instead of profits they might be run, like our railways, at a loss. In other more fortunate circumstances I would be only too pleased to co-operate with the hon. gentleman in getting the Bill through, but I am bound, at this juncture, to point out to the taxpayers of Queensland that an additional burden is being placed on their shoulders by this Government.

Colonel RANKIN: I do not think anyone would raise any serious objection to the Government having control of a public utility of this kind. We all recognise that in the case of railways, post offices, and things of that sort, it is desirable that the Government should have control, but I think the motion is open to objection for two very sound reasons. First of all the Government,

*Colonel Rankin.]*

in bringing forward this motion, which the Home Secretary has told us would not come into operation for three years, is unnecessarily tying the hands of a possible future Government.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Can't they repeal it?

Colonel RANKIN: Of course they could, but why should it be necessary for them to repeal it? If the arguments of the Government are sincere—that there is so much business to be done that we must sit five days a week—surely it is a startling commentary on parliamentary procedure that we should have a measure brought in this afternoon that is not required for three years on the showing of the Minister himself. That is in itself a sufficient argument for the Opposition in opposing a measure of this kind; but there is a graver and much stronger reason why the Opposition should strongly protest against this measure, and it is this: that the Government are seeking to bind the country to an expenditure of £2,000,000 in taking over a tramway in Brisbane when the country districts are crying out for railways; when the man on the land has not those facilities which are essential to the successful development of his land. If we look over the financial transactions of the present Government, we see how they have been piling up the national debt; how the expenditure, not only from revenue, but from loan funds and from trust funds, has been rising, rising, and steadily rising, and even now apparently it has not reached high-water mark. On the face of that, and on the face of the losses that have already been sustained under the administration of the present Government, and with proposals now before the Chamber involving something like three-quarters of a million sterling, surely it is not the time for this House to discuss a further increase of £2,000,000 to our national debt.

The HOME SECRETARY: This affects the Brisbane people only.

Colonel RANKIN: That was my contention a few minutes ago in regard to the introduction of the other Bill; it affects the Brisbane people only. The Government are spending £2,000,000 of public money to benefit the people of Brisbane. How many miles of railway would that £2,000,000 build in the country districts? Probably some 400 or 500 miles of railway, but this Government, which the Assistant Minister for Justice just now claimed was not a Queen-street Government, is spending this amount of money to benefit the people of Brisbane. Out of the Home Secretary's own mouth they stand condemned.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are not paying cash; we are giving debentures.

Colonel RANKIN: What is the difference?

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: You could hardly build railways on debentures.

Colonel RANKIN: So far as the purchase of these tramways is concerned, it is simply another method of adding to the national debt.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: You cannot build railways out of debentures.

Colonel RANKIN: What is the difference?

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: You would have to get someone else to take them up. There is no ultimate difference, but you cannot do it.

[Colonel Rankin.]

Colonel RANKIN: There is no present difference either. I would not like to say that Queensland has got to such a stage that nobody would buy our debentures, but the fact remains the same. Here we have the Home Secretary on his own showing bringing in a Bill for the purpose of expending £2,000,000 at a time when we should be economising in every way; at a time when we should be husbanding the resources of the State by every possible means; when the people of the country are crying out for railway facilities; when the man on the land requires better facilities for bringing his produce—produced by the sweat of his brow—to market and thereby obtain the full result of his labour. Instead of having 400 or 500 miles of railway opening up immense areas of fertile country and settled by a prosperous yeomanry, we have this proposition brought forward three years before its time binding a future Government to an expenditure of £2,000,000 merely because it is going to be, directly or indirectly, of some slight advantage to the people of Brisbane. I would like to ask the Home Secretary can he put his finger on any action of previous Administrations where a similar enormous expenditure has been incurred for the benefit of such a small portion of the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: Small portion! It is a quarter of the population.

Colonel RANKIN: I confess it may be large in point of population; but I say it is small in area. After all, when we come to the basic principle of the thing, of what great value is the city to the country? It is the country that makes it such as it is; it is the man on the land—the producer of the wealth—who makes the city dweller's life possible. The hon. member knows it as well as I do. Why this frantic endeavour to do something for the man in the town, who is already pretty well catered for; who has all the advantages of gas water, telephones, telegrams, trams, and a hundred and one things which the country man has to do without—as the Treasurer himself knows. In these times of stress, when we are preaching economy and having economy preached at us from every housetop, should we not rather be inclined to help those people who are going to add to the wealth of the community, to help the man on the land, the farmer and the settler! We are constantly being told that members opposite are the friends of the man on the land. They may be, but they have a peculiar way of hiding their friendship for the man on the land, and a still more peculiar way of disclosing it. For those two reasons we are justified in opposing this measure with all the vigour that we have—first of all that it is committing a future Government to something. Whatever may happen, the present Government cannot go on until 1920. The present Tramways Company's franchise does not expire until September, 1920—three years, practically, from now. I say it is not wise and it is not fair; it is unjust. It is not an urgent measure by any manner of means, and there are other things which are clamouring for attention.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why should not we do it when a previous Government did it?

Colonel RANKIN: A previous Government did not do it, else it would not be necessary for you to do it.

The HOME SECRETARY: They tried to.

Colonel RANKIN: It is not what people try to do, but what we are doing in the present instance. A previous Government may have tried to do it. I have no personal knowledge of any previous Government having tried to do this.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: I will let it out in a minute.

Colonel RANKIN: If the Minister knows of it, he will tell us. Whatever he may tell us is not going to alter the position one iota. The fact still remains that the franchise of that company does not expire for three years, and that by the introduction of this measure we are committing another Government to an expenditure of two millions of money. You are showing a preference towards the city dweller at the expense of the men in the country. If it was even going to create something new I could understand it, perhaps; but it is not going to create anything new. It is quite problematical—in fact, it is quite open to doubt whether, when this measure is passed and on the expiry of this franchise the tramways are taken over and run by the Government, the public will be better served than they are now.

The HOME SECRETARY: Leave it until 1920.

Colonel RANKIN: We can leave it till 1920; but if we can draw any comparison from the present, I should be inclined to say they will not be better served. I am drawing my conclusions from your administration in similar departments—to wit, the Railway Department, where last year you had a deficit of over three-quarters of a million and where this year the Minister promises us a deficit of £1,053,000. I say, even with this measure, it is not going to be any advantage; it is not going to give any great facilities to the people of Brisbane; and I also anticipate that it is going to be—through the loss in running—a further tax on the shoulders of the ratepayers of this State. Perhaps all these things depend a good deal for their success on the people who run them. Perhaps under an Administration like the predecessors of the present Government, who were able to run their railways as paying concerns, nationalisation might be a success and they might pay their way. But if we are to take as a guide what we have learned from the last two and a-half years' financial administration of this Government I say we can look forward with a feeling of doubt to the success of the tramway system under a Government such as that which Queensland is possessed of at the present time.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: I don't think I have listened for a long time to such flimsy arguments used to impede the passage of a proposed measure through this Chamber. The leader of the Opposition remarked that it was like the small boy on the end of the bough, who cut it off and fell. As a matter of fact, it is the Tramways Company that is on this particular bough, and this Government has the axe to cut it down and give the tree itself—the people—a chance. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member for Burrum referred to the fact that we are legislating three years ahead. He supported a Government, of which subsequently he was a member, which circulated a Bill in this House with almost precisely the same proposals in the way of repurchase. The position is not a different one. In 1920 Mr. Badger's franchise expires. The Denham Government—and the member

for Burrum, as Secretary for Railways, should know of it—proposed to introduce legislation to meet the exigencies of the circumstances at the end of 1920. It should not be permitted that Mr. Badger should go on for all time. Are we simply to stultify ourselves as a Government, to prepare no machinery to take over the tramways, and simply to leave Mr. Badger there in perpetual tenancy of that valuable franchise? That is the position. It is not a matter of £2,000,000. The local authorities at the present time cannot take over; if the franchise expired to-morrow, they could not get the money. The Act provides that they shall take over. They are not even unanimous in their ideas in regard to the matter, and if one local authority dissented from the proposals of all the others the whole thing would fall through, and Mr. Badger would be left in possession. Is that a good thing? The Denham Government, even, considered that it was not a good thing.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Is this going to alter it?

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Of course it is. This Bill is a sensible, rational Bill, brought in for a specific purpose—to deal with the bungle created by past Liberal Governments, which did not merely issue debentures but built up a debt of over £60,000,000, on which the taxpayers are paying interest to-day.

Colonel RANKIN: And they have a very good asset for £50,000,000 odd of it.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: If we bought the tramways—no matter what the purchase price—we also would have a good asset, and be enabled to give the people of the city cheaper transit and more rapid transit. At the present time the people of Queensland are not paying 4½ per cent. on £2,000,000 for these tramways, certainly, but the people of Brisbane are paying something like 12 per cent. on the tramways.

The HOME SECRETARY: More than that.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: If you take into account the watered capital, a good deal more than that. That is the position. It is not a waste of £2,000,000.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Only a few years ago the tramways paid nothing at all.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Facts are rather stubborn things; and to-day the people of Brisbane are paying about 5 per cent. for their workers' dwellings, and about 12 per cent. for their rides in the trams. If the workers' dwellings were successful on the one hand, there was no reason to anticipate that the tramways would be a failure.

Mr. ROBERTS: The tramways are competing with the railways.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: When we go, say, to a place like Ascot, the railways charge about 5d. return; about 6d. or 7d. first class. The tramways charge 1s. on special days, and then you stand practically on the top. In Brisbane we are really a race of strap-hangers. They take you to the Exhibition for a special fare of 3d.; it is too much from here to the Exhibition.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Deal with the everyday working.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: In everyday working I say the people of Brisbane pay too much for the tramways. I have no objection to the tramways monopoly. I object to the Liberal Administration that gave that franchise, which even left the matter of

*Hon. J. A. Fidelity.*

goodwill as a doubtful quantity. I blame the bad Governments of the past, not Mr. Badger. Mr. Badger is entitled, under our commercial system, to make every penny he can out of tramways; but we would be very foolish if we were to sit by inattentively and allow him to exploit the people unnecessarily.

Mr. ROBERTS: Tell us what the railways charge.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: I can tell the hon. member for East Toowoomba that during the last ten years railway freights have hardly gone up, and shipping freights have gone up anything up to 80 per cent. I will tell him something further—that if the State Government or the Commonwealth Government owned the coastal shipping, fares and freights on our coast would be at least 30 per cent. less than they are now. I will tell him, also, that the Government Workers' Compensation Department is doing accident business at least 40 per cent., and probably 50 per cent., cheaper than any private concern.

Colonel RANKIN: Your railway fares have gone up 20 per cent.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: Our railway freights in regard to wool and stock have.

Colonel RANKIN: That is freights. I am speaking of fares.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: Fares have scarcely gone up at all. Reference was also made—following the Liberal policy, of course, of calling attention to some alleged financial extravagance of the Government—to stations. Hon. members know very well that any of our stations to-morrow could be unloaded on the private speculator with a good deal of profit to the Government. (Hear, hear!) Reference was made to the difference between debentures and loans. Any intelligent member knows that we cannot build railways on debentures, unless we can get individuals to take up debentures—which is prohibited by our agreement with the Commonwealth—as they were taken up in New South Wales by Norton Griffith, and in South Australia and Tasmania by Teesdale Smith. You can buy properties and so on with debentures, but it is quite a different matter to build railways. If we bought the tramways to-morrow and paid two million pounds in debentures, it would not affect to the extent of one mile our railway policy in Queensland. It could not affect our loan transactions. The Government is desirous of unravelling this tramways tangle, and we are arranging for 1920 that they will be taken over with the least possible friction. The hon. member for Burrum has no right to object to our legislating three years ahead. After his Government was defeated at the polls, he, as Minister for Railways, appointed the Commissioner for Railways for three years. We should really have upset the appointment, if we did not agree with it. That Government did a most unheard-of thing. After the Government was defeated at the polls, after our present Premier requested Mr. Denham to hold office for a week, so that he could get his team together, they extended the time.

Colonel RANKIN: I rise to a point of order. The statement of the hon. member is not in accordance with the fact with regard to the appointment of the Commissioner for Railways.

[Hon. J. A. Fihelly.]

HON. J. A. FIELLY: If it is not in accordance with fact, it is the fact that after the late Government was defeated at the polls the Commissioner for Railways got an extension of his term for three years.

Colonel RANKIN: I take exception to that. I must ask the hon. member to withdraw his statement. There was no appointment of such a nature made after the Government had been defeated.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: It is so. You altered the basis of overtime payment after you were defeated, too. However, I will take that up with you later on. There is no need to hurry.

HON. J. TOLMIE: You are generally mistaken about these matters, are not you?

HON. J. A. FIELLY: I am usually right in these matters—and other matters, too. I will undertake to say that you will find I am right, because I have taken particular care to look into the minute.

Mr. BARNES: Is that why you are stonewalling?

HON. J. A. FIELLY: This is a very important measure, and it is just as well to clear away any misconceptions that may exist.

HON. J. TOLMIE: You might get the Secretary for Public Instruction to help you.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: I admit I am encroaching a little bit on his monopoly, as I want to encroach a little bit on Badger's monopoly. Our desire is to have an efficient and well-equipped service in the city. We do not want to impose on the [5.30 p.m.] goodness or generosity of country constituencies. We try to do a fair thing by them, but we recognise that Mr. Badger cannot have this valuable franchise for all time. I am sure that every man in Queensland of intelligence or patriotism will agree with that. We want a properly well conducted service. We want, if possible, to co-ordinate electrical power and light. Possibly, in the near future, if the Government remain in power for ten or twelve years—which, of course, I anticipate—they will build a power station capable of giving the necessary power and light and also capable of electrifying the railways, and it will be there as a permanent tribute to the far-sightedness of the present Government, which did not build up a public debt of £50,000,000.

Mr. CORSER: It is not my intention to follow the Assistant Minister for Justice in stonewalling the motion before the House, but I do not see the importance of it at the present time and I do not know that the Minister gave us any information. I do not know that he did anything more than show that some of his departments were bad administrators at any rate. I do not see that there is, at the present time, any necessity to introduce a measure which is likely to put such a burden on the community, because the administration of some departments show that they have not the business system and method to enable our railroads and other State enterprises to succeed. Until we are able to do those things, I do not see the advisability of taxing the people to the extent of the deficit that is likely to accrue when these tramways are handed by the present Government. If it is a matter of selling debentures, I think it would be best

to sell them in the interests of development and production, and there are very many ways in which we could use our energies in that direction at the present time.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: State ironworks?

Mr. CORSER: That has my support, and as another instance, we might be able to secure for struggling agriculturists in other districts who have everything but stock, any amount of milking cows to enable them to use the feed on their properties and thus obtain development and production in the State.

Mr. POLLOCK: You want the people of Brisbane to milk cows for Badger.

Mr. CORSER: I do not know that we do—or for anybody else. We certainly know that the people of Brisbane enjoy a very good service.

Mr. POLLOCK: You can travel three times as far in Sydney as you can in Brisbane for the same money.

Mr. CORSER: A member of Parliament can travel a long way in Sydney for nothing. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Every cloud has a silver lining, and if it is going to provide cheap fares for members of Parliament, perhaps that is the silver lining in this cloud. That is not what we should look at altogether, and if we are going to make ourselves responsible for this amount of money our energies might be far better directed towards production and development.

The HOME SECRETARY: The people in Brisbane pay for it; not the general community.

Mr. CORSER: The people in the country would have to pay for any deficit. That is the thing we are looking at.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): I think this is a very important measure and I do not think that I would be justified in not saying a word on it. It seems to me that this Government have no control over their wish to spend money. If they are not able to buy things for cash they want to buy things with debentures. We have a loss of £750,000 upon our railways—practically three-quarters of a million. Then we have spent three-quarters of a million in buying stations, and another three-quarters of a million that we propose to spend in buying the Chillagoe railway. I think we might call this the three-quarter of a million Government. (Laughter.) Everything seems to be three-quarters of a million—nothing less. In fact, it is more in this case. They want to spend £2,000,000 in buying Badger's trams. That means that about £100,000 is going to be spent in interest for these enterprises. At a time like this, we cannot afford that sort of thing. It is all very well to say that we are not going to pay cash, but somebody has to pay interest on the debentures and we are that somebody. What are we going to get for it? The country constituencies are not going to get any advantage by the taking over of the tramways. If the people of Brisbane want the Government or municipal trams, why should the country constituencies pay for them? What is to prevent the municipalities of Brisbane combining and buying Badger's trams and running them in any way they think fit? The municipal or Government enterprises that we have in other States are nothing so very wonderful. The trams in Sydney are not better run than they

are in Brisbane, if as well, and they are run at a loss. They had to raise the fares some time ago.

Mr. POLLOCK: They were not run at a loss last year.

Mr. GUNN: It was only last year that they raised the rates to make both ends meet. When the Government take the Brisbane tramways over we will find that there will be no 12 per cent. dividend. There will be a shortage, just as there is on the railways, and the producers of Queensland will have to be taxed to make up that shortage. More debentures will then have to be floated to pay off the deficit, and so on. The Government seem to me to have gone on a financial spree, and if the Opposition can do anything to stop that financial spree they are doing a good thing for Queensland.

Mr. ROBERTS: We are trying to sober them up.

Mr. GUNN: We are trying to sober them up. It is time the brake was put on them. If you read through the "red book," you will see all sorts of methods of extinguishing public debts and how Governments should not borrow at all. They used to call the Denham and other Governments the "Borrow, boom, and burst" Governments. If this is not a borrow, boom, and burst Government, I do not know what Government ought to be called by such a name. Coming in from Toowong you ride on Badger's trams, and you notice that the only spot that you can travel on is in the middle of the road. Who keeps it up? Badger's Tramways Company. If the Government take over this utility we will find that the road will all be no good and there will be no place on which people can travel. I have no time for the Government running everything. It seems to me that soon there will be no private enterprise. I know very well that the supporters of the Government believe in the nationalisation of all means of production, distribution, and exchange. But if we got down to that state of things where everybody was a public servant, who is going to work? There would be no incentive to work. What has made the British nation go ahead at the present time? What made Europe the country it is but the incentive to work—the feeling a man has that if he gathers property together he can call it his own and give it to his children and his children's children. But, according to this Government, no man ought to have any right to own property at all. All ought to be put in one pool. Everything should belong to the Government, and the man who works and strives should get no reward at all, and the consequence is that he will not work or strive. He will work less and less, and eventually he will come down to the state of the aboriginals. What caused the present state of the aboriginals? Nothing else but this system of socialism. No aboriginal has anything that he can call his own; everything belongs to the tribe. If he gets two opossums instead of one, the tribe take one from him. (Laughter.) What was the cause of that disaster in the Gulf the other day? Nothing but the socialistic propensities of the aboriginal. If those missionaries had shared all they possessed the aboriginals would have said they were good fellows, but because they had clothes and houses they thought they were bloated aristocrats and that they should divide their property with them. The consequence was that the unfortunate missionary lost his life, because he was not a

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socialist of the type of the present Government in power. Everybody who has an incentive to work will be sacrificed, the same as the missionary on Mornington Island. I have no time for this wholesale socialism. There are utilities that have to belong to the Government, and we have plenty of them at the present time. If it is necessary to acquire these tramways, let the people acquire them through the municipality. What advantage are these municipal railways to the producers and selectors of Queensland?

Mr. FOLEY: You said the other day that you did not care if the railways were taken over by a syndicate.

Mr. GUNN: Privately I do not care if a syndicate took the railways over. I compare the prosperity of Australia with the prosperity of America and England and other countries where, under private enterprise, they have flourishing railway systems, flourishing ironworks, and everything else.

Mr. WEIR: What happened when the war broke out?

Mr. GUNN: A great number of things were taken over by the Government, and they are sighing for the time when they will get back to private ownership. (Government laughter.) You can say what you like, but the worker gets better terms and conditions from a private owner than from any corporation, municipality, or Government. If you are working for a private man, you can appeal to him straight away and get redress of your wrongs, but if you are working for a municipality or a Government, you have got to go through ever so much red tape. And by the time you have waded through acres of red tape and sealing wax, you are just about where you started. I think the worker, taking him all through, would sooner work for a private individual than for a corporation or municipality. Look at Mr. Badger's men on the trams! Are they not just as contented, just as well off, as men working in the Railway Department?

Mr. POLLOCK: At £2 10s. per week.

Mr. GUNN: I am not conversant with what they are getting, but they got an award, and I think they are getting over the award in some cases, and the tram manager gives many concessions to those men in the way of looking after their wants that the Government do not give them. Hon. members opposite talk a great deal about what a wonderful employer the Railway Department is, and yet I go along the line and see the navvies living in huts made of kerosene tins.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How long is it since you saw that?

Mr. GUNN: I was up on the Talwood line last week and I saw it, and I passed one place where a lengthman has been living for five years in a hut made of cases and tins. That has been going on for a long time, and I do not think the men are much better off when employed by the Government than when employed by a private individual. I have complained of it all along. I will always be in favour of private enterprise. Private enterprise drove Canada along, and private enterprise drove America ahead, and other places; but when you get the Government stroke and municipalism the country is going to be fleeced. Then, again, you have many men working on the railways, and they all have a vote. You have so many

stations, and the men there will be under Government patronage, and when you take over the tramways you will get more Government employees, and when the Government have more employees than anybody else has, what is going to happen to the people who are not Government employees? Will not the Government employees held the balance of power? Of course they will, and they will crush the individual out of existence. I am not going to say a word about the Government employees as Government employees, because some of the best men I know or ever happened to come in contact with in my life were employed in the Government service; but it is only human nature that when they get power they will make use of that power. Then, again, there is this trouble about the public service—that it is so difficult to get rid of a loafer once he gets employed in the Government service. That is the trouble—you cannot fire him. If the ganger discharges him he appeals to the member of Parliament or the union or somebody else, and he is reinstated, and the ganger loses control of his men, and he cannot get the work out of them that a private employer can, because he does not treat them fairly. He is not able to give any bonus to the men who do a fair day's work. He has to treat them all alike, and the waster can do as little as he likes under a Government department, in many cases, through the ganger not being able to sack him. That is more particularly the case under Labour rules, because under the Liberal rule there was some chance of getting a fair day's work, because the Government of the day did not get their support in votes. But now the present Government are kept in power by the public service vote, and consequently all the legislation they are bringing forward is in the interests of the public servant. When our railways started in Queensland they were built to carry produce to market. They were run in the interests of the producer. But now you never hear anything about the railways of Queensland being run in those interests. It is a question whether the hours are to be eight hours or six hours, or whether proper overtime is paid or whether some Labour commission is right or wrong. They are running all our utilities in the interests of the employees and not in the interests of the producers of Queensland, and therefore I am against this Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister is asking us to agree to allow him to introduce a Bill to obtain a loan by means of debentures for the purchase of the Brisbane tramways. I think it will be admitted by people who have travelled throughout Australia that, so far as the general service given by the tramways here is concerned, they are equal to any of the other tramways in Australia. I have had experience of travelling in other States of the Commonwealth, and I have taken notice when travelling on the different tramway systems in the different States, and I can honestly state, as one who has made a practice of studying these particular matters, that the Brisbane tramway service compares favourably with the tramway service in any other State.

The HOME SECRETARY: And will compare more favourably with the fares reduced and the sections longer.

Mr. MORGAN: So far as crowding the travelling public is concerned, I think they are crowded more in Sydney than in any

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other city. I know myself when visiting that locality, so far as people hanging on to straps and footboards is concerned, you find that at certain hours of the day in every State.

The HOME SECRETARY: I never saw it so bad in Sydney as here.

Mr. MORGAN: I know I myself have had to hang out on the steps while in Sydney going to the races with my friend the hon. member for Nanango. We had to hang on to the steps along with scores of other people. Every train was crowded, and I think everybody has had that experience who has been in Sydney. I admit the same thing occurs here in Brisbane, and particularly in Exhibition week.

The HOME SECRETARY: Every morning when I come into town I have to stand.

Mr. MORGAN: In the early morning hours and during the hour when people start to knock off—at 5 o'clock in the evening—that is the case, and it is the same even in the train service. If you go down to Roma Street or Central Station what do you discover? You find people standing up in the railway carriages.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not to the same extent.

Mr. MORGAN: All the same, they are doing it. I have had experience at different times, for instance during Exhibition week and during the Christmas holidays. I have known people not to have a seat after leaving Central Station until they got to Dalby on the Western mail train. People have had to stand up or sit on boxes, or make use of their portmanteaus in the passages of the railway carriages.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: At what time did that happen?

Mr. MORGAN: It happens, and I want the Minister to make a note of it, almost every year during the period when the schools break up at the Christmas holidays, and when the school children are returning to their homes in the West. It happens during Exhibition week, when the people on the last day are catching the Western mail train to go back to their homes, and it also happens when the teachers congregate from all parts of the Western portion of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is only an insignificant number who would travel at those times.

Mr. MORGAN: It occurs every year. I generally go up in that particular train myself, and I have noticed it, and I have given up my seat to ladies so that they could have the benefit of it, and I myself have sat on a box in the passages of the different carriages. The same thing will occur, no doubt, in connection with the trams. With regard to the fares, we know that on the country railways they have raised the fares; but, so far as the city is concerned, they left them as they found them when the previous Government was in power. For instance, take the fares charged by our tramways from Roma Street to the Customs House; I think it is 1d. I do not know the exact distance, but I estimate it is nearly 2 miles. I am willing to make a bet with any hon. member opposite that it is nearer 2 miles than 1 mile.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: It is 1½ mile.

Mr. MORGAN: Then, from the Victoria Bridge across the Brisbane River to New Farm, you can travel that distance for 2d.

Mr. McMINN: No, you cannot, not from across the river; you can from George street.

Mr. MORGAN: I did not say "from across the river." I mentioned the Victoria Bridge, to show the locality.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing that matter on this motion.

Mr. MORGAN: This matter was raised by the hon. member for Paddington.

The SPEAKER: Order! It was raised on the previous motion.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, but the question has been raised, and it is my wish to point out that, so far as the Government taking over the tramways is concerned, as a country representative, I am not in favour of it, not at any rate at this particular juncture. I think the Government would be better advised to try to give us more railways in the country districts; to continue the programme that was mapped out by the previous Government, and that has been mapped out by this Government in connection with country railways. So far as the fares are concerned, I am quite satisfied that when the Government do get possession of the trams the general public are not going to benefit one iota, and the fares are not going to be reduced when the Government get control. They are likely to be increased, because at present there is a certain amount of competition between the trams and the railways, and that competition will be done away with. At the present time there are certain tram lines that compete with the Government railways. For instance, the Toowong line out Auchinfloer way.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you not think the line could be extended from the North Quay to the Valley, instead of stopping at the Customs House?

Mr. MORGAN: That might be, but I am sure that at the present time the people of Brisbane are getting a service equal to the service the people are getting in any other part of Australia, and, if that is so—and it cannot be denied—why is it necessary to bring in this legislation at the present time? You can travel now 1½ mile for 1d.: and in the country districts the people have to pay on an average 2d. per mile on the railways.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is still discussing the motion that has already been agreed to.

Mr. MORGAN: I certainly think that at the present time the Government are simply introducing this Bill for political purposes, and they have no idea whatever of carrying it any further. They have been advocating when on this side of the House, for many years, the taking over of the Brisbane tramways, but three years have gone by and they have done nothing until the very expiring hours of the session of Parliament, and they come forward with the Bill in order that during the coming election campaign the people will not have an opportunity of saying the Government did not fulfil the promises and pledges they made, that if they obtained the Government benches they would immediately do something to take over the Brisbane tramways and so get square with

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Mr. Badger for the part he took in connection with the tramway strike. That is one of the reasons why the Bill has been introduced, in order to try if possible to satisfy a certain section of the people of Brisbane that the Government are anxious to fulfil the promises they made during the last election campaign. I am quite satisfied that if the trams are carried on by the Government the people are not going to benefit in any shape or form. It will mean the raising of a huge sum of money by debentures—which is only another word for loan—and the Government anticipate paying  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest on that loan.

Mr. SWAYNE: The Minister in charge of this Bill remarked that it was a corollary to its predecessor. I intend to support the previous Bill, but it seems to me if that is

[7 p.m.] largely disappears, because, while we all join in the desire to protect the people of Brisbane from anything in the shape of extortion or exploitation at the hands of any monopoly, once Parliament has power to prevent that extortion the evil disappears. I take it that the object is to secure an efficient tramway service for the people of Brisbane, and if that can be accomplished under the previous Bill, there should be no necessity to introduce this measure. We know very well that when the war is over there will be a lot of railway building to do. We have had to mark time in that respect, but once we get back to normal conditions there will be a very big demand for railways, and if we lock up the large sum involved in the purchase of the Brisbane tramways there will be so much less for railway construction.

The SPEAKER: Order! That ground can be covered by the hon. member on the second reading of the Bill, and I suggest that he confine his remarks to the motion, and not deal with the Bill.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am endeavouring to give some reasons as to whether or not its introduction is a good thing. It has been remarked that the Brisbane tramways are a public utility, but I beg to differ from the speakers who said that, because it seems to me that when you speak of a public utility you speak of a large service that applies to the whole of Queensland. Nobody can argue that in any direct way the Brisbane tramway service affects the whole of Queensland. If it should be that the people of Brisbane are dissatisfied with the present system, then it is up to them to municipalise these tramways and let the people of Brisbane run their own tramways.

The HOME SECRETARY: We have made provision for that.

Mr. SWAYNE: If that is the case, one of my objections to the introduction of the Bill largely disappears. I quite understand that there may be very strong arguments in favour of the municipalisation of the Brisbane tramways, but I do not think it would be a good thing for them to be taken over by the State. We know what happens at election times. We know how there would be pressure brought to bear on candidates to get a tramline into outlying suburbs, whose population probably did not warrant an extension, and no matter what party may be concerned it would be very hard for the candidates to resist such requests. If that were to happen and the Government were

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squeezed into giving extensions, and the working of the tramways resulted in a loss, then the whole State would have to share the loss. If, on the other hand, it was a municipal affair, then the people of Brisbane would have to bear the loss. I do not think it is a fair thing to ask the people of Queensland to bear any loss. We know that the more you add to the Government service the larger is the public service vote that has to be dealt with, and the larger the power you place in their hands, and there are indications that that vote is not always used in the best interests of the country. After all, our prosperity depends on the success of our primary industries. It is generally admitted that one of our great evils at the present time is the aggregation of large populations in the cities.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is wandering all over the place.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am simply following other speakers, because it has been urged that one reason why this legislation should be introduced is because of the number of people in Brisbane who will be benefited by it. I quite understand that there is a very large number of people living in Brisbane.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member had no other opportunity of speaking on the matter he might be allowed some latitude, but, as he will have another opportunity of speaking on the Bill, I must ask him to keep to the question now before the House.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am giving reasons why I do not think it advisable to introduce this measure, and one reason is that it might encourage that tendency for people to gather in the cities. I know that from the view of a member of Parliament it may be of advantage to nationalise the tramways, because if this nationalisation takes place members of Parliament will not have to pay.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to obey my call to order. He is using arguments that have nothing whatever to do with the motion.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am giving reasons why I question whether it would be a good thing to bring in the Bill at the present time.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is in order in mentioning his reasons for objecting to the introduction of the measure, but he continues to debate everything he mentions.

Mr. SWAYNE: So far I have confined myself to the points that have already been raised. For instance, the Assistant Minister for Justice dragged in that beneficial piece of legislation called the Workers' Dwellings Act, and, so far as I could follow him, he argued that because in that case they could get money for the buildings at 5 per cent.—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member does not appear to recognise the difference between mentioning a thing in passing and debating the matter mentioned. The hon. member proceeds to argue every matter mentioned.

Mr. SWAYNE: With all due respect I would point out that I have not mentioned the figures referred to by the Minister. He went so far as to deal with the rate of interest these people are paying, and he

also mentioned the rate of interest he estimated they were paying for these tramways—5 per cent. in one case as against 12 per cent. in another—and I was going to say that I could not see where the analogy came in. When the people of Queensland come to their senses on the matter of collectivism, and realise that the collectivist policy is detrimental to the interests of Queensland, the question of individualism versus collectivism will disappear, because I do not think the people of Queensland are collectivists, though they put a collectivist party into power on side issues. I think, when the people of Queensland realise that collectivism or socialism will be a dead letter in this Legislature, and then we shall find that the line of demarcation between the two parties in politics will be the towns versus the country. The country constituencies at present are not very much concerned about socialism or individualism, but what they will be concerned about will be the preventing of the constituencies from being unjustly treated.

Question put and passed.

#### BUNDABERG HARBOUR BOARD ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The TREASURER, in moving—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Bundaberg Harbour Board Act, 1895, in certain particulars,”

said he had already explained the measure, and he did not think it was necessary for him to say anything further.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Can you explain the franchise?

The TREASURER: The Bill would bring the franchise into line with that of a number of other boards, recently constituted, by allowing the various local authorities served by the particular harbour board to have direct representation on the harbour board to the extent of one member for each shire council and two for the town of Bundaberg.

Colonel RANKIN: Is the Barolin Shire represented?

The TREASURER: They are to have one representative. Woongarra is to have one, Barolin one, and one each for Gooburrum, Isis, and Perry.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: On a ratepayer's franchise?

The TREASURER: A ratepayer's franchise.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That is practically all that is in the Bill.

The TREASURER: That is entirely all that is in the Bill; the Bill simply deals with those two subjects.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolution, which was agreed to by the House.

#### FIRST READING.

The Bill was introduced and read a first time. The second reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### CHILLAGOE AND ETHERIDGE RAILWAYS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: When speaking on the order of leave to introduce this Bill yesterday, I pointed out to hon. members that the agreements in the schedules attached to this Bill really constitute the Bill itself. Last year, when I introduced to the House an almost similar Bill, I went extensively over the whole of the assets of the different companies and the debenture-holders who had mortgages over these companies, and which—if this Bill is ratified—will become the property of the Crown. Hon. members have referred to the fact that there has not been much mining development in the Chillagoe district for some time. That is owing chiefly to the terms on which these mining leases were first given to the Chillagoe Company. They were exempt from all labour conditions, and, therefore, at their own sweet will they could hold up the whole of the mining industry in that district. They, of course, met with bad times; the money they held did not enable them to hang out, and, according to what I showed hon. members last year, one of the leaders of one of the companies expressed the opinion that there was a good deal of mismanagement in the conduct of affairs of these companies. Whether that was or was not the cause of the failure of the company I cannot say, but I do know that the assets that will come to the Crown through this Bill will be a handsome thing for the Crown. The value of the permanent way, apart from anything else, on the Etheridge and Chillagoe railways, is no less than £300,000.

Colonel RANKIN: Is that rails and material?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Rails only.

Mr. STEVENS: Is that the value for removal?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, they would be of that value to remove them. And that is not taking into account the rolling-stock. But I believe that, had not the company been exempt from labour conditions, there would be a great deal of traffic going over both those lines to-day. Had those companies been compelled to comply with ordinary labour conditions they would have had to either work the mines or forfeit, and in the latter case other people would have come along and developed the mineral resources of those districts. The Commissioner estimated that if a similar line had to be constructed last year it would cost £498,902. That was the Commissioner's estimate of the value of the line as it stood last year. Hon. members will see that the Government do not stand to lose anything, and stand to gain a great deal. Besides that, they also stand to develop that very important and—as some people who are experts in the matter say—very valuable mineral district. Hon. members will see that the schedules for the Bill are the agreements. There are two schedules to the Bill. The first contains the agreement entered into between the different companies—the debenture-holders—and myself on behalf of the Government, and the second one on behalf of Chillagoe Limited and the Treasurer. It was necessary that the second agreement should be entered into for the sake of the Government itself as well as

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for the sake of the company, because they did not have the means to put in machinery and develop the Mulligan coalfields unless the Government came to their aid on this occasion.

Colonel RANKIN: Why don't the Government do it themselves?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government did not have the mine to do it. The company has the mine. If they could not get assistance to develop the mine, it would be going along in the same lackadaisical fashion in which it has been going for some time.

Mr. MURPHY: They had mineral leases.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would be like a step in the dark spending money in developing something you had no proof of.

The TREASURER: The leases are inaccessible.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As I am reminded by the Treasurer, the leases held by the Government are inaccessible at the present time. At any rate, the company have the mine. They have some machinery there. They want other machinery there, and they are going to put in a coke furnace and all the rest of it, and it will be a good thing for the Government if they can take out sufficient coal for the needs of the Railway Department in that far Northern district. You will also see by the agreement that the Commissioner may fix special tolls, fares, rates, and charges for the carriage of goods on these railways; but he is limited to a charge equal to 50 per cent. above what the Government charged prior to the passing of the Act. That is similar to what was in existence before. Hon. members will know that although the Chillagoe Company exacted their full "pound of flesh" there is very little danger of the Commissioner for Railways doing that.

Mr. MURPHY: I don't think we should give him the chance; we ought to leave that the same as any other railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I don't think that hon. members need have any fear that the Commissioner will deal any more unfairly with the people in that district than he would with the people in any other district in Queensland. Generally speaking, hon. members will agree that the people of Queensland—as far as railway carriage is concerned—have been dealt with very generously indeed by the Railway Commissioner. Now, the amount of £475,000 at 4 per cent. per annum for a guarantee of seven years is the amount that will be paid by way of debentures to the different companies and debenture-holders. There is also a question of £1,000 in cash which will be paid to the same bodies. That was provided for in the Bill introduced last year. It would enable them to defray the expenses of transfer and so on. It was insisted by the different companies and debenture-holders this year that it also should be included. If hon. members would like to look at "Hansard" last year, page 2416, on the 2nd December, they would see where the Premier mentioned that this £1,000 in cash, in addition to the £450,000, was to be paid to the debenture-holders. Now, when I was speaking on this question last year I traversed the history of the Chillagoe Company and the Etheridge Company, their lines, their properties, their assets, general equipment and

everything else; also their mineral leases. I traced it up fully and I don't propose to go over that ground again. Hon. members—if they desire to go through the agreement—will see fully there everything that is done in the agreement between the two parties. In the second agreement which was made between the Treasurer and the Chillagoe Company, the allotment of the money that will be advanced, or guaranteed, to this company has been mutually agreed upon. There is £60,000 to be devoted for the purchase and erection of coke-ovens, machinery, plant, and accessories, and the conservation and laying on of water to the company's mines. There is also £5,000 for underground development. Quarterly returns have to be furnished by the company to the Treasurer for his approval, showing the estimated amounts proposed to be expended by the company during the ensuing three months for the above purposes, and specifying as far as possible the manner in which it was to be expended and the objects for which it was proposed to expend it, in order that they could see that the money was not being devoted to any other purpose. Then there is a sum of £25,000 for discharging the present obligations of the company, including the Einasleigh debentures, and for interest and such initial expenses and general purposes as may be approved of by the Minister in writing. This agreement stipulates that the Minister, or his agent, shall control the manner in which the moneys shall be spent; also that the company shall execute to the Minister a bill of sale over all such machinery, plant, and other property to be purchased and erected pursuant to this agreement and all machinery plant and effects of which the company may now be possessed or entitled to or may become possessed or entitled to; also a mortgage over the leaseholds of the company and any leaseholds to which the company may at any future time become possessed of or entitled to. So that hon. members will see that the Government are fully safeguarded in the matter of security for the money advanced by the Treasurer. Now, there is another very important thing in connection with this which I briefly referred to just a while ago; and that is in the production of the coal for the use of the Government in the Cairns district and hinterland. It is agreed that the company shall supply for the use of all the Government railways in the Cairns district, including the Innisfail-Mourilyan Tramway, all coal and coke required for their working; and that they shall supply it at 7½ per cent. above the cost of production, management, and administrative expenses—but excepting the payment of directors—and royalties, rents, and interest payable by the company in respect of any sums advanced in respect of this agreement; but this shall not include "on cost" expenses, or agency fees, or expenses of a similar nature. Hon. members will see there that the Government have been safeguarding the public purse as far as possible in the purchase of this railway. The Commissioner for Railways has recommended the acquisition of this by the State for a number of years past; and seeing that the mining industry in that district is now dormant and has been for some time, and as the mining experts state there is almost untold mineral wealth in that district, it is only right that something should be done to develop it. If the private persons who are

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willing to put their capital into developing these mineral resources in these districts have been prevented from doing so by reason of the higher freights which are charged over this railway, it is the duty of the Government, in the interests of the whole State and in the interests of the Empire at the present time, to develop those mineral resources in this district and give to those people who are prepared to put their money into these debentures an opportunity of doing so and adding to the further development of the State. I think that if hon. members have carefully read this agreement and [7.30 p.m.] look at it from an unbiassed point of view they will admit that this is a very good thing for the Government, and consequently it must be a good thing for the State. There is no earthly reason why anybody from any purely parochial or narrow-minded point of view should try to prevent the development of a very rich district such as—as has been proved by the very best mineral experts to be found in Australia—exists in that part of Queensland. I commend the speedy passage of this Bill to hon. members. Seeing that I have traversed the whole of the history and given the reports of mining experts on that district already, and members have only to refer to "Hansard" to find them, it would be idle on my part to go over them again. I now move the second reading of the Bill, and hope it will have a speedy passage through the Chamber. (Hear, hear!)

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do not agree with the Minister for Railways when he says that it would be idle for him to go through the Bill and make the explanation which he made last year. Having heard it last year, it would be much more interesting and would make a more indelible impression on our minds if we had the opportunity of hearing it a second time. He must acknowledge that the agreement is rather an intricate one, and if we had the opportunity of listening to him twice we would have a better idea of the contents.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would be tedious repetition.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It depends altogether on the view-point. An explanation from the hon. member is never looked upon as tedious repetition. I have a recollection of the Chillagoe district. I spent one night in the works some years ago, and on that occasion some 400 men were employed there in three shifts, if my memory serves me correctly. I saw two copper smelters at work and one silver smelter, and I thought what a wonderful North Queensland we had. But I was told by those who knew more about the place than I did, that the mineral prospects were not there and the deposits would be very easily worked out. They told me, however, that they could get communication with Cloncurry and bring the metal from there by means of bullock teams and horse teams, and that in that way they would be able to keep their works going and develop an exceedingly rich district. I came away very much impressed with the value of the district, and when I learned that they were building a railway to Cloncurry and there would be no necessity for the bullock teams and horse teams I again had dreams.

THE TREASURER: Who told you that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The manager.

MR. POLLOCK: That must have been one of your dreams.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I thought that when the railway was constructed, giving them the means to bring this metal by rail rather than by horse or bullock teams, they could make it successful, and I again had dreams that the North was going to go ahead. I know that the electorate in which that district is situated was subdivided, because the voters went up to something near 10,000—showing that there was some idea of the realisation of this wonderful Eldorado. But a change came over the spirit of the dream, and now we have a Bill with the purpose of preserving the hon. member in his electorate because some Government money might be spent there.

THE TREASURER: You want to reform your geography if you talk about bringing ore from Cloncurry.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am only telling the hon. member the aspirations of those at Chillagoe in the early days.

MR. MURPHY: You mean Etheridge.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It may have been Etheridge. At any rate, the railway gave them the opportunity of getting that metal to the works. But I want to point out that those prospects that seemed so well founded have altogether vanished and the company, after spending a very considerable amount of money, has had to be sold up. I believe in the development of the country, but I do not know that this is good business for the Government to take up at this particular time. To do a thing at one time may be right and proper, and to do the same thing at another time may be altogether wrong, and I am under the impression that the Government are altogether wrong in attempting to do the thing they are attempting to do now. I would recommend this agreement to the careful perusal of all hon. members. I am sure that if they had a leisure Sunday afternoon and were to sit down to study it they would have a very interesting time. I have gone through it as carefully as the time at my disposal permits, and it seems to me a most wonderful agreement. It sets off by giving us some history and telling us who the owners were. There is a Charles William Chapman James Smith Reid. Could any enterprise succeed with a name so voluminous as that and with not a hyphen in the whole lot of it? (Laughter.) Associated with him was the loyal friend of the North, Mr. John Moffat. Everybody seems to have a kind word for him.

MR. POLLOCK: They say prayers for him up there.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Probably he is worth praying over. I have even heard it said that somebody says prayers for the hon. member for Gregory. (Laughter.) Then those owners sold the mine to what was called the Chillagoe Proprietary Ltd., or the vendor company, and the vendor company sold it to the original or purchasing company, and then the original company made an agreement with what was called the second company, and so it passed to another company, which capitalised it at something like £1,000,000 and became the third company. And the third company became the fourth and fifth and sixth

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company. Finally they came to bedrock, and the Government are asked to purchase the assets. Well, in entering into an agreement of that kind, although we might and do regret the occasion for it, we ought to remember that this good thing which the Government are to get appears to have been obtained at the expense of a very large sum of money. From what I can gather from this agreement the Government have made arrangements with the debenture-holders. They are to be protected up to the last shilling.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, they are not.

HON. J. TOLMIE: They put in an amount of money, which they are getting out.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were willing to take £450,000 cash last year instead of £670,000.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Perhaps they are willing to take more in order that the shareholders might get something out of it. The shareholders now are to get nothing.

The TREASURER: The debenture-holders sacrificed the difference between £670,000 and £476,000.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The shareholders sacrificed everything. If the Government were dealing fairly they should insist on the shareholders getting something out of the money, if they are going to come to the assistance of the debenture-holders. This is a purchase which might be a good thing under certain circumstances—that is, if we had the money available; but I fail to see why we should enter into it at a time like this, when we cannot find money for the ordinary services of the State without imposing burdens on the people, without more than doubling the original amount of taxation upon the people three years ago, without having a deficit at the end of each year. When we cannot obtain the amount of loan money that is essential to the development of different parts of the State, then I say it is an unwise action on the part of the Government to wish to pledge the credit of the country to the extent of another £700,000 as they are doing now, adding to the public debt of Queensland to that extent. If there were any indication by the hon. member who moved the second reading of the Bill that prosperity was going to return to the North again, we might feel inclined to say it might be a desirable thing to make this purchase.

Mr. FOLEY: Do you not think you should give it a chance to return?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do not think anything has been adduced by the Secretary for Railways to show that it is going to give it that chance at all. If the enormous amount of money that was poured into the district by the people, not only of Queensland, but the people throughout Australia and the home country, could not make it pay when they had the railways, when on all hands it was alleged there were rich ore deposits, what chance has it of paying under these conditions? Everything now has increased in price enormously.

Mr. GILLIES: Including copper.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The copper is not there. That is the whole trouble. If the copper were there there would be no necessity for the debenture-holders to go hawking such a valuable concession as this is supposed to be all round the country and sell it

at a dead loss to the shareholders, and at a very great loss, as is alleged by the Treasurer, to the debenture-holders. If the prospects were good, the capital would be forthcoming. There has been always money ready to go into enterprises of this kind if there is a possibility of their showing a return. It was most refreshing to listen to the Secretary for Railways belauding the work done by the companies, and saying that if enterprise of this kind is permitted to go on what magnificent development there is going to be in the North of Queensland and how progressive the State is going to become. Contrast the tone adopted by hon. members opposite with the tone assumed by them to enterprises already in existence, enterprises struggling on their last legs because of the actions of the Government. If there were that generous treatment towards enterprise that the hon. member says he desires should be accorded to this one, we should be in a much more prosperous condition than we are at the present time. But there has not been that generous disposition, and I say there is nothing in the proposition before us to say that it is going to be a good marketable proposition and it is going to restore industries to the North. The companies have not the capital to carry on, and they have come to the Government and asked them to finance the scheme. When we look at the agreement here I am certain that those who have gone through it are worthy of commendation for carefully perusing it. I find it is most voluminous, and there is one thing I notice about the agreement, in the schedule—the Government is endeavouring to get everything it is possible for them to lay their hands on. I notice there are a certain number of clocks set down as coming into the possession of the Government. It also says there are two Blick typewriters (out of order), and in that respect I think they bear very favourable comparison with the Government.

The TREASURER: You find a very illuminating history of the Chillagoe Company there, too.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The part I take exception to in connection with the purchase of the railway is for the Government to make themselves responsible for the sum of £90,000 in respect of this measure. The Government will probably tell us it does not cost them one penny, that all they do is to back the bill. But we know the fate of persons who back the bill. Almost invariably they are called upon to make good the bill, and that appears to me likely to be the result of this venture. If the companies could not carry on with hundreds of thousands of pounds, how are they going to do that with this, to them, paltry sum, although to many of us it must appear a very large sum?

The TREASURER: That is only to run the coke properties, not the smelters.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman may throw dust in the eyes of the House or the country, when he says this is for the purpose of running the coke properties with. Sixty thousand pounds is to be devoted to the purchase of machinery and the erection of plant on the surface, and only £5,000 is to be used for developmental purposes under the surface. That is £65,000, and there is a deficiency of £25,000 which has not been accounted for up to the present. The Secretary for Railways made no reference whatever to that £25,000. That sum does not go

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into reproductive works of any kind, or to enhance the value of the securities, but is for the purpose of liquidating the debts of the company, so that all that is supposed to go into the company for the working of the property is the sum of £65,000, and most of that will probably be taken up by the purchase of machinery and certain surface works before anything can be done in regard to mining. If that sum is to be advanced, and it is only proposed to carry on the making of coke, and the obtaining of a limited supply of coal that is essential for the working of North Queensland, then it is not going to add very materially to the development of the North. If it is going to be used for developing the mining resources of the district, then the amount at the disposal of the company will be quite insufficient for the purpose. Taking all these factors into consideration, I cannot see how it is possibly going to be a payable concern for the Government. At any rate, they must make 4 per cent. on the amount of money that is being spent—£770,000.

The TREASURER: £770,000 is not being expended. In this purchase there is only £475,000.

HON. J. TOLMIE: £475,000 in debentures, plus any cash, and then there is the purchase of the Etheridge Railway, which is being provided for at the present time, whereas there was no necessity to purchase that railway until 1921. The hon. member is making provision for £225,000 for the purchase of that railway, plus £475,000 for the purchase of the Chillagoe Railway. On that £700,000 we have to earn £58,000 a year interest.

The TREASURER: We have had to pay £11,000 a year on account of the Etheridge line.

HON. J. TOLMIE: As I have pointed out, we have had to pay too much. But because errors have been made in the past, that is no reason why we should be perpetuating them. I can quite understand the advocacy by the Treasurer of this proposal, because it is in his own electorate. I might do the same if it were in my electorate, but I am not looking at it now from the same parochial standpoint as the hon. member.

The TREASURER: I can assure the hon. member it is not a parochial question. It is a national question.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Of course, it is a national question to the hon. member for Chillagoe. Anything affecting the interests of Chillagoe must be regarded as a national question, but not from the standpoint of others; we look at it from quite a different aspect. We regard it from the way it is going to affect Queensland, and here we have to provide £58,000 to pay interest, and we have to pay the working expenses of that line. The line, so far as my remembrance goes, is a beautifully constructed line, one of the best constructed lines in Queensland, but it has now been built for quite a number of years, fifteen or sixteen years, or longer. Perhaps, even twenty years that line has been built.

The TREASURER: Not quite so long.

Mr. MURPHY: It was built in 1897 and 1898.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In the course of twenty years, no matter how well a line has been built, there must be decay of sleepers and

depreciation of the ironwork, and consequently the line cannot be anything like in the same order it was some years ago, and it will require renewals, and with each succeeding year the renewals will be heavier.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner reports the line has been kept in very good condition.

HON. J. TOLMIE: All this is piling up the expense in connection with the administration of the line, and at the same time there is no indication of where the return is going to come from in the district. We know that money is not being put into mining ventures in that district now. No district has been exploited, has had money poured into it, and opportunities given for the development of it like that district, which is supposed to be tremendously rich mineral country lying in the hinterland of Cairns. There is scarcely a portion of the district that has not been thoroughly investigated, that has not had money poured into it, and notwithstanding the construction of the railway to Chillagoe, and all the branch tramway lines from that railway into the metalliferous district, both to the south and the north of the line, there is not to-day any evidence that any adequate return has been secured. All that is necessary for us to do is to look at the population of the district and find how it is fading away. As a matter of fact, it is more than fading away now; it has practically faded away. At any rate, it is passing away very rapidly indeed. In these circumstances is it a fair proposition to put before the country at a time when the resources of the people are required in other directions, and when they ought not to be called upon to find interest to pay for the working of a line such as this that has not been reproductive up to the present time? I am very sorry to have to assume this attitude in regard to it. I should be very much better pleased if I could advocate the expenditure of more money in that part of Queensland. I have been in the North several times, and have been very favourably impressed with it.

The TREASURER: You never had a more favourable opportunity than now.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I hope the Treasurer will be more illuminating in the speech which I have no doubt he is going to make, not from a parochial standpoint, but from a national standpoint, so that we will be able to see where this return is going to come from.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: More stonewalling.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Why is this regarded as a stonewall? Cannot we take any objection at all to the proposals of the Government?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not referring to your stonewalling.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Must we be charged with stonewalling when we do that? Is it not our province, is it not a duty placed upon us, to make reference to any difficulties we see in legislation? And if we see a possibility of a failure of the Government in an expenditure of this kind, it becomes our bounden duty to put it out, not only for the guidance of hon. members opposite, but also for the country. It is not right that at such a period in the history of Queensland we should incur expenditure that can well stand over for another period. If

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this company was in a position to rehabilitate itself, to get capital again for the purpose of launching out expensively in the district, there might be something in purchasing the railway, and there might be something in going to the extent we are. But it seems to me from all I have read concerning the company and the district, and from as careful a study of the Bill and the agreement as could be given in the short time at our disposal, through it being placed in our boxes only this morning, and we are expected to investigate it and make ourselves acquainted with all the details, I say that with the knowledge we have been able to glean under the circumstances it is not a sound proposition to take up now, and instead of purchasing this line on debentures it would be much better to endeavour to secure a similar sum of money for development in other districts in Queensland.

**THE TREASURER:** How do you mean a similar sum of money? There is no cash.

**HON. J. TOLMIE:** I know there is no cash.

**MR. FORSYTH:** You will have to pay it in seven years.

**HON. J. TOLMIE:** I was going to ask the Treasurer when he says there is no cash passing, where is the money? Are we not responsible for the £475,000 in seven years? This line is not going to drop into our hands without our paying that cash over, and that is where the present Government are making a mistake, and we are rightly thinking of the future.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** We are going to have four years' use of the Etheridge line in the meantime.

**MR. POLLOCK:** The real joke is, not one of the Opposition knows anything about mining.

**HON. J. TOLMIE:** We know quite sufficient about the North and about mining to express an opinion on matters of this kind, and I am afraid that if we were looking for information we would not be

[8 p.m.] likely to go to the experts on the other side of the House. One

other point to which reference was made by the Minister for Railways, and which does not seem to have been a point that struck the House very favourably either, was that in the agreement the charge of 50 per cent. extra is maintained. The Commissioner will be empowered to charge 50 per cent. extra for the purpose of obtaining revenue. There should be no discrimination in regard to the various railways of the State. It might have been right enough for the Chillagoe Company, who put so much money into this venture, to say: "If we have to carry goods for other people we should be allowed to charge 50 per cent. more than is charged on Government railways." They realise the difficulties in front of them, and they must make a certain charge in order to make the railways pay, but the position is quite different when the Secretary for Railways takes over the railway. When it becomes a State railway it is in the same position as the railway between Brisbane and Toowoomba, and the people on that line should be treated on exactly the same terms as the people between Brisbane and Toowoomba.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** They will be treated generously.

**HON. J. TOLMIE:** The hon. gentleman says they will be treated generously, but the means to do evil deeds often leads to

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the evil deeds being done. It means that, if we give the Government power to put 50 per cent. extra on the freight, that extra freight will be put on. We know how the Government have been putting on extra freight during the last two or three years, and if they have to continue raising their freights, is there a probability of their dropping this 50 per cent.? They will need all that, and possibly need more than that, if they are going to get a sufficient return to make the railways pay. Taking all things into consideration, the value of the railway, the value of the industry, and the value of other industries of the State, I think it is unwise that the Government should embark on this proposition. Given conditions more satisfactory than they are now, then the probability is that we would not oppose this Bill, but I can see no other course than to oppose the passage of the Bill at the present time.

**THE TREASURER:** In supporting the second reading of the Bill I wish first of all to express my regret at the poor knowledge of the district displayed by the leader of the Opposition. I give the hon. member credit for being inspired by the best of motives in his opposition to the Bill now before the Chamber. He has probably come to the conclusion that the present is not an opportune time to conclude such a purchase, but I am sure he has arrived at the conclusion without knowing the circumstances with regard to that district and the probability of the district being resuscitated by the purchase of this railway and the development of the mining industry in that locality. The hon. member set out by making a very absurd statement in regard to a suggestion that ore might be brought from the Cloncurry district by bullock teams. No mining man ever made such a suggestion, or even considered such a thing as possible. I have known ore to be sent from the Burke district as far as Townsville. Some of the pioneers of those mineral fields, since the Chillagoe smelters closed down, sent ore from the Daintree Copper-Mine on the Einasleigh River to Townsville—250 miles—by teams, but no one would ever think of bringing ore from Cloncurry to Chillagoe by bullock team. The thing is too utterly absurd to be considered by any mining man for a single moment.

**HON. J. TOLMIE:** Did they take ore from the Einasleigh?

**THE TREASURER:** That may have been suggested. Since the Chillagoe smelters have been working a good many thousand tons of ore have been sent from Einasleigh to Chillagoe. The Einasleigh mine will become the property of the Government under this agreement. That mine is valued in the Chillagoe Company's books at £110,000, and is a very important mine indeed. It is one of the oldest copper-mines in the district; it was found in the early seventies, purely by accident, and was worked fifty years ago. That mine afforded a great amount of employment in the North long before the days of a railway, and it has been a big producer since the Etheridge Railway was built. I want in my speech to dilate somewhat upon the possibilities of the district, and to explain to hon. members as ably as I can the fact that the district is by no means worked out or bankrupt, so far as its resources are concerned. As I mentioned by interjection when the hon. member for



Murrumba was speaking last night, the district has practically not even been scratched in the way of exploitation of its mineral resources. The deepest mine on the Chillagoe field is only 900 feet deep. That is the Girofina mine, and there has been practically no stopping in that mine worth speaking about below the 600-foot level. The mine is immensely rich. I am not making this statement on the authority of my own knowledge, but on the authority of the numerous geologists and mining experts who have visited the district, not men sent merely for the purpose of booming a particular mining proposition but men sent there by the Mines Department for the purpose of making an impartial investigation and report to the department at various times. We have reports from the most eminent mining geologists dating back for the last twenty years on the various mining propositions in the Chillagoe, Etheridge, and Herberton districts. Their reports are available in the Mines Department, and can be perused by hon. members.

Colonel RANKIN: You would not care to buy on a geologist's report.

The TREASURER: I would have no hesitation in buying on the reports of the Government geologists. So far as I know anything about the geologists, I think they are thoroughly competent and impartial men.

Mr. FORSYTH: As geologists they are, but as mining engineers they are not.

The TREASURER: I am speaking about mines that have been sufficiently developed to enable the geologists to report on them. One such report was published in the "Mining Journal" within the last few weeks—the report of Geologist Ball on the Cardross mines. He did not have to depend on any mere theory as to possible occurrence of the ore. He saw the actual development that had taken place. The mine had been sunk several hundred feet and drives extended along the lode in various directions, and the man had all that actual data before he made his report.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Do you remember the reports made on Chillagoe?

The TREASURER: There were many reports made on Chillagoe. The hon. member wants to understand this: that very few of those reports—one of them was made by the eminent geologist Dr. R. L. Jack—have been proved false. It is only the mining engineers' reports—who, in the early days, with the geologists' reports at their disposal showing the size and extent of the ore bodies, thought they could produce more than they actually could, and they did not anticipate some of the difficulties that were afterwards encountered and which led to a partial failure. That is what happened and not that the geologists have been wrong in their deductions. I am not speaking now of the interested mining companies' reports that may have, in some instances, been procured for the purpose of unduly booming certain propositions for the sake of the share market, but I am speaking about actual official reports of the Mines Department, and there can be no question as to their authenticity or to the facts that they give. A practical mining man who knows the conditions that exist in these various localities and who gets the geologists' reports, could follow the reports intelligently and could tell the value of such reports.

That, in the hands of men who know something about mining, will enable them to get a fair insight into the possibilities of that vast district. No one who has not personal knowledge of the great Chillagoe, Etheridge, and Herberton fields can have any conception whatever of the possibilities of those districts. But those who have a personal knowledge of the districts, and also who are sufficiently interested in mining to take notice of the developments going on there, must be impressed with the great possibilities of the district. Queensland is particularly fortunate in having immense mineral districts such as the Chillagoe-Herberton and Cloncurry fields. These two belts of mineral country will assist Queensland materially in years to come to develop into the important State she undoubtedly one day will be. The Chillagoe field is capable of supporting a very large permanent population. So far, it practically has not been tried. The fact that one company became established there, and endeavoured to make a success of the business but failed, does not indicate that the district is of no further use or that the district is bankrupt, and that it is no use expending any further money or attention on the district. That would be a very foolish policy for the Government to adopt. We have to examine the circumstances under which that company operated and which led to the failure before we can come to any conclusion. The Chillagoe Company, in spite of the fact that many men may have been connected with the company for the purpose of making money out of it—that may have been their only inspiring motive so far as I know—there is no doubt that the Chillagoe Company did a lot towards the development of North Queensland. They brought in from outside, I suppose, no less than £1,000,000 worth of capital. I do not think their first motive was to develop the country for the benefit of Queensland. The first motive was the motive that inspires almost all such companies, that was to establish a lucrative business for themselves. Some may have gone further and used the Chillagoe Company as a means of exploiting investors in the mining business. But the fact is that the company's operations during the many years they have carried on in North Queensland have resulted in a great deal of development and brought a great deal of prosperity to North Queensland, and I regret that they have failed. They failed—we must realise this—because of their extremely bad luck in the latter days of their career. They had to close down, as everyone knows, in April, 1914—practically just on the eve of the recovery of the metal market. That is one of the melancholy facts in regard to the history of the Chillagoe Company; not that I am called upon to express any particular regret in this matter, because the district, no doubt, will be revived under the Government activity; but I want to call attention to that as one of the features of the Chillagoe Company's failure. After carrying on for so many years they collapsed. If they had been able to continue for another twelve months—the time when the Mount Mulligan coal was available at cost to themselves of not more than 12s. per ton at the pit's mouth—they would have been able to continue until the metal market recovered, and now, no doubt, they would have been making very large profits. At the time they closed down they were paying for coal 44s. per ton and for coke 75s. per ton. Those

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were the actual costs of the Chillagoe Company in April, 1914. When the coal from the Mount Mulligan coalmine was made available—the railway was completed nine months after the smelters closed down—coal was being sold to the Railway Commissioner from Mount Mulligan at 12s. per ton at the pit's mouth. That shows the difference in regard to the costs to the company for coal. But here is the most remarkable difference in the values of metals. Metal prices, at the time of the close-down, taking the average for the year 1914—the year in which the company closed down—for copper was £60 10s. per ton. The average price now in London is £130 5s., but the price to the Australian producers is £110 5s. at the present time. The price of lead at the close-down was £19 15s. 3d.; the price now is £30 10s. Silver—and the Chillagoe has always been a large producer of silver—at the close-down was 2s. 1d. per oz.; now it is 3s. 7½d. per oz. To show what a difference the proposition would have been under these changed circumstances with the present prices ruling, the last year of their operations they treated 51,607 tons of ore; they produced 1,950 tons of copper, worth £118,000; they produced 2,472 tons of lead, valued at £48,800; they produced 264,000 oz. of silver, valued at £27,500. The aggregate of the mineral production in that year was £206,000. With the present prices ruling the same tonnage of ore, the same production would have yielded £388,000, or an increase of £182,000 for that year.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Would there be any change in the cost of production?

The TREASURER: Yes, probably there would have been some change, and the change would have been to the advantage of smelting. It is recognised in the copper-smelting proposition that the two greatest factors are labour and fuel, but principally fuel, including coke, especially if it has to be carted any distance. In this case coke and coal had to be transported from New South Wales to Chillagoe. For the coal they paid 44s., and the coke cost them 75s. Coal will not cost them any more now than at the outside 17s. per ton at the pit's mouth, whoever is operating the smelters; and from the facts which I have—that a ton and a-half of Mount Mulligan coal will make a ton of coke—coke will not cost them more than, at the outside, 30s. per ton, instead of 75s. Those are the principal factors leading up to the enormous cost of working under the conditions under which the Chillagoe Company were working at the time of the close-down; but the £182,000 difference, which the additional prices of metals, would, if they had continued working, have made all the difference between a failure and a very profitable undertaking, even if you take out of that a fair allowance for any possible contingency with regard to the cost of production. Would it not have been foolish of the Government not to take cognisance of that? In the early part of 1914, before closing down, they asked the late Government—the Denham Administration—to advance them £30,000 to enable them to carry on for nine months until the Mount Mulligan coal was available. They reckoned that they would lose £30,000, but they would continue smelting operations until then. They were refused. The previous Government would not give them that advance. I think it would have been a good proposition to give it to them, because it would enable them to keep their staff there

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and have a fair chance of making a profitable deal of it. At that time, I might mention, there were no immediate prospects of an increase in the price of metal. If there had been, there would have been an even greater inducement to continue. They were willing to continue if they could have got a loan of £30,000 for another nine months, until the Mount Mulligan coal was available. The then Government having refused that, they exhausted their financial resources and closed down. Then they prepared to raise new capital in London in order to put a coke plant on Mount Mulligan and get working again. Just then the war broke out, and the issue of new capital was prohibited by the Imperial Government. That is a well-known fact in relation to the history of the Chillagoe Company. That is why it is that the company have not been able to take advantage of the higher metal market. What a suicidal policy it would be for this Government, or any Government, not to take any reasonable action they could take which would lead to the opening of the Chillagoe smelters and the recommencement of the production in that district of the valuable minerals and metals—copper, lead, and silver—which are highly necessary in connection with the conduct of the war, and the continuance of industrial operations generally throughout the Empire! Everyone knows there is a shortage of copper. America has not been able to supply it up to the full requirements of the allies. The American production, according to the American mining journals, is declining, and mines are becoming more or less worked out. They are bringing mines into operation now that previously could not even be looked at for production.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: What about that 14,000 tons?

The TREASURER: Well, the hon. member knows that, if this proposition of the Government in connection with Chillagoe had received the assent of Parliament when it was first introduced, we should have had at least six months' additional production up to now under that agreement. It is known, too, that the proposition to build a railway to Mount Oxide would enable that richest copper ore deposit in Queensland—one which had a wonderful future, and was simply waiting access to a market—to supply the copper production under the agreement mentioned by the Premier.

Mr. MURPHY: Was it not turned down by your own people?

The TREASURER: It was; it was found to be impracticable on account of the inability to get rails and build the line in the time.

Mr. MURPHY: It ought to go from a Gulf port.

The TREASURER: I think it ought. I have advocated that many times, and I am surprised that the mining interests in the Cloncurry district have not continued an agitation to get direct access to a deep-water port within 200 or 300 miles of their district, instead of being compelled to drag their coal and coke and other requisites nearly 600 miles. I am a hearty supporter of that policy, and always have been. I think this Government is entirely sympathetic to the policy of building a railway to a deep-water port in the Gulf, but it is rather inopportune at the present time, because of the difficulty in obtaining rails

and the high cost of material, and the very much larger sum which would be required to establish a port in the Gulf than would be in normal times. From the last Chillagoe balance-sheet I notice that the various assets of the company are set out as follows:— This is interesting, because it is taken to be the actual market value of the assets as determined by the company at that time. It is for the period ended June, 1916. They state their mines and railways in connection with the mines to be worth £175,000; telephone system, £3,426; reduction works, £97,588; smelting works, £12,642; sidings and ore-bins, £7,573; rolling-stock, £22,644; buildings, £14,379; furniture, £1,545; plant and tools on hand, £30,677; stock on hand, £28,720; Einasleigh property, £111,317; total, £505,873; and the Chillagoe Railway (110 miles), £335,000; and the Etheridge Railway (145 miles), £463,000; a total of £1,304,657. The Etheridge branch line is stated at £6,000. Then, if you deduct the £225,000—the Government's interests in the Etheridge Railway—it will leave the assets stated in the balance-sheet at £1,085,523. That value can be attached to the various assets that will come into the Government's possession under this purchase. As the Secretary for Railways mentioned, looking at it from a purely business or commercial point of view, and applying the test of whether the actual market value is what the Government is paying, the rails and fastenings alone on the two railways would be worth, at the present time, what the Government are paying for the whole proposition—two working railways, an up-to-date complete smelting and metallurgical treatment plant, rolling-stock, various appurtenances of the railway, and leases (including the value of the Einasleigh Mine), of which no one can doubt the value. The leader of the Opposition spoke about the proposition to advance £60,000 to the Chillagoe Company to develop the coal leases.

Colonel RANKIN: £90,000.

The TREASURER: Yes, £90,000. I want to point out that the Government, in order to assist in the active development of this district, and justify the purchase and continuance of the railway, must make some provision to start one or two furnaces at the Chillagoe smelters; and, in order to do that, they must insure themselves of a supply of coal and coke at reasonable prices. With those two commodities supplied at reasonable prices, there will be no possible doubt about the success of this from a business point of view. In fact, there will be no possible doubt of its being a huge financial success. Hon. members probably know that for the last five years, before the close-down of the smelters, the Chillagoe Company made £60,000 per annum net profit on their railway. They lost again on their mining proposition. That was the net profit they made on the railway after paying working and maintenance and all other expenses.

Colonel RANKIN: In five years?

The TREASURER: That was the average per annum for five years. Since the smelters have been idle, and the railway has been depending upon small mineral traffic, upon the cattle traffic, and general traffic that comes from the Etheridge and other districts, in spite of this reduced traffic and stagnation in the district, the Chillagoe Company have run the railway at a profit of £15,000 for the first year after the close-down of the smelters, after paying

maintenance and working expenses, and £12,000, I understand, for the last year.

Mr. BARNES: What about interest?

The TREASURER: That does not cover interest. I am stating net income; I am not taking into account interest in either of those cases.

Mr. BARNES: That was gross revenue.

The TREASURER: No. Gross revenue is taken to be the whole of the revenue of the railway. Net income, as the hon. member will see from frequent references in the reports of the Commissioner, are the net earnings after paying maintenance and working expenses. This proposition from a railway point of view is an excellent one. If metallurgical works are working in Chillagoe, they will bring in an immense amount of traffic over the railway. That always is the corollary of the working of a smelting plant. It will make the Chillagoe Railway a highly paying proposition, and it also will make the Cairns Railway—a Government railway—a paying proposition, too. The Commissioner, in his reports dealing with this matter, says, in effect: Not only will you make the property of the Chillagoe Company a payable proposition, but you bring in an enormous amount of traffic to the Cairns Railway, as all the goods must come via Cairns to the Chillagoe Railway. The proposition is a wonderfully good one from that point of view, if the metallurgical works can be kept going. Now, there is no possible doubt in my mind that one furnace will work continuously. There are five stands for furnaces, but I do not think the

[8.30 p.m.] Chillagoe Company ever work more than three or four. If we can work two furnaces—one continuously on silver-lead, and one on copper—there is not the slightest doubt that the district will revive and become an immensely prosperous district again. Someone might say that all this depends on the success or otherwise of Mount Mulligan, and whether we can get cheap coal and coke from there. There have been numerous reports in connection with that field, and the Government have not been slow to get the very best expert information as to its value, as to its permanency, and as to the qualities of the coal for steaming and coking purposes, and I intend to make one or two references to them. One of the geologists who had been inquiring into this matter, Mr. Ball—a very competent geologist, and one who is not by any means an optimist—his estimates are all conservative, and all his opinions are upon the cautious side. He does not overboom in his official reports to the Government. I think that most mining members will realise that. In this report in the "Government Mining Journal" of 15th September of this year, on the Mount Mulligan coalfield, to be found at page 446, he refers to the history of the coalfield and to the leases, and so on, and then, on page 448, refers to the coal—

"Before going into the matter of the coking possibilities of Mount Mulligan, it would be as well to give some consideration to the nature of the coal itself. The section given above shows a respectable gross thickness of coal in these measures, but it also shows that the coal is interbedded with earthy matter (shales and fireclays), and that in no place is there an ordinary working section free from bands of such material—that is, excepting the 2 feet 3 inches

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seam of coking coal, which the management regards as workable by mechanical cutter without the breaking of roof or floor.

"The section may be condensed as in Table B, wherein it will be observed that, of the 111 feet of measures, 44 feet consists of coal with shale bands; this being equivalent to 39½ per cent. of the whole. Moreover, the coal seams, after deducting the included shale bands, aggregate 27 feet, which is equal to 61½ per cent. of the seams, and 24½ per cent. of the measures.

"Firstly, we have to note that the coal itself is extremely variable in quality, some of the seams consisting almost wholly of friable, bright, jet-like coal without trace of lamination and presumably very low in ash; others almost completely of tough, dull, conchoidally-breaking splint containing 20 to 30 per cent. ash; while again others are made up of interlaminated bright and dull coal, with shaly bands including fragments of charcoal. The coal is absolutely black in the mass, but when any of the varieties are ground to a powder a faint, yet distinct, brownish tinge is observable. The various classes of coal are all filled (*i.e.*, loaded into the trucks or skips) and mixed in the railway wagons; and the following rough estimate of the quality of the coal on the locomotive stage at Dimbulah when I passed through may be instructive:—  
*a.* Bright jet-like coal, with, say, 5 per cent. ash, = 45 per cent. of total;  
*b.* Laminated bright and dull, with, say, 10 per cent. ash, = 30 per cent. total;  
*c.* Splint coal, with, say, 20 per cent. ash, = 10 per cent. total;  
*d.* Pricking, with, say, 50 per cent. ash, = 10 per cent. total;  
*e.* Clean shale, with, say, 100 per cent. ash, = 5 per cent. total."

Colonel RANKIN: How many seams are they working?

The TREASURER: They are working two seams.

Colonel RANKIN: You have only quoted one seam, 2 feet 6 inches.

The TREASURER: They are working two seams, one 6 feet in thickness and the other 2 feet 3 inches.

Colonel RANKIN: Several bands?

The TREASURER: No bands in those seams. If the hon. member will follow me, he will see. The geologist took out of a railway wagon, where the whole width of the seam was loaded, a sample of the coal, and he says:—

"Whence the average is probably about 17 per cent. ash, but this I am convinced is much above that normally contained in consignments from the pit. The elimination of shale and pricking would reduce the ash percentage in this particular case to less than one-half and would result in reduced clinkering on the fire-bars, as it is known that clinkering in the boiler furnaces at the mine is brought about by excess of these constituents."

That indicates the steaming qualities of the coal.

Colonel RANKIN: That does not sound very good.

The TREASURER: It sounds very good in my opinion. The geologist refers to a sample taken from the coal stage without

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any cleaning or picking, a sample from several seams aggregating many feet in thickness, which shows only 17 per cent. of ash.

Colonel RANKIN: Only 17 per cent.?

The TREASURER: Yes. We have carried from Southern Queensland to Northern Queensland coal which cost the railways 20s. in freight alone, and which gave 19 per cent. of ash. Now, I want to give some practical examples of the steaming qualities of this coal. This is a practical test, carried out by the locomotive foreman at Cairns:—

"Net weight loaded on tender—5 tons 1 cwt. 0 qr. 23 lb. Engine used—Class B 15. Route run—Cairns to Atherton and back. Miles run—135. Coal consumed—5,654 lb. Consumption per train mile—41.88 lb. Total average load taken—212 tons. Consumption per ton mile—0.16 lb. Ashes from firebox—5 cwt. 2 qr. 17 lb. Cinders from smoke-box—3 cwt. 0 qr. 11 lb. Clinker—none. Average amount of other Queensland coal used for same journey—4½ tons.

"The stoking was easy work, and the vehicles exceptionally clean after the run, the coal emitting little smoke. The test was made on 19th September, 1912."

Colonel RANKIN: You have 8 cwt. of ash out of 2 tons of coal. That is 20 per cent.

The TREASURER: The average amount of other Queensland coal used over the same journey is 4½ tons as compared with a little over 2 tons of Mount Mulligan coal. That has to be taken into account. Actual tests have shown remarkably favourable results in regard to Mount Mulligan coal. Now, with regard to coke—and that is, after all, the important feature about the Mount Mulligan Coalmine—if it is a successful coking proposition and cheap coke can be got close to Chillagoe, it will make an immense difference to that district. The hon. member for Burrum will easily understand that. This is what Mr. Ball says about the coke, on page 451 of the "Queensland Mining Journal" of the 15th September of this year:—

"There happening to be an old benzine muffie furnace at the mine, a few coking tests of the coals were made during the recent visit. I much regret that the condition of the furnace did not permit of an extension of these tests nor of a single ash determination.

"The first test was made on sample (8) taken in the Fan Tunnel from the 11 inches of bright clean coal in the bottom seam. When heated in small porcelain crucibles, this gave off yellowish tarry vapours, burning with a sooty luminous flame, and it yielded a strong coke dense in the outer part but very vesicular towards the centre. The coke produced amounted by weight to 68 per cent. of the coal charged.

"A rough sample (I.) was then obtained from a railway wagon in process of being filled. Treated similarly, this gave off the same dense fumes and a good coke (dense in outer part and spongy in central) amounting to 76½ per cent. of the charge. An unsuccessful attempt was made to completely burn off the carbon and estimate the ash, which would seem to be without colour.

"A sample (II.) of very fine powder blown from the screens on to the rails also yielded a coke; but, because of

defective heating, it proved to have no strength and to be granular in structure. The yield was 76 per cent.

"A sample (III.) was then secured of the fines (mostly pricking) supplied to the Babcock and Wilcox boilers, and rather unexpectedly this yielded a slightly friable vesicular coke of fair quality. It amounted to 81 per cent. of the charge, but presumably was high in ash.

"For the purposes of my advance reports, I judged from these rough tests that there could be no doubt as to the coking qualities of certain of the Mount Mulligan coals, and the only point not clear was the amount of ash. Allowing for the moment that this might be high and that some of the coke produced from unwashed coal might carry as much as 20 per cent. ash, I still thought that a market for such coke could be found at the Cloncurry smelters. On the other hand, it was evident that a small amount of sorting would result in a coal, reasonably low in ash, which could be depended on to yield a coke of ordinary commercial grade, while, by the installation of washers, a very clean coal could be produced ensuring a first-class coke."

I do not think you could get a higher test of the quality of coke anywhere, especially in Queensland.

Colonel RANKIN: You must recollect that that report is based on coal taken from 11-inch seam.

The TREASURER: That only refers to the first test. Other samples were taken elsewhere, and the summing up refers to coal taken from a 2 feet 3 inches seam. I am not able to give extensive quotations from the report, but I recommend the hon. member to peruse it. Here is another quotation on page 453—

"From these figures one might reasonably conclude, firstly, that insufficient care was exercised in mining the coal because of the disparity in the ash contents of the face sample and the coal mined, and, secondly, that it should not be impossible to produce a coal of such a grade that 1½ tons might be converted into 1 ton of coke—carrying perhaps only 13½ per cent. and certainly not more than 16 per cent. ash, the basic percentage of cokes formerly imported by Chillagoe Limited."

And those cokes were imported from Bulli, so that if we can get local coal just as low in ash and just as high in other qualities, if 1 ton of coke can be produced from only 1½ tons of coal which compares favourably in the matter of quality with that imported at considerable cost, we have made a considerable step forward towards solving the smelting problems of North Queensland.

Now I want to refer to the reserves in Mount Mulligan. This is a matter on which members have cast some doubt. The hon. member himself made an interjection which I think indicated that he believed that the reserves were not very extensive. Mr. Ball, in this recent report, says this about it, on page 453:—

"We may then estimate the reserves on the leases held by Chillagoe Limited, as below:—

"(A) Assuming the 2 ft. 3 in. seam (of No. 2) to be continuous under the

whole of coalmining leases 418, 417, 398, and 399 (totalling 2,240 acres) and to extend under the eastern halves of coalmining leases 397 and 400 (totalling 640 acres), we have an area of 2,880 acres; and, anticipating the usual recovery of 1,100 tons of coal per foot thickness from each acre, the seam should yield rather over 7,000,000 tons.

"(B) In the steam coal section of No. 1 seam, the faces expose 4 feet of coal, and the yield from under the same area should, therefore, amount to say 12,500,000 tons.

"(C) No effort having been made to exploit the much larger quantities of thinner coals appearing in the section given above, calculation of reserves thereof is not called for here."

There is another reference to the same thing by Mr. Lionel Ball in his pamphlet on the Mount Mulligan Coalfield in 1912, after very extensive surveys and examinations of the coal measures. On page 16, he says:—

"As far as the exposures go the central seam would appear to be unimportant, but both top and bottom seams should be workable. There is 7 feet of coal nearly free from bands in the top seam in No. 1 adit, and beneath this there is more coal (possibly the bottom seam) that may be worked from the same headings. It is risky, in view of the small amount of prospecting work done, to attempt to estimate the quantity of coal to be depended on, but, to afford some idea of the possibilities of the field, we may, limiting ourselves to a thickness of 6 feet in the top seam and 3 feet in the bottom which the exposures show to be well within the mark,—"

Colonel RANKIN: That is not 6 feet of clean coal?

The TREASURER: Yes; 6 feet of clean coal. The hon. member will find that there is 6 feet of clean coal from what is known as No. 1 seam and nearly 3 feet from No. 2 seam, and there are others.

Mr. FORSYTH: Are there any bands between those seams?

The TREASURER: Only what they call penny bands which come out in the washing of the coal. It does not interfere with the breaking of the coal. Mr. Ball goes on:—

"calculate on at least 84,000,000 tons of coal beneath the 14 square miles of country believed to be underlaid by the measures—allowing a recovery of 1,100 tons per foot per acre."

There are further references which show the extent of the field. On page 10, he says:—

"As shown on the attached map, the productive measures underlie an area 8 miles in length from north-west to south-east, with a width of 3½ miles (in the north-western part) to 1½ miles (in the south-eastern part). There is thus an area of about twenty square miles that we may reasonably expect to be coal-bearing."

"As shown on the attached map, the productive measures underlie an area 8 miles in length from north-west to south-east, with a width of 3½ miles (in the north-western part) to 1½ miles (in the south-eastern part). There is thus an

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area of about 20 square miles that we may reasonably expect to be coal-bearing."

I refer to that so that hon. members by the frequent reference to the coking seam of 2 feet 3 inches in thickness will not believe it is a small coalmine that may be exhausted in a few years. One of the experts called upon by the Chillagoe Company to report on that mine stated in all seriousness, in a deputation to Mr. Barnes, who was then acting Premier, and introduced by myself, that there was no doubt there was sufficient coal in the Mount Mulligan coalmine to supply all the possible needs of that district for 250 years to come. A practical test of this coal was made at Chillagoe. I want to give as much information as possible on the coal, because much of the success of this proposal depends upon the success of the coalmine. Mr. Jackson, the Chief Inspector of Mines, who was noted for his conservative opinions, and who always errs, if he errs at all, on the side of caution and wise estimate, relates that a practical test was carried out under his supervision at Chillagoe.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman's time has expired.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY moved that the hon. member be granted an extension of time to conclude his speech.

Question put and passed.

The TREASURER (continuing): I thank hon. members for allowing me a few more minutes. Mr. Jackson, reporting on the practical test, says—

"Boiler test No. 1 seam, 6 feet top hole—10 tons of this coal—the same coal as that used for the first coke test referred to above—was tested at Chillagoe for steam-raising purposes on 12th and 13th November (three tests). Three tons approximately of the coal (taken separately from the fine holings produced in mining it, which would ordinarily be kept apart and used for other purposes) gave very good results in most respects (No. 3 test); the chief defect being the large percentage of refuse (ash and clinker). The coal burnt somewhat too freely in the boiler in which it was tried, but it gave an evaporative efficiency of 5.216 lb. water per lb. of coal from and at 212 degrees Fahr., which, considering the class of coal, compares well with 7.77 lb water per lb. of coal from and at 212 degrees Fahr. obtained from the 'best screened' Newcastle, New South Wales coal in use at the works, by a test made immediately afterwards on the same boiler and under the same conditions for comparative purposes."

A test was made with Newcastle coal, which of Australian coal is considered to be the very highest standard, and compared with that the Mount Mulligan coal gave a test so far as evaporative sufficiency is concerned, almost equal to it. That is, for steaming purposes this 6-foot seam, according to all accounts, is eminently suitable for all the requirements of that district, and is much superior to any other coal in Queensland. I say that with all due regard to Bowen, Burrum, and Ipswich. And in evaporation efficiency it compares favourably with Newcastle coal. Then there is the other seam which for coking purposes is almost equal to Newcastle coal, which, of

course, is putting a very high value upon Mount Mulligan as a coal and coking proposition.

Mr. GLEDSON: I think it is superior to Newcastle coal for coking.

The TREASURER: I intended to say Bulli coal, because the Chillagoe Company mostly used coke from the Bulli district, and it was in comparison with that coke the test was made. The only other element I think worthy of very much consideration in connection with this proposal is in regard to the possibilities of the district from a mining point of view. Granted that there is coke and coal of sufficient quality and quantity and which can be produced cheaply enough, there is sufficient mineral resources in the district to warrant the running of a couple of furnaces continually. There is not the slightest possible doubt about that. There is no doubt in the mind of any mining man in the district that sufficient ore will be forthcoming. That, of course, is understood to apply while metal prices remain at a reasonable level. I do not believe that the Chillagoe smelters could possibly be run under present labour conditions with copper at £50 a ton, or lead at £10 a ton; but, with copper anything over £65 and lead somewhere near £20 and silver at a reasonable price, there cannot be the slightest doubt about the development of the field. At the present time copper is over £100 a ton, lead over £30, and silver 3s. 7d. an ounce, and with those prices there is not the slightest shadow of doubt about the prospects of the district. I have met men from the North within the last few weeks, and they have all been talking about the crying necessity for a smelter. At the present time there is not a smelter running in the hinterland of Cairns, and it is very necessary that one should be started in order that ore might be sent there instead of being sent out of the district or out of the State altogether. Given smelters reasonably situated—as the Chillagoe smelters are—there are scores of mining men who would not hesitate to take up claims and leases to supply minerals, copper and lead ore, to those works. Since the Chillagoe Company closed down there has been a good deal of prospecting development going on. The Herberton field, which for many years was known as one of the greatest tin-producing centres, has now been converted into a copper centre. But they could not afford to touch any ore under 10 per cent., and there are vast quantities of ore between 5 and 10 per cent. that would pay to send to Chillagoe, but which they cannot afford to touch now. Probably some of the ores they could not afford to treat under 15 per cent., if it requires very much handling. There are very large propositions in Queensland that would pay if they could sell the ore to some local buyer, such as the Chillagoe smelter will become, and thus bring the district into active production again. I want to refer to some of those mining propositions. Mr. Rodda, I think, was one of the most eminent mining engineers actively engaged in North Queensland. He was general mining manager of the Chillagoe Company up till the time Chillagoe closed down. Since the staff of the Chillagoe Company was dispersed he was asked by the Railway Commissioner to make a report on the mining resources of that district. He is now a consulting mining engineer in Sydney, and these are a few remarks from his report. I am quoting now

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from "Hansard" of last year, page 2547. This report was then quoted by the Minister for Railways. Mr. Rodda says—

"Around Boonmoo itself are several promising copper shows from which the rich ore has been removed, leaving the lower grade ore.

"Petford.—This is the outlet for Bamford (producing wolfram, bismuth, and molybdenite), Dover Castle (producing tin), and Emuford (producing both tin and copper). There is a modern mill here, driven by a suction gas engine, and crushing the owners' and public stone.

"The principal production here will be copper from the Mount Volk and Moore's copper mines. Quantities of ore have been shipped from here both to Chillagoe and Southern smelters. The Mount Volk line of lode is traceable for several miles, and is consistently rich wherever opened. The drawback has been the rough country and high cost of packing the ore out.

"From this one portion of the district the industry if properly fostered would be capable of yielding several thousand tons of matte yearly, and giving employment to 200 men.

"Mount Cardwell.—This is an enormous low grade basic copper mine. The ore is perhaps too low and too basic to treat by itself at present, but so valuable are its fluxing properties that it paid the Mount Molloy Company to take it by rail and team to Mount Molloy to smelt in conjunction with their siliceous ores. No estimate of tonnage is available, but to say there are 100,000 tons there would be well within the mark. It is probable that should railway connection (2½ miles) be made, this ore could be railed to Chillagoe with advantage.

"Mount Garnet.—This mine, originally worked for copper and silver, made into zinc at a shallow depth, and operations were suspended. Since that time, however, great strides have been made in the metallurgy of zinc, so that instead of being, as it was, a grave deterrent, it is now a most valuable factor; so much so that at Broken Hill it is doubtful if the mines would be working to-day except for its presence. Mount Garnet possesses an immense body of zinciferous ore, estimated at three-quarters of a million tons, running from 16 per cent. to 30 per cent. zinc, while the quantity of ore under foot is unknown, as it was only opened to a shallow depth. Nevertheless, there is an immense and solid body of ore going under foot. Should concentrating works be established, using one of the flotation processes now in general use at Broken Hill, a concentrate might be made, containing from 45 to 48 per cent. zinc. This product would, as at Broken Hill, be shipped for foreign treatment, thus ensuring a large population at Mount Garnet and a heavy railway traffic in concentrates and supplies."

Then he refers to Mount Lucy—

"This is a large ironstone quarry, connected by rail from Almaden to the Chillagoe Company's line. This is one of the notable deposits of ironstone in Australia, and is now worked only to

provide iron for smelting, only 2,000 tons being broken yearly. It is possible, however, that later, owing to the quantity and purity, an attempt will be made to utilise it in a more productive form."

Now we come to Chillagoe, and Mr. Rodda says—

"This field, though suffering from many reverses, is still capable of figuring as a producer. Many of the principal mines, though now shut down, would be producers under improved conditions.

"A number of shows have been opened and worked by local men, and a large tonnage of ore won, but, hampered by lack of capital, they have been unable to do the necessary development work that would permit of cheap mining."

Then he goes on to refer to Mungana, and says—

"In this mine there are roughly 50,000 tons of good grade ore to be removed when the fire is extinguished and the mine is drained, which will give employment to at least 100 men."

Referring to the Chieftain Mine, he says—

"The general manager estimated 30,000 tons of ore in this mine alone, and it is a very small unit of the line of reef."

Mr. McDermott, the traffic manager of the Chillagoe Company, advises that on the figures—

"The Mammoth Company will easily be worth £10,000 a year to the Chillagoe Railway, but from my own observations I should say their properties give every indication of a long life. Within the next three years Cardross should support a population of 1,500."

Referring to the Einasleigh, he says—

"This is the shipping point for the Einasleigh mine, the property of the Chillagoe Company, which is at present shipping at the rate of 30,000 tons of ore yearly."

Then he goes on to refer to other mines in the Etheridge district, which, perhaps, I could do better by quoting a more recent report. This is a report by Mr. A. Linedale, who is a well-known mining expert in North Queensland, and thoroughly acquainted with propositions on the Etheridge. He says—

"Commencing at Almaden, I might mention the argentiferous lead-zinc ore-body at Crooked Creek. The chief outcrop so far proved is that opened by Mr. Torpy on an ore-body of 10 to 20 feet wide and very similar to the lead deposit of Silver Spur, which, as you know, is a mine so well developed by Mr. Edgar Hall's company.

"This Crooked Creek lode is from some 3 to 4 miles south-easterly of Almaden.

"Proceeding westwards to the Tate River and its watershed, there are many copper-bearing outcrops over a wide area reaching from Mount Cardwell on the south to the many partly-tested shows in the vicinity of the Tate Telegraph Station. This lot includes the copper lode operated by Fisher Brothers on what is known as The Branch."

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Then he refers to a number of propositions in which the Chillagoe Company was interested—

“Further on, down the Elizabeth and Junction Creeks, are numerous groups of outcrops, some carrying considerable value of silver, with copper-lead ores, and, so far, little tested except by individual miners. This group of lode and deposits extends on Einasleigh River.”

Then he refers to McMillan's Creek. He says—

“Another lot is that of McMillan's Creek, on the western side, higher up the river, from which the Chillagoe people have treated considerable copper ores.”

Then he refers to the Daintree Mine—

“The Daintree Mine is situated some distance up the Einasleigh River and owned by Mr. MacClennan and mate. A lot of prospecting has been done, and a large body of copper ore developed. During last year a few parcels of ore were sent to Southern smelters, but with present high charges of carriage, freight, etc., the margin of profit has been unsatisfactory, and the work recently suspended.

“Mr. MacClennan informed me that the lower levels have exposed a large body of sulphide ore, and that he has some 2,000 tons of oxidised ores stacked at surface worth about 12 per cent. copper; also that there are considerable quantities of oxides and copper carbonates opened up.”

Then he refers to the mines that have been developed on the Eastern slope of the Newcastle Range at a place called [9 p.m.] Teesdale. Considerable work has been done there, and he says this district will become a very important producer later on. He says—

“Further westwards are the lead lodes of Mosquito Creek area. Any, or all of these, are likely to produce large quantities of ore. Some 40 or 50 miles south of Forsyth are the Percy River gold and copper mines. The chief copper ores known are the Ortona and the Eight Mills groups. The Ortona has been well developed and rich copper and silver-bearing ores have been despatched for many years past. Recently, a winding plant has been installed at Ortona and the property is gradually being prepared for larger operations, and a concentration plant is contemplated, and some of the machinery is already on the ground. There are now ten shafts down from 50 to 160 feet deep, and some considerable driving done, and about 3,000 tons of ore stacked at the surface, while it is estimated there has been 15,000 tons of copper ore developed, much of which carries a weight or two of gold and up as high as 80 oz. of silver has been returned for some parcels, while much of the ore can be picked to go from 40 to 50 per cent. and the bulk is worth 10 per cent copper.”

It is not necessary to enumerate all the well-known copper shows that have been opened up in various parts of the Chillagoe and Etheridge fields, not to mention the Herberton field itself. On the Herberton field a well-known and famous mine has given employment to a considerable number of men. That is the Empress Mine, which has lately

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come to be known as a very important copper-ore producer. It is only a quarter developed. There are silver-lead mines at Mount Albion, Orient Camp, and Stannary Hills, too, that have been idle since the Chillagoe closed down, and all these shows will become producers immediately a furnace is commenced at Chillagoe. That is the prospective hope in regard to the passage of this Bill. This Bill, which will authorise the Government to purchase the Chillagoe and Etheridge railways and smelters will enable the Government to set alive again that district, because the company failed, not because of the fault of the district, but failed because of the circumstances they found themselves up against. This immense district is likely to give employment to a large body of men and support a large population, and, so far from my supporting the measure out of any parochial interest, I can assure hon. members that nothing is farther from my thoughts. I believe it will bring more actual prosperity to the districts of Eacham, Cook, and Burke than to the Chillagoe district, although the Chillagoe district is certainly languishing for want of facilities for smelting the ore. The proposition will not only become a highly payable one, but it will bring indirectly to the Government very much increased revenue over the Cairns Railway and through other departments and other sources that we know all about. I hope the House will pass the measure, and that it will become law this session in order that the Government may take immediate possession, and in order that the smelters may be started within a very few weeks. I want to emphasise that the plant is in such order at Chillagoe, according to the report of the Mines Department, that so soon as a manager is appointed and he can get together supplies of coke and fuel and other stores that are necessary, and a staff of men, he can start operations. Ore is waiting to be delivered. There is ore at the plant at the present time; ore on the Mungana Mine, the Einasleigh Mine, and the Herberton mines waiting to be shipped to a smelter. So in a very few weeks after the passage of this Bill Chillagoe will be working as it did in the old days and give employment to a large body of men and generally help towards the more rapid development of Queensland.

Colonel RANKIN: I think the Treasurer is interesting to listen to on all occasions, but to-night he, to some extent, excelled himself in extolling the virtues of the Chillagoe district and championing the possibilities of the neighbourhood. It is perhaps a mere coincidence that he happens to represent the Chillagoe district in Parliament, which, no doubt, gives him an opportunity to get a clear insight into the mining possibilities of the neighbourhood which otherwise he might not possess. One could not help thinking, in listening to his very able speech, that it sounded like a chapter out of the “Arabian Nights,” or perhaps, to make a better comparison, it sounded very much like a well-edited prospectus of a new mining company. But, like most of these things, it contained one or two weak points. I do not wish, in any captious spirit, to adversely criticise this proposal, because it is with extreme diffidence that one rises to oppose any project calculated to develop our primary resources or our mineral resources. If it can be shown that even in the remotest sense these industries will be developed, then it is a very difficult matter to oppose such a



proposition. But we must not permit our enthusiasm in that regard to override our judgment. This measure must be regarded in the light of a plain business proposition, and it is in that light that we, as an Opposition, desire to criticise it. What do we find? The Treasurer tells us that there are great possibilities there. He has postulated somewhat lengthily as to what might be brought about. If all this richness is there, if all these rich mineral ores are lying dormant awaiting development, if all these enormous possibilities for immediate wealth production are there, why, in the name of fortune, do we find the owners of this railway and the owners of these immense mineral leases containing wealth beyond the dreams of avarice; why is it necessary for a company that has invested over a million of money to come to the Queensland Parliament and ask us to enable them to unload their assets on us at a comparatively small figure?

The TREASURER: They did not ask us; they protested.

Colonel RANKIN: I am quite sure, if the position is as explained to us by the Treasurer, a company of this kind would have no difficulty in raising the necessary funds to enable them to carry on in Australia itself without going on the English market. Does anyone mean to tell me that the names associated with this undertaking would have found any difficulty—judging from the Treasurer it was merely on account of the previous Government failing to advance £30,000 that they had to hang up.

The TREASURER: That was in 1914.

Colonel RANKIN: On that account they had to suspend operations, and on that account we now find the company are in liquidation, and offering their assets to us.

The TREASURER: The company have not offered their assets; it was the debenture-holders who foreclosed on them.

Colonel RANKIN: That is practically the same thing. If the possibilities are such as the Treasurer would have us believe, then surely these debenture-holders, as shrewd business men, would not have been stuck for a mere £30,000.

At ten minutes past 9 o'clock,

Mr. BERTRAM took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Colonel RANKIN: It was only a very short time after they closed down that the metal market recovered, and the price of copper, lead, and silver went up too.

The TREASURER: The debenture-holders were not getting their interest.

Colonel RANKIN: Does the hon. gentleman want to make this House believe that the London people are not just as conversant with the details of what is happening in Australia as the Australians themselves? I can assure him that the men in London know what is proceeding at Chillagoe just as well as the men in Melbourne. The men in London know just as well as the men in Melbourne that the price of copper jumped from £60 to £110 per ton. They know the altered conditions, and if the position is such as has been stated by the Treasurer; if this is such an excellent proposal, then there is something strange about it that these long-headed business men, after having all this time to recover themselves, have not taken advantage of the improved position. That

is the first objection that I have to the proposition. I am not venturing on any dangerous ground. I am not posing as one who has an intimate knowledge of the Chillagoe field. I have not. I am looking at it in the light of a plain business proposition, and that is what we are asked to do. Twelve months has elapsed since this measure first came before Parliament, and during that time the price of metals has still been high, and no effort has been made by these people to recover their position. The Bill placed before us really consists largely of an agreement, and, reading between the lines of the agreement, one can easily read into it what I might term the tragedy of mining speculation. We see here where company after company has been formed, the one coming to the rescue of the other, the one throwing their good money after bad money, until in the end they are unable to go any further, and unable to find any more capital. Then they turn round—I suppose they think this is a philanthropic Government—and ask the Government to come to their rescue by buying up their assets.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They were very much incensed about us doing it.

Colonel RANKIN: Then why did you do it? The Secretary for Public Instruction does not mean to suggest to me that the Government in any way coerced these people?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The debenture-holders coerced them.

Colonel RANKIN: Who are the debenture-holders? The debenture-holders are the men who would have taken it up if it was such a good thing as the Treasurer would like us to believe. As a matter of fact, they have had enough of it, to use vulgar language. The various accounts of untold wealth which seemed to find expression from the Treasurer's fertile imagination evidently have not been convincing enough to the people who have already sunk their money in Chillagoe, and that is why they come along and ask us to take it over. Another weak point in regard to this Bill is this: We have a good deal of information in the schedule to the Bill; we are told that the assets which we are asked to purchase cover a whole lot of things, such as wheelbarrows, broken-down typewriters, and things of that kind. But really, the things that do matter are not given to us; they are withheld from us. What I am concerned about chiefly are the principal assets. How about the railway? We have no report of any expert as to what the state of that line is. We know that the line was built twenty years ago. Now, most of you will recognise that a railway line, like anything else, has a lifetime; it does not improve as years go by, and for depreciation, I suppose, 4 per cent. to 5 per cent. would be a reasonable thing to allow. If you allow a depreciation of 5 per cent. for twenty years, it practically wipes out the whole thing. Now, what is the state of that railway line?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is in a good state.

Colonel RANKIN: We only have the word of the Minister for that; we have no expert knowledge. Has the Minister himself made an inspection of it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, and I have experts' opinion on it, too.

*Colonel Rankin.]*

Colonel RANKIN: It is not what the Minister has; it is what the House has here. We ought to have the information, and we haven't got it. We are simply asked to accept an assurance that this line is in good repair after twenty years, when an ordinary commercial firm would have written it down to zero.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner's valuation last year—

Colonel RANKIN: Was something like £300,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: £419,000 odd.

Colonel RANKIN: Anyhow, that does not very much matter. The permanent way this year, you also told us, was something like £300,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is rails alone.

Colonel RANKIN: And the whole undertaking was estimated at £419,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Colonel RANKIN: That may be; but we have not got the information here. We are merely asked to take the assurance of the Minister that that is so. The same thing applies with regard to various other matters covered in this agreement. We have no certificate from anybody that these things are there; that they have any existence, in fact. Now, is that a fair thing? Is it a reasonable request to make to this House, to come along and ask us to expend nearly three quarters of a million of money simply on the word of the Minister without any corroboration at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you doubt it?

Colonel RANKIN: I don't doubt the word of the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you doubt that the smelters are there?

Colonel RANKIN: We have no evidence that there are any smelters there.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is the evidence you have got in the agreement.

Colonel RANKIN: Where is it? There is not a certificate attached to the whole undertaking. There is a certain indenture, a form of agreement; there is a brief history of the ups and downs of the Chillagoe Company; but, as far as any evidence of the existence of anything is concerned there is not a certificate of any kind, class, or description attached to the Bill. I have never seen such a measure introduced into this House before.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You have no reasonable doubts, have you?

Colonel RANKIN: The Minister for Education may have no reasonable doubts. I was quite satisfied that when the Minister said these things were there he believed they were there. But there is a businesslike and an unbusinesslike way of doing things. To ask any member of this House to believe that the Minister can tell us that all these things in this agreement to purchase are there, which are stipulated to be there, I say is absurd on the face of it. I am finding fault with the whole system on which this Bill is introduced. We are asked to pass a large sum of money on a proposition which has been extolled by the Treasurer, but

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which, so far as actual experience goes by the people who have been running it for the last twenty years, and who are giving it up, on the evidence of the Minister for Education this afternoon, has been reduced in price from £1,000,000 last year to £400,000 this year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Because the debenture-holders made them.

Colonel RANKIN: What is the difference between the debenture-holders and the company? Of course, the debenture-holders are the company for the time being. (Government dissent.)

Mr. DUNSTAN: The hon. Mr. Thynne can give you a certificate as to the value of the property.

Colonel RANKIN: I am not concerned with Mr. Thynne. I am concerned with the measure which has been brought into this Chamber; and I say that, notwithstanding the excellent speech of the Treasurer, notwithstanding the laudatory comments of the Treasurer, notwithstanding the speech of the Minister for Railways, I am not satisfied that we are getting a fair deal for our money.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is there anything that could be said from this side that would satisfy you.

Colonel RANKIN: Not necessarily. It is not a question of something that is said. What we want is a certificate that these things are there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We had them last year.

Colonel RANKIN: We have not got them now. For anything we know to the contrary, the culverts and bridges along that line of railway may be washed away.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They are not.

Colonel RANKIN: The sleepers on that line have been twenty years laid, and they may be white-ant eaten and rotten. The life of a sleeper is not twenty years, and the Minister knows it. I am just putting the case as any business man would put it. You have brought in a measure and have not given us a single certificate of anybody. The Minister will tell us these things are there. Is there any certificate of any official of your department here?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What would be the necessity for it?

Colonel RANKIN: There is every necessity for it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course not.

Colonel RANKIN: Surely this House wants some assurance, if we are going to give the Government £700,000, that we are getting something for it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And so you are. Our officials have checked it.

Colonel RANKIN: We have the word of the Minister that these things are there. He believes they are there.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is one of the most absurd grounds I have ever heard raised.

Colonel RANKIN: It may be absurd in the eyes of the Minister. But if he were dealing with his own money he would take good care to have a certificate prepared for

him that they were there. Merely because he is dealing with public money he says it is all right.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I take my officers' assurance.

Colonel RANKIN: Not only that, but he asks us to accept the same thing. I submit that we are justified in protesting against a measure of this kind in the absence of any information. I am not prepared to question the accuracy of the statements of the Treasurer. I have no desire to throw cold water on anything he said with regard to the mineral resources of the North, but I say that, so far as the evidence of these resources has gone, so far as anything we have before us is concerned, it has one word only written across it and that is "failure." It is disclosed in the tragedy—because you can only call it a tragedy—of this agreement we have before us, when you see company after company coming to the rescue of their predecessors, until finally they exhaust all possible resources and they come to the Government and, metaphorically speaking, say, "For God's sake relieve us of this burden." Now, that is the position as it presents itself to me, and that is the position as it must present itself to any business man.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did you hear the screech they made last year when we proposed to take this over?

Colonel RANKIN: No, I didn't hear the screech.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They said we were confiscating it.

Colonel RANKIN: I have sufficient intelligence to know that if the Chillagoe Company or the owners of this particular commodity that they are offering—or utility, or mine, or whatever you might choose to call it—thought it was a good thing, and if they thought it was worth more than you are giving, I am quite sure the Queensland Government would not have the chance of getting it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you not know of an estate in difficulty being offered for sale for less than its true value?

Colonel RANKIN: I have known many companies in difficulties and many individuals. I know if that company or that individual possessed the assets which have been told us by the Treasurer this evening they would have no difficulty whatever in raising whatever funds were necessary to carry on.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: These are not movable assets.

Colonel RANKIN: We are referred to the statements of a geologist. I know the value of a geologist. Far be it from me to decry the work of the geologist. I recognise the excellent work they have done; but I say that geologists are fallible—very fallible. In my experience of thirty years in mining I have seen mistake after mistake they have made. No one blames them for it. They can only form certain deductions from certain evidence. The geologist, no more than you or I, can peer into the bowels of the earth and say what is there. The Treasurer told us these statements he was making were absolutely beyond dispute because they were confirmed by geologists. I say there is in my mind a very big doubt. I can realise the desire of the Treasurer to make the best speech he can; but I say this is not a case where we should allow our enthusiasm for

any developmental work to cloud our business vision. That is just what there is a danger of our doing. Turning for a moment to the second part of the agreement, dealing with this £90,000 that is being advanced to the Mount Mulligan Coal Company: of all the extraordinary proposals I have ever heard brought before any House, I think that one certainly caps the lot. Let us see what are the actual assets on which we are asked to make this enormous advance. The said assets absolutely are wrapped up in something in the neighbourhood of 4,000 acres. Now, anybody who knows anything about coalmining at all knows that that is a very small area if you are going to work a big coalfield. I know of comparatively small places in my own district where the area is nearly as great as that; where at the close of thirty years they have travelled over an area nearly as great as that. And here we are asked to advance £90,000 on it. I speak as a coalmining man.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is that all we are advancing it for?

Colonel RANKIN: No; but that is what you are advancing it against.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, that is only a small portion of what we are advancing it for.

Colonel RANKIN: The area of the coalfield on which you are asking us to advance £90,000 is only some 4,000 acres.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I say that that coal area is only a small portion of what we are advancing it for.

Colonel RANKIN: I say that £90,000 is an enormous sum to advance on a coal proposition of this kind. Where does it come in?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why don't you be fair? Why don't you try to be fair, anyway?

Colonel RANKIN: If the hon. gentleman will indicate any sense of unfairness—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is £60,000 of that to go towards the purchase and erection of coke ovens.

Colonel RANKIN: I am coming to that presently. But what is the value of those coke ovens to you when your mineral area peters out? What is the value of those coke ovens on which you are going to spend £65,000, when your coal area is finished—that area of some 40,000 odd acres?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why do you assume that?

Colonel RANKIN: Assume what?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That it is going to be finished.

Colonel RANKIN: I am going by the area you have to work. Everybody knows you probably would not recover 25 per cent. of the coal in that area. I listened very carefully to the Treasurer's speech, and while he shows there is quite a large quantity of coal, it is so broken up by bands that only a comparatively small portion of it will be recoverable at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Would that exhaust the coal?

Colonel RANKIN: It exhausts all that the company has got. It does not mean it is going to exhaust all the coal in that district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Then the rest of the coal in the district would make them of some use.

*Colonel Rankin.]*

Colonel RANKIN: A man opening up his coal will build his own coke ovens. The hon. member knows very little [9.30 p.m.] about it. In cokemaking you have to economise every copper, and if you have to carry your raw product, the extra handling, in addition to the cost of carriage, will practically put you out of court altogether. I see this weakness in the proposition—that you are going to advance the huge sum of £90,000 on a coal area of about 4,000 acres. I am not quite sure that I am satisfied at all that this coal justifies it. I tried to follow the Treasurer, and I certainly came to the conclusion that the seam of coal was only 2 feet 3 inches thick.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: One is 6 feet.

Colonel RANKIN: It is not a clean 6-foot seam of coal. Before you can tell whether a seam of that nature is of any real value, you need to have a section of the strata placed before you, because if you have 3 inches of coal, 2 inches of stone, 4 inches of coal, 3 inches of stone, 4 inches of coal, and 2 inches of stone right through the 6 feet there is very little in it.

Mr. POLLOCK: Only "penny" bands.

Colonel RANKIN: I have known "penny" bands run up to an inch, and, if you have to deal with a number of them, the cost of cleaning is simply enormous. It has to be hand-picked in many cases, and if you have only 2 feet 3 inches of clean coal, it is not a very big thing. So far as the quality of the coal is concerned, so far as I could gather, it seemed to be all right.

Mr. GLEDSON: The seam was 2 feet 3 inches.

Colonel RANKIN: Well, that makes it worse still. The hon. member knows as well as I do that a seam of 2 feet 3 inches is very expensive to work, and he also knows as well as I do, that although you may have 6 feet of coal, a number of bands throughout that 6 feet may make it almost prohibitive.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If you had 30 feet with bands, it would be worse.

Colonel RANKIN: No, provided you had 4, 5, or 6 feet of clean coal, it is all right, because you leave the rest. However, I do not think the Treasurer has disclosed anything very remarkable to induce us to receive this proposition with open arms. There is another point. I think the Treasurer told us that this area was 8 miles by 6 miles. So far as I can gather that is the area prospected. Well, if the area is so extensive, why do not the Government go in for a coalmine of their own?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They may, later on.

Colonel RANKIN: We would know where we were then, but instead of that, the Government come along with a proposal to lend somebody £90,000. Is this going to be part of the settled policy of the Government? If any company happen to get into financial difficulties, and come along to the Government, are they going to act "the fairy godmother" to them all?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The assets are sufficient.

Colonel RANKIN: It is certainly something new in the policy of any Administration when the only justification for making

[Colonel Rankin.]

this advance is, as the Minister says, that the people have not got sufficient money to carry on.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said the assets were sufficiently good.

Colonel RANKIN: What are the assets? Again, we are asked to make this leap in the dark. We are asked to advance £90,000 on the statement of the Minister, and a schedule showing certain mineral leases aggregating about 4,000 acres.

Mr. GLEDSON: Four thousand and thirteen acres.

Colonel RANKIN: That is all the assets the Government have in making this enormous advance, because in coalmining it is an enormous advance. I do not know whether anything like such an expenditure has taken place in any colliery in Queensland. The sum of £90,000 is a very large sum of money to be expended, outside the purchase of the property itself.

The TREASURER: The whole property goes in as security.

Colonel RANKIN: Yes, but the land is not freehold. I could understand it if you were buying a property at £20 or £30 an acre.

The TREASURER: How many people have tried to sell their mines at a quarter of a million?

Colonel RANKIN: But that covers the freehold. You have nothing here but a lease extending over a few years. And then, with the exception of the remarks made by the Treasurer, we have no indication as to the mineral value of those leases. It should be here in the Bill. There certainly ought to be some certificates as to what we are buying.

The TREASURER: That would be ridiculous.

Colonel RANKIN: It would be anything but ridiculous. We are asked to accept the bald statement of anybody who comes along. I have already gone over that ground, and as far as I can see we have nothing like the information we ought to have, and I cannot see anything to justify this extraordinary departure of making an advance of £90,000 for five or six years at 4½ per cent. to a company who cannot carry on themselves. It is a most extraordinary proposal. Of that sum, £60,000 is to be expended in coke ovens and water supply. That is a very considerable sum. Is it the intention of the Government to make use of the by-products or are they simply going to make coke?

The TREASURER: They will utilise the by-products, if practicable.

Colonel RANKIN: There you are; we cannot get any information about it. It sounds too much like what the "Bulletin" calls a wild-cat scheme to suit me. Only £5,000 is being allocated for underground development, the most important thing of the whole lot. Any mining man knows that when you are spending £60,000 on your surface improvements and £25,000 in paying some back debts and it leaves you the sum of £5,000 to develop the property—

The TREASURER: They have been developing for three years.

Colonel RANKIN: What is the result of it? Nothing.

The TREASURER: Ascertaining the capabilities.

Colonel RANKIN: I presume that the capabilities mark time with the output. What is the output? The Treasurer and the Minister do not know. It might be 100 tons or it might be 10 tons per day. We are absolutely in the dark. We know that the proportion to be expended in underground development is absurd compared with the surface expenditure, and the expenditure on back debts. Then we come to another matter that the Treasurer made a good deal of talk about—that is, the fact that the railway requirements are to be met at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. over the cost of production. That, on the face of it, seems a very fair thing, but, as a matter of fact, it may mean anything or nothing. I would much rather have incorporated in the Bill a fixed price. Then we know where we are. What is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. over the cost of production? You will notice, too, that in that cost of production is included royalties, rents, and interest; interest, I suppose, upon that £90,000 amongst other sums. I say that instead of this proving a cheap, economical thing it may prove just the opposite. We are asked to make this leap in the dark, and believe that by agreeing to this proposal to supply the Government at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. above cost price we are getting something cheap, which I maintain may prove very dear coal or very dear coke. It would be very much wiser and there should be no difficulty in having incorporated in the Bill exactly what is to be charged. Then we would know where we were. Notwithstanding the excellent statement given us by the Treasurer and the sympathetic speech of the Minister, I say that this is a proposition that will not bear the light of day. Money is scarce. The line is already built, and it is not going to settle any new country. The money that we have to spend might be spent very much better in some other district crying out for a railway.

Mr. MURPHY (*Burke*): I intend to support this proposal, and I am not going to traverse the arguments of the hon. member for Burrum and other hon. members opposed to the purchase of these railways. Nor do I propose to paint the Chillagoe district in the same roseate hue in which the Treasurer depicted it. I think that right outside mining altogether the purchase of these railways can be justified.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Compare it with the Burke district.

Mr. MURPHY: The Burke district, like the Chillagoe district, is very depressed at the present time. A large amount of money has been spent in both districts, and, so far as investment is concerned, I think the Burke district has given more to shareholders in companies than has ever been given to shareholders in companies in the Chillagoe district. However, this seems to be the last chapter in the book of the Chillagoe Company. It is unfortunate that they have failed in their enterprise, and I, for one, sincerely regret that the day has come when the shareholders have been compelled to throw in the towel. But we have to take things as they are, not as we would like them to be, and although we may sympathise with the shareholders we have to deal with this matter as a business proposition. It may be said that in view of some of the speeches which I have made in connection with the borrowing policy of the Government I am somewhat inconsistent in supporting this proposal, but it was before the House last

year, and I then gave it cordial support, and I honestly believe that the State is justified in taking over these railways at the present time. As I pointed out yesterday, we have not to deal with the Etheridge Railway proposal at all. So far as Queensland is concerned, within the next four years it is compulsory that the Government take that line over. It is compulsory that we take that line over, because under the agreement which was entered into when the railway was constructed the Government and the company decided to share the loss.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And the Government is paying over £11,000 a year by way of interest.

Mr. MURPHY: I know that. They are paying  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. I am not going to agree with the Minister for Railways in that argument in favour of the proposal which he has submitted to-night, for the very simple reason that we shall still have to go on paying interest on the money, not at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., but at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We may make the line more productive than it is now.

Mr. MURPHY: So far as the Chillagoe Company is concerned, it expended many, many thousands of pounds in mining operations in that district. It is unfortunate that it was compelled to cease operations at a time, as the Treasurer has pointed out, when there was a big revival in the metal market. If the Government start the smelters in Chillagoe, which I think it is necessary should be done, I believe that that vast mineral area, leaving the Etheridge district out of it altogether, in the Chillagoe district ought certainly to supply sufficient ore to make the railway profitable, and give employment to a very large number of miners. I believe if the Government open the smelters at Chillagoe that small parties will be formed in that district to work a number of the mines, and there is no doubt in my mind that the Government proposes to open the Einasleigh copper-mine. It has been said there are very few men on this side of the House who know much about mining. As a matter of fact, there are very few men in Queensland who know much about mining. There may be a lot of men who think they know a lot about mining.

Mr. DUNSTAN: And there are a few who know too much—to their cost.

Mr. MURPHY: My experience in mining is this: that there is a good deal of luck attached to making money in mining ventures. I know in goldmining, a cousin Jack said, "Where it be, there it be; and where it be, there I beant." And that has been the experience of a good number of us. It has been pointed out this evening that the Chillagoe district, from a mining standpoint, is very dull to-day. I recollect, and the hon. Mr. Forsyth will recollect also, when I went out to the Gulf country some thirty years ago, Cloncurry was fairly prosperous. The drop in the price of copper shut Cloncurry down, and for quite a number of years there was very little mining in the Cloncurry district. I know they used to bring their ore some 250 miles by horse and bullock teams from Cloncurry into the port of Norman; but, anyhow, the drop in the price of copper shut Cloncurry down.

Mr. DUNSTAN: That was enough to shut up the mine.

[*Mr. Murphy.*]

Mr. MURPHY: As I say, the drop in the price of copper shut up the field, and it was not till years after—when there was a revival in mining, when big companies came into operation, and the field was brought into railway connection with a port—that the mining started again. Anybody who has studied mining will admit that to-day Cloncurry is a prosperous centre, and there is no reason why Chillagoe should not again become a prosperous mining centre. The fact that one company has lost a considerable amount of money does not for one moment prove that the whole mineral resources of that district are exhausted.

Mr. DUNSTAN: You do not use it to show the failure of private enterprise.

Mr. MURPHY: In dealing with a mining proposition you do not use it to show the failure of anybody. I recollect the Golden Gate line of reef was absolutely abandoned by parties of working miners on account of the poor returns received. They were unable to make a living out of it, and the whole place was closed down for years. Later on No. 1 North Golden Gate was taken up by Mr. Rogers and a mate, and as a result of rich returns the whole line right from one end of the Golden Gate line to the other gave employment to a large number of men and gave many thousands of pounds in dividends. I think the hon. member, Mr. Collins, will bear me out in that. When you are dealing with the business of mining it is no use condemning a proposal such as this because one company unfortunately made a failure, but looking at the matter right outside mining altogether I think it is a very desirable thing that the State should accept the opportunity that has arisen to acquire these railways. We know the immense area that these railways serve. We know that in those districts the pastoral industry is pretty prosperous. There is every likelihood that the stations and the transit necessary for keeping the stations going, and for carrying cattle into the Bibbohra meatworks and down to butchers in Cairns and the many other places in that district may make the railway a profitable one, and it is because I believe in the State taking over the railways at the present time that I am strongly opposed to the insertion in this agreement of power to the Commissioner for Railways to keep the freights 50 per cent. above our ordinary rates. When these railways were constructed, Parliament sanctioned the clause empowering the companies to charge these extra rates as a kind of guarantee. We know when the Chillagoe Company decided to build that railway what was the position of that district. It was the expenditure of money by the Chillagoe Company and the construction of that railway that made that vast Chillagoe district so prosperous for quite a number of years. Not only did that expenditure help the district but we also know what it did for the Cairns line, which for many years had incurred a heavy loss in working expenses. That being so would there be any justification for us at the present time refusing the Government power to pay £475,000 for the Chillagoe Railway. Of course, I am not going to agree with either the Minister for Railways or the Treasurer when they talk about not having to find any cash. We have to recognise that the debentures which will be issued to these companies will mean an additional interest burden on the people. It

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is no good our doing the Micawber business, and just signing the debentures and saying "Thank God they are paid." We have simply to recognise that the issue of those debentures means an increased burden on the community, but I say that that increased burden is justified by the fact that this vast area served by the Chillagoe and Etheridge railways will be in the hands of the State, and the private control of those railways will disappear and consequently the people who have gone into those outback places and who have not the conveniences of life people in the more-settled districts are able to obtain will not continue to be left at the mercy of any private company. That being so, I sincerely trust the Government will give an assurance that this proposal regarding the 50 per cent. increase will be eliminated from the agreement. I think that one of the great objections in the old days to the proposal of the Chillagoe Company for power to construct that railway raised by Labour men of that time was that the Government were not only placing a monopoly of the carrying business of that vast district in the hands of the Chillagoe Company, but they were giving them power to charge 50 per cent. higher rates than we were being charged at that time on the Cairns Railway. Later on I know that the rates of fares and freights on the Cairns line were increased by 25 per cent., and on the Croydon Railway we had to pay 50 per cent. more than in the South. At any rate, that power was given to the company as a sort of guarantee that the railway would pay. But the guarantee system has been wiped out in Queensland, and there is not the slightest justification for giving the Government power to charge 50 per cent. extra in that district. I am supporting this railway proposal because I think when it is handed over to the Commissioner the Government will assist the mining industry in this district, as I presume it proposes to do. I believe there is a greater chance for the development of the Etheridge and Chillagoe districts when the railway is controlled by the State. I understand there has been a good deal of criticism with regard to the £95,000 which is to be advanced by the Government to the Chillagoe Company in connection with the development of the Mount Mulligan coalfield. I agree with the Treasurer that if anything is to be done in the way of attempting to revive mining in the Chillagoe district the first essential is that there should be ensured for the smelters cheap fuel. Consequently nobody can really take any exception to the action of the Government in coming to the assistance of the Chillagoe Company. We have to recollect that so far as North Queensland is concerned the shareholders in the Chillagoe Company have spent a very large sum of money indeed in prospecting and developing that district, and I am sure that nobody who gives the matter any reasonable consideration will take exception to the action of the Government in coming to their assistance at the present time. The shareholders in that company have lost everything. No doubt, as the Treasurer pointed out, some of the early shareholders of the company may have made some money as the result of taking advantage of the share market.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: It was over-capitalised in the first instance.

Mr. MURPHY: It is too late to deal with the question of whether the capital was too

large. Evidently the final result shows that there was an insufficiency of capital.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: It was over-capitalised in the first instance.

Mr. MURPHY: I am not going to enter into an argument with regard to that. I am just trying to show the House that I believe it is in the interests of Queensland that the opportunity which has arisen should be taken advantage of. We know that last year opposition was shown to the [10 p.m.] proposal because it was thought that the Government had taken a rather mean advantage of the Chillagoe shareholders when the Premier entered into an arrangement with the debenture-holders in London. But that phase of the question has now disappeared. An agreement has been arrived at between the various companies interested in the Chillagoe properties and the debenture-holders, and also the Government, so no exception can now be taken on the score that the Government are not dealing fairly with the shareholders in the Chillagoe Company. We have to recognise also that, so far as the far Northern part of Queensland is concerned, it is very desirable that any Government should give assistance in order that it may become populated. I have always taken exception, since I have been in this Chamber, to the criticisms which have fallen from some hon. members regarding the assistance which has been given to the mining industry. We have to recollect that the mining industry has done a great deal for Queensland, and I am one of those who believe that it will continue to do a great deal for the State. We know that when mining was prosperous in the Chillagoe district the railway was profitable, that employment was given to a large number of men, and I honestly believe that the purchase of these railways by the Government will tend to improve the conditions in those districts. The miner goes out into the back country prospecting; he opens it up, and frequently lives under very adverse conditions, and the State of Queensland can well afford to assist those who will try to redevelop the Chillagoe district. There is no reason why the State should not assist the Chillagoe Company in this matter of fuel. We may take exception—as the hon. member for Burrum did, and as I do—to the agreement which has been entered into in the matter of the price that is to be paid.

Mr. WELLINGTON: You opposed the proposition in the first instance.

Mr. MURPHY: At the time the Chillagoe Railway passed through this Chamber I did not happen to be a member of Parliament. In those days I never thought I would be a member of Parliament; and the men who represented Burke at that time were Mr. Sim, who represented Carpentaria; Mr. Hoolan, who represented the Burke; and Mr. W. H. Browne, who represented Croydon.

Mr. WELLINGTON: You had a paper in Croydon.

Mr. MURPHY: Yes, and I was supporting Mr. Browne, and for the information of the hon. member I would point out that Mr. Browne voted against the Chillagoe proposal, and assisted in that memorable stonewall against syndicate railways, and both Mr. Sim and Mr. Hoolan had to get out of the Labour party for supporting syndicate railways. I think that what the hon. member is trying to get at is the Etheridge Railway.

He wishes to say that I was one of those who supported the Etheridge Railway. I realised that, so far as the Etheridge district was concerned, it needed a railway if it was to be developed. I was hopeful that the construction of that railway would have proved very beneficial indeed to the mining industry. It is unfortunate that the railway has not been a profitable investment for the Government. I do not suppose there is any need to enter into the history of the Chillagoe or Etheridge Railways at the present time. All the things which the Labour party had against the Chillagoe Railway have disappeared. The great cry against the 50 per cent. increase on Government rates has disappeared, because we find the present-day members of the party, who so vigorously stonewalled that proposal when the railway proposition was introduced by the then Liberal Minister for Railways, are now sitting behind the Government, and ready, I suppose, to vote for every clause in the agreement. I am voting for the Bill because I believe it is in the interests of Queensland that the railway should be taken over. I am voting for it because I believe, if the Government obtain possession of the railway, the Chillagoe Company having become insolvent, there is a possibility that mining may be revived in the district. I am not advocating that the Government should rush in and spend huge sums of money just for the purpose of saving the mining industry in that district, but the Government should give very careful consideration to every proposition for reviving mining in that centre. I hope there will not be any deliberate waste of public money, because any deliberate waste of public money simply falls back upon the great mass of wage-earners of the State. But there is no reason why a State like Queensland—bad and all as its needs are at the present time, hard and all as it is to obtain loan money—should not be able to devote a reasonable sum to ensure prospecting in that area, or assist parties of men to develop some of the mines which have been closed down because of the failure to secure capital by the Chillagoe Company. That being so, I give this proposal my cordial support, and I sincerely trust, if the Legislative Council on this occasion agree to the passage of the Bill, that all the good things which have been predicted by the Treasurer will be forthcoming. I do not profess to be a judge, but the only way to prove whether a mineral area is any good is by spending money to prospect it. You can talk about geologists, mining engineers, and mining experts as much as you like, but the only way to prove a mineral area is to get down into the ground and thoroughly prospect it. There is no doubt from the financial aspect of the State and from the financial position of the world to-day, that there may be some justification for a criticism of such a proposal at this time, but I would point out to those who criticise it from that view that we have to realise that if we do not accept the opportunity which is given us to-day to secure these railways, it may pass away. Some hon. members have said if we allow the matter to go on for another year, or two we may be able to purchase these railways at a much less price than we are paying to-day. I do not think that is a fair standpoint from which to view this question. The closing of the Chillagoe works has made things very depressed in that district, and the purchase

of the railway and a little assistance to mining may make the Chillagoe district the thriving place that it was a few years ago, and I sincerely trust that such will be the case.

Mr. FORSYTH: I am somewhat pessimistic in regard to this proposal, although we have had a most excellent speech from the Treasurer from his particular standpoint. There is no doubt he gave us a good deal of information; he must have gone to a great deal of trouble in preparing his speech, and he is very optimistic. But we must not forget that the Chillagoe Company—a company run by some of the ablest men in mining in Australia—after twenty years of mining, and after having spent an enormous sum of money, could not make a success of it. I admit that copper was at a very much lower price than it is now. But does it not seem reasonable, seeing that the machinery was there, that they would have made some attempt to work it at the present juncture, with the price of copper so high, and thereby retrieve some of the money which has been lost, but not one single effort has been made. If these people, who knew their business, had been under the impression that they could have made that mine pay, they would have started these works again and have given employment to a large number of people. My idea is that the bulk of the good ore belonging to the Chillagoe Company has been worked out. I have seen men who have worked in the Chillagoe mines, and they say that the mines have been worked out, and that there is no good ore left. The Treasurer inferred that we had large copper companies in Queensland at the present time, particularly in Cloncurry, who had to pay a very much higher price for coal than the Chillagoe Company have to pay, and that they had been able to pay dividends to their shareholders. The Mount Elliott and Mount Ilampden mines have been able to pay, for the simple reason that they are working high-grade ore. We know the Chillagoe mine was not a high-grade proposition, and all the ore of a high-grade nature has been taken away. Now, we are asked to spend a great deal of money in purchasing these properties. It is quite true that we will have to find the Etheridge money in four years' time, but on that money we are only paying  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. We will have to pay  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the £475,000, and that represents £20,000 per year which is apart altogether from the Etheridge Company, and if you add the amount required for the Etheridge Company it means that over £30,000 per year interest will have to be paid no matter whether the mines pay or not. And then they have £90,000 which is going to be advanced to the Mount Mulligan Company; and we know, according to the agreement, that it is going to be paid back in five years. Suppose they cannot pay it back? Does the hon. gentleman think they will be able to?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. FORSYTH: Of course, he does; he was bound to say that. I have very great doubt about it, as a matter of fact. The Treasurer has told us that when the mine closed down the Chillagoe Company has been making a profit on the line of £12,000 after paying working expenses. That had nothing whatever to do with the interest upon the railways. The interest on £400,000 or £500,000 at 4 per cent. or 5 per cent. would be double that amount. When you take

into account the interest charges, the line is losing heavily. There are a good many companies that are going to get well paid out of this. I see that £15,000 is going to the Bank of Australasia. There is also another matter in connection with the Etheridge Company, in connection with the Mount Mulligan Mine, of £90,000. The Government say that the money will be wanted as required. That is all right; but how is it going to be required? If the hon. gentleman will refer to the agreement in connection with Mount Mulligan he will see he has to find a good deal of money at once; a considerable amount has to be paid whether he likes it or not. That £60,000 is supposed to be for development of the mine. Then there is a sum not exceeding £25,000 for discharging the present obligations of the company, including interest on debentures. In other words, this £25,000 has to be paid straight away. It is not a question of advancing £5,000 or £10,000 at a time; they are going to advance £25,000 straight away to wipe off that liability. There is another £15,000 in connection with the Bank of Australasia. All this is to wipe off a good many old accounts. I think, myself, we are entering into something that we don't understand. They have only got the money for five years. If at the end of that time they fail to pay, what is going to happen? I suppose the Government will go in and take possession?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government are well secured.

Mr. FORSYTH: I have no desire to say a single word against endeavouring to assist in any way any fair railways in North Queensland; because we all know how the country is at the present time. These companies were reformed and reformed again and again, until I believe there has been £1,500,000 lost in connection with the Chillagoe Company. What guarantee have the Government got with regard to its paying when it comes under the Government?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Because there will be no boodling under Government control.

Mr. FORSYTH: Whether there is or not, the fact remains that this company has lost a huge sum of money.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not in developmental work; floating and refloating and all the rest.

Mr. FORSYTH: Of course, enormous sums of money have been spent in development work.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I say that a large amount of the loss was not money spent in development work.

Mr. FORSYTH: There was a great deal spent in development. I have been on some of the properties, and have seen the development going on there, and have seen the huge amount of money spent in furnaces and other appliances. The point I want particularly to refer to is that the whole of this business is a pure gamble. If you can get the ore and it is rich enough, it will be all right; but I don't think it is a wise thing for the Government to go in for a gamble with £500,000, £600,000, or £700,000 belonging to the people of Queensland. The hon. gentleman, I know, is perfectly honest in his belief, and so is the Treasurer. Probably he believes that this money is all right; but there can be no

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guarantee given whatever. Naturally, being the member for the district, he gives a good report of the whole thing, he is not going to tell you what other people think about it. I have discussed this thing with some people who have had a great deal of difficulty with mines worked by them, and they say that the mines are worked out. The general proposition, so far as the ore is concerned, is a low grade. The mines in Cloncurry would not have paid but for the fact that it was of such a high grade.

The TREASURER: They were smelting 5 per cent. ore at Mount Mulligan last year.

Mr. FORSYTH: That may be. The reason why these did so well in the first instance was because the ore was of such a high grade. I have seen ore from Cloncurry sent down in bags, going up to 50 per cent. When you get down to the sulphide ore, if it is on the basis of 10 per cent. you have got a first-class proposition. Have you got that in Chillagoe? You have not; you have a very much lower grade. I would be very sorry to give my sanction to something which would mean an absolutely dead loss to the country, before very long, of £700,000 or £800,000.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I was not intending to say anything, but I think it is necessary to say a few words owing to what has been said from the other side. In the first place, I would like to congratulate the Treasurer upon the very excellent address he has given us to-night, and the very valuable information he has given to us in connection with the mineral prospects of North Queensland. Now, I would like to say that I had the opportunity of visiting that district, and I was able to see just what this proposal will mean to that district. If you went through Chillagoe to-day you would fancy you could see the word written over it "Ichabod"—its glory has departed. Chillagoe at one time had all the appearance of being a prosperous settlement. We find now that it is practically down to nothing, and when I was there there were only nine men employed in the Chillagoe, as against some hundreds of men who were employed before. Now, I was looking up a deputation from the North that approached the late Treasurer (Mr. Barnes), and I see here in the files of the "Courier" of 27th February, 1914, that that deputation was introduced by the member for Chillagoe (Mr. Theodore). It consisted of two very prominent men there—Mr. Torpy and Mr. Mayers—Mr. Mayers representing the big commercial interests, and the Chambers of Commerce of Cairns and other towns. Now, this is what they have to say in connection with that district—

"Mr. Torpy said: The Chillagoe Company never had been able to work profitably owing to the high price and the indifferent quality of fuel available. It treated about 1,000 tons of ore per week. It is estimated that when the coke from Mount Mulligan was obtained a saving equal to 6s. per ton of ore would be effected. If the Government advanced the money required by the company, the loan might be made a first charge on the saving effected on the coke. The coke now obtained from New South Wales, which did not come up in sufficient quantities or regularly, cost £3 15s. a ton. He was not there as an advocate for the company. He had been mining

in Chillagoe for thirteen years, and had sold the company 100,000 tons of ore, but now he had been definitely advised that the company would take no more ore."

Later on, he said—

"He supposed about 1,000 men got a living through the Chillagoe Company, and the companies which supplied ore to it. A highly specialised body of men had been got together from all parts of Australia, and if they were dispersed they would not be likely to come back again."

It says there that 1,000 men were employed there at that time; but when I visited it this year there were only nine men employed. Now, further down, Mr. Mayers is asked a question by Mr. Barnes. It is as follows:—

"Mr. Barnes: If anyone came to you for a loan of £30,000, would you be prepared to say, 'It is all right; I do not want any assurance or guarantee that it is going to be paid.'"

"Mr. Mayers: It all depends on the circumstances of the case. If it was a case of the Chillagoe Company, which had taken over barren country, built railways, settled towns, and spent £5,000,000 making the district a good asset for the Government, I would say, 'You can have that £30,000,' if I thought it was going to carry them on. The Government have on numerous occasions come to the assistance of settlers and others."

Mr. Barnes, in replying, said—

"He would place their views before the Cabinet, but he did not hold out any hope of their requests being granted."

"Mr. Torpy (rising): I consider this deputation has been beautifully shunted out on to a side track."

"Mr. Barnes (severely): Now, I won't have any insults. You take your chair. I won't allow a man to insult me in my office."

"Mr. Torpy: I will go out quick and lively. You can't interpret it into an insult by any specious way whatever."

"The deputation then thanked Mr. Barnes and withdrew."

Now, that shows you how the late Government met these men when they were trying to do something for that district. That shows that that company has spent over £5,000,000, and that there were 1,000 men employed; and now they are practically down to nothing at all. Now, I had the opportunity of coming in contact with several gentlemen there in connection with mining. There was Mr. Lindale—I think he is a brother-in-law to Mr. Moffatt, one of the parties to this agreement—Mr. Frew, Mr. Reid (manager of the Irvinebank Company), Mr. Brown, Mr. McDonald, and others. Those men are working those mines up there, and they are able to tell you what you are not able to see yourself, as to prospects of the mineral fields of the North.

Mr. BARNES: You are killing the Treasurer's arguments. You informed us that the company lost £5,000,000, and you ask us to go into a venture of that kind.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am pointing out that the Chillagoe Company spent £5,000,000 in

*Mr. Gledson.]*

that district. I do not know what return they got. I do not say they lost it. The proposal before us seems to have been lost sight of by some Opposition members. This is a proposal to take over the Chillagoe Railway. I travelled over the railway at the beginning of this year, and it was in a good condition then. I do not know much about the Etheridge Railway. I

consider that the railway itself, [10.30 p.m.] apart from any other consideration, is a good proposition, it would pay in itself without anything else. We find that the debenture-holders will not advance any further money to develop the mine, and the company had to close down. The company asked the Government to ride them over their difficulties, but the Treasurer (Mr. Barnes) refused to help them. In consequence, 1,000 men were thrown out of employment, and the district suffered. This agreement, if it does nothing more, is bringing the railways into the hands of the people themselves. Along with other hon. members who have made it their business to go up to the place and find out the conditions, I am satisfied that the acquisition of these railways is a good proposal, and there are other considerations. Provision has been made for the employment of men and for the development of the industries of the State. When the pastoral industry and the dairying industry have failed in times past we have had to depend on the mining industry to bring us out of the rut and practically keep the State from insolvency. There is no better way of fostering the mining industry than by accepting this agreement to take over the rights of the Chillagoe and Etheridge railways, to help the people there, and to get the Chillagoe smelters into operation again. The result of the starting of the smelters will not be simply to help the company or the big mines; there are hundreds of men who have been working for years up there on small shows, and trying to make an existence and if the smelters were started it would enable them to make a good living.

Dealing with the coal proposal, the hon. member for Burrum said that a 2 feet 3 inches seam could not be worked successfully.

Colonel RANKIN: I did not say that they could not be worked successfully; I said they could not be worked economically.

Mr. GLEDSON: Working on scientific lines, you can get more coal out of a 2 feet 3 inches seam than you can out of a seam 3 feet or 4 feet thick worked on the system in operation at Burrum, where they get about 40 per cent. of the coal, and leave the rest in the pillars.

Colonel RANKIN: The system is determined by the roof.

Mr. GLEDSON: It does not always depend upon the height of the seam. The hon. member for Burrum said, "Fancy £5,000 for developing a mine!" but in that mine there is a big bluff, and the tunnel has been driven right into the bluff; they had to go some considerable distance before they could open up the mine. They have made arrangements to secure the whole of that 2 feet 3 inches seam of clean coal. They are going to work it on the long wall system, to take the whole of their face together. They will be working an equal amount of stone, which will go back to build up their gobs, and the whole of the coal will be extracted and

cut out in one operation. None of the mines in the Burrum district are working under that system.

Colonel RANKIN: I have seen mines working under that system forty years ago.

Mr. GLEDSON: That may be so. A 2 feet 3 inches seam, the whole of the coal in which you get out, is equal to a 4-foot seam of which you take only 50 per cent. out. The No. 2 seam up there has bends in it, but it is being worked successfully. They are able to work it at a fairly reasonable cost, and it has proved very good as far as their test in cokemaking is concerned. The main trouble in the North is the question of fuel, and, if they can overcome that difficulty and secure coke of a good marketable quality in the North, it will mean the making of the mining industry. I think it would be better if the Government guaranteed the £60,000 at the bank; the Government guarantee is all that should be asked for.

Colonel RANKIN: Who is going to pay the guarantee?

Mr. GLEDSON: The ones who pay the guarantee are the ones who work the mines, so long as they are able to work them successfully. Against that guarantee, they have the whole of the assets—the whole of the mine and the whole of the plant, including an up-to-date electrical plant which works the whole of their plant and lights the township of Mount Mulligan. It is the intention of the company, when this money is guaranteed, to employ something like 200 hands in that mine. At present, there are about forty or fifty. We find that the question of expending £60,000 on coking-ovens was mentioned. It is not the intention to put down a coking plant such as that they have at Howard. I suppose that is as far as the mind of the hon. member for Burrum goes.

Colonel RANKIN: I have seen more coke-works in a day than you have seen in all your life—the biggest works in England.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am not going to dispute what the hon. member has seen. I dare say he has seen some funny things in his time. (Laughter.)

Colonel RANKIN: You say my own experience extends to the cokeworks at Burrum.

Mr. GLEDSON: I did not say anything of the sort. I said that the hon. member, when disputing this amount of £60,000, could see no further than the cokeworks at the Burrum. I have no right to say anything about his experience, or what experiences he has been through. He knows them better than I do. We know that no coke-ovens in Queensland are established on up-to-date lines. The system in Queensland, of burning coke in out-of-date ovens, has secured only 60 to 65 per cent. of the coal. In up-to-date ovens the amount recovered is 72 to 75 per cent., sometimes up to 78 per cent. In addition to that, the whole principle is that the loading and unloading is to be done by electricity, so that it may be done economically and produce coke at the least possible cost. That is the only way in which it can be done successfully. I would not have spoken at all had it not been necessary to disabuse the minds of some members of the Opposition of the belief that the Government were attempting to do anything but what would be a good bargain for the State, and I say it will be a good bargain to get the works started, to get some thousands of people employed in North Queensland, not

[Mr. Gledson.]

only from an industrial point of view, but from the point of view of defence. It is necessary that the Government should launch out and see that the people are settled there, and this proposition will go a long day towards that. After all, the rails and machinery there would pay for the whole amount without anything else.

Mr. MURPHY: Machinery on an old mining field is not much good.

Mr. GLEDSON: The machinery on the Chillagoe field is good. It is ready for immediate use. I took particular care to go round it; the manager went to no little trouble to show it to us.

Mr. MURPHY: I am not arguing that this machinery is bad, but on an old mining field machinery is not too saleable. You have the Mount Chalmers experience for that.

Mr. GLEDSON: We are talking about Chillagoe. I think the hon. member knows, that the works are at Chillagoe, and the mines are at Giroffa and other places. He knows that better than I do, because he has been there oftener. We want to impress on the Opposition that we want their assistance in this matter. Every member ought to get up in his place and applaud the Government for their attempt to get the industries started. They ought to help us all that they possibly can instead of hindering us, and we appeal to them to give us all the help they can, because we know that, although we may carry it here, we want their assistance to carry it in "another place." We want the measure through at the earliest possible moment, so that it will be a good thing for the people of Queensland—and, when I say that, I include both the Government and the Opposition and their supporters. We want to see the North develop as it should. There are other things I could deal with, but I think the good sense of members opposite—after the excellent speech of the Treasurer—will lead them to see that this is a good thing for the Government; and if it is a good thing for the Government, it is a good thing in the interests of the people of Queensland.

Mr. BARNES: The hon. member for Ipswich was certainly right in making the reference he did to the speech of the Treasurer. I was almost convinced, "almost persuaded," to believe in the case he made out, but however much I may have been impressed by the Treasurer, the speech of the hon. member for Ipswich has discounted pretty well every good point made by the Treasurer. What could be more condemnatory of a proposal such as that which has been brought forward than the bare statement made by the hon. member for Ipswich that no less than five millions of money have been expended in that district in developing the mines, and yet to-day the whole country is bankrupt, and we are asked as a kind of last gambling chance to consent to the expenditure of another £750,000 to bring to life, in effect, what he states himself has been for years entirely wasted. I am sure that after the remarks of the hon. member for Ipswich, no sensible man, no sensible body of men could approve of such a proposal—because he gave facts, he is speaking as a man of authority, he knows somewhat of what he is talking about. Even taking the Treasurer's statement and the statement of the Minister for Railways, who gave us very fully to understand that even the restarting of the smelters would revive the whole of the mining in that country, while miners, of all men in the world,

are the most optimistic and most industrious and will take the biggest risks, yet as a further inducement it is necessary for the country to come down with a guarantee of £90,000. Not only is one inducement found necessary to get us to support the Bill, but a second inducement, and a third inducement. A great deal has been made of the fact that there is a mere expenditure of £1,000 necessary in connection with this transaction. That seems to be the titbit which has been thrown out to hon. members—that the only cash to be expended in the meanwhile is £1,000. Every man in Queensland pretty well knows Mr. Moffat either directly or by repute, and we know that if any man in Queensland or Australia could have succeeded in connection with these mining undertakings, it was Mr. Moffat. He had been a successful man, a man ardently industrious, a man with a complete knowledge of mining and enjoying the confidence of the people far and wide, and if success was to be achieved in connection with mining on that field, then success would have followed the efforts of Mr. Moffat and those associated with him. Yet the fact is that the people of the land are showing no confidence in this venture to-day. The hon. member for Ipswich intimated that when he was there some time ago there were 1,000 people on the field. Now there are just a few people there. If there was confidence in the various shows on the field, the miners would have been hanging on still, but we know that from the beginning to the end of the field the miners are non est. Nothing has been said here this evening that justifies this House more thoroughly in rejecting the proposal now submitted than the speech by the hon. member for Ipswich. I should have remembered the deputation which waited on the late Treasurer some time ago, but it entirely escaped my memory until it was resurrected in this discussion. Seeing that our interest charges are so heavy at the present time, I think we have no right to commit the country to a further interest charge of £28,000 a year, or to commit the country to mining ventures such as we would not enter upon ourselves individually. The Treasurer said we will do this thing, and we will do the other thing. One would like to know who the "we" are. Is it the intention of the Government to enter upon the business of mining generally, and to go into speculations of this kind?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Treasurer said nothing of the kind, and you know he did not say it.

Mr. BARNES: I drew the attention of the leader of the Opposition to that very statement.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARNES: The Treasurer himself said so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was speaking of his transactions in connection with the agreement.

Mr. BARNES: The House should be a long way off supporting this proposal, even if the Government wish to run a venture of this kind.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you in favour of it?

Mr. BARNES: Decidedly not, on the meagre information before us. I was almost convinced, as I have said, by the arguments of the Treasurer, but other facts have been

*Mr. Barnes.]*

disclosed, and they almost entirely obliterate the convincing arguments of the Treasurer. At this juncture, when our railways are not paying and when we have difficulty in making ends meet, we are not justified in entering upon a risk which will probably add to the deficit for the year. Hon. members seem to imagine that because the properties are to be acquired on debentures redeemable in seven years it is a fair bargain. One year of the seven years has already gone, and six years from now the £450,000 will have to be met. We may find that even in six years from now there will be considerable difficulty in raising the money.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Who are the "we" you are referring to now?

Mr. BARNES: I am referring to the country. The country or the Treasurer will find exceeding difficulty in raising £450,000 to take up that loan. Six years will soon run by, and the prospects of obtaining money at that time are not too good, and on that score I insist that it is not wise for this House to seriously consider the acceptance of the proposal of the Minister for Railways.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): We have a most extraordinary agreement attached to the Bill, and when one reads that agreement, and finds that there have been four companies registered from time to time to take up the liabilities of the previous company, and that all those companies have failed; that a sum of £5,000,000 has been expended; and that £2,000,000 of capital has been actually lost in this venture, one naturally asks: Is it a reasonable thing for this House to be asked to commit the people of Queensland to such an expenditure as is asked for in this Bill? It is a funny thing how we finance in these days. Here, for £1,000 cash, we are able to raise £475,000 by debentures, which are to be paid in the future. The amount previously was £450,000, and in twelve months it has risen to £475,000. I presume the market value of debentures is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and if that is so, we shall have to pay  $4\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. on that £475,000, which is a big item, and we shall have to pay that for the next ten years. When you come to consider the vicissitudes of the [11 p.m.] various companies and the history of Chillagoe; when you come to consider the number of skilled men whose business is winning metals from the soil; when you consider they have proved that property not to be a failure, but such a venture that it is a very doubtful business proposition: is it a fair thing that we should be asked, as the custodians of the people's money, to go to the expenditure asked for this evening? In regard to the item of £90,000, it is a peculiar position we are placed in now. We are asked to back the guarantor's venture, which is, to a very great extent, a wild-cat scheme. We are told that on the increased price of copper, it is a reasonable proposition, but is it reasonable to suppose that it will be worked successfully? I ask the Treasurer, is it not a fact that we have State batteries in the North at the present time?

The TREASURER: Not State batteries. We have a State battery.

Mr. VOWLES: Is it being worked as a success?

The TREASURER: Yes.

[*Mr. Barnes.*]

Mr. VOWLES: Is it being worked as a financial success?

The TREASURER: It is not possible to ascertain as present.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not think that the Minister will be able to say that it is being worked as a success.

The TREASURER: It is a complete success as claims are being worked which would not be worked without it.

Mr. VOWLES: It cannot be shown that it is a success with the limited amount invested in it. If it could be shown that it was a success then the Treasurer and the Minister for Mines ought to show it. If it had been a success or anything approaching it then we would have had the evidence brought before us to-night. We are guaranteeing £90,000, and we must consider that £25,000 of it is lost for ever, as they do not pretend that it will remain in tangible security, but the money is going to liquidate present debts.

Mr. GLEDSON: There are assets against that.

Mr. VOWLES: They are problematical. If the mine peters out what is the good of the assets to the Government? We have simply got a hole in the ground and a certain amount of machinery which we know from experience will be second-hand stuff. We know from the experience of old mines that the machinery from those mines is only worth the price of scrap iron. We have simply got that as security for the people's money. It is a "wild-cat" security, and we have no right to be asked to find that money. It is provided that there shall be £5,000 spent in underground development. How far is £5,000 going to develop that mine?

The TREASURER: They have been developing it for the last four years.

Mr. VOWLES: They have only a limited area to develop.

The TREASURER: Twenty square miles.

Mr. VOWLES: They have got about 4,000 acres. We do not know the conditions of the surrounding country. We want to know if the country can be developed. Can it be developed by putting down another pit there? The great distance of the coal may make all the difference between a profit and failure. That being so, why should the House at this time be asked to further encumber the people of Queensland with more interest. It happens to be in the Minister's electorate.

The TREASURER: Mount Mulligan is in the Cook electorate.

Mr. VOWLES: But the Chillagoe works are in the Treasurer's electorate, and it is nice for him to be able to keep the people there. It is necessary that the district should be peopled and developed, but we should not be asked to use the people's money in embarking on an enterprise which has proved to be unworkable. It has been worked by the best mining people for twenty years and they have used the best plant, and as they could not make a success of it it is not a fair thing to put the people's money into it. It seems to me that the Government are taking advantage of the shareholders in the way they are dealing with the debenture-holders at the present time. The shareholders do not seem to be considered at all. We are told that this is a fine proposition

lying idle. If that is so, surely there is enough speculation in the people of Australia with the price of copper doubled to induce them to put their money into it. If it is such a wonderful show I cannot understand why it has not been taken up before this. It is not a fair thing to ask this House to consider this proposition at this stage.

Question—That the Bill be read a second time—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 37.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lennon
„ Barber	„ McLachlan
„ Carter	„ McMinn
„ Collins	„ McPhail
„ Coyne	„ Murphy
„ Dunstan	„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Peterson
„ Forde	„ Pollock
„ Free	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Smith
„ Gledson	„ Stopford
„ Hardacre	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Weir
„ Hartley, W.	„ Wellington
„ Huxham	„ Wilson
„ Jones	„ Winstanley
„ Land	

Tellers: Mr. Forde and Mr. Peterson.

NOES, 15.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Morgan
„ Bayley	„ Petrie
„ Bebbington	Col. Rankin
„ Bell	Mr. Somerset
„ Bridges	„ Swayne
„ Corser	„ Tolmie
„ Grayson	„ Vowles
„ Gunn	

Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Corser.

Resolved in the affirmative.

At fifteen minutes past 11 o'clock p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

MOTION TO GO INTO COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Bill in detail.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I fail to see any reason why the Bill should be considered in detail to-night. One hon. gentleman opposite expressed the wish that the passage of the Bill should be facilitated through Committee and that the Upper House might be asked to assist the Government in passing it. But why should we ask anybody to pass legislation that has been ill-considered and ill-digested? The Council is composed of intelligent men, and surely they are not going to allow slipshod legislation to go through. The Government are prepared to use the strength of their big majority to pass legislation, whether it is for the good of the country or whether it is not. Here is a matter involving a liability of no less than £700,000 worth of debentures, and a further amount in cash of £90,000 to enable the Government to back the bills of the company.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is now making another second-reading speech.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am giving reasons why the Bill should not be considered in detail to-night. Time should be given to frame amendments; and, so far, the Government have given no opportunity for framing amendments. It is not fair that we should be expected to pass legislation merely at the whim of the Government. That is not how legislation should be passed, and that is not the legislation that is conducive to the welfare of the country. Surely the Government does not seek to place upon another Chamber its will as it tries to force it on this Chamber? I am told by the Treasurer that he wants to close at the end of the month and in view of closing down he desires to get this legislation before the House to-morrow. We know that they have a business-sheet that is chock-a-block with legislation, and they are getting on with that legislation as fast as they can. Personally, I hope they are not endeavouring to pass it in the same slipshod way that we are passing legislation in this Chamber. I can only enter my protest at the action of the Government in endeavouring to burke further discussion on a question of this sort, and in endeavouring to take away from the House an opportunity of considering the measure as it ought to be considered. It is all very well to agree to the principles of a Bill, bad as they may be, but when we pass on to consider details we require a little more time. We know that an ill-thought-out word very often wrecks legislation. We have had experience of that in this Chamber before. We have passed legislation through without giving that consideration to it that ought to have been given. When we come to consider the details, we have to consider every line phrase for phrase and word for word and get an accurate meaning of it in order that legislation may not have a different meaning to that which is anticipated. I enter my protest against going into Committee, and when we get into Committee we can only enter our protest against the clauses as they are being put.

Mr. CORSER: Before we go into Committee—

At twenty-one minutes past 11 o'clock p.m.,

The TREASURER: I move that the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 36.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Land
„ Barber	„ Lennon
„ Carter	„ McLachlan
„ Collins	„ McMinn
„ Coyne	„ McPhail
„ Dunstan	„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Peterson
„ Forde	„ Pollock
„ Free	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Smith
„ Gledson	„ Stopford
„ Hardacre	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Weir
„ Hartley, W.	„ Wellington
„ Huxham	„ Wilson
„ Jones	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Forde and Mr. Peterson.

Hon. E. G. Theodore ]

NOES, 15.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Morgan
„ Bayley	„ Murphy
„ Bebbington	„ Petrie
„ Bell	Col. Rankin
„ Bridges	Mr. Swayne
„ Corser	„ Tolmie
„ Grayson	„ Vowles
„ Gunn	

*Tellers:* Mr. Bell and Mr. Corser.

Resolved in the affirmative.

[11.30 p.m.]

Question—That the Speaker do now leave the chair—put; and the House divided:—

Ayes, 36  
Noes, 14.

This division was the same as that last recorded, except that Mr. Swayne did not vote with the “Noes.”

Resolved in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—“*Approval of agreement of 6th November, 1917*”—

Mr. VOWLES moved the omission on line 32 of the words “passing of this Act,” and the substitution in place thereof of the words “first day of April, 1920.” No reason had been given why they should rush into a transaction such as this, and it would be a wise thing if the coming into operation of the Bill were deferred. Legislation like this dealing with large sums of money should not be rushed through. Every inquiry possible should be made and all information given before coming to a decision.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS thought that this amendment was out of order. The House had approved of the ratification and approval of an agreement, but the hon. member now wanted to defer the taking over of the railways and appurtenances, and some other things which were part of the agreement, till April, 1921. He thought the Chairman would have no hesitation in ruling the amendment out of order.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: We have not come to the agreement; we may modify it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The House had approved of the ratification of an agreement, and they could not alter the agreement. There was only one thing to be done if the agreement were altered, and that was to withdraw the Bill, because the parties to the agreement had not signed anything but what was in this agreement.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The amendment was certainly in order. Under the Bill the agreement had to be ratified, and after they had finished the Bill they would come to the agreement. They were prepared to ratify the agreement, but the question was as to when the ratification of the agreement should commence. It was for the Committee to say whether they should take it over now or ten years hence. What was the use of the Bill if they could not make amendments? Surely the hon. member did not understand the object of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I understand the object of the amendment.

[*Mr. Vowles.*

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The object of the amendment was to give time for ample consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is pure obstruction.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That charge could not be brought home to either the hon. member for Dalby or himself or anybody else. They had not come to the agreement. They contended that the agreement should not come into operation for some time, in order to give the public time to consider the matter, and in order to give the Commissioner an opportunity to consider the working of the line. They were only putting the Bill on the same footing as one before them earlier in the day, when the Government wanted to pass a measure some three years before the tramways were actually to be taken over. Surely if that were the case in regard to a working concern which was making a profit, they should be more careful in regard to a concern which was not making a profit.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am sorry to see that you are lending yourself to such a ludicrous and ridiculous proposal as this.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He was sorry there should be any disagreement between himself and the Minister. There was a difference between the agreement and the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I beg to move—That the question be now put. I think we have gone far enough with this farce. (Laughter.)

Mr. MURPHY: You cannot put the question when the Chairman has not given his ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is a point of order.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He had endeavoured to point out the difference between what they were considering and the agreement. He hoped the Chairman would see the wisdom of the attitude they had taken up.

The CHAIRMAN: The question was raised rather suddenly and I was at a loss for the moment to say definitely whether the amendment was in order or not. I am of opinion that the amendment is in order, and I rule accordingly.

Mr. CORSER thought that the amendment was a good one.

At forty-seven minutes past 11 o'clock p.m.,

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—That the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put (*Mr. Coyne's motion*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 37.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Land
„ Barber	„ Lennon
„ Carter	„ McLachlan
„ Collins	„ McMinn
„ Coyne	„ McPhail
„ Dunstan	„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Peterson
„ Forde	„ Pollock
„ Free	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Smith
„ Gledson	„ Stopford
„ Hardacre	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Weir
„ Hartley, W.	„ Wellington
„ Hunter	„ Wilson
„ Huxham	„ Winstanley
„ Jones	

*Tellers:* Mr. W. Hartley and Mr. McPhail.

NOES, 14.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Gunn
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	„ Petrie
„ Bridges	Col. Rankin
„ Corser	Mr. Tolmie
„ Grayson	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Bridges.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

Ayes, 38.

Noes, 13.

The division was the same as that last recorded, except that Mr. Murphy voted with the “Ayes.”

Mr. GILLIES moved—That all the words from the word “railways” on line 40, down to and including the word “Mareeba” on line 49, be omitted. The object of the amendment was to omit the provision copied from section 16 of the Chillagoe Railway Act, which allowed an increase of fares and freights up to 50 per cent.

Mr. MURPHY supported the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was an entirely different thing to give the Commissioner power to [12 p.m.] charge increased rates on this railway and to put it on a new railway. However, he had no objection to the amendment.

HON. J. TOLMIE congratulated the Minister for accepting the amendment.

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

Mr. VOWLES moved the omission of the word “four,” on line 57, with the view of inserting “three.” That meant that the Governor in Council could issue debentures at 3½ per cent. instead of 4½ per cent. It was making the interest the same as that on Savings Bank deposits.

At ten minutes past 12 o'clock a.m.,

The TREASURER moved—That the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 37.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lennon
„ Barber	„ Lloyd
„ Carter	„ McLachlan
„ Collins	„ McMinn
„ Coyne	„ McPhail
„ Dunstan	„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Peterson
„ Forde	„ Pollock
„ Free	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gledson	„ Smith
„ Hardacre	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, W.	„ Weir
„ Hunter	„ Wellington
„ Huxham	„ Wilson
„ Jones	„ Winstanley
„ Land	

Tellers: Mr. Pollock and Mr. H. J. Ryan.

NOES, 13.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Gunn
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	Col. Rankin
„ Bridges	Mr. Tolmie
„ Corser	„ Vowles
„ Grayson	

Tellers: Mr. Corser and Mr. Gunn.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that clause 2 stand part of the Bill.

Colonel RANKIN said he had an amendment to move.

The TREASURER rose to a point of order. The hon. member for Dalby moved an amendment, but it was not put from the chair. The division was on the closure on clause 2 and that was passed.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that the Treasurer is quite right, and that the amendment of the hon. member for Dalby was not put to the Committee. The division was on the closure on clause 2.

Colonel RANKIN said he had an amendment to move in clause 2.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The closure on clause 2 had been carried and clause 2 must be put without debate.

The CHAIRMAN upheld the contention of the Secretary for Railways.

Question—That clause 2, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 38.

Noes, 13.

The division was the same as the previous division, except that Mr. Gillies also voted with the “Ayes.”

On clause 3—“Approval of agreement of 12th November, 1917”—

Mr. VOWLES moved the insertion of the words “for discharging the present obligations of the company and also for such initial expenses and general purposes as may be approved of by the Minister in writing,” after the word “mines,” on line 31.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will accept that amendment.

Amendment agreed to; and clause 3, as amended, put and passed.

On the First Schedule—

HON. J. TOLMIE contended that the Committee should not go further with the Bill that night. They had only received the Bill that morning, and had not had time to give it full consideration. He protested against the passing of the schedule.

Mr. VOWLES supported the protest of the leader of the Opposition. It was a physical impossibility to grasp the whole of the contents of the schedule in one day. The debenture-holders, who were absentees, were left free of income tax and other duties. These were things that required to be looked into in detail. If the Government were going to rush measures through in this hurried way the Opposition had to protest against it.

Mr. PETRIE argued that there were a lot of matters in the schedule that required looking into. He protested against the legislation being put through so hurriedly.

Mr. Petrie.]

Question—That the First Schedule stand as a schedule of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 33.

Noes, 13.

This division was identical with that last recorded, except that Mr. Gillies voted with the "Ayes."

Resolved in the affirmative.

On the Second Schedule—

HON. J. TOLMIE protested against passing the Bill through at that sitting, because he had not had an opportunity of going thoroughly into the matter. Mistakes would occur if they rushed the Bill through in this manner, and the Opposition did not want to be responsible for any mistakes.

Mr. GUNN pointed out that there were things in the schedule that he had not had time to consider. He saw "L.S." in the middle of a circle, and he supposed that that meant, "Labour socialist," and he did not want to have anything to do with Labour socialists.

Second Schedule put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments. The report was agreed to, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

## SUCCESSION AND PROBATE DUTIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

### SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. VOWLES pointed out that the Bill was very far-reaching and very damaging to property. There was a straightout attack on widows and orphans, who were to be victimised by this legislation. The Federal Government were dealing with the estates of soldiers, so far as succession duties were concerned, while the State only muddled with it. If two soldier brothers were fighting and one was killed, and he had made a will leaving his estate to his brother, that brother would have to pay succession duty, so that it did not exempt soldiers from duty at all. The Government posed as the friend of the widow, but they increased the amount of duty she would have to pay on her deceased husband's estate. Many of the existing principles in the original Act would be defeated by the Bill, and the widow would not receive the benefit of the half rate of duty which was the law at the present time.

At 1 a.m.,

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

The SPEAKER: There was a division taken not long ago, and I have reason to believe that there is a quorum within the precincts of the House.

Mr. VOWLES dealt at some length with the amended duties proposed by the Bill, and compared them with the duties imposed under the existing law. The Government were victimising and fleecing the public wherever it was possible for them to do so, and that was going to have a bad effect on industry in the future. As the Government continued

[*Hon. J. Tolmie.*

in office, so property would depreciate in value, and there would be no incentive for anyone to go in for any industrial undertakings. People were being driven from Queensland to the other States because of the legislation introduced by the present Government. The people in the Dalby district were alarmed at the legislation introduced by the Government. Clause 4 provided that upon the death of any person after the 1st October, 1917, all monies held by any bank or financial institution upon any account, whether "and/or." or joint, or joint and several, or which the deceased had the right to operate or draw, should be deemed to form part of his estate, and confer a succession on his death. That meant that succession duty would have to be paid on the full value of the estate.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: It is only intended that succession duty shall be paid on deceased's share of the estate.

Mr. VOWLES pointed out that the wording of the clause clearly showed that succession duty would have to be paid on the full amount.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: If that is so, I will accept an amendment of that.

Mr. VOWLES also dealt with the proposed duty on gifts of life insurance policies. The law had been decided on the question that the amount of the insurance policy, the subject of an assignment, was not subject to succession duty, but the Government were introducing legislation to defeat a decision recently given in the English courts. There was a new principle in every clause of the Bill. Clause 7 fixed the rates of duty on succession. Under the old Act the rate varied from 2 per cent. to 10 per cent.; but the Bill provided for rates varying from 2 per cent. up to 15 per cent. Seeing that the Commonwealth were also collecting succession duties on large estates, it was quite possible under the new law for 40 per cent. to be taken out of a big estate for succession duty. The Commonwealth would take 15 per cent., the State Treasurer 15 per cent., and the trustee  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, and the other charges would bring the total up to 40 per cent. He always understood this was a humanitarian Government, but they were going to rob the estates where widows and orphans should get the benefit. The widows and orphans would have to pay higher duties in the future than they had been called on to pay in the past. The only deductions allowed under the Bill were debts incurred by the deceased, but he hoped that the funeral expenses, testamentary expenses, and fees of office would also be deducted from the estate before duty was charged. He also thought there should be some appeal from the Commissioner's decisions.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It was rather unfortunate that they should be asked to discuss such an important measure at that hour. This was the fourth taxation Bill introduced by the Government during the [2 a.m.] session. It proposed to impose taxation under the most cruel circumstances. The Bill gave the Government power to exact their "pound of flesh" in every case where a disposition of property was made. Under clause 8, if a man made a disposition of £10,000 to his wife, under a Bill passed the previous night she would have to pay stamp duty amounting to £450. In the event of the wife predeceasing her



husband and the property reverted to him, the Crown dipped their fingers into his pocket to the extent of something like £500. The Government were simply piling one form of taxation on another, thereby removing all incentive to people to improve their material condition and to accumulate capital which would be employed in reproductive work. Every clause in the Bill made an attempt to get at the pockets of the producers. There seemed to be an idea in the minds of hon. members opposite that every person in Queensland was a rogue who was endeavouring to defraud the revenue. The Government had no right to ask for more than a just proportion of the property of any person. In the past, Governments that had despoiled the people had led to the destruction of States, and that would be the inevitable result of the policy of the present Government of Queensland. He protested against the Government attempting to rush such legislation through with such haste. The Government were anxious to close the session by the end of the current month, but they could not expect the other Chamber to pass legislation of such tremendous importance without full consideration. He voiced his protest against the passage of the Bill under such circumstances.

Mr. BARNES thought it exceedingly regrettable that a better opportunity was not afforded of discussing such an important taxation proposal, and that the very fine criticism of the Bill by the hon. member for Dalby was not fully reported. Under ordinary circumstances such taxation was fair and reasonable, but it had to be considered in the light of the other taxation measures introduced by the Government. The effect of the very heavy taxation being imposed by the Government was reducing very seriously the value of all property in the State. The duties in that direction had been trebled. The Minister attempted to justify the Bill on the ground that the succession duties in the other States were heavier than the present duties in Queensland, but he neglected to point out that in those States the other forms of taxation were by no means as heavy as they were in Queensland. Under the existing rates, in an estate of £5,000, if the property went to the immediate family of the deceased, the succession duty would be £253; if the property went to relatives or others outside the immediate family, the amount of duty would be £430. In the case of an estate of £10,000 the State duty in the case of the immediate family would be £500, and the Commonwealth interest would be £173; if the property went outside the immediate family circle, the tax would be £1,460. In the case of an estate of £20,000, the combined Commonwealth and State duty would be £1,813, and, if it went outside the immediate family, the duty would be £3,120. In an estate of £45,000 the State tax would be £2,700 and the Commonwealth tax £2,890, or a total of £5,880. If the estate were distributed outside the immediate family, the total tax would amount to £9,270. That was a very heavy burden, and at least six or eight months should be allowed to enable the beneficiaries to provide for the payment of the duty.

\* Colonel RANKIN said that the two objects of the Bill were taxation and confiscation. The Government had made Queensland a most undesirable place in which to

live, with their heavy taxation. According to the latest figures given by Knibbs, the revenue from probate and succession duties in New South Wales was £551,629, with a population of 1,861,522; in Victoria the revenue was £536,869, with a population of 1,430,667; in Queensland the revenue was £112,740, with a population of 676,770; in South Australia the revenue was £113,734, with a population of 441,690; in Western Australia the revenue was £40,156, with a population of 323,018; and in Tasmania the revenue was £38,252, with a population of 201,416. After giving details of the rates of duty in all the States of the Commonwealth and New Zealand, he maintained that the position in Queensland with regard to taxation was most unfavourable, and the increased rates made it still worse.

At four minutes to 3 a.m.,

The TREASURER moved—That the question be now put.

Question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 37.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lennon
„ Barber	„ Lloyd
„ Bertram	„ McLachlan
„ Carter	„ McMinn
„ Collins	„ McPhail
„ Coyne	„ O'Sullivan
„ Dunstan	„ Payne
„ Fihelly	„ Peterson
„ Foley	„ Pollock
„ Forde	„ Ryan, D.
„ Free	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gilday	„ Smith
„ Gillies	„ Stopford
„ Gledson	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Weir
„ Hartley, W.	„ Wellington
„ Huxham	„ Wilson
„ Jones	„ Winstanley
„ Land	

Tellers: Mr. H. J. Ryan and Mr. McPhail.

NOES, 14.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Gunn
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	„ Petrie
„ Bridges	Col. Rankin
„ Corser	Mr. Tolmie
„ Grayson	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Gunn and Mr. Bell

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided:—

Ayes, 37.

Noes, 14.

This division was the same as the last recorded.

Resolved in the affirmative.

MOTION FOR COMMITTAL.

HON. J. A. FIELLY moved—That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Bill in detail.

HON. J. TOLMIE protested against taking the Bill in Committee, seeing that it had not been discussed at the second reading stage and there had been no time to frame amendments. There was plenty of other business on the paper that could be proceeded with.

Hon. J. Tolmie.]

Mr. BEBBINGTON also protested against taking the Bill in Committee at that hour.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY explained that the Stamp Act Amendment Bill and the Succession and Probate Duties Acts Amendment Bill had been introduced early the previous week, and the second readings had been postponed until Tuesday at the request of the leader of the Opposition; but, in spite of the time given, members of the Opposition had not acquainted themselves with the contents of the Bill, and he did not see the slightest indication that, if the Committee stage were adjourned for another two or three days, hon. members opposite would then be in a position to submit any reasonable amendments.

Mr. MORGAN also protested against proceeding with the Bill, and suggested that the Stamp Act Amendment Bill should be taken instead. He did not think the Treasurer had treated the Opposition fairly in trying to rush through so much business in one sitting, and it was especially unfair to the Opposition to expect Bills to be passed through Committee immediately after the second readings. A very bad precedent was being created.

Mr. CORSER asked that the Government should not press on the Committee stage of the Bill, so that the Opposition would have time to prepare amendments.

At half-past 3 o'clock a.m.,

The TREASURER moved—That the question be now put.

Question put; and the House divided:—

	AYES, 36.	
Mr. Armfield		Mr. Lennon
„ Barber		„ Lloyd
„ Carter		„ McLachlan
„ Collins		„ McMinn
„ Coyne		„ McPhail
„ Dunstan		„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly		„ Payne
„ Foley		„ Peterson
„ Forde		„ Pollock
„ Free		„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday		„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies		„ Smith
„ Gledson		„ Stopford
„ Hartley, H. L.		„ Theodore
„ Hartley, W.		„ Weir
„ Huxham		„ Wellington
„ Jones		„ Wilson
„ Land		„ Winstanley
Tellers: Mr. Peterson and Mr. Forde.		

	NOES, 14.
Mr. Barnes	Mr. Gunn
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	„ Petrie
„ Bridges	Col. Rankin
„ Corser	Mr. Tolmie
„ Grayson	„ Vowles
Tellers: Mr. Corser and Mr. Morgan.	

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the House go into Committee to consider the Bill in detail—put; and the House divided:—

Ayes, 35.  
Noes, 14.

This division was the same as on the previous question.

Resolved in the affirmative.

[Mr. Bebbington.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Bertram, Marce, in the chair.)

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—“*Amendment of section 5*”—

Mr. VOWLES moved the omission, on lines 9 and 10, of the words “creating the joint title as predecessor,” with a view to inserting the words “from whom the joint title was derived.” The amendment would make the succession a succession in respect of the joint owner who died, and it would not revert back to the estate of the person who created the title in the first instance.

Mr. BEBBINGTON supported the amendment.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: I will accept the amendment.

Amendment agreed to; and clause 4, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 3 —“*Amendment*”—

Mr. VOWLES moved the omission, on lines 20 and 21, of the words “whether or not such engagement, trust, or arrangement is legally enforceable.” He could not see the necessity for those words. If it was not legally enforceable, there must be succession, and if it was legally enforceable, then that should be the end of it. It should apply only one way, not be double-edged.

Mr. BEBBINGTON said all Acts of Parliament were too much in the hands of lawyers, and they even found judges quibbling about the meaning of different clauses.

At 4 o'clock a.m.,

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY moved—That the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the Committee divided:—

	AYES, 34.	
Mr. Armfield		Mr. Lennon
„ Barber		„ Lloyd
„ Carter		„ McLachlan
„ Collins		„ McMinn
„ Coyne		„ McPhail
„ Dunstan		„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly		„ Payne
„ Foley		„ Peterson
„ Forde		„ Ryan, D.
„ Free		„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gilday		„ Smith
„ Gillies		„ Stopford
„ Gledson		„ Theodore
„ Hartley, H. L.		„ Weir
„ Hartley, W.		„ Wellington
„ Jones		„ Wilson
„ Land		„ Winstanley
Tellers: Mr. Barber and Mr. McLachlan.		

	NOES, 13.
Mr. Barnes	Mr. Gunn
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	Col. Rankin
„ Bridges	Mr. Tolmie
„ Corser	„ Vowles
„ Grayson	
Tellers: Mr. Barnes and Mr. Bridges.	

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Vowles's amendment in clause 3*)—stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 35.  
Noes, 13.

This division was the same as the last, except that Mr. Huxham voted with the “Ayes.”

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. VOWLES said he had another amendment to move on the clause.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY moved—That the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 35  
Noes, 13.

This division was exactly similar to last. Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That clause 3, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 35  
Noes, 13.

This division was exactly similar to the two previous divisions.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 4—“*Deposit, etc., in joint names, etc.*”—

Mr. VOWLES moved the insertion after the word “shall” on line 39, page 3, of the words “to the extent of the interest of such person so dying in such money.” The clause was very indefinite, and could be construed into meaning that if two persons had an estate and one died, then the department could claim duty on the whole of the estate. That should not be so.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: The trouble is, nothing can be ascertained and all can be evaded.

Mr. BEBBINGTON supported the amendment because he knew several persons who had joint accounts and they had no intention whatever to evade their just dues. It would certainly be an injustice if one of those persons died and they had to pay stamp duty on the whole of the estate.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted (*Mr. Vowles's amendment on clause 4*) be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 13.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Gunn
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	Col. Rankin
„ Bridges	Mr. Tolmie
„ Corser	„ Vowles
„ Grayson	

Tellers: Mr. Bayley and Mr. Morgan.

Noes, 35.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lennon
„ Barber	„ Lloyd
„ Carter	„ McLachlan
„ Collins	„ McMinn
„ Coyne	„ McPhail
„ Dunstan	„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Peterson
„ Forde	„ Ryan, D.
„ Free	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gilday	„ Smith
„ Gillies	„ Stopford
„ Gledson	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Weir
„ Hartley, W.	„ Wellington
„ Huxham	„ Wilson
„ Jones	„ Winstanley
„ Land	

Tellers: Mr. Stopford and Mr. Wilson.

Resolved in the negative. Original question stated.

At twenty minutes to 5 o'clock,

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY moved—That the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 36.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lennon
„ Barber	„ Lloyd
„ Carter	„ McLachlan
„ Collins	„ McMinn
„ Coyne	„ McPhail
„ Dunstan	„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Peterson
„ Forde	„ Pollock
„ Free	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Smith
„ Gledson	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, W.	„ Weir
„ Huxham	„ Wellington
„ Jones	„ Wilson
„ Land	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. H. L. Hartley and Mr. Lloyd.

Noes, 13.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Gunn
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	Col. Rankin
„ Bridges	Mr. Tolmie
„ Corser	„ Vowles
„ Grayson	

Tellers: Mr. Gunn and Mr. Murphy.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That clause 4, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 36.  
Noes, 13.

This division was the same as the last recorded.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 5—“*Amendment of section 11*”—put and passed.

On clause 6—“*Registration of duty as a charge*”—

Mr. MORGAN: He had an amendment to move.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY moved—That the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 35.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lloyd
„ Barber	„ McLachlan
„ Carter	„ McMinn
„ Collins	„ McPhail
„ Dunstan	„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Peterson
„ Forde	„ Pollock
„ Free	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Smith
„ Gledson	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, W.	„ Weir
„ Huxham	„ Wellington
„ Jones	„ Wilson
„ Land	„ Winstanley
„ Lennon	

Tellers: Mr. W. Hartley and Mr. McPhail.

Noes, 13.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Gunn
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	Col. Rankin
„ Bridges	Mr. Tolmie
„ Corser	„ Vowles
„ Grayson	

Tellers: Mr. Corser and Mr. Bell.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Hon. J. A. Fihelly.]

At 5 o'clock a.m.,

Mr. FOLEY took the chair as Temporary Chairman.

Question—That clause 6, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 34.  
Noes, 13.

This division was exactly similar to the last, with the exception that Mr. Foley, being in the chair, did not vote.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 7—“*Amendment of section 12*”—

Mr. MORGAN: He had a very important amendment to move on that clause.

HON. J. A. FIIHELLY moved—That the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 31.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. McLachlan
„ Barber	„ McMinn
„ Carter	„ McPhail
„ Collins	„ O’Sullivan
„ Dunstan	„ Payne
„ Forde	„ Peterson
„ Free	„ Pollock
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gillies	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gledson	„ Smith
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, W.	„ Weir
„ Huxham	„ Wellington
„ Jones	„ Wilson
„ Land	„ Winstanley
„ Lloyd	

Tellers: Mr. Barber and Mr. Dunstan.

NOES, 13.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Gunn
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	Col. Rankin
„ Bridges	Mr. Tolmie
„ Corser	„ Vowles
„ Grayson	

Tellers: Mr. Morgan and Mr. Vowles.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That clause 7, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 31.  
Noes, 13.

This division was precisely similar to the previous division.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 8—“*Amendment of section 14*”—

Mr. MORGAN: Mr. Foley—

The TREASURER moved—That the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lloyd
„ Barber	„ McLachlan
„ Carter	„ McMinn
„ Collins	„ McPhail
„ Coyne	„ O’Sullivan
„ Dunstan	„ Payne
„ Fihelly	„ Peterson
„ Forde	„ Pollock
„ Free	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Smith
„ Gledson	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, W.	„ Weir
„ Huxham	„ Wellington
„ Jones	„ Wilson
„ Land	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. H. L. Hartley and Mr. Lloyd.

[Mr. Morgan.

NOES, 6.

Mr. Bebbington	Mr. Murphy
„ Bell	Col. Rankin
„ Bridges	Mr. Tolmie

Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Murphy.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That clause 8, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 31.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lloyd
„ Barber	„ McLachlan
„ Carter	„ McMinn
„ Coyne	„ McPhail
„ Dunstan	„ O’Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Forde	„ Peterson
„ Free	„ Pollock
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gillies	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gledson	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Weir
„ Hartley, W.	„ Wellington
„ Huxham	„ Wilson
„ Jones	„ Winstanley
„ Land	

Tellers: Mr. Gillies and Mr. Weir.

NOES, 7.

Mr. Bebbington	Mr. Gunn
„ Bell	„ Murphy
„ Bridges	„ Tolmie
„ Corser	

Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Corser.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 9—“*Amendment of section 43*”—

Mr. BEBBINGTON moved the omission, on line 17, of the words “which entry shall have the like effect.” It seemed to him that those words had no right to be there.

HON. J. A. FIIHELLY moved—That the question be now put.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 32.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lloyd
„ Barber	„ McLachlan
„ Carter	„ McMinn
„ Coyne	„ McPhail
„ Dunstan	„ O’Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Forde	„ Peterson
„ Free	„ Pollock
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gillies	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gledson	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Theodore
„ Hartley, W.	„ Weir
„ Huxham	„ Wellington
„ Jones	„ Wilson
„ Land	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Forde and Mr. Peterson.

NOES, 9.

Mr. Bayley	Mr. Gunn
„ Bebbington	„ Murphy
„ Bell	„ Tolmie
„ Bridges	„ Vowles
„ Corser	

Tellers: Mr. Bridges and Mr. Gunn.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That clause 9, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES 32.  
NOES 9.

This division was exactly similar to the previous division.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 10 and 11 put and passed.

On clause 12—“*Power to reassess*”—

Mr. VOWLES said there should be some limitation as far as reopening of assessments was concerned. The clause provided that successors might be disturbed years and years after the estate had been closed. He moved the omission, on line 16, of the words "at any time," and the insertion in lieu thereof of the words "within two years."

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: The amendment seemed a reasonable one and he would accept it, but he would point out that the Bill was drafted on the English Act and there had not been any complaints there.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 13 put and passed.

On clause 14—"Default in returns, etc."—

Mr. VOWLES said subclause (d) was pretty strong. Under that provision if a clerk in a lawyer's office prepared statements necessary for the purposes of the Stamp Commissioner, and it turned out there was an omission, he would be liable to a penalty of £100.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: In order to meet the objection of the hon. member he moved the omission on line 58, page 9, of the word "whole," and on line 1, page 10, of the words "of the."

Amendment agreed to.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY moved the insertion after the word "circumstances," on line 1, page 10, of the words "within his knowledge."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 17 put and passed.

On clause 18—"Amendment of section 4 of Act 1904"—

Mr. VOWLES objected to extending the time till three years, and he was opposed to the retrospective application of any legislation.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 19 put and passed.

On clause 20—"Amendment of section 11"—

Mr. VOWLES formally objected to the principle contained in the clause.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble put and passed.

The House resumed. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments, and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for the next sitting day.

[6 a.m.]

## HARBOUR BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY moved—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to declare the rights of the Crown in the foreshores and bed of harbours, and to make provision for the granting of leases of wharfage lands, and to further amend the Harbour Boards Act, 1892, in certain particulars, and for other incidental purposes."

Question put and passed.

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

### FIRST READING.

The Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order for the next sitting day.

## LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER moved—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to further amend the Land Act of 1910 in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

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

### FIRST READING.

The Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order for the next sitting day.

## TREASURY BILLS BILL.

### RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, returning this Bill without amendment.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 6 o'clock a.m.