

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 6 DECEMBER 1917**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 6 DECEMBER, 1917.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), took the chair at 7 o'clock p.m.

## STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL'S MESSAGE, No. 2.

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

HON. J. A. FIDELLY (*Paddington*): It was not proposed to accept any of the amendments insisted on by the Council, as they would destroy the object of the Bill, and the Government would find themselves hampered by the conditions imposed by the amendments. He therefore moved that the Committee insist on their disagreement to the amendments on which the Legislative Council had insisted.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): The hon. gentleman had suggested that the amendments insisted on by the Council would prevent the Government carrying out the object aimed at in the Bill. The hon. gentleman had not seen fit to point out in what particular the amendments were likely to affect the carrying out of the proposed undertaking.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: If the hon. gentleman will look at the emasculated state of the Bill he will understand.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman referred to the emasculated state of the Bill, and no doubt those words would go out to the public, but no doubt they would convey nothing but words, and did not contain any reason. There was one way of treating the public and another way of ignoring the public. That seemed to be a way of ignoring the public, and it seemed that the object was, not only to ignore the public, but to deceive the public, because it would be stated in round terms to the people who did not understand it that the Bill was emasculated, and it was not possible for the undertaking to be carried out by the Government. That was not so. The terms of the Bill, as accepted by the Council, gave the Government exceedingly wide powers. They had full power to carry out all that had been recommended on the subject of the industry up to the time of the passing of the Bill. It was a Bill to authorise the establishment, continuance, and carrying on of State coke, iron, and steel works, and contained the fullest power to carry out those objects; but because the Government had not been able to get any power to carry on associated businesses in a general term, without any definition of associated businesses, they said the Bill had been wrecked. The Bill had not been wrecked. The Government had power to establish coke, iron, and steel works, and they had all the incidental powers necessary in clause 3 of the Bill. Clause 3 read—

“(1.) Subject to this Act, the Minister representing the Crown is hereby authorised and empowered to establish, undertake, maintain, and carry on the business of searching for, mining, getting, winning, reducing, and smelting iron and iron ores, and any metal, mineral, earth, ore, or product used or for use in such

business, and the manufacture and production of iron and steel, with all or any associated trades, processes, industries, or enterprises, and the manufacture, preparation, and production of chattels, articles, and things composed wholly or in part of iron or steel, and the sale, supply, or other disposal of the ores, metals, and manufactured products of such business so carried on by him."

Those were exceedingly wide powers, and certainly sufficient to enable the Government to make any bonâ fide experiment in order to show the possibility of their being able to establish the business and carry it on successfully. What more was wanted? The remaining powers in the Bill were very full, both for the purpose of acquiring all that was necessary to carry on the business and providing for the financing of any necessary purchase or expenditure. The fact that a restriction was placed in regard to the person who was to be appointed manager, who was to be an engineer with ten years' experience, was objected to by the Government. Why should the engineer appointed to manage those works not be a man of experience commensurate with the undertaking he was to be asked to control? Taking it all through, the powers conferred on the Government by the Bill were amply sufficient, and as it was founded on the report of the Royal Commission consisting of members exclusively selected from members on the other side of the House, who had stated that they were unable to report in favour of anything more than the establishment of experimental works and the expenditure of something like £5,000 it was more than sufficient. The Bill had been passed giving power far beyond anything that had been reported on by the Royal Commission, and far beyond any information that had been vouchsafed to the House. The Legislative Council were prepared to extend the powers of the Government far beyond those asked for in the report to which he had referred, and to allow the Government to experiment up to the tune of £100,000. That was a very generous power to give the Government these times, and he could only look on the attitude of the Government as indicating that they were not sincere; that the Bill was merely what was called window-dressing. That was going to be brought before the electors at the next election as showing the desires and aims of the Government, with the further intention of endeavouring to shoulder upon the Council the responsibility of having rejected the measure. If the Government were sincere in their desire to establish those works; if they were honestly of opinion that those works could be established and carried on profitably: they had all the machinery necessary in the Bill as amended by the Legislative Council to enable them to do it. He could only come to the conclusion that the Government were not sincere, and that they were not satisfied that they had got information to justify them in the belief that those works could be satisfactorily established and the output put on the market in competition with the other States or other parts of the world.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: It would not be right in the closing hours of the session that such a number of inaccurate statements and false charges should be published in regard to the measure. No hon. member who had been elected by the people could sit in the Chamber and retain any self-respect if he

recollected what had happened to the measures of the Government in another unelected Chamber during the last few weeks.

Mr. CORSER: They were elected.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: They were never elected.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, by referendum.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: They got sent there through being defeated at previous elections. Very few of those hon. members would have any chance at all, barring the recent nominees, of obtaining a seat in the Assembly for any electorate in Queensland. The easiest way to become a member of Parliament for life was to get defeated for Parliament for three years. The Government had submitted to the Council an amendment of the Stamp Act and an amendment of the Succession and Probate Duties Act, and they were thrown out with contumely. The Council had followed the same policy in regard to the Iron and Steel Works Bill. Last session the Government introduced the Industrial Diseases Bill to provide for those unfortunate persons who were suffering from an incurable disease called miners' phthisis. The Bill provides for an allowance to the children and for pensions to the widows, and to give medical attention to the invalid. What did the other House do? They gave that Bill a currency of two years, and a lawyer who was prepared to grab everything had the impertinence to accuse the Government yesterday of making money out of the estates of deceased soldiers. The Assembly and the Council last year passed a measure giving all sorts of concessions and immunities in that regard—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. J. A. FIELLY: He was merely showing the policy of the other Chamber, and their policy in regard to this measure was on the same plane. They had limited the Government to an expenditure of £100,000. That was not enough. If the directors of the steel works in Newcastle had been confined to an expenditure of £100,000 they could never have gone a step further; they would never have thought of that magnificent enterprise that is established in New South Wales now.

Colonel RANKIN: The sum is quite sufficient on the information we have.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: The hon. member for Toowong read out some clauses of the Bill, but there was a most informative document—a report of a Royal Commission—which had been submitted, and anybody who read that would recognise that £100,000 was a sum which was absolutely too small.

Mr. MACARTNEY: You ought to read the report of that Royal Commission yourself and see what is in it.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: He had read it a dozen times.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There is £5,000 in the report of that Royal Commission.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: For the initial expenditure. They had spent that already—or given authority to do so.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They are not able to recommend any more for initial experiments.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: The hon. member for Toowong complained that on that commission the Opposition side was not represented. They had a chance of representation,

*Hon. J. A. Fielly.]*

but they had refused to be represented. It was not the fault of the Government or of Parliament.

Colonel RANKIN: We are not complaining about that.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: The member for Toowong did. The Government proposed to take the stand that they would not accept the amendments with the limitations in them, but to send the Bill back to the Upper House. He understood there was a spirit of conciliation abroad, and the Upper House might feel in the humour to accept, say, a limitation to a sum of a quarter of a million. If that was so the Bill would be accepted. They could not go back from the position they had taken up. They were determined to establish the iron industry in Queensland if it were possible. They were doing their best. They were hampered on every side by the actions of the unselected Chamber; but give them a fair chance, and they were quite sure they would establish the industry and make a great success of it.

Mr. CORSER: The statements of the Assistant Minister for Justice in not accepting the amendment of the "other place" were quite contrary to the remarks made when introducing the Bill. It was claimed, when the Bill was first introduced, that it was the desire of the Government to develop the pig iron resources of Queensland; and to do that they wanted a few thousand pounds. The Bill made possible the production of steel and the manufacture and equipment of large steel works. It was clearly understood that the Government did not intend, immediately, to proceed with the steel part of it, as it was considered that a million pounds or so would be required. As had been the experience with other portions of Australia, large sums of money and greater experience were required than had been provided in the report collected by the Government through members of Parliament from their own side, before they could enter into such an enterprise. The Bill gave the Governor in Council power to enumerate such other articles, from time to time, as the Governor in Council, by Order in Council, so required. As amended by the Council, it provided just what the Government claimed that they wanted when they introduced the Bill. It made possible the development of the large iron resources of Queensland. It made possible the development of the Biggenden mine and the huge iron deposits that were there. If the Government were not going to accept those amendments, they would be doing an injustice to the State and to the large iron deposits that had been proved to exist. The Government, up to the present time, had not shown them—nor had the commission of their own members—where they had carried out any practical experiments with the iron that had come from the Biggenden mine. The manager of the business at the mine sent to Monteith Brothers, as a private individual, certain deposits of iron ore from those mines, and a bar of iron was shown as having been produced from that ore. That was the only information that had been collected. The Government, on that recommendation, from what they had seen of the production in that way, came along with the Bill which they claimed would develop that mine. It was suggested that £5,000 would be sufficient to put in a blast furnace for experimental purposes—the initial

[Hon. J. A. Fihelly.]

expenditure. The Assistant Minister for Justice said that that had practically been expended; whereas, the only expenditure that they had had was the expenses of their own Public Works Committee of inquiry.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: We have entered into an agreement to lease the Biggenden Mine.

Mr. CORSER: That did not cost them money. It was not until the Minister was mining and using the iron ore from that place that he proposed to pay the manager (Mr. Brady) £5 per week—he thought that that was the amount—during the time he was using the ore from that mine. That was not costing any money at the present time. Practically none of the £5,000 had been expended. It was never suggested that in order to develop the pig iron possibilities of the Biggenden Mine anything like £100,000 would be required. There was a lot in the Bill which they had not claimed they wanted and which the other place had thrown out. What they had thrown out was that serpent which always was buried in the leaves of Bills presented to that Chamber.

Mr. PAYNE: It was only idle talk for the member for Toowong and the gentleman who had just resumed his seat to say that the Government were not sincere in trying to establish an iron and steel works in Queensland. He was one of those who had been on the committee. He had listened to evidence from men who had spent a lifetime in that business—some of the ablest men they had in the Commonwealth on that matter—and they had no hesitation in telling him that Queensland was very fortunate in having extremely rich raw material for the development of that particular business. The hon. member for Toowong said that £100,000 was sufficient to develop an iron and steel works.

Mr. MACARNEY: For experiments?

Mr. PAYNE: The thing was past the experimental stage in Queensland, in this way—that they knew for a certainty that they had unlimited quantities of the finest raw material in the world. The Biggenden ore was peculiar in that it contained certain other elements besides iron ore that made it particularly fitted for the development of the finest quality of steel. It only showed the ignorance of members when they got up and talked about £100,000 to build up an iron and steel works in this country. He had been at Newcastle some time ago, and had had a conversation with the man who was managing that concern. He was quite sure that if the hon. member for Toowong had been there his ideas would have been altogether altered. If they were going to develop an iron and steel industry, what sense was there in handicapping them or tying the hands of any Government—whether it was that Government or any other Government. He thought the Government were doing the right thing in not allowing the Legislative Council to dictate to the representatives of the people the exact way in which to do their business. It was a monstrous thing that a nominee Chamber should come along and say to the representatives of the people, "Unless you do this particular business in this way you cannot do it at all." He hoped that better counsels would prevail, and that an attempt would be made to develop that big industry; because it was going to mean a big thing for Queensland—it was going to give employment to thousands of people, and

it was going to bring a population into this State to consume it and help to keep the men on the land. He wondered that the member for Burnett had not thought of that. If they had a particle of Australian sentiment about them, they would not object to starting secondary industries in this country.

Mr. CORSER: You know that nobody is; we are trying to start them.

Mr. PAYNE: If for all time they were going to draw their resources from some other country and allow those very rich mineral deposits to lie dormant, he did not know how they were going to make this a big country. It was all moonshine to say that they were going to make this a prosperous country by placing all the people on the land. Fifty per cent. of the product of the land had to be consumed here, and unless they had a population to consume it what was the good of producing it? He hoped the Legislative Council would give that matter honest thought from an Australian point of view, and not put anything in the paths of the Government in making an attempt. It was not possible for this or for any other Government to build up a big steel works in a day. As a matter of fact an up-to-date steel works to-day would run into two or three millions of money.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY: You would have to pass an Act every year.

Mr. CORSER: £250,000 is not going to help you in that direction. You could start with pig iron on what you have got.

Mr. PAYNE: The pig-iron industry was nothing.

Mr. CORSER: Isn't it? We are getting the pig iron from China at the present time.

Mr. PAYNE: One up-to-date blast furnace in Queensland would flood the market in three months.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: No.

Mr. PAYNE: Of course, it would. The hon. gentleman knew nothing at all about it. With a blast furnace capable of putting through 5,000 to 7,000 tons of iron ore, 75 per cent. to 80 per cent. would be pig iron.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: You say that one up-to-date blast furnace would supply Australia? Pure nonsense!

Mr. PAYNE: Putting through 500 to 600 tons per day, working the twenty-four hours round. If they got 70 per cent. ore—allowing for loss in smelting—and that went on constantly, inside twelve months, unless they had some process of converting that pig iron into steel, it would not be worth producing. If the steel works which now were in existence in Australia were to put their pig iron on to the market the thing would slump down. As a matter of fact, he thought Lithgow was the only steel works in Australia that sold pig iron. The Newcastle steel works used up all their pig iron. Lithgow used 70 per cent. of theirs. It was a ridiculous idea to put up a big blast furnace to turn out pig iron when there was no market for it, or would not be in a little time. They must go on with the [7.30 p.m.] whole thing. He heard the hon. gentleman talking about £5,000 to put up a blast furnace. As a matter of fact the £5,000 which the Royal Commission recommended was for a small crucible fur-

nace for the experimental stages. They all knew that the whole mechanical structure and the burners would run into a lot of money.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Are you a member of the commission?

Mr. PAYNE: Yes.

Mr. MACARTNEY: You made that report?

Mr. PAYNE: Yes, the Royal Commission made an interim report to permit the Government to start on the experimental stages, and to spend £5,000 in putting up a small crucible furnace so as to experiment with the ores from the different deposits.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Then you haven't made your report yet?

Mr. PAYNE: No. The commission had not yet made their report. How could they expect any Royal Commission, even if it were composed of the ablest men in Australia, to make a report in connection with the establishment of iron and steel works in a few months? He supposed that altogether the commission had not been travelling for more than five weeks in connection with the investigations.

Mr. MACARTNEY: And yet the Government rush into the thing before any report has been made.

Mr. PAYNE: They knew that the raw material existed in Queensland. The hon. member for Burnett knew that the Biggenden Mine had been tested to a depth of 280 feet, and they knew that it contained a large body of iron. There was also another mountain alongside it which had not been tested at all. There were thousands of tons of iron ore lying on the surface at Biggenden. The Government were honest in their attempt to start iron and steel works, and if hon. members opposite were Australians they would help the Government to establish the industry in the interests of Australia.

Colonel RANKIN (*Burrum*): He had listened to the speech of the Minister regarding the attitude of another place, and he thought those remarks were hardly warranted. So far as the measure was concerned, the Council had not gone beyond what they thought was wanted in safeguarding the interests of the public. The other Chamber were actuated by what they conceived to be the best interests of the State in dealing with measures sent up to them, and last session they found it necessary to condemn certain Bills passed by the present Government. Since then the country was called upon to decide in favour of the abolition or retention of the Upper House, and the people spoke with no uncertain sound in favour of the retention of that branch of the Legislature. So they had to pay some strict attention to what the Upper House conceived to be the interests of Queensland. He was not much enamoured of the Bill. He was not enamoured of State enterprises at all, and he did not look on the Bill with enthusiasm, but if there was any business in it, he believed in stimulating primary industries, as he recognised their value to Queensland. The Bill conferred on the Government all the powers that were required to carry out the project they had in view. The clauses emanating from the Upper House to which exertion had been taken were, first of all, clause 7, where the Legislative Council

*Colonel Rankin.*

refused to allow the Government to carry on any business described in a proclamation published in the "Gazette." The Council limited the Government in their operations.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: The Government will accept every amendment if the Upper House accepts our suggestion with regard to the amount of money required to start the industry.

Colonel RANKIN: He was just going to mention that the Council, in clause 9, limited the expenditure to £100,000. The Assistant Minister for Justice said that the Government had no objection to the Council's amendment in clause 7, which he had just referred to, so that there was only one bone of contention, and that was the amount of money required to start the work. Where was the emasculation that the Minister referred to? It really narrowed itself down to one clause. On the evidence before the Committee, they were not justified in giving the Government a blank cheque for an unlimited amount. All they had before them was the interim report of the commission, made up of members on the Government side of the House, which he would read to the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in quoting from a previous debate of the same session.

Colonel RANKIN: He was quoting from the report. According to the terms of it, the commissioners were asked to report on—

- "1. Location, quantities, and suitability of iron ore deposits.
- "2. Location, quantities, and suitability of fuel supplies.
- "3. Most suitable site or sites for central works.
- "4. Primary cost of erection and equipping such works."

The reply to those questions is as follows:—

"Before your commissioners can reply to these questions, so far as they relate to the establishment of a complete iron and steel works, a great deal of research work will have to be undertaken and much more information collected, which must take considerable time. Owing, no doubt, to the fact that no previous Government has ever seriously considered the iron question, the data in possession of the Mines Department is incomplete regarding the raw material either as to quantities or suitability for the successful establishment of an iron industry. A geologist from the Government Geological Survey Department has now been deputed by the Minister for Mines to specialise in this work, and has entered upon his duties. The site for a central works can only be determined after locating the largest and most suitable deposits of ore, coal, fluxes, etc. Information must also be sought outside of the State concerning the cost of an up-to-date iron and steel works.

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

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

[Colonel Rankin.]

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

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

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

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

"We therefore beg to recommend that steps be taken forthwith to establish, at a site to be chosen by the Mines Department, a State iron melting plant capable of producing pig iron commercially and of testing in bulk the iron ore deposits of the State."

There was the report of the Royal Commission on which the Bill was based.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: This is an Iron and Steel Works Bill, not a pig iron Bill.

Colonel RANKIN: There was no recommendation contained in the report that would justify the Committee in passing the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman cannot make a second reading speech on this motion.

Colonel RANKIN drew the attention of the Committee to the report of the commission, which stated that a plant for the manufacture of pig iron could be erected at a cost of £5,000. The commission pointed out that the manufacture of pig iron would be a profitable undertaking for the State. What came of the interjection of the Minister and the speech of the hon. member for Mitchell, who told them that the manufacture of pig iron was a fallacy, and was absurd. The hon. member for Mitchell told them that to go in for the manufacture of pig iron was ridiculous on the face of it, because a single furnace would supply the whole of Australia, although he afterwards altered it to the whole of Queensland. What were they to believe? The strictures passed by the Minister on another place were not justified at all in the face of that report.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Read clause 11, and you will see that it is not a pig iron Bill.

Colonel RANKIN: The report stated that it was possible to make pig iron.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: But it is not confined to that. It also provides for the manufacture of coke, iron, and steel, mining for ore, and the acquisition of property.

Colonel RANKIN: He accepted the correction of the Minister, and pointed out that the Upper House were willing to go further than what the commission had recommended. The Upper House were willing to grant the necessary funds to enable the Government to establish a pig iron industry, which was the only form of an iron industry that the commission recommended, and the cost of which was put down at £5,000, but the Council were willing to give them £100,000. The

Minister said quite distinctly that he did not disagree with the attitude of the other place in limiting the operations of the Bill.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: We disagree, but we are prepared to compromise.

Colonel RANKIN: The hon. gentleman's disagreement was not sufficiently strong to justify him in protesting very much against it. The only contentious clause in the whole lot was the limitation in regard to the funds. The Council had limited the expenditure to £100,000, instead of giving the Government power to incur unlimited expenditure. Having due regard to the state of affairs throughout Queensland at the present time, and having due regard to the proposal of the Royal Commission, the Upper House were fully justified in putting a limit on that experiment. It was no use the hon. member for Mitchell saying it was past the experimental stage. The hon. gentleman himself admitted in his report that it was not past the experimental stage. He said they had not sufficient information to enable them to state definitely that it would be a success, and, therefore, the Upper House were fully justified in limiting the experiment to £100,000. It was a large sum of money, particularly in view of the financial conditions of the country at the present time. He offered his protest against the strictures that had been passed on another Chamber with regard to their attitude towards the measure, and also on other measures that had been submitted to them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hunter, *Muranou*): The attitude of the other Chamber was indicative of the attitude of hon. members opposite on that measure.

Mr. CORSER: Speak for yourself

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If he spoke for the hon. member, he should say he would be ashamed of himself as representing the district where that industry was to be established if he was not found heartily supporting it. They, as Australians, were desirous of seeing their great mineral wealth made available for the development of the country, and one would expect, at any rate, that the hon. member for Burnett would be particularly anxious, seeing that it was proposed to establish the industry in his district, to see the Bill passed.

Mr. CORSER: £100,000 will do that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When the hon. member talked about £100,000 to cover an industry such as coke, iron and steel, one realised how small his ideas were concerning the magnitude of such an industry. If some small municipality were to ask for powers such as those one might hesitate to give them, but here they had a Government controlling the vast resources of Queensland and desirous of setting up an industry like this, and yet they were told that £100,000 was sufficient. When they came to the various amendments inserted by the Council one could only appreciate their attitude at its proper value; that was there was a disposition to hamper the whole business and to prevent the establishment of the industry. They were told that the man who was to be appointed manager must be an engineer of ten years' standing. He would

not have been surprised if the Council had said he must be a man with red hair, or must not have a club-foot.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They should have put in that he should not be an incompetent politician.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then they would bar the hon. member for Toowong immediately. Could anyone imagine a body of men starting in downright earnest to establish an industry such as that, and then hampering it in the way the Council had done; fencing it round on every side so that it would be impossible to carry it on? In new clause 11, inserted by the Council, they had described exactly what could be mined—iron ore and other ores necessary for the business of coke, iron and steel works. He understood that coal was not an ore, neither was lime, and yet both were essential for the manufacture of iron and steel, and under that clause there was no power to mine for those products. They were told in another clause that there were certain things they might manufacture, but beyond that they dare not go. The Government must come down to the House and have a resolution passed, then send the resolution on to the other Chamber and get the permission, no matter how urgent or profitable it might be, to extend the usefulness of the works. Nothing could be more absurd. It was utterly useless for the hon. members opposite to say that they were willing to see the business established. The hon. member for Albert had expressed himself whole-heartedly in favour of the measure. They had hon. members opposite getting up with their tongues in their cheeks saying they were in favour of it, and still they showed their opposition and resistance to it by permitting and encouraging those amendments of the other Chamber which were intended to do nothing more than prevent the establishment of the industry. In the past they had been sending millions of pounds to Germany, Belgium, America, and Great Britain for all classes of iron and steel, while they had an abundance of the richest ore to be found in the world, and they were not to be allowed to make use of it. Why? Because the Government proposed to make it a State enterprise, and hon. members opposite did not believe in State enterprise. Hon. members opposite had said that it should be left to private enterprise. For over 50 years private enterprise has had full scope. If private enterprise were going to start iron and steel works why had they not done it long ago? Why had those millions of pounds gone oversea when they had an opportunity of supplying those things for themselves? The Opposition would sacrifice that most promising industry rather than that shibboleth of theirs, private enterprise, should be set aside. He deplored that they in Queensland, situated as they were at the present time, unable to obtain the necessary iron material for the construction of railways, bridges and other works, and standing on the threshold of another year, should be prepared to stop a Government which had the enterprising courage to undertake an industry like that, merely because it was to be done by State enterprise rather than by private enterprise.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He supposed that next year they would be imagining the hon. gentleman sitting in an office in London and weeping because the Queensland Government

*Mr. Macartney.]*

had not been allowed to spend unlimited money in starting an industry about which they themselves and the commission they appointed absolutely knew nothing. There was no objection on that side of the House to the starting of that industry if it could be shown that the industry could be started and carried on profitably. The Opposition objected to the Government taking *carte blanche*—an open cheque—to start a business about which they themselves confessed they knew nothing, and without any evidence placed before the Chamber as to the possibility of carrying it out successfully. Nobody would deny the existence of the raw material spoken of by the hon. member. This was the wrong time in which wild-cat speculations ought to be entered into. The Government had entered into too many wild-cat speculations already. They had used too much of the hard cash of the State in speculative undertakings at a time when all the cash in the Commonwealth was required for one great purpose, and they were asking now that a further large sum of money should be scattered about before they were able even to suggest or put before the House evidence that the industry could be established with success. If there was any business that the Government was justified in starting it was a business which was not yet taken hold of by private enterprise, and if it could be shown that there was anything like a reasonable probability of establishing the iron and steel business on permanent and profitable lines, the Government would, on that ground, get not only the support of every member in both Chambers, but would get all the cash necessary for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Only words.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He would like the hon. gentleman to put his finger on the words or advice showing he had a profitable scheme to put before the House. He was really beginning to doubt the business sanity of the hon. gentleman, or his colleagues or followers. The powers given under the Bill were ample, and the expenditure authorised of £100,000 was more than ample for the next year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Would you start a business—

Mr. MACARTNEY: He would ask the Chairman to restrain the hon. gentleman who knew everything connected with everything, who constantly interjected on every subject. There was nothing under the sun that the hon. gentleman did not know. The money authorised was more than ample to meet the case. The House was not going to adjourn for ever. It might be that hon. members opposite would still be in office twelve months from date, and they might not be there. If they were there and it was shown that it was advisable to proceed with the venture there was

[8 p.m.] ample time to get the additional funds necessary. He could not help thinking there was something behind the measure which did not quite appear on the face of it.

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

Mr. MACARTNEY (continuing): It might be something in connection with the coming elections, but he had listened to every speech the hon. gentleman had made in the House and had read every speech made in the

House on it, and he stood there to say that a business proposition had not been put before the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Bill is the proposition.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The report read by the hon. member for Burrum was the only material put before the House. With that report the extent the Government have gone to was not justified, and if the Upper House extended that sum from £100,000 to £250,000 then they would be taking a risk he did not think they were justified in taking. When the hon. gentleman opened up this debate, he said it was proposed to disagree with the amendments of the Upper House in toto. He did not for a moment suggest that if the Upper House would agree to an extension of the amount he would accept it.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: The suggestion came afterwards from them—that they were willing to compromise.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman did not mention the fact that if the Upper House would extend the amount he would accept it.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: Our Minister in the Legislative Council sent down word afterwards. As the Bill stands we disagree, but the compromise which our Minister has been negotiating I am quite willing to accept. That transpired while I was talking.

Mr. MACARTNEY: At any rate, if that was the idea, it was up to the hon. gentleman to accept the amendment which he was prepared to accept instead of sending the Bill back, and they would have to go over this ground again. At any rate—whether the Upper House agreed to that or not—he maintained that there had been no evidence offered to Parliament which justified the authorisation of the expenditure of so much money or the entering into by the Government of the undertaking to the extent they suggested.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): He had just a few words to say on these amendments. He wished to point out the captious attitude the Opposition were taking up in this matter, getting their friends in the Upper House to oppose the passage of this measure on a basis that could be reasonably expected to be profitable. They knew very well that the Opposition during the whole term of Parliament had been trying to run down the State enterprises. They had been endeavouring to prove the failure of State enterprises, and they were endeavouring to make a failure of this enterprise before it got a chance to be launched at all. He would like to remind the members of the Opposition that not very many days ago they passed a measure confirming an agreement between the Government and the Chillagoe Company to take over the company's works. In that there was a proposal that the Government guarantee £60,000 for the purpose of establishing a coke works alone at Mount Mulligan. That was the establishing of coke works for one small mine, and the idea the Government had now was to establish coke works that would practically supply the whole of Queensland with coke. He had in his hands a book, "British Coal Trade" by H. Stanley Jevons, the latest book on the subject. That book showed that these things could only be worked profitably if they were given a fair chance, and it took a large amount of capital to give them a fair chance. The amendments proposed practically confined the business to iron, steel, and coke. Before

[Mr. Macartney.]



you could manufacture coke you had to have bricks. Before you could get bricks you had to have a brickyard, and it was necessary where they had extensive coke works that they should have their own brickyards and their own machinery for providing firebricks, because they were continually requiring to replace them and to rebuild, and it was necessary that the business of brickmaking should be carried on. These amendments prevented the Government from starting a brickyard to provide firebricks for the coke ovens and for the necessary buildings, and it prevented other things. He found that for the successful carrying on of coke works they must utilise the whole of the material, and he would read what Jevons said—

“A new industry is arising in the preparing of coal in various forms for the market, and in the manufacture of by-products which are put to the utmost variety of uses, from driving motor-cars to making of scents and delicate shades of colours. The establishment of extensive coking ovens with plant for the recovery and separation of by-products is a new industry which has come over from Germany; and those who look into the future may anticipate the time when coke, not coal, will be the usual form of fuel, because the by-products obtained from the bituminous part of the coal will be worth far more than the coal in solid form. Coke of the highest quality may, indeed, itself become a by-product produced in such quantities that it becomes a cheaper form of fuel for household and general purposes than most qualities of coal now used; and this is the only bright point in an outlook which is rather dark for the coal consumer.”

That showed the only successful way of working these affairs. Now the Opposition were preventing the establishment of those by confining it to certain businesses which they know could not be carried on without the other businesses. As the Secretary for Public Lands pointed out, the amendment in clause 11 provided—

“Nothing in this Act shall be construed or deemed to authorise—

(i) The carrying on of any business except—

(a) Coke works;

(b) Iron and steel works; and

(c) Mining for iron ore and other ores necessary for the business of coke, iron, and steel works.”

Anyone knew that mining was not confined to mining for ores. As the Secretary for Public Lands pointed out, they would not be able to mine for coal under this Act, because coal was not an ore. Then they prevented the Government from getting the fluxes, the limestone, and other things. It was meant to prevent the Government from mining for the coal necessary to establish the coke works. Its object was to allow the Government certain powers. They could start the works knowing, if they started them on those conditions, they were doomed to failure. It was better not to start if they knew it was not going to pay. The Government wanted power to start them, knowing they would pay. The Opposition said they were quite willing to allow the Government to start, and in the next breath they inserted such limitations as would make the works fail before they got a start. He hoped the Opposition would change their

tactics and request their friends in the other House to alter their tactics. It was not the Government who wanted this Bill, but the people of Queensland, and they were calling for it from one end of the country to the other. The Opposition had to meet the people of the country, and they would then have to tell why they put up this captious opposition and prevented this measure being launched with a reasonable chance of success. He said it was impossible by limiting the whole of the expenditure to £100,000. They passed a measure allowing the Government to guarantee £60,000 for the establishment of coke works at one small mine, and yet they limited the whole expenditure for iron, steel, and coke works to £100,000. The hon. member for Murrumba said they would not be able to establish the works under £2,000,000. He claimed that the amendments practically destroyed the Bill. They prevented the manufacture of bricks and the mining for coal, and unless they could get their fuel turned out at a reasonable cost and utilise the by-products, which meant that business had to be established for dealing with those by-products, dealing with the extraction of the tars and the ammoniacal liquors that came from coal—unless they could do that their enterprise was doomed to failure.

Mr. CORSER: How much would a coke-works cost?

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member agreed to a measure in this House agreeing to guarantee £60,000 for the establishment of coke works in one small mine, at Mount Mulligan.

Colonel RANKIN: We did not vote for Mount Mulligan.

Mr. GLEDSON: He did not know the hon. member was opposed to it. He understood the Opposition agreed to it. The leader of the Opposition got up and said he would agree to that being carried.

Colonel RANKIN: No, no!

Mr. GLEDSON: He thought, if the hon. member would turn up “Hansard,” he would see that was so. The leader of the Opposition said he was not going to raise any strenuous opposition to it. He knew that to put down a proper washing plant alone for the purpose of washing the coal to enable pure coke to be made would cost £20,000 with the machinery and other things, and then there were the ovens and other things in addition. To put up by-product ovens it would cost nothing less than £200,000, or double what the Opposition were allowing for the establishment of the whole thing. To be successful you must be up to date; and he maintained the House should insist on their Bill being carried in a way that would give it a reasonable chance of being successful.

Colonel RANKIN said the whole subject of the discussion centred round the point whether the amount authorised was sufficient for the purpose or whether they should have given a larger sum. He thought that—on the face of the report given to the House by the commission, which he had already read—the Upper House had been very liberal in the amount placed at the disposal of the Government in this regard, particularly when we have in mind the want of success that had attended the efforts of the Government in other enterprises of a more or less similar nature. What had happened to the State

*Colonel Rankin.]*

joinery works in South Brisbane? They knew that a large sum of money had been sunk there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Colonel RANKIN: The hon. gentleman who had just resumed his seat made reference to the actions of the Government regarding the Chillagoe Railway and the Mount Mulligan Mine. Surely he was much more relevant to the subject if he referred to other State enterprises and the failure that had attended their efforts in that direction. They knew that the joinery works in South Brisbane, where large sums of money had been expended, were practically hung up. They knew that the State sawmills, in which they had invested considerable sums of money, were running at a loss. They found that the State coalmine had practically been a losing concern. It was not only here, but the same thing obtained in other States where State enterprises of that kind had been experimented with.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why are you not honest and not pretending you are in favour of it and all the time you are not?

Colonel RANKIN: If the hon. member were not such a Rip Van Winkle and if he had been in his place when he (Colonel Rankin) was speaking, he would not have made such a remark. The interjection was quite irrelevant, because he had urged caution with regard to the Bill when it came in before.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the hon. member had been in the House when I was speaking, he would understand my interjection now. You were out when I was speaking on the matter.

Colonel RANKIN: He was trying to lead the country to believe that he (Colonel Rankin) was posing now as a supporter of State enterprises.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; your party contended they were supporting it. You were not there to say how you regarded the matter.

Colonel RANKIN: He was very much concerned about what the hon. member's interjections were. He was dealing more particularly with the success or failure that had attended State enterprises of that kind, not only in Queensland, but in other States where they had been tried.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in dealing with State enterprises generally.

Colonel RANKIN: He was not dealing with State enterprises generally, but was pointing out that all "another place" had to guide them was what had been done in those other undertakings under State control. He had referred briefly to the State enterprises which he had specifically mentioned. He found that in Victoria—he was quoting from that afternoon's "Telegraph"—a return tabled in the Legislative Assembly in Melbourne in connection with the commercial and other activities controlled by the State as at 30th June last showed that the net loss was £26,384.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Don't you see that the Upper House have given us £100,000?

[Colonel Rankin.

Colonel RANKIN: He could understand that. The Upper House were exceedingly liberal in conceding £100,000 to play with in an experiment of this kind. But there was another point: Where was that money to come from? What provision had been made for it? He would ask the Minister in charge of the Bill, assuming they got a larger sum from "another place," where was the money coming from? It had not been voted, so far as he knew. There was no provision made in the Estimates for it; there was no provision made in the Appropriation Bill for it. Did the Minister mean that the Government were simply going to pass this Bill?

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Of course, you know that the money is thereby appropriated. You don't want to worry about that.

Colonel RANKIN: The hon. member knew quite well that it had to be specifically voted by that House. A railway might be passed by Parliament, but the money had to be voted year by year.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: This Appropriation must come along.

Colonel RANKIN: They had not seen anything of the Appropriation for this purpose, even on the Estimates.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: There is a very small Appropriation on the Estimates for it. We got an Appropriation for a geologist, £400. That is just to illustrate it. Take a big department like the Insurance. We voted nothing, but we passed an Act, and the vote came next year. We might have spent £100,000.

Colonel RANKIN: Yes, they might have done that—probably just as they bought cattle stations. They bought cattle stations and brought it in under the heading of "unforeseen expenditure"—unauthorised expenditure. This certainly would not be subject to the same condemnation, because it would not be termed unauthorised expenditure.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister for Public Lands tried to claim that members on the Opposition side were against the Government undertaking this enterprise. He spoke of the Opposition as being opposed to it, and as favouring private enterprise taking it up. It had been repeatedly said by Opposition members that the Government had an opening there because private enterprise had not, up to the present time, done anything towards developing the iron industry of this State. That was the point he wanted to make. The Minister in charge of the Bill opposed the amendment because it provided for only £100,000 expenditure. He admitted—and every member of the House would admit—that they wanted probably a million pounds to build steel works.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: I would like you to be clear on that. The Government disagree with all the amendments, but they are prepared to compromise.

Mr. CORSER: One gentleman on the Government side, who knew a good deal about the coal industry, claimed that in developing coke works they might have anything over £60,000. He did not know what was at the back of the Minister's head. It might be £100,000 to develop the coke industry alone. This was a State Iron and Steel Works Bill to develop the iron of the State.

Mr. GLEDSON: How can you make steel without coke?

Mr. CORSER: It was claimed by all who knew anything about it that probably £1,000,000 would be required to launch out in steel works in Queensland. Everybody would agree that £100,000 would be sufficient to produce pig iron; and £250,000 was not going to make possible the building of steel works; so why did they want to hang the measure up for that, and say that the other place was not satisfied to start the production of pig iron? He hoped the Minister would not jeopardise the possibility of carrying the Bill, but would secure for the State the £100,000 to develop the Biggenden Mine and make possible the raising of the iron ore that lay there waiting to be taken away.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is no use starting with a one-horse proposition.

Mr. CORSER: Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds was not going to make it a two-horse proposition. Members who had spoken with an idea of what the development of coke, iron, and steel meant would agree that £250,000 was not going to go anywhere.

Mr. GLEDSON: Why limit it?

Mr. CORSER: Why ask for another £150,000, when it was not going to take them any further? The granting of £250,000 was only giving the Government something more to squander.

Mr. GLEDSON: What will they do with the pig iron when it is there—leave it lie on the ground?

Mr. CORSER: They were going to do with it what they were doing with the pig iron which they were importing to-day—use it in the various iron works of Australia. From the Premier's own remarks, he was warned that the Broken Hill Proprietary Company of Newcastle had lost £200,000 in their steel works, and that they were now doubling their plant and their expenditure.

Mr. GLEDSON: They are establishing their coke works now—which should have been done first.

Mr. CORSER: When they saw large works established with huge sums of money, similar to that which he had quoted, and the Government bartering for £250,000 to establish steel works, they saw that the Government was not interested in the production of pig iron, but wanted to make political capital out of the Bill.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: He was in favour of the establishment of those works, and always had been. He had listened to the hon. member for Ipswich; but even his evidence only showed that if they got £250,000 or £500,000 they were no further on. Then, again, he did not like to vote in the dark. He did not know what it was going to land the country into in the future, nor why, at this time, with the present state of the finances, they should embark upon that huge enterprise on so little evidence and knowledge. If it was a question of killing the Bill, he would vote for the retention of £100,000.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: You agreed to an unlimited sum when the Bill was going through last time.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: He had voted for that on account of the impression which was held in the Chamber that it was merely a commencement, based upon the Royal Commission's report; that it was a matter

of starting the works by discovering where the best ore was to be procured and laying down an experimental plant at a cost of £5,000. He had listened to-night to a very impassioned speech delivered by the Secretary for Public Lands; and just now, in reply to the hon. member for Burrum, when he was speaking, he stated, "Why don't you deal with these matters honestly; why don't you be honest in your remarks?" He would reply to the Minister for Lands—why was he not honest in his remarks in that House? There were very few men who suppressed things more completely than did the hon. member who sat in the chair of the Secretary for Public Lands. He would say distinctly to him that he would never go to him to establish a code of honour. He was the last man—or one of the last—whom he would go to for that purpose.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: His honesty had been such that he had gone even to the extent of saying that if, on a muster of a station, it was found to be beyond a certain number, he would stick to the certain number and say nothing about it. That was his code of honour.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: At the closing hour of the session I don't care to rise to a point of order; but I think that the hon. member for Lockyer is somewhat unparliamentary.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: He did not usually get blamed for using unparliamentary language. At the same time, he was replying to a statement by way of interjection of the Minister for Public Lands. Why did not he deal honestly with the matter? When he (Mr. Armstrong) stood on his feet he dealt honestly with any matter with which he was dealing. The Secretary for Public Lands, in an impassioned speech, told the House that the Bill had been emasculated.

The Council inserted an amendment [8.30 p.m.] ment stating that the manager employed in the construction of the works must be a qualified engineer of not less than ten years' standing. The Assembly refused to accept that amendment, and when a message came back from the Council last night it was found that the Council did not insist on the amendment with respect to the appointment of a manager of ten years' standing, so how could it be emasculated? A great many misleading statements had been made in the Assembly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A lot of them are made over there.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: No man knew better how to mislead the House than the Secretary for Public Lands.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had insisted upon their disagreement with the amendments which the Legislative Council had insisted on. The report was adopted.

#### MESSAGE TO COUNCIL.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: I beg to move—That the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

"Mr. President,—

"The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Council of date 5th December,

*Hon. J. A. Fidelity.]*

relative to the State Iron and Steel Works Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

“Insist upon their disagreement to the amendments upon which the Legislative Council have insisted.

“W. McCORMACK,  
“Speaker.

“Legislative Assembly Chamber,  
“Brisbane, 6th December, 1917.”

Mr. MACARTNEY: I understood that a compromise had been come to in connection with this Bill.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: I will inform the Minister in the other House that we are agreeable to accept all the amendments if they increase the amount to £250,000.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That was the information given to the Committee. If that is the case, I do not understand the message which it is proposed to send back to the other Chamber, because the message just states that the Assembly disagrees with all the amendments of the Upper House. I understand that the compromise suggested is that the amount of £100,000 should be increased to £250,000, and all the other amendments of the Upper House will be accepted. If that is the case I do not understand why you wish to disagree with the amendments of the Upper House in toto. I rose more particularly to say this, that the discussion hangs round the increase of the sum of money which the Government is authorised to spend from £100,000 to £250,000. Without wasting any time over it I say that that permission ought not to be given to the Government, because no case has been made out showing that the enterprise is justified to that extent at the present time. I say that a blank cheque should not be given to the Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman had an opportunity of discussing that question in Committee.

Mr. MACARTNEY: But we are sending a message back to the Upper House. My view is that the Upper House should be invited not to increase the amount beyond £100,000. The Opposition strenuously object, because it will only be the means whereby the peoples' money will be squandered.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: In reply, I might say, briefly, in order to remove any misunderstanding, that a message came from the Upper House this evening saying that a spirit of reasonableness might prevail, and that that Chamber might extend the amount from £100,000 to £200,000 or £250,000. The suggestion emanated from them, and I say, let them fix it up. They interfered with our measure in the first place. If they are going to make conditions, well and good. Let them bear the brunt of it. We are doing our best to pass the measure, because we want to see it passed. We disagree with every amendment, but we are prepared to accept a reasonable compromise. I think we are acting in a most polite manner with that Chamber in this particular matter.

Question put and passed.

#### PAPER.

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

Additional regulations under the Public Curator Act of 1915.

[Hon. J. A. Fihelly.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL, NO. 4.

##### MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:—

“Mr. Speaker,—

“The Legislative Council having come to the following resolution, viz.:—That before reading Appropriation Bill No. 4 a second time, it be returned to the Legislative Assembly with a request that they will omit clause 2 on the ground that it is not reasonable that a Parliament in its last session should deal with the finances that properly belong to, and should be dealt with by, a future Parliament,” beg now to intimate the same to the Legislative Assembly, and herewith return the Bill.

“W. HAMILTON,  
“President.

“Legislative Council Chamber,  
“Brisbane, 6th December, 1917.”

##### FREE CONFERENCE.

The TREASURER: I beg to move—That the following message be sent to the Legislative Council:—

“Mr. President,—

“The Legislative Assembly having considered the Legislative Council's message of this day's date, relative to the Appropriation Bill No. 4, request a free conference with the Legislative Council, with a view of arriving at a mutual agreement with respect to the said Bill.

“The Legislative Assembly appoint the Hon. T. J. Ryan and the Hon. E. G. Theodore to be the managers to represent them at such conference, and name No. 1 Committee Room, Legislative Assembly, to be the place, the conference to be held forthwith.

“W. McCORMACK,  
“Speaker.

“Legislative Assembly Chamber,  
“Brisbane, 6th December, 1917.”

Question put and passed.

At three minutes to 9 o'clock p.m.,

The SPEAKER said: I shall resume the chair at a later hour.

At twenty minutes past 9 o'clock p.m.,  
The House resumed.

The SPEAKER reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:—

“Mr. Speaker,—

“The Legislative Council agree to the free conference requested by the Legislative Assembly in their message of 6th December, on the subject of the Appropriation Bill, No. 4.

“The Legislative Council name No. 1 Committee Room, Legislative Council, to be the place and 9.15 p.m. this day to be the hour and date of meeting, and appoint the Hon. E. W. H. Fowles, the Hon. T. M. Hall, and the Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn to be the managers thereof in their behalf.

“W. HAMILTON,  
“President.

“Legislative Council Chamber,  
“Brisbane, 6th December, 1917.”

The SPEAKER: I shall resume the chair at a later hour.

At five minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.,

The House resumed.

## LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

### MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

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

### CONSIDERATION OF THE MESSAGE IN COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The other Chamber had refused, again, to accept the Assembly's clause 2 to the Bill, which provided for the repeal of that section of the Act by which the court was prevented from increasing the rent on any assessment beyond 50 per cent. on existing rates. The Treasurer had estimated in his Budget receiving a certain amount of money from this amendment of the Act. However, it was only one of many reductions made by the other Chamber, and it seemed impossible to press it any further. It had been submitted on two previous occasions, and he thought that this year, at any rate, there would be no difficulty. As a matter of fact the court, when dealing with a number of assessments this year in the appraisements, had as much as 75 per cent. more rents asked than the court could give on account of this Act. They thought that by the repeal of it, it would be possible for the Crown to obtain full value from its present tenants.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: On present values of stock.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman was an authority on that.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Yes, I am. I know more than you do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If he were not, he thought he was, so it came to the same thing, so far as he was concerned. At any rate, that was apart from the subject. He thought it was regrettable that the Crown was not able to obtain a fair rent from the pastoralists of the State. Other tenants in a smaller way were called upon to pay the full value for their leases; but the other Chamber, as the guardians of the pastoralists, said that those people must not be charged their full value, because at an earlier period in their history Parliament thought fit to do something to protect those people; therefore, for all time they must enjoy that protection. He very much regretted the position as it was, but he was compelled reluctantly to accept the amendment.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman, in announcing the agreement of the Government to that amendment, had found it necessary to reflect on the other Chamber in the usual way for electioneering purposes. The hon. gentleman must recognise that, if the Government placed the same store on the Bill that the hon. gentleman sought to make the people believe he placed upon those matters which were rejected by the Upper

Chamber, a different reception would be given to the action taken by the other House. He could only take it, seeing that the amendment was accepted—there was not much in the Bill otherwise—that the subject matter was more of that electioneering character required for use amongst the people. The hon. gentleman could not suggest that the extraordinary conditions which existed at the present moment, arising from the war or other causes, was a justification for altering the conditions for all time. They knew very well that as soon as the war was over the special conditions would not exist, and they would probably get back into a condition similar to that which existed before the war—and probably a great deal worse.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In 1910 your own Government tried to remove this.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They remember that the very clause about which they were now fighting was introduced by a Labour-controlled Government, of which the hon. gentleman's colleague was a supporter. In 1905 it was passed by a Labour-controlled Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I fought against it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Minister brought it up by interjection. The other Chamber had made an amendment that protected the character of Parliament, and they did good service for Queensland.

Question put and passed.

On clause 4—"Amendment of section 109"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This clause had been struck out, and it was consequential on the deletion of clause 2. He moved—That the amendment of the Legislative Council be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 9—"Amendment of schedule II."—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The same principle was involved in this clause. In reply to the hon. member for Toowoomba, he pointed out by interjection that in 1910, when Mr. Denham was Secretary for Public Lands, a Land Bill was introduced which sought to repeal the section of the Land Act which this Bill also tried to do, and only for the pastoralists outside—supported by hon. members in the House—that section would have been deleted. They blamed the Land Court at that time for not giving at least up to 50 per cent. increase in the rent, but that was ancient history. He (Mr. Hunter) then supported the repeal of the section, and he still supported it. It was not fair to the other tenants of the Crown that one section were protected to the extent of 50 per cent. while the other had to pay the full increase in the rent.

Mr. GUNN: There are twice as many grazing farmers as pastoralists.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All the more reason why the pastoralists should pay more. It would open the eyes of hon. members if they could read the reports of the assessors.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Well, open our eyes. We are here to get information.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: An hon. member opposite said that because

*Hon. J. M. Hunter.*]

there was a war on, and the price of wool was high, an opportunity was sought to get an increase in the rents of pastoral leases. The Kidston Government tried to get more rent from the pastoralists in 1910 when there was not a war on. He moved—That the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member referred to the fact that the 1910 Bill contained a similar clause. It was pointed out to the Liberal Government at that time that it was an act of repudiation of a statutory written contract, and the Liberal Government recognising the justice of it restored the clause which had previously been introduced into the Act by a Labour-controlled Government.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendments in the Bill. The report was adopted, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

At ten minutes to 11 o'clock p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

#### STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS BILL.

##### MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL, No. 3.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:—

“Mr. Speaker,—

“The Legislative Council having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly of date 6th December, relative to the State Iron and Steel Works Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

“Further insist on their amendment in clause 10 (now 9), and offer the following further amendment, on line 7—After ‘hundred’ to insert ‘and fifty’; in which further amendment they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly; and further insist on their other amendments in the Bill, including the amendment in the title, to which the Legislative Assembly have insisted on disagreeing.

“W. HAMILTON,  
“President.

“Legislative Council Chamber,  
“Brisbane, 6th December, 1917.”

##### MESSAGE TO COUNCIL DECLARING BILL “LOST.”

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That the following message be sent to the Legislative Council in reply to their message of this date:—

“Mr. President,—

“The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's message of this day's date, insisting on their amendments in the State Iron and Steel Works Bill, to which the Legislative Assembly have already disagreed, beg now to intimate that, the Legislative Assembly being unable to concur in the said amendments, the Bill, in the terms of the Parliamentary Bills Referendum Act of 1908, is now lost.

“W. McCORMACK,  
“Speaker.

“Legislative Assembly Chamber,  
“Brisbane, 6th December, 1917.”

[Hon. J. M. Hunter.

I regret that the Council have seen fit to insist upon the limitation which they have placed upon the amount that may be expended in the establishment of iron and steel works. It must be quite obvious to them that eventually—if these works are to be a complete success—a larger sum than £150,000 will have to be spent. It seems to me to indicate that their desire is to limit the amount which may be eventually spent upon it under the authority of this Bill to such an extent that they cannot be a complete success. The attitude is only consistent with the views we heard expressed by some prominent members of the Opposition during the passage of the Bill through this House. Moreover, it is an infringement of the privileges of this House for the Legislative Council to attempt to limit the amount which may be appropriated for the purposes of the Bill. The other amendments, too, seem to me to be somewhat capricious. They are certainly intended to bring about the result which I very much regret to see has occurred.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the hon. gentleman had been in this Chamber when the matter was before the Committee on the previous occasion he would have heard the statement of the Minister then in charge of the Bill that it was expected that a compromise would have been arrived at under which the amendment of the Council, other than the limitation of £100,000, would be accepted, and that the £100,000 would be increased to a larger amount.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: I said not less than £200,000, and I mentioned £250,000.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman did mention £250,000. I point that out in reply to the remarks of the Premier in regard to the other amendments. At the time I said I doubted very much whether the Government seriously desired the passage of this Bill, and I am encouraged in that doubt by the fact that no concrete recommendation from those who understood the undertaking has been put before this Chamber at any stage of this Bill. There is nothing, indeed, to show that the Government have considered the question further than the existence of certain suitable ores; and no proposition has been put which would justify the House in believing that the undertaking would be successful or profitable. I think the Upper Chamber had done a service to the State in endeavouring to put a limitation upon the amount which the Government might risk or squander. There has been no Estimates placed before Parliament suggesting expenditure for the establishment of iron and steel works.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: I can mention £400 for an assistant geologist.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The current financial year will end on 30th June, and not one pound has been put on the Estimates, as anticipated expenditure, in connection with those works.

The PREMIER: That is not necessary when it is appropriated by the Act.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It may be appropriated by the Act; but no provision has been made for the amount required under that Act.

The PREMIER: It is appropriated by the Bill.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The amount suggested by the other House is more than ample for the current year. I realise that if it were desirable to establish these works, and carry them on profitably, the limit would not be even half a million—probably not even a million. But we have not got to that stage yet. The Government has not put a concrete proposition before the House, supported by expert recommendation. £100,000 is a sufficient amount for the Government to play with during the current financial year. As has been pointed out in the "other place," no legislation was final. If it turns out that the experiments the Government are going to make—and they have not got beyond the experimental stage yet—show that the industry can be established on a successful basis, further provision can be made when Parliament meets again. There will be plenty of time to add to the amount required. It will be shown, in the course of time, that the Legislative Council are doing a service to Queensland in placing a limit on a Government that was prepared to enter into a "wild-cat" speculation without due consideration, and without obtaining sufficient expert advice.

The PREMIER: There is nothing "wild-cat" about this.

Mr. CORSER: I am very disappointed at the Government not accepting the recommendations of the "other place." I am convinced now that the Government have no business in the scheme—that it is merely a bit of window-dressing. The proof of that is in bringing it forward at the eleventh hour, and stating—as they have done right along—that the proposition was primarily for the development of the industry in regard to pig iron. And now, when they have more than is necessary for all that they claimed, they are not going on with it. They never claimed that they were going to start steel works at once.

The PREMIER: You will find that the Government will not be deterred from pursuing their policy; but they want a proper Bill. In the meantime we will be going on.

Mr. CORSER: We are quite certain that the Premier is not going to be stopped by an Act of Parliament—unless there is some other power which is greater going to stop him. He is one who likes to see that others do not break Acts of Parliament, but he does not mind whether he does, so long as he is able to do what he wants, in his own way.

Question put and passed.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 4.

##### RESULT OF FREE CONFERENCE.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"Mr. Speaker,—

"The Legislative Council have this day agreed to the Bill intituled 'A Bill to Apply Certain Sums of Money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund to the Service of the Years ending on the last days of June, 1918 and 1919, and certain further Sums to the Service of the year ended on the last day of June, 1917, and to appropriate the Supplies granted in the present Session of Parliament,' with the amendments indicated by the accompanying schedule, which were agreed to as a result of the free conference between the two Houses. The Legislative Council

accordingly request the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly in these amendments.

"W. HAMILTON.

"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber,  
"Brisbane, 6th December, 1917."

The TREASURER: I have to report that the managers appointed by this House met the managers appointed from another place, to hold a free conference on the subject-matter of Appropriation Bill, No. 4. After consideration, they arrived at a mutual understanding with regard to the suggested amendments. The amendments will be inserted by the Legislative Council. I beg to move—That the following message be returned to the Legislative Council:—

"Mr. President,—

"The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's message of this day's date, relative to the Appropriation Bill, No. 4, beg now to intimate that they—

"Agree to the amendments in the said Bill. The Legislative Assembly desire it to be understood that they agree to this unusual procedure (being the result of a free conference) for the purpose of facilitating the passage of the Bill, but on no account is it to be regarded as a precedent or an admission of the right of the Legislative Council to amend an Appropriation Bill.

"W. McCORMACK,

"Speaker.

"Legislative Assembly Chamber,  
"Brisbane, 6th December, 1917."

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: What was the arrangement?

The TREASURER: The agreement involves the reduction of the amount which was asked for as a vote of credit on behalf of the financial year 1918-19. The original Bill provided for the appropriation of £500,000 from the consolidated revenue fund on account of 1918-19, £250,000 from the trust and special fund, and £150,000 from the loan fund account. The Council have agreed to give us a vote on credit on behalf of that year, but asked that the amount be reduced; so that—as a compromise—we accepted half the amount that was asked for in the first case.

The SPEAKER: I suggest that the hon. gentleman move me out of the chair and that the House go into Committee to deal with the Legislative Council's amendments in the Bill.

##### COMMITTEE.

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

The TREASURER moved—That the Legislative Council's amendments in clause 2 be agreed to, on the understanding which he had already mentioned to hon. members. It represented the carrying out of an agreement already arrived at at the free conference.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Although the hon. gentleman had not said so, he took it that the effect of the amendment was to make the Supply that had been given for the year 1918-19 a fortnight's Supply, instead of a month.

The TREASURER: Yes, it carries us over the first pay.

Mr. Macartney.]

Mr. MACARTNEY: He also wished to say, for his side of the House, that they still strongly objected to the principle which was involved in what had been done. They looked on the amendment simply as a compromise.

The PREMIER: Supposing a Parliament was ended by effluxion of time in February, how long would we get Supply—until June?

Mr. MACARTNEY: If this Parliament expired by effluxion of time in February they would get Supply to the end of June; and that was the recognised practice.

The PREMIER: I am not speaking of this Parliament; but assuming a Parliament ended by effluxion of time in February?

Mr. MACARTNEY: Assuming a Parliament did end in February, Supply would, no doubt, be granted to the end of June, according to the ordinary practice, simply because it had been recognised. It might be a very good practice to limit Supply up to the end of March in such a case. The objection taken by the Legislative Council, in their first message, was a sound one, and he regretted they had not adhered to it. It showed the reasonableness, apparently, of another Chamber in dealing with matters of business sent to it from this Chamber. Judging by their attitude on this and other matters, there was no ground for the complaint that had been made.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendments in the Bill. The report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

“Mr. President,—

“The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's message of this day's date, relative to the Appropriation Bill, No. 4, beg now to intimate that they—

“Agree to the amendments in the said Bill. The Legislative Assembly desire it to be understood that they agree to this unusual procedure (being the result of a free conference) for the purpose of facilitating the passage of the Bill, but on no account is it to be regarded as a precedent or an admission of the right of the Legislative Council to amend an Appropriation Bill.

“W. McCORMACK,  
“Speaker.

“Legislative Assembly Chamber,  
“Brisbane, 6th December, 1917.”

## SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

### VALEDICTORY.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move—That the House, at its rising, do adjourn till Thursday, 27th December. We have now come to the end of the session. It has been a very strenuous and somewhat eventful session, and I am sure that hon. members are glad that it has come to an end. (Hear, hear!) During the session we have had many political differences, but I trust that we have not left any feelings of personal ill-will on the occasion of our parting at the end of the session. (Hear,

[Mr. Macartney.

hear!)] For some of us—indeed, for all of us—it is a case of knocking off work to carry bricks, as we will be engaged in what will be a strenuous campaign on one of the most important matters any Government can submit to the people. I wish to express the hope that in the conduct of that campaign there will be no personal bitterness displayed, and that feelings will be more harmonious than they have been; because, no matter what is the result of this campaign, there is no doubt that after the 20th December we must stand together a united people to carry out the policy of prosecuting the war to a successful issue. (Hear, hear!) I have to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also other members of the House, and also the “Hansard” staff, officers of the House, and attendants in the refreshment-room for their courteous assistance on all occasions throughout the session. I hope that hon. members will have as happy a Christmastide as they can under the circumstances. I feel sure that our sympathy will go out at that time to those who have been bereaved by the loss of those near and dear to them at the front. (Hear, hear!) There is no doubt that it will be a consolation to them to know that our thoughts are with them at a time when their bereavement will be accentuated by the remembrance of former happy times.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: There is no doubt that we have had a strenuous session, and it will probably be long remembered in connection with the history of the Queensland Parliament. I do not propose to refer to the unhappy episodes of the session. I suppose we will take them up in another place later on. I would like to join the Premier in thanking the Clerk of the House and his assistants, and also the various employees in connection with the parliamentary building, including the “Hansard” staff and also representatives of the Press, for the courtesy and assistance at all times extended to the Opposition. We are adjourning earlier than usual, and it is perhaps too early to offer Christmas greetings. With the hon. gentleman, I think we all agree that there should be an expression of our feeling of sympathy for those who have lost their dear ones at the front, and for those who have been wounded—and, indeed, for all those who have suffered as a result of the war. We would not be human beings if we did not respond to those feelings at a time like this. I hope that the time may not be far distant when both sides of the House may be united in the desire to help the Empire to the greatest possible extent, and to extend that feeling of loyalty which we all ought to show. I also trust that the campaign which we are entering upon will not be necessarily one of bitterness, although there appears to be an inclination in that direction at the present time. If we can only remember the issues at stake, and act accordingly, I do not think there should be any real room for difference between members on either side of the House. One is perhaps inclined to express the feelings one holds; but, having regard to the differences that exist, it would be out of place to say more than I have done on this motion. I trust that before we meet, either in another session, or in another Parliament, members on both sides will see alike in regard to the great questions which I have referred to to-night. (Hear, hear!)]



HON. J. G. APPEL: I desire, with the leader of the House and the deputy leader of the Opposition, to thank the officers of the House in every capacity, for the courtesy shown to the Opposition and to members generally. If we have no further session, many of us may possibly not meet again in this august Chamber. Some of us probably will. So far as I am personally concerned, I may say that I have always endeavoured to direct my conduct so as to avoid the indulgence of any personal feeling in connection with any subject which may have come before us. I have also adopted the same line of conduct on the platform outside. The leader of the Government has mentioned a certain matter of the greatest moment to the Empire and to the Commonwealth of Australia, and, perforce, to the State of Queensland. We differ in connection with a certain question which has been submitted to the people of this State. I can only hope that, in dealing with this matter, legitimate discussion and debate may alone be carried on, without any personalities or bitterness. The question at issue is far above and transcends any personal matter. Hon. gentlemen on the Government side may think that a certain method should be adopted. Others consider that another method should be adopted. The matter rests almost wholly in the Premier's hands, and I hope we can approach the matter in the way he has suggested. Let us put our views before the electors of the State and Commonwealth, and let us work together for the one common purpose, with the one common aim and the one common object, and that is that our Empire shall succeed. We must all feel very proud of our Empire, and we all hope that she will succeed and will still hold the position as the arbiter of justice and freedom for the benefit, not alone of our own people, but for the universe generally. (Hear, hear!) May the Empire be crowned with victory, and may a conclusive peace soon appear, like the bright morning star. May the Empire arise from her trials and tribulations, and may the blood that has been shed for the nation have the effect of making us more united, and emerge from this titanic struggle the most glorious Empire that the world has ever seen. I unite in the good wishes expressed towards members of this House. Although we may have differed, I have no personal feeling or bitterness against any member of the House. I trust some of us may meet here again for the purpose of carrying on a government that will be for the benefit of the people of this State, which, I am sorry to say, has not been the case during the present Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Before putting the motion I desire, on behalf of the officers of the House, the "Harvard" staff, [11.30 p.m.] the Press, and the various assistants, to thank the Premier, the deputy leader of the Opposition, and Mr. Appel, for their kindly references. On my own behalf I desire to sincerely thank the members of the House for their courtesy to me during my occupancy of the position of Speaker. I have been treated invariably with courtesy by both sides of the House, and have on all occasions endeavoured to do my best and to act fairly and impartially.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Before the adjournment I would like to ask the hon. gentleman whether there would be any objection to the publication of the statement made by Mr. McDougall, of Warwick, in reference to the recent incident at Warwick? I understand that a portion only of his statement has been made public, and it has given rise to a certain amount of dissatisfaction. Mr. McDougall—a well-known man at Warwick—made a statement to the police, and a portion only of that statement has been referred to in the report of the Commissioner of Police, and I understand it is the general desire to have the statement made public.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has asked a question with regard to the statement given by Mr. McDougall to the Commissioner of Police. Of course, there is nothing to prevent Mr. McDougall himself making public anything that he thinks has not been disclosed, although I have no doubt that my colleague, the Home Secretary, will make available any of those reports to the Press if they wish to see them.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There is no objection to the Press seeing the reports?

The PREMIER: There is no objection whatever to the Press seeing the reports.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at thirty minutes past 11 o'clock p.m.

## BILLS ASSENTED TO AT CLOSE OF SESSION.

On Saturday, 8th December, 1917, a *Gazette Extraordinary* was issued signifying the assent of His Excellency the Governor to the following Bill:—

Closer Settlement Act Amendment Bill.

On Monday, 10th December, 1917, a *Gazette Extraordinary* was issued signifying the assent of His Excellency the Governor to the following Bills:—

State Children Act Amendment Bill;  
Pharmacy Bill;  
State Produce Agency Bill;  
Appropriation Bill, No. 4.

On Saturday, 22nd December, 1917, *Gazettes Extraordinary* were issued signifying the assent of His Excellency the Governor to the following Bills:—

Woongarra Tramway Bill;  
Clermont Flood Relief Act Amendment Bill;  
Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill;  
Farm Produce Agents Bill;  
Land Act Amendment Bill;  
Local Authorities Acts Amendment Bill;  
Public Works Land Resumption Act Amendment Bill.

[PROROGATION.]

*Parliament prorogued by following Proclamation in Gazette Extraordinary, Saturday,  
22nd December, 1917 :—*

A PROCLAMATION by His Excellency Sir HAMILTON JOHN GOOLD-ADAMS, Major on the Retired List of His Majesty's Army, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor of the State of Queensland and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia.

[L.S.]

HAMILTON GOOLD-ADAMS,

*Governor.*

IN pursuance of the power and authority vested in me as Governor of the State aforesaid, I, Sir HAMILTON JOHN GOOLD-ADAMS, G.C.M.G., C.B., do, by this my Proclamation, Prorogue the Parliament of Queensland to Tuesday, the twenty-ninth day of January, 1918.

Given under my Hand and Seal, at Stanthorpe, this Twenty-second day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventeen, and in the eighth year of His Majesty's reign.

By Command,

T. J. RYAN.

GOD SAVE THE KING!