

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 4 OCTOBER 1929

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The SPEAKER (Hon. C. Taylor, *Windsor*) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

REMOVAL OF MEMBERS FROM ROCKHAMPTON HOSPITAL BOARD.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) asked the Home Secretary—

“1. Having perused all the papers in connection with the appointment of certain members to and the removal from the Rockhampton Hospital Board, and not noticing anything whatsoever as to how any of such members came to be appointed to or removed therefrom, will he say what system, if any, exists in such appointments or removals—that is to say, how did these members acting on the board come to be appointed, and how did others come to be removed?”

“2. How did Mr. John Joseph Cullen come to be appointed to the Rockhampton Hospital Board in place of Mr. Maurice Kelly, and who nominated him?”

“3. What were the names of those persons who were approached prior to Mr. Cullen's appointment and who declined the position offered them?”

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*) replied—

“1. Each Government adopts its own method of selecting persons for public appointments. One member was appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the late Government, and three members were appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the present Government. The latter appointments were made because it was considered that the change was necessary.

“2. The Minister submitted Mr. Cullen's name to Cabinet, which recommended his appointment to the Governor in Council.

“3. As is probably usual in all cases of public appointments, Mr. Cullen's name was listed with others. His appointment was under consideration from the time it was deemed desirable to reconstitute the board.”

DECISION IN RE MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY INTO DEATH OF DULCIE BARCLAY.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) asked the Home Secretary—

“1. Did the National Council of Women wait on him last week to press for a magisterial inquiry to be held into the death of Dulcie Barclay?”

“2. In view of the fact that he, in the first place, was so emphatic about holding a magisterial inquiry, what has prompted him to change his mind so suddenly from the natural channels of justice?”

“3. Seeing he is reported in ‘Truth’ of 29th September, 1929, as saying: ‘Recently I had the opportunity, and after having gone carefully into the whole of the papers with the Attorney-General and Commissioner of Police, I decided that a magisterial inquiry was neither advisable nor desirable, that I then took

the matter to Cabinet, and after careful consideration Cabinet agreed with my decision, and that in this case there is overwhelming evidence to prove suicide, and under no circumstances could anybody be put on trial, how does he reconcile his attitude in view of the serious statements that exist in this unfortunate case as reported very fully in 'Truth' of Sunday, 1st September, 1929, and 8th September, 1929?

"4. Why does he appear to put all the blame on to the unfortunate young woman mentioned above, seeing a certain barrister rented a flat at Milton and such barrister and this young woman resided together?

"5. Do not the reports in his possession show that Dulcie Barclay sought her mother's consent to be allowed to marry Mr. R. E. O'Connor, barrister, and this being so, was it not very apparent that it was O'Connor's intention to marry the young woman?

"6. Is it a fact that a magisterial inquiry was held a few days ago into the case of two people who died at New Farm, it being murder and suicide, and that since the murderer was dead no charge was possible then, but still an inquiry was held?

"7. Is it a fact that a magisterial inquiry was held this week into a murder and suicide that occurred in Wharf street some little time ago, that the victim and the slayer are dead, and that thereby no charge is possible?

"8. Will he state quite candidly why this unfortunate case of Dulcie Barclay should be hushed up, and will he now see the error of his ways and immediately see that a magisterial inquiry is held in the interests of the general public of Queensland?

"9. Will he allow me to peruse all the papers in connection with this case at his office?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*) replied—

"A deputation from the National Council of Women did wait upon me in relation to this matter, and after having all the facts placed before them, agreed that the course adopted was the best in the circumstances. As the reasons for Cabinet's decision have already been published, I have nothing further to add to them. Papers are available for perusal by any hon. member."

PAPER.

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

Report of the Board of Trade and Arbitration under section 37 of the Profiteering Prevention Act of 1920 for the year ended 30th June, 1929.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremer*): I ask permission of the House to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the wish of hon. members that the hon. member for Bremer be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COOPER: In this morning's issue of the "Brisbane Courier" there appears a statement of remarks purported to have been made by me in Committee yesterday. I recognise that in making condensed reports pressmen have a very difficult task to perform, and it is just unfortunate that in condensing the report of my speech I was stated to have made use of some words which I did not use. The report says—

"Mr. F. Cooper (Labour, Bremer) said that the average tax on farmers was £7 a year."

What I really said was this—I have my "Hansard" proof in my hand—

"Now let us see what this tremendous amount of taxation means to the farmers. Table D shows that the total number of farmers, dairy farmers, and farmers who pay land tax is 3,495, and the average tax is £7 a head."

My statement was that the average amount paid in land tax by those farmers who had to pay the tax was £7 per head—not £7 per head of the farmers of the State, as reported in the "Courier." A previous portion of my speech shows that I stated that many thousands of farmers pay no tax at all.

DISEASES IN PLANTS BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to diseases in plants, and for other purposes."

Question put and passed.

BANANA INDUSTRY PROTECTION BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make better provision for the protection of the banana industry of Queensland, and for other purposes."

Question put and passed.

INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to foster the development of secondary industries by enabling advances to be made or guaranteed for the assistance of corporations engaged or who may hereafter be engaged in such industries, and for other purposes."

Question put and passed.

Mr. Cooper.]

EXTENSION OF HOURS OF SITTING.

DAYS ALLOTTED TO SUPPLY.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*): I beg to move—

“That on a day appointed for the consideration of the Estimates the House may meet for the despatch of business at 10 o'clock a.m. and continue to sit until 10 o'clock p.m. Each of the periods between 10.30 o'clock a.m. and 4 o'clock p.m., and between 4 o'clock p.m. and 10 o'clock p.m., shall be accounted an allotted day under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307. All provisions of Standing Order No. 307 and of Sessional Order of 22nd August last shall, *mutatis mutandis*, continue to apply.”

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I fail to see the necessity for double sittings. The Deputy Premier has certainly given us no information on the matter, although possibly the change is due to the delay occasioned in assembling Parliament. Hon. members opposite have explained that there was ample reason for that delay, but I do not hold that view. It would be a great convenience to hon. members if the hon. gentleman would indicate the special day in the week that is likely to be selected by the Government for a double sitting day. I hope it is not to be Friday.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It will not be Friday.

Mr. KIRWAN: If the hon. gentleman will study the convenience not only of hon. members of this House but of the staff and the press representatives associated with Parliament, he will indicate the day likely to be set apart for the extended hours. That would enable all concerned to make their arrangements beforehand.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I oppose this motion “lock, stock, and barrel.” (Government laughter.)

Mr. KERR: Your Government did it.

Mr. COLLINS: There is no necessity for double sittings, particularly when we realise that the Government had plenty of time, after the result of the elections was known, to call Parliament together earlier. The Treasurer knows that there is no need for double sitting days.

I was first returned to this House in 1909. The election took place on 2nd October, and Parliament met on 2nd November. We went through the whole of the business, and, if my memory serves me correctly, we finished on Christmas Eve. We went right through the Estimates although there were not then the restrictions on hon. members that there are to-day in regard to the number of hours that we could discuss the Estimates. The restrictions were placed on hon. members later by the Kidston Government. In spite of that, we were able to get through the whole of the business. What need is there for these double sittings? The discussion of the Estimates can only occupy seventeen days, one of which has already passed. Therefore, only sixteen days more are required for the discussion of the Estimates, and there is no need for the motion at all.

Let me quote a few figures to back up my statement. All my statements can be found in this splendid publication, “Queensland Politics during Sixty Years,” by C. A.

[*Mr. Kirwan.*]

Bernays, a gentleman well known to members of Parliament. The last election took place on 11th May, and Parliament did not meet until 20th August. This Government took longer to meet Parliament than any other Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A new Government, with all the mess that your party left to clean up.

Mr. COLLINS: I shall prove my case to the limit. The dates of elections since 1899 and the dates on which Queensland Parliament met are—

—	Date of Election.	Date of Meeting.
13th Parliament ..	18 Mar., 1899	16 May, 1899
14th Parliament ..	11 Mar., 1902	8 July, 1902
15th Parliament ..	27 Aug., 1904	29 Sept., 1904
16th Parliament ..	18 May, 1907	23 July, 1907
17th Parliament ..	5 Feb., 1908	3 Mar., 1908
18th Parliament ..	2 Oct., 1909	2 Nov., 1909
19th Parliament ..	27 April, 1912	2 July, 1912
20th Parliament ..	22 May, 1915	12 July, 1915

I had better pause there for a moment, as that was when the Labour Government came into power—men who had no experience in the government of the State with the exception of Mr. Hardacre, who had been a Minister for a week. Notwithstanding that handicap, although the election was held on 22nd May, we met the House with a full programme on 12th July—

—	Date of Election.	Date of Meeting.
21st Parliament ..	16 Mar., 1918	28 May, 1918
22nd Parliament ..	9 Oct., 1920	15 Nov., 1920
23rd Parliament ..	12 May, 1923	10 July, 1923
24th Parliament ..	8 May, 1926	27 July, 1926

Now we come to the twenty-fifth Parliament, when the present Government obtained power. In this case the elections took place on 11th May, and we did not meet until 20th August.

Mr. KELSO: Look at the cleaning up that had to be done!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: What is the need for these double sittings? Does anyone mean to tell me that I can do my work—I have just as much brains as any hon. member sitting on the Government side of the House—as I ought to do it by meeting here at 10.30 in the morning and sitting until 10 o'clock at night? I am not getting paid any overtime rates either. This taxing of members of Parliament is beyond all reason! A form of insanity swept over the world not so long ago in connection with the Great War, and it appears to me that there is a form of insanity affecting members of Parliament to-day. This double-shift proposal is a form of insanity.

Mr. KERR: Speak for yourself.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: There is no necessity for Parliament to close at Christmas. If hon. members will look through the records, they will find that the Government on one occasion sat after Christmas. When Government members were in opposition they consistently pointed out that most of our

legislation consisted of amending Bills owing to the slipshod manner in which, according to them, measures were rushed through Parliament. Surely the Government are not going on in what they used to term a slipshod manner by rushing measures through. That is what it really amounts to. We can meet after Christmas if we cannot do our work in an up-to-date manner by sitting a reasonable number of hours a day.

I will take my own case as a country member. I am going like a lightning machine all the time.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What are you doing?

Mr. COLLINS: That is a silly question. All the hon. member needs to do is to go up into my electorate and ask my electors what I am doing. I am looking after their interests all the time, and am not running a business like the hon. member. I have a lot of correspondence to attend to. I have to go round to the different departments from time to time, and how am I going to get round if we have to work double shifts? How am I going to slip round to see the Treasurer or the Secretary for Public Instruction if I want to see either of those gentlemen? How can I attend to my correspondence and other business if I am kept here till half-past 10 at night? When I should be listening to the Treasurer or the Secretary for Public Instruction I might be called below to answer the telephone or to see someone. I enter my protest against this proposal. The Commonwealth Parliament has already sat twice this year and a general election is taking place to enable it to sit again before Christmas. There is no need for rushing business through in this way. When I sat behind the late Government hon. members knew that in caucus I always opposed any restriction of parliamentary privileges; but, being a good soldier, I was always in line when the party came to a decision. (Government interjections.) That was discipline; and, if we had not had that discipline, we would not have attained to the Treasury benches in 1915.

I claim the support of hon. members opposite who, when they were in opposition, argued against double sittings. They claimed that Parliament should meet earlier so that measures could be fully discussed; but, after they became a Government, they delayed the meeting of Parliament from 11th May to 20th August. The British House of Commons had an election and met within a few weeks after, and transacted an enormous amount of business for the benefit of the whole of the British Empire. This procedure is a disgrace, as the Treasurer knows. The hon. gentleman was Treasurer at the time I came into Parliament. I was returned for the great Burke electorate, and in those days the communication with that electorate was not like it is to-day. In order to reach Brisbane from the centre of my electorate, which was then Georgetown, I had to journey by coach to Binasleigh, thence by train to Cairns, and thence by boat to Townsville, where it was necessary to change into another boat for Gladstone. Despite that difficult and trying journey I had to be here for the opening of Parliament on 2nd November. As the Treasurer knows, we went through all the work of the session from 2nd November up to Christmas Eve,

and did our work very well. There is no need for this motion, and I hope it will be defeated.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I do not intend to oppose the motion, and I am surprised to hear the protest of the hon. member for Bowen. We know that during the last nine years, under the Labour Government, we were called upon to sit double days. The hon. member for Bowen went to considerable trouble to turn up the date on which various elections were held, and the dates on which Parliament met. So far as the 1920 Parliament was concerned, certainly he gave the date on which we met, but he refrained from giving the date when we adjourned, which was 23rd December. Now he talks about stifling debate and about our not being given an opportunity to express our opinions, and he supported a Government which in one session put all its legislation through between 15th November and 23rd December. The hon. member has been trying to mislead us by giving information which suits himself, and I have just taken this opportunity of exposing him.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*): I just rise to express my great surprise at the attitude of my esteemed friend the hon. member for Bowen. It seems to me that he must have had a dose of sanatogen this morning—which is well known to be very good for the nerves—and is well straightened up. As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, at an earlier sitting I made some remarks when the Premier brought down his motion as to days and hours of sitting. The Opposition opposed the evening sittings, but the Premier's proposal to sit from 2.30 to 9.30 was most suitable to those of us who are country members. I am surprised at the attitude of the hon. member for Bowen, because I understood he always kept in view the desirability of a reasonable working day of eight hours. The hours we have worked are quite suitable to me. In fact, they have done me good, because I am putting on condition—(laughter)—but I say that we should support this motion. I go further, and say that, instead of meeting on Tuesday and sitting for three days—I am pleased to see that the Government are gradually coming round to my way of thinking—we should start on Monday and finish on Friday, put in our proper time, and set a good example to people outside who are subject to the provisions of certain awards. A little bit of work does nobody any harm; and, if you calculate the total time we shall work a week, even with the double days, you will find that they will not be very long. Of course, if I can help it with my little vote, there will be no "gagging."

Mr. COLLINS: What about the men who take down your speeches?

Mr. DUNLOP: My speeches are short and to the point; they contain essentials, and nothing superfluous. (Laughter.) A practice has been established that the session must finish at Christmas. I am going to oppose that for the reason that, if we cannot finish at Christmas with the assistance of the double sittings even with the eight hours a day, we can sit after Christmas.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about your correspondence?

Mr. DUNLOP: It depends on the system you adopt in connection with your

Mr. Dunlop.]

correspondence. I have a system. If the hon. member for Bowen has no system—

Mr. COLLINS: I think my system will equal yours. (Laughter.)

Mr. DUNLOP: If the hon. member will kindly come to my allotted room and see the system I have, he will realise how he may be assisted in getting through the clerical part of his work. I hope that, if the Government do not finish before Christmas, they will come back afterwards, even for a couple of months, and show the country that we are prepared to do our duty. This immemorial usage that you must finish up before Christmas is nothing to me; but I shall not pursue the subject, because I notice the Speaker has his eye on me and might pull me up if I proceed.

Mr. COOPER (*Brewer*): I am sure that, if the hon. member for Rockhampton would visit the hon. member for Bowen in his room, he would find a very fine system in reference to correspondence. I venture to say that no member has a better method than the hon. member for Bowen of filing and noting his correspondence and of keeping a diary.

Let me show how circumstances alter cases. May I quote from "Hansard" for 1926, volume 2, at page 1018, from the speech delivered by the Premier, who was then Leader of the Opposition, when [Mr. Cum.] speaking on a motion moved by the then Premier, Mr. McCormack—exactly the same motion as the one we are now discussing? The then Leader of the Opposition said—

"I called 'Not formal' to this motion last Friday because I object to sitting two days in one. In the first place, it means a curtailment of an hour and a quarter of the sitting time to which we are entitled on the Estimates, and I think it is all nonsense for the Premier to say that we are not getting on fast enough."

Further on he said—

"It means a very long sitting."

Further he said—

"I consider it is rushing. I think it is a very long day. Even the present sitting days feel pretty long before the end of the sitting, and, when we sit after tea, I do not think any advantage will be gained by the Government. In any case, a certain amount of our privileges is being taken away. We are having the day curtailed by an hour and a quarter, or two and a-half hours in two days, whereas, instead of a curtailment of time on the Estimates, there should be an increase of a few days considering the extra departments which are now being conducted by the State."

He also said—

"If the Premier had agreed to the proposition we made in the first place, of sitting in the afternoon and into the evening and endeavouring to carry out the business in that way, it would have been ever so much better."

He meant thereby that, if we had had night sittings, there would have been no need for double days. I wonder why the Premier has now changed his mind! Is it because he now realises that the late Premier had a better grip of the business of the House than the hon. gentleman had as Leader of the Opposition?

[*Mr. Dunlop.*

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I consider the request made by the hon. member for Brisbane for some information as to what days are likely to be double-sitting days is a perfectly legitimate request. I do not know whether the Deputy Leader of the Government is in a position to give that information, but it would be of great advantage to members if they could take for granted that certain days would be double days—whether they would be on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. If hon. members were possessed of that information they would be able to make their arrangements accordingly, and it would be a decided advantage to them.

As to the necessity or otherwise for sitting double days, opinions differ. I should prefer Parliament to sit for a longer period rather than that we should have the introduction of the system of double days. Many people outside this House have the impression that members of Parliament work only when the House is in session, and then only while it is sitting, but they are making a very grave mistake. I am sure that every honest and impartial member will frankly admit that much time is spent outside sitting hours by members, particularly country members and Northern members, representing constituents who have no means of communication with Brisbane except through their member, who looks after the interests of those people. Everybody knows that representatives attend to the requirements of their constituents, not only from the point of view of politics but in many other directions in order to oblige those people. An hon. member would certainly not be able to do that if the House sat double days every day during the session: it would be an utter impossibility. For that reason I have always thought it an undesirable thing to have a system of double days. It is a strain on the mental capacity to sit here from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. and follow the business of the House as it is being transacted. I know that there are members who, when they want to go down the street or go away, just merely go, but every hon. member in this Chamber could not do that. If they wanted to go outside to attend to correspondence while the House was sitting, they could do it but that would not be possible for all hon. members. There is some ground for the statement made by the hon. member for Bowen; and, as the hon. member for Brewer points out, there is a considerable difference in the ideas of hon. members opposite when sitting in opposition and their ideas to-day when sitting on the Government side of the House.

For instance, on 27th September, 1928, when this question was being discussed on a motion submitted by the late Government, the hon. member for Murilla, now Secretary for Railways, said—

"I desire to enter a most emphatic protest against the passing of this resolution. The Premier referred principally to the fact that it would mean the loss of a few hours in the discussion of the Estimates as compared with the time that would be occupied on the Estimates if seventeen single days, as provided by the Standing Orders, were allowed for discussion. That is not the main point. The main factor, from the point of view of the Opposition, is that, if we are compelled to sit here from 10.30 o'clock in the morning till 10 o'clock at night, it is

impossible for members of the Opposition to give the necessary time to other matters that are brought forward in this Chamber."

That statement was made only twelve months ago by the Secretary for Railways. Other members of the then Opposition spoke in a similar strain. The hon. member for Nundah said this—

"I very much regret that the Premier has given notice of this motion, because it is going to be a very severe strain on hon. members—especially on members of the Opposition—in carrying on public business. It seems to me that this is the result of absolutely bad management on the part of members of the Cabinet."

If that was the case twelve months ago, what is the reason for this motion to-day? Surely the same argument must apply to-day; but here is the effect, whatever the cause may be. I have quoted from the speeches of hon. members opposite to show how much credence and dependence can be paid to them when they would make such statements sitting in opposition, and then, when occupying the Government benches, act in direct opposition to the sentiments they then expressed.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Experience has probably taught them that this is right.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It is only fair that the Government should indicate when these double days are likely to take place. It would be unfair and unjust to have three double days in one week. If they would indicate that the double days would take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, it certainly would be an advantage not only to hon. members on this side of the House but to every hon. member.

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): Although it is mere waste of time to rise and oppose the motion or even debate it, I intend to oppose double sittings for health reasons, if for no other reason. I am of the opinion that sitting from 10 o'clock in the morning till 10 o'clock in the evening is much too great a strain on hon. members, especially when we have other work to perform. Two wrongs do not make a right. I believe that the Government adopted very reasonable hours for this Parliament when they decided to sit from half-past 2 o'clock in the afternoon until half-past 9 o'clock in the evening. That fact gave members ample time in the morning to attend to their correspondence and conduct their interviews with the various departments.

The TREASURER: It gives the hon. member for Bowen plenty of time.

Mr. JONES: We know that the Government will do just what they want, as we did when we occupied the Treasury benches. This gives us the opportunity of raising the question of parliamentary reform. One hon. member stated that, if Parliament met earlier in the year and transacted the business of the country in a reasonable time on each sitting day, we could get through our business without many of these limitations being placed on hon. members, and far better than when we have a rush session, compelling members to work twelve hours a day. That is not conducive to the good government of the country. That is why I oppose double sittings. I opposed double sittings when we instituted them.

Mr. KELSO: The majority rules.

Mr. JONES: It is desirable that Parliament should meet earlier so that the work to be placed before hon. members can be despatched before the hot months. The Government should indicate to the House the number of days per week on which they intend to have double sittings.

Mrs. LONGMAN (*Bulimba*): I do not rise to oppose this measure, because I am convinced that the Premier would not have considered its introduction had he not been perfectly satisfied that it was necessary. I would, however, like to offer a little advice to hon. members, if I may be allowed to do so without being accused of lecturing them. Looking at it from the woman's point of view, and speaking as one who is new to parliamentary work, I have been struck by the waste of time that goes on here.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mrs. LONGMAN: May I ask hon. members opposite, if they are so much against extra sitting hours, to hurry on the business a little, which is only common sense? Since I have been in this Chamber, I have noticed over and over again that irrelevant matter is introduced into a debate simply, it appears to me, for the sake of delaying the business. The hon. member for Paddington suggests that, for health reasons, we should not sit from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. Of course, women are used to long hours, and they do not feel that it is likely to injure their health at all to keep on for the length of time proposed—which would be an exceedingly short day for many of them. If hon. members opposite will speak on every subject and discuss things which are quite irrelevant to the subject under discussion, then the Government are obliged to take extra time to get through the business. I intend to support the motion, because I feel that it is necessary in the circumstances.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*): Perhaps the Opposition are entitled to the courtesy of a reply, and I have no hesitation in giving them one. It is intensely amusing to hear hon. members opposite protesting against something that has been the practice for years and that was initiated by themselves. The hon. member for Brisbane inquired as to the reasons which prompted the Government to take the present action. The reasons are similar to those which prompted his Government to do likewise. We want to get through the business in a reasonable time, and it will depend entirely upon hon. members opposite whether double sittings are actually held. It may be that there will be no double sittings; but that is dependent on hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Bowen protests against the motion, saying that he has no time to do his other parliamentary work, and he remarked on the "wave of insanity," as he called it, which has come over Parliament. Well, the people of Queensland will be able to judge of the insanity of hon. members opposite when they find that these hon. members are convicted out of their own mouths, seeing that they did what we propose to do now. What about the insanity that prevailed in years gone by?

Mr. COOPER: Why pick up the insanity and continue it? (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member for Bowen

Hon. R. M. King.]

brought the matter up. If he likes to condemn the Government on that ground, then it is for the people of Queensland to say whether he is right or wrong. We realise that it is not advisable to have double sittings if they can be avoided, because the best results cannot be achieved under those circumstances; but at the same time the exigencies of the times may demand that course, which will be dictated in every instance by the reasonableness or otherwise of hon. members opposite.

Reference has been made to the late date at which Parliament has been summoned to meet—

Mr. COLLINS: Isn't that quite true?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I admit it is true; but I want to tell the hon. member that it was absolutely unavoidable by reason of the fact that, when the Government took office, they found such an unholty mess that they required time to find out exactly where they stood. The delay could not be avoided. However, I do not desire to delay matters. If we can avoid double sittings, we shall do so; and it depends entirely on hon. members opposite whether it is necessary to have double sittings or not.

Question (*Mr. King's motion*) put and passed.

ALTERATION OF BUSINESS-PAPER.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), by consent, without notice, in moving—

"That the order of this House for the further consideration in Committee on Tuesday next of the Babinda State Hotel Sale Bill be rescinded, and that the Bill be placed on the business-paper for this day"—

said: Unfortunately, the resumption of the Committee was placed on the business-paper for "Tuesday next," whereas in the ordinary course of events it should have been placed on the business-sheet for the next sitting day. We desire to have the Bill on the business-sheet to-day. We are not going on with it straight away, but it will be gone on with before we reach Supply.

Mr. KIRWAN: Are you going to make it Order No. 4?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Probably Order No. 2.

Question stated.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! There can be no debate on this motion.

Question put and passed.

Mr. COLLINS: Entirely wrong—misleading the House.

The SPEAKER: Did the hon. member say that the Speaker was entirely wrong?

Mr. COLLINS: No, Mr. Speaker. I said that the proceedings were entirely wrong.

MINING TRUST LIMITED AGREEMENT RATIFICATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*): There is very little to add to what I stated at the initiatory stage of this Bill; but, for the infor-

mation of hon. members, I should like to place before the House some details in elaboration of the information that has been furnished already. It will be agreed, I am sure, by a majority of hon. members, if not by every hon. member of the Assembly, that a tract of mineral-bearing country such as Lawn Hill, which has been prospected in a more or less desultory sort of way for a period of years, should not be allowed to become dormant again, with little or no prospect of revival in the ordinary course of events. Therefore, any offer for a geological test of that area in a systematic manner for minerals should be received with serious consideration, and I think should be greeted by hon. members with open arms. Such an offer has been made, and it is proposed to give prospecting rights over an area of approximately 100,000 acres, most of which is contained in the Burketown mineral field. An agreement has accordingly been entered into to provide for certain rights and privileges being granted, with conditions attached thereto, as set out in the agreement. The Bill provides for the ratification of that agreement.

The next question is as to the bona fides of the company or the people concerned in this venture. I was questioned by hon. members opposite the other day as to who or what constituted the Mining Trust. I was very much surprised, especially with the interjections of the hon. member for Warrego, which, to my way of thinking, were not at all complimentary to the Mining Trust. I was very much surprised at the allusions made by the hon. member, more so coming from him than from any other hon. member in the House, in so far as it appears to me quite conclusively that the hon. member just allows his conscience to play "ducks and drakes" with him. You cannot express it more favourably—in other words, he not only allows but prompts his conscience to run "hot and cold" to suit the occasion. One day he is right up to boiling point and the next morning away down below zero.

Mr. BEDFORD: And then he suppresses something in a State document.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That has been the case with the hon. member for Warrego in this instance. As I said previously, he should be the last individual to object to this Bill from what I might term a special angle. I daresay you will remember, Mr. Speaker, that it is only a matter of a few weeks since that the hon. member for Warrego was running around the district squealing like an injured pig, for the simple reason that there were a certain number of leases held by certain individuals which happened to be under option to a company called the Mount Isa Company.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): Mr. Speaker, if this statement is relevant to the Bill—which it is not—I presume that I can also review the whole matter.

Mr. KERR: Wait till it comes along.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am quoting Mount Isa to show that it is the people who are running Mount Isa who want to launch out in a big way at Lawn Hill. As I was saying, these leases were held by certain individuals who had given an option to a company which was either formed or controlled by the hon. member for Warrego. From what I could read in the

[*Hon. R. M. King.*]

press, the hon. member for Warrego seemed to protest most vigorously and resent those areas having been declared forfeited. For the information of the House, I think it would be wise to allow hon. members to know why those areas were declared forfeited, to show that these people at Lawn Hill are not asking for very much more or any more than previously granted to the hon. member for Warrego without even asking for it.

Mr. BEDFORD: Paying rent.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is a certain number of these leases—I have them here, and I will just quote certain of them. We will take No. 2608, which was taken up on 7th February, 1924. As hon. members are all aware, certain labour conditions have to be complied with within a specified time.

Mr. BEDFORD: Not by me.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If those conditions are not complied with, the land is liable to forfeiture. Although they held that land for considerably over five years—

Mr. BEDFORD: They did not.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They only applied for exemption on two occasions. They got exemption for nine months. The only work done on that lease was a trench 2 feet deep and 30 feet long—probably a man would do it in two days—still they were allowed to hold that land for five years.

Mr. BEDFORD: You know that is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Some were worse. Take Nos. 2438 and 2439. Both were taken up in 1923. No. 2439 was under option to this company that is apparently controlled by the hon. member for Warrego, but it never had the courtesy even to apply for exemption. It held it in the vicinity of six years.

Mr. BEDFORD: It did not. It never held it for six months.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: So far as the evidence I can get goes, there has never been one penny piece spent on that area. It seems that that individual who the other day protested against this area being given to the Mount Isa Company—

Mr. COLLINS: You are not discussing this Bill. The same latitude should be allowed to other hon. members.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member does not show the House that he has any better grip of his subject than a blind mule has of grammar. (Government laughter.) These people are applying for a concession, but they want to be safeguarded, as it were, against the "go-getting" promoter—against what I term the "kerbstone" prospectors, who claim that they are legitimate prospectors, but who on a mining field we term "stool pigeon" prospectors. They sit on the stools of the most noted hotels waiting for a man to come along with a few pounds to spend, and when anybody of that type comes along they are down on him like a hawk and try to get him to speculate his money before they have proved the proposition. This trust wants to avoid that. It does not want to be almost black-mailed into paying huge sums of money for the right to work certain areas of land.

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, whether you are aware of it, but what happened in the case of Mount Isa is what prompted these people first of all, to declare that they would not do anything until they were granted a concession to safeguard their interests in the event of their discovering anything that was valuable enough to do it. In the case of Mount Isa there was a company called the Mount Isa Proprietary Company, and after a certain time, when the Mount Isa Mines Limited wanted to branch out on a large scale—and it is only by branching out on a large scale in these areas that it is possible to make both ends meet—what did they discover? When they wanted to get a little more land in order to enable them to branch out on the magnitude they desired, they had to give no less a sum than 125,000 one pound shares in Mount Isa to Mount Isa Proprietary Company that was formed by the hon. member for Warrego. (Opposition interjections.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Within a very short period that company disposed of its shares for no less a sum than £125,000.

Mr. BEDFORD: No.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is to avoid a recurrence of such incidents as that that these people have been forced to come to the Government to safeguard their interests, because I think every sane-minded individual in Queensland recognises the value to the State of Queensland of having Mount Isa opened up in a manner in which it is proposed to open it up.

I think everyone will agree that Mount Isa is one of the biggest mining ventures ever undertaken in Queensland, and it will be an incentive to other people to launch out elsewhere in a similar direction. It is but a short time since the Mount Isa field supported an odd "gouger" here and there; but to-day the field is supporting [11.30 a.m.] in the vicinity of 3,000 people.

over 1,100 being on the pay-sheet of the company. Mount Isa is a very valuable asset to the State of Queensland to-day, and we should endeavour to encourage these people to speculate their money rather than attempt to harass them. These people do not wish to be held up when they discover a payable field by legitimate prospecting methods and be compelled to find £125,000 to buy out people in the Lawn Hill district, as was the case in the Mount Isa district. I am led to believe that the hon. member for Warrego got no less a sum than £40,000 out of the £125,000 paid for the Mount Isa Proprietary Ltd. That was his share out of that little deal. I merely mention that to give a clear conception of the position to those who may not be able to appreciate the reason why this concession should be granted. It is the wish of these people that they shall not be held up again in this manner.

At another stage of the Bill I was asked a question relating to the constitution of the Mining Trust Ltd. It is an international company, formed in London and controlled by Englishmen. It was formed last year to acquire, amongst other things, all the assets outside Russia of the Russo-Asiatic Consolidated Ltd. There are over 20,000 shareholders in the Mining Trust Limited, which

Hon. E. A. Atherton.]

has an authorised capital of £6,000,000, a subscribed capital of £4,500,000, £1,000,000 in reserve, and £500,000 under option. The Mining Trust Limited purchased and paid for 847,690 shares in the Mount Isa Company, and has an option over a further 194,195 shares in that company. At the present time it is financing the Mount Isa Company to the extent of a further £1,000,500 for equipment. I do not think anyone can question the bona fides of the Mining Trust Limited. As hon. members know, the chairman of directors is Mr. Leslie Urquhart. I think most hon. members have met that gentleman, and everyone will agree that it is a pity that we do not have more men of the type of Mr. Urquhart casting their eyes in the direction of Queensland. If we had half a dozen Mr. Urquharts to come along and do for Queensland what Mr. Urquhart is trying to do, then everything in the garden would look a lot brighter than it is to-day. The company is asking for a five-years option over 100,000 acres, with the right to prospect in that area. The conditions are that the trust shall spend £10,000 prospecting the area within the first twelve months, and that during the next four years, if it decides to go on with the venture, it shall spend a further £90,000. That is, it is bound to spend £100,000 in the first five years if it resolves to proceed with the venture. I have seen the holders of the leases already held there. They are all properly secured.

Mr. COLLINS: How many are there?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There are fifty-nine leases. Those fifty-nine leases are all under option to the Mining Trust, and had been so for a considerable period prior to this agreement being drawn up. During the period of its option over these 100,000 acres it will be its duty to pay the rent on the fifty-nine leases for the period of five years.

Mr. KIRWAN: And not on any other part.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No, not on any other part. To be exact, the trust will pay the rent on 779 acres; but, should it decide during any period of this five years not to go on with the venture, those leases will revert to the original holders. It will be seen that these holders are amply protected against exploitation of any kind. As hon. members are aware, the Lawn Hill field was originally discovered in 1887. Since then the field has been worked in a more or less haphazard fashion. "Gaugers" have since been working there, endeavouring to carve out a living. Some of them did make an existence, but, as I previously stated on the floor of this House, the day has come when we must go in for the development of these fields on a larger and much more systematic way than has ever been attempted before in Queensland.

Mr. BEDFORD interjected.

Mr. EDWARDS: Was Carrington one of your partners in that big deal?

Mr. BEDFORD: I will tell you something directly.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: During the last few years very little work of any description has been done at Lawn Hill. In fact, for 1923 not one ounce of ore was despatched from the field. That shows that the field was really lying dormant. I think I am right in saying that for 1927 the amount

of ore despatched from the field was 247 tons only.

Mr. BEDFORD: Due more to the price of lead than to anything else.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member for Warrego keeps on interjecting about the class of prospector.

Mr. BEDFORD: I said that the fall in the price of lead was responsible for the field not being worked.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Perhaps the only occasion when the hon. member for Warrego resolved to do any real prospecting on his own account was one night when he and a gentleman named Mr. Carrington were together, but, when morning broke, the hon. member for Warrego was missing from Mr. Carrington's tent.

Mr. BEDFORD: That is as true as other statements made by you.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That was the only occasion on which the hon. member for Warrego has, to my knowledge, done anything like what I call legitimate prospecting.

Mr. COLLINS: Tell us something about clause 5.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is said that he ran like a deer that night. (Laughter.)

Mr. BUTLER: He put up a record for 100 yards.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Clause 5 reads—

"It is also hereby declared that the union of any leases as set forth in section forty-two of the Mining Act of 1898, which may be taken up and acquired pursuant to clause six of the said Agreement, shall at the option of the company be approved, which approval shall be granted subject to the provisions of the said section forty-two of the Mining Act of 1898."

There is nothing additional inserted there. Nothing at all is being put over the people. The terms of that clause are the exact terms of the Mining Act. The trust is prepared to abide by what is in the Mining Act, which provides that two adjoining leases may be united. Hon. members need have no concern, therefore, that the company does not realise its obligations.

The principal reason for giving this concession is that it has been realised that Lawn Hill has never been a "poor man's show." It is a mining field which has appeared to me to be incapable of development unless considerable capital was introduced, because it is of no advantage to the individual or to the State to continue the exploitation of that field by men whose capital is only £200 or £300, which would in all probability be lost. The Government realise that Lawn Hill will remain dormant for a very considerable period unless capital is introduced, and that has prompted the making of the agreement now being discussed. That agreement will be most beneficial not only to the district concerned but to the whole of Queensland. We realise the great value of Mount Isa not only to Queensland but to Australia. For example, a considerable quantity of machinery has been required for operations there. Cement and timber also have been required, some of which—I say, unfortunately—has been obtained from the other States.

Mr. JONES: Cement?

[Hon. E. A. Atherton.]

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not know about cement, but some of the timber has been obtained from the other States. Still, that field is a very big asset to Queensland, and, if we can establish another Mount Isa in the district covered by this Bill, then, to use a favourite expression of the ex-member for Burke, we shall be "on the pig's back." The present population of 3,000 at Mount Isa will no doubt be well over 5,000 within twelve months, but, apart from those people, there are others who derive a benefit from extensive mining operations. Indeed, I am satisfied that this Bill will go through with very little opposition. The only hon. member who seemed to resent the Bill the other day was the hon. member for Warrego, who apparently allows his conscience to run hot and cold, and is not consistent. I am sorry to say that, since I have been in this Assembly—and it is only a matter of a few weeks—my eyes have been opened to the fact that some hon. members are really not here wholly and solely in the interests of the State of Queensland, but for the individual benefit to be derived from membership of this Assembly. That is quite a wrong attitude for any hon. member to take up. If a man is not prepared to come into this Assembly and give his time, ability, and energy wholly and solely in the interests of the State, then he should take the right course and say, "I will not contest the electorate. I am not going to remain a member of Parliament."

Mr. HANLON: I hope your people on your left are listening.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: My people on the left are listening.

Mr. HANLON: That is what we are always telling them.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In 1900 a proposal was before this Chamber to build the Burketown-Lilydale railway, so that at that time the eyes of Queensland were on Lawn Hill. I do not want to mislead anyone outside this Chamber into believing that this is a low-grade proposition.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It is a very rich one.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: So it is, but, from what has been proved so far, the lodes are very small; and it is not possible to make it a payable proposition unless all these lodes are united and worked on a large scale. This field is a long way from any port. It is in the vicinity of 100 miles of Burketown, and is about 100 miles from Dobbyn, the terminus of the line from Cloncurry through Mount Cuthbert. It will be seen, therefore, that it will require a huge amount of capital to work Lawn Hill on such a scale as to enable the company to pay for the long transit.

I do not intend to labour the question. I am sure that most hon. members will welcome the Bill with open arms as I did. I trust that no concern will be caused me as to whether it will go through the House or not. I expect the Bill to go through without any opposition. I beg to move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): The Secretary for Mines has assumed that this party is against the Bill, and, from the tone of his speech, he has also assumed that it is opposed to the development of the mining industry in North Queensland by the introduction of capital.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I said the hon. gentleman was in favour of it.

Mr. JONES: I think the Minister assumes that we are opposed to this measure. When the Bill was introduced a few days ago I remarked that it would be wise to wait until we saw the agreement so that we could analyse it very carefully. It is our duty as members of Parliament to analyse that agreement and make suggestions to the Minister that may improve it. During the number of years that I was Secretary for Mines, the Government of which I was a member endeavoured in every way to encourage the introduction of English capital and the use of Australian capital to develop the mining fields of this State. We have never taken the narrow view that a limitation of areas would be a wise thing.

We have never taken the narrow view that a field is merely a "gougers'" field. Mr. Leslie Urquhart, the gentleman mentioned by the Minister, admitted that in a speech to shareholders and directors in London, as reported in the London "Times" about eighteen months ago. He said that he was thoroughly satisfied with the treatment that he had received at the hands of the Labour Government in Queensland. The meeting comprised representative members of financial institutions and mining companies. Further than that, he said that, although when he first came to Australia, he had fears with regard to industrial conditions, he was satisfied that in North Queensland the industry could be carried on harmoniously. He stated that he was satisfied with the men engaged in the industry in North Queensland, particularly at Mount Isa. I know from him personally that he is thoroughly satisfied with the treatment meted out to him by the then Labour Government. I say without fear of contradiction that I will never by a vote of mine deny the right of British capitalists to come to our country and help to populate it with a white and virile population.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think you misinterpreted my thought. I said that I did not expect one member to vote against it.

Mr. JONES: If we were in power and this offer were made to me as Secretary for Mines, I would very likely accept it, probably asking for some slight amendment of the agreement. When we were in power, we encouraged the development of the mining industry on a big scale.

Mr. BEDFORD: Probably caucus would have thrown it out.

Mr. JONES: Probably caucus would have thrown it out.

Mr. BEDFORD: Then you would not have had anything to say about it.

Mr. JONES: Caucus did not throw out the same provision in the Petroleum Act. I have yet to learn that the Labour Party stands for any restriction in the development of the State. When I introduced a Bill in 1927 to amend the Petroleum Act of 1923, I laid

Mr. Jones.]

down the principle of the geological and geophysical survey of large areas of land prior to testing by deep drilling. In the 1927 Act—and caucus approved of it, let me remind the hon. member who interjects—we laid down the principle of allowing 100 square miles for a period of three years to be geophysically or geologically surveyed prior to taking up the ordinary permit of 10,000 acres under the principal Act. I think it is a good principle to adopt in certain areas of Queensland. We should encourage anybody who is willing to go out. I do not say that it should apply to places like Gympie, or, so far as petroleum is concerned, at Roma or Longreach, where something has been proved, but it is a good principle to encourage the development of our far-away fields by allowing an area larger than that which is laid down in the Mining Act.

Mr. BEDFORD interjected.

The TREASURER: There is evidently a breach in the party.

Mr. JONES: There is no breach in the party, but we are broad-minded men, and we differ on many subjects. Under the Petroleum Act we certainly made it wide enough for anybody who could make out a case. In this case it could not be done under the Mining Act. I admit that it could not be done by the Minister, because the Mining Act does not provide for its being done. The Act places a limit on a mining lease of 150 acres. That is the area for which anyone may apply. It is worth suggesting—I have considered it very seriously—that we should give some very careful consideration to putting a section in the Mining Act to deal with a case similar to this, so that the Minister would not have to come to Parliament with an agreement of this kind but would have power in such cases to grant an area larger than 150 acres on a distant field.

At 11.55 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Roberts, *East Toowoomba*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. JONES: We should know—we on this side do know—that the Lawn Hill field is so situated that no company or trust would take up so small an area as the maximum of 150 acres allowed under the Act and spend a lot of money on developing it. That is where the Minister may be right so far as this agreement is concerned. Lawn Hill is so situated that it does require large capital to test and develop it; and I venture the opinion that it will also require a railway. It is 110 miles from Burketown. I have been twice on the field, and the mines are not all huddled together in an area of 150 acres. I have been down practically every shaft or hole in the ground at Lawn Hill, and on one day when we went round the various mines I remember we registered 65 miles by motor car, so that 150 acres would not cover them all. I am not one of those who are opposed to the ratification of this agreement, which will permit of the expenditure of big capital, and will help those who wish to develop that portion of the State. The Lawn Hill ore has gone as high as 90 per cent. lead, as I pointed out a few days ago. Some of it is a bit low in silver values, but it is very rich lead ore. The reason for one of my missions to Lawn Hill—I took a geologist

[Mr. Jones.

from the staff with me—was to try to get the Lawn Hill ore for smelting at Chillagoe. We were successful in making arrangements for that purpose. I loaned £1,500 to one person to enable him to purchase a big tractor to cart the ore to Burketown; but, although the ore showed such high values as 70 per cent., 80 per cent., or 90 per cent. lead, it did not pay because the transportation and lighterage charges to get it to Chillagoe killed it. The only way in which Lawn Hill will be of value to this State and the mining community will be by the expenditure of very large capital, treatment on the field, and by building a railway. But that is another question. It may come up again, and it may be debated whether the railway should go from Burketown or from Mount Isa through Camooweal. Again I say that we personally know the Mount Isa Company. The Minister has given us the names of the trust, for which we were justified in asking, because we want to do things with our eyes open. We know Mr. Urquhart and the wonderful development that has taken place at Mount Isa, and we hail him with delight. We know that he has done some work for Queensland, and probably some good for the people overseas whom he represents.

[12 noon]

The Minister made some reference to the forfeiture of leases. The agreement provides that the trust shall pay the rent on the lease, mining tenement, or holding due by the leaseholder and affected by this agreement. On another stage of the Bill I asked the Minister if he had made provision for the protection of those who held mining tenements. Now it appears that all these mining leases, tenements, or other forms of holding—I think the Minister said they are fifty-nine in number—must be under option to the trust. We should protect the small man as well as give every encouragement for the development of the industry generally. Presumably the holders of the small leases are satisfied, otherwise they would not have given options over their holdings to the company. I want to remind the Minister that during my twelve years as Secretary for Mines the Government adopted a policy of leniency in the matter of the forfeiture of leases. Whether that was right or wrong, or whether the Minister differs from me or not, I did not arbitrarily forfeit one mining lease during my term as Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There must be a limit to your leniency.

Mr. JONES: In most cases they were forfeited voluntarily. We should insist—this is a matter for local administration—that application be made for exemption from labour conditions. I know of one coalmining lease held in the Bowen district where four years elapsed before any application was made for exemption from labour conditions. They could have made out the best possible case. They were fined £100, and were very lucky to get out of the position by payment of that amount, because the department had been deprived of £118 in fees. Although we imposed the maximum fine provided under the Act, the department actually lost £18. However, the department always did regard the question of forfeiting leases with leniency, because very many men who take up leases deserve consideration. There is no analogy between a limitation in area imposed in respect of Mount Isa and the

question of taking up land under this agreement. Mount Isa was discovered by two or three men—they were not of the type of Mr. Urquhart—but others rushed out to Mount Isa and tried to grab up the whole of the country, to the detriment of the small men who had prospected the field. The Government intervened and imposed a limit on the area of leases that could be held by one man. Why should a trust, or a company, or a person who has a faster motor car than someone else have an advantage over the "gouger" who cannot travel so fast on horseback? Why should he be given the opportunity to grab up the whole of the country that he has not discovered? Mount Isa was discovered by two genuine prospectors, and they informed their mates; but, before their mates had time to put in applications, one person went out and grabbed up the whole of the area. It was at that stage that the Government intervened, and the small man benefited thereby. These small holders did a certain amount of prospecting work, and, after they had developed a lode or opened out a lode, they gave an option over their leases and eventually the leases passed into the hands of one big concern that could develop the property. It is a good thing that that has been so.

Mount Isa would be a failure to-day—the hon. member for Warrego will agree with me—as a "gouger" district. The Government to which I belonged until a few months ago had the vision, anyhow, to build a railway to Mount Isa. We looked upon the question from a statesmanlike point of view, and encouraged much capital to develop that field which is going to do so much in the future for North Queensland. In other words, we tried to develop the mining industry in a bigger way than was attempted hitherto. I believe we have reached a stage in mining in Australia when big capital is required to work it, and when we shall have to look upon mining as a big industry rather than as an industry providing employment for one or two men under a prospector's existence, or as providing a bare living for those men who mine and send ore away for treatment at long distances. Taking into consideration the price of the lead and the difficulty of transport, I venture to say that it would not pay to send ore from Lawn Hill to Port Kembla or the Chillagoe State smelting works when they are opened.

Clause 4 of the Bill reads—

"It is hereby declared that the company is, and was at all material times, fully empowered and authorised to enter into the said agreement.

"Moreover, such company is hereby authorised, if necessary, from time to time to make any amendment of or addition to its memoranda and articles of association which may be deemed necessary and expedient so to do by the company in that behalf."

The House should be aware, and probably the Minister, either in Committee or at a later stage, may give us some information regarding that clause. We want to know what extra power the company may get, or what extra concessions it may receive by an alteration of articles of association under this agreement. To me the clause is ambiguous. According to the company law, it may be necessary to have some such paragraph in the agreement or in the Bill. However, I leave that point to the Minister in

the hope that he will give hon. members some information before the Bill goes through.

Mention has been made of clause 5. As I read that clause—the Minister may correct me if I am wrong, but I believe my interpretation of it is correct—I do not see any danger in it. My interpretation of the clause is that, if the trust takes up a number of mining leases now existent or on the land over which they may prospect, those leases automatically become united—not by application to the Minister in the usual way, but upon payment of a fee of £10 10s. I believe this clause permits the company automatically to unite the leases until the maximum area allowed under the Mining Act is reached. Will this clause give the company the right to amalgamate all its leases irrespective of the area? In other words, will the company have the right to amalgamate or unite all its leases and hold an area over and above the maximum area permitted under the Mining Act? Personally, I do not think it does.

Clause 5 reads—

"It is also hereby declared that the union of any leases as set forth in section forty-two of the Mining Act of 1898, which may be taken up and acquired pursuant to clause six of the said agreement, shall at the option of the company be approved, which approval shall be granted subject to the provisions of the said section forty-two of the Mining Act of 1898."

There is just a fear that that may give a right to unite leases over and above the maximum area required under the Mining Act.

Regarding the agreement generally, Government members should understand that we realise the effect of the provisions of this agreement. Personally, I am giving a general support to the Bill, with the right, if necessary, to improve the agreement when it comes to be considered in Committee. Of course, I realise the difficulty of amending an agreement once it is made, although the agreement provides that it shall be ratified by this Parliament. If the general principles of the agreement are altered, it might be difficult to secure acceptance of it by the London principals of the Trust. At the same time, I hope the Minister will realise that this should not be approached from any party angle. I would not like to do anything that would prevent the expenditure of money in the development of the mining industry in North Queensland, but surely that should not prevent us from examining this agreement with the closest scrutiny and suggesting amendments which may meet with the approval of the Trust. The Opposition have given some consideration to this agreement, so that we are not "pulling our own legs" in the matter. The agreement provides for the expenditure of £10,000 in one year in geological investigation and prospecting. Prospecting is by diamond-drilling, surface prospecting, geophysical methods, etc. although it does not appear to me that the trust will use geophysical methods for prospecting as it evidently prefers the diamond-drilling. The Minister says that the agreement is for five years, but, as a matter of fact, it is for ten years. In the first year the trust must spend £10,000, and after that the expenditure

Mr. Jones.]

is just the sum of money that geologists of the company may recommend to the trust. Taking a hypothetical case, the geologists may recommend the expenditure of £5 or £10 per year under the strict reading of this agreement. That, of course, would be absurd. We know that big mining men would not waste time in trying to hold up any proposition in Queensland by not expending money. Still, under the agreement this land can be held for five years by the expenditure of the first £10,000. Whether Mr. Urquhart would agree to an expenditure of £10,000 per annum is another question; he may not want that restriction placed upon the trust. In my opinion, if it spends the first £10,000, and it is satisfied, as it should be in the first year from the geologists who are brought here, it will spend that £100,000 for the first five years. If it proves to the satisfaction of the Minister that it has spent £100,000 in the development of that area, then it has to be given an extension of five years for further development.

At 12.16 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. JONES: We quite understand the possibility, and we have really to rely on the bigness of the men forming that company and their desire to do something for Australia as well as for themselves. I have sense enough to know that no trust would hold down Lawn Hill or any other large field, for a period of five years without doing something with it. At the same time the agreement does give the opportunity of expending only £10,000 in the first year and very little afterwards. It will all depend on whether the geologists recommend the expenditure of a fair sum of money or whether the whole thing be abandoned. I am pleased to know that the men who hold the leases at the present time will be protected. Possibly it would be wise to have a further agreement, and I should like some information in regard to the agreement made by the trust with the men who already hold mining tenements. If they are satisfied with the conditions and with the payment they are to receive for their leases, well and good. The trust will hold these areas during the time they are prospecting the field and will hand them back if they do not exercise their opinion. It would be interesting to know what these men are getting. Does the Minister know? The trust may not have informed him. I think we should know the nature of the agreement under which these tenements are allowed to be held by the trust. Speaking for myself, I cannot see very much danger in the agreement, and if it will encourage the mining industry, as I believe it will, knowing the gentleman forming the trust, then it should receive support. Lawn Hill is a beautiful place. The climatic conditions are much better than at Mount Isa. At Lawn Hill there are greater facilities in every way except as to the value of the ore. Mount Isa has nothing to recommend it except the value of the ore. Lawn Hill has a beautiful water supply and is beautiful country. While I am in the House I shall never vote or speak against the development of Queensland, which is my native State. If we are to populate Queensland as it should be populated, then it will be done only through the mining industry. Mining will be the forerunner of land settlement in that area. As the hon. member for Bowen

knows, some of the best land in Queensland is to be found on the Gregory River and on Lawn Hill. Within 17 miles of Mount Isa you get into good sheep and grazing country also some splendid agricultural country, and I consider it to be my duty, as one member of this Assembly, to support this Bill and when we get into Committee I shall probably make some suggestions for improving the agreement.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): I echo the sentiment of the hon. member for Paddington that he would do anything for the development of the country. It is for that reason that I oppose this Bill, which is one which is eminently qualified to burke development. If there were no other reason, the lame and impotent defence of it by the Minister would be sufficient. My reasons for general opposition to it is that, in the first place, it is wholly opposed to public interest, seeing that there is in existence in Queensland already one of the most liberal Mining Acts in the world; and secondly, I oppose it particularly by reason of the personnel of the company to whom this concession is to be given. Taking the Bill itself, I am very glad that the Minister spoke with great irrelevancy, because it permits me to review and correct some of the wild statements he made. In reading clause 3 of the agreement I see it is stated that there shall be an area of 100,000 acres. Under the ordinary mining conditions that would represent a rent of £50,000 a year. The ordinary tenements or leases now in existence are to be protected; the concessionaires have already options over them. Then the agreement goes on in a loose way. The agreement is in favour of the concessionaires, and all against the Government. Subparagraph (a) of paragraph 5 of the agreement states that the company shall—

“As soon as possible after the passing of the Act mentioned in clause (1) hereof appoint and send to the said land a specially selected geological party properly equipped with all necessary plant, tools, and appliances.”

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss the clauses of the Bill in detail. He must discuss the principles of the Bill.

Mr. BEDFORD: I must not discuss the agreement?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member can discuss the agreement but not the clauses in detail.

Mr. BEDFORD: There is nothing in this agreement by which any onus is put on the company at all. They have to commence operations as soon as possible—they being the judges of time—and twelve months after they have arrived on the ground they must furnish certain particulars and incur some expenditure unless they are prevented by some explainable circumstances, of which they are to be the judges. At the end of that time they must spend £10,000, amounting to 2s. per acre, and for that they are going to get this area locked for five years. It is just as well to remember that, for the purpose of marketing, this field is worth more than it was in 1927. Mount Isa was established in 1923 and dragged a very slow course towards production, because they will not be producing for another two years, which will mean eight years after discovery. At the same time, Jervoise Range, 240 miles to the south-west of Mount Isa, will probably, by that time, have prepared the

[*Mr. Jones.*]

London market for a tremendous marketing scheme such as this. Everybody knows that the whole course of large areas being handed over anywhere in the world, especially in new countries, has been disastrous to the people handing them over and the people who put money into them. For example, the Chartered Company of Rhodesia resulted in a failure of millions of pounds. The British Government had to give it away and then take it back again and return some of the capital to the people who should never have been in it. It may be stated in round terms that the agreement under this Bill is all for the benefit of the concessionaires and not for the Government. The action of the Government in handing over these areas under such a loose agreement as this is made worse by the people to whom it is to be given.

The Minister stated that this company wanted this area so that they would not have to pay for the property as they had to pay on the Mount Isa field. I thoroughly agree with that. The reason why the Mount Isa Proprietary Company came into existence is this: A number of prospectors on the field who had known me twenty or twenty-five years before, would not do business with Mount Isa Mines, Limited, under any circumstances, having known them previously.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I would not contradict you, but I would not believe you.

Mr. BEDFORD: It does not matter what the hon. gentleman believes. These facts can be substantiated by my fellow directors, Mr. Joe Millican, late of E. D. Miles and Company, of Charters Towers, and Mr. V. J. Sadler, chairman of the Silvertown Tramway Company, and they are men of immeasurably finer standing than the Secretary for Mines will ever be. These prospectors would not sell to Mount Isa Mines, Limited, but they put their leases under option to me at £25,000, and a group of my friends put up the necessary money for development. We spent £27,000 on the show. Before I secured the option and these men had told the Mount Isa Mines, Limited, on the field that they would do business with me and nobody else—because they had had a square deal from me twenty years before, since when they had not seen me—the Isa mines representative came to me and offered me £5,000 to turn over the options. I said, "I want to see them, because if they are good enough I will make my usual mistake—or it may be not a mistake this time—and see what is in the cellar." I was never a scrip hawker. If a mine looked good at 200 feet, I wanted to see what it looked like at 300 feet—and generally fell in and lost money. I went up to the field and looked at the options, and eventually we formed a company. The Mount Isa Mines, Limited, immediately afterwards offered £35,000, but we told them, "We are still going to see what is in the area." By-and-by we saw that the value was there, although while the other company was getting down to 150 feet we were down to 600 feet with drills. We proved the Ibus-Black Star lode at 600 feet as being 230 feet wide. We were not getting in the way of development, as the Minister so charitably mentioned. We were repaid for having done development already and it proved that there was something like 500,000 tons of ore for every 100 feet of sinking. Mount Isa Mines, Limited, offered £130,000. The time was up and we had spent £27,000.

We were pushed for capital and were in danger of not getting it, because if we put out our reserve shares the Isa mines would bear our stock and we would not have been able to sell even to shareholders, because if 5s. shares were offered to shareholders and the market was 4s. nobody would take them up. I was supposed to be dying of pneumonia, but the idea of letting these people get this property cured me. While they were doing this in Sydney they were also offering the prospectors on the field an extra £10,000 if they would break our option, which would give them the property for £35,000. So, although I was supposed to be dying of pneumonia, I thought it would be better to be dead than let them have it. I went to the field with only £14,000 to get the £25,000, but I paid the £14,000 and got an extension of three months for the payment of the balance by paying some hearty interest. Then, seeing that the game was up, the company paid us £125,000 in shares. I regard that as being absolutely a gift to them. If ever any man was against the sale it was I. It was pointed out to me by my colleagues that they knew my reputation for holding on to a property—

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: When you were clerking on the "hill."

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr. BEDFORD: The hon. gentleman never heard of me before, because I never move among the "paddy-snatchers." The whole thing in this affair comes down to this: We then having got about £125,000 in shares did not, as the Minister says, sell them for £1 a share. We held them, or most of them, until they were £2 a share and if it will give the Minister any greater shock to know that we got double what he thought, then I present him with the shock. Not wishing to get out of the field and on the advice of Mr. Dunstan and Mr. Saint Smith we decided that the mine on the eastern side of the field, the flood plain of the Leichhardt River on which the out-crops had been broken down by floods and covered with alluvium, we considered this would be an excellent field for a systematic campaign of drilling. The Minister tried to mislead the House by saying that we held some of these leases for six years. We did not start to get them until two months before Christmas and they were 1 acre, 2 acres, 5 acres, and 10 acres, and so on, valueless in themselves but for a big drilling campaign probably valuable in the mass. The Mount Isa Consolidated Syndicate took these options and put in an application for a union of the lease. That is the reason why exemptions were not applied for. In February this year the Commissioner for Railways told me that the department required certain service rights for railway purposes. We said, "Certainly, take them, but the only thing is we want to reserve the right to drill in the station yard or as close to the permanent-way as we please, subject to safety." They agreed to that and asked if we required compensation. We said no, but that we wanted the right to be allowed to drill in the station yard or near the permanent-way. I met the chairman of the Mount Isa Mines, and said, "I am told by the Railway Department that you propose to come over to the east side with your works. We have already commenced our survey of boring lines on the advice of Mr. Saint Smith and Mr. Dunstan, and if you

Mr. Bedford.]

want anything you had better say it quickly before we make our arrangements." They did not take the offer of course, and having then in charge of Mount Isa Mines a Mexican from Connecticut, they decided to "jump" the leases. After the pumping and when they got to Brisbane they discovered that the Mines Department had not forfeited a lease in fifteen years. It was then arranged partly through the Crown Law Office that some arrangement should be made whereby they should get 15 acres of surface rights and we should continue the mining rights within 60 feet of the surface. We then met to decide as to the proper compensation. They offered £750 and said they wanted only 15 acres. I said, "Why did you try to jump 150 acres?" At any rate I asked them to say something which would not make me laugh too much, and with that the conversation ended. I went away to the elections which turned out in a deplorable way as you see—with all those singularly unfortunate gentlemen on the front benches. I still did not believe that any Government could be so blind to the interests of small people and blind to the necessity for developing the deposits in this flooded plain which Isa Mines said were valueless and which now are dead for prospecting and will never be prospected, because they have got into the hands of these people. We met again and they asked what was the value due on the 15 acres. Now, we already had our agreements drawn up to transfer the whole of the property of the syndicate. We could not take away the surface rights and transfer the subterranean. The whole lot was to be transferred to the company, and this company to sell those surface rights.

Mr. CLAYTON: What is the name of the syndicate?

Mr. BEDFORD: The secretary is S. N. Griffith, 115 Pitt street, Sydney, from whom all information can be obtained. They then said to us, "What is the figure you will take for that 15 acres?" I pointed out this fact—that a lode half as big as the Ibus or the Star could be hidden in 15 acres; that if they were putting down 5 or 10 acres of buildings it would mean that the development of the subterranean area would be so much the more expensive. I asked for the £6,000 to be paid to the credit of the company's working capital. They did not refuse that. They said, "We must communicate with London"—or Moscow, or somewhere else, and went away. The next thing I heard of was the new Government being in power. I met the Secretary for Mines, and he told me that the Government also wanted me to come to an agreement with the company and advised me to go to Sydney and see the directors of the Mount Isa Company. I had written to him this letter—

"More than six months ago, my company—the Mount Isa Consolidated—secured options on certain mineral leases at Mount Isa to the east of the Mount Isa mines area, and west of the Leichhardt River. This area is covered with alluvium with occasional outcrops of gossan.

"Mr. Dunstan, Government Geologist, reported on this area: 'The Louisa group of leases is on the eastern side of the Mount Isa main line of lode and undoubtedly is an area of disturbance running parallel with the main Isa belt. It is subject to cross-faults and other

movements, as in the main Isa belt, has silver-lead ore in some of the outcrops, and has many peculiarities in common with the main deposits. Probably the influence of the main or channel will be more pronounced on the east and west of the positions of the main lode, which are highly ore-bearing, and the situation of the leases on the east side are in a position opposite to the rich Beech Rock area, and incomparable in position with the Ibus-Black Star belt on the west side. There will undoubtedly be ore values in the Louisa group, not only in the hard, conspicuous ironstone and ribbon-stone outcrops, but in the intermediate soft shales between these, which in other parts of the field have proved to be highly mineral-bearing.

"Prospecting the ground with a diamond drill seems to be the best means of testing the lodes for values."

I went on to relate these facts which I have already told non. members, and said—

"The areas we have are not particularly favourable for ordinary methods of prospecting, and exploration by diamond drill is plainly suggested. The area was unwanted by anybody and we have consolidated it, on the advice of the geologists quoted, for an exhaustive boring campaign. Mount Isa Mines Ltd. is quite surprised that we do not hurry off our own property, properly acquired, as soon as they express a wish to have it. In the furtherance of that design, they affect to believe that the area is valueless for prospecting, but we prefer the opinion of Australian geologists whose knowledge of the field is greater than that of these imported men.

"Having attempted to jump 150 acres, they now say they want the surface rights of 15 acres only. But 3 acres covered from prospecting may mean missing a valuable ore-deposit, and our own opinion is that any encroachment will be to our disadvantage.

"The retiring Minister, Mr. Jones, wishing to help Mount Isa Mines Ltd., without injustice to us, asked me to confer with Mount Isa Mines representatives, and this I did—stating, at their request, a price which we know to be reasonable."

As a matter of fact, we had already told them that we did not want to have anything to do with them, or to be obstructed or interfered with by them, no matter how much money they had. The position with Mount Isa was that they had been throwing money away like a drunken sailor and are still continuing to do so. They erected large numbers of buildings on the north-east side of the area, and as soon as they had done so, commenced pulling them down again and re-erecting them on the south and west side of the area. Apparently a great deal of this wasteful expenditure was not to be noticed so long as they could steal from the property of some other person for nothing. Take, for instance, a case which occurred over a year ago when a warden named Knyvett was in Cloncurry. A girl in Cloncurry put up a "tenner" in a little 10-acre block and was holding on to it. No one could say that she was a prospector. Everybody knows she would not do anything except it was done in the way of a consolidation. In the case of this area, when Draper, I

[Mr. Bedford.]

think his name was—the Mexican from Connecticut—was talking to Knyvett he said, "We want that block. I wonder how much they will want for it." Mr. Knyvett, with that habit that some public servants have of "kowtowing" to big money and caring nothing for the smaller people, said, "Don't pay for it at all; apply for forfeiture and you will get it." Similarly, the same thing would have been done with us.

Mr. JONES: The lease held by that girl was not forfeited. It is just as well to say so.

Mr. BEDFORD: I did not know what happened to it. I know we never had it. During the Labour regime there was never a lease forfeited. There can be no doubt that my statement was correct, for here are photographs of the requisition for fifteen acres by McCrea, the chairman of directors of Mount Isa. Following on that, the last interview with them was that they would consider cabling to London. At the beginning they were to continue on the western side, where they had planned their smelters and built large numbers of houses for the reception of a staff. It was only at the last moment they decided to go on to the east side, and apparently their idea—fresh as they were from Russia and other places—was that the Australians were to be pushed off the earth if they wanted that land. Following on this I had this interview with the Secretary for Mines, who quite naturally expressed a wish to get the matter cleaned up. I told him I would go to Sydney the next day and confer. Probably they thought this was a good time to get to it while I was away. I waited in Sydney a week, they having promised to fix up an interview. Having put me off from day to day, at the end of that time they said that really there was no necessity for a meeting at all. But in the meantime it was being told to our friends that Mr. Macartney, the solicitor for the Isa Mines Company, was to be Agent-General and that Isa Mines could get anything it wanted. It is a fact that on the following Tuesday—I came back to Brisbane immediately, but the Minister had gone North on the Monday—at the same Executive meeting which forfeited these areas, none of which was our property but was optioned to us and belonged to a lot of little people, Mr. Macartney was appointed Agent-General. These are the facts so far as this particular business is concerned on which mud has been attempted to be thrown, and I thank the mud-thrower for the opportunity of having been able to give a plain and unvarnished statement of the whole thing. I oppose this Bill because in the first place it is too much against the Government and too much in favour of the concessionaires. In the second place, the people to whom it is to be given have already got too much in this country, are land-poor, and cannot develop the area as they should because they have 600 acres of ore-bearing country and it is not sufficient for the State that they should develop it at a rate that will give that field a life of 100 or 200 years. It would be much better for the present generation and would be for the benefit of Queensland if half a dozen companies were operating on it. Seeing that they are not only land-poor but are so slow in their methods that they will not be producing until eight years after the discovery of the field, I think the House—although it will not do anything of the sort—should take into con-

sideration the advisability of confining the energies of these people to where they are at present.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): One would think, after listening to the hon. member for Warrego, that he was sorry he did not get in on this deal as he did on the other deals.

Mr. BEDFORD: I never said anything of the sort. I would not be found dead with them.

Mr. KELSO: The late Secretary for Mines made a very reasonable speech, and I think his speeches on mining matters always have been reasonable.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: He is more reasonable than you are.

Mr. KELSO: It does not matter about me. The hon. member for Paddington delivered a very fair speech this morning. The hon. member for Warrego has an awful set on concessionaires and marketeers.

Mr. BEDFORD: Have you got a pain?

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member will have a pain by the time I have finished with him. (Government laughter.) The hon. member talks about concessionaires and marketeers, and wants us to believe that he is a Simon Pure.

Mr. BEDFORD: I don't want you to think anything of the sort.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member has put up such a pitiful tale that one would think, if you examined his shoulders, it would be found that he was growing a couple of wings. The statements made by the hon. member in self-defence are all right from his point of view, but there are other facts in connection with the Mount Isa Company, and more especially with the subsidiary company known as the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead, Limited, that this House should know something about, and I am going to give the facts of the matter and not fanciful statements. I shall give facts that can be verified. In August, October, and December 1923, six leases were taken up at Mount Isa—"Out on Her Own," "Mount Argule," "Ibas," "Durham Angel," "Even Break," and "Only Chance."

On 9th February, 1924, Mr. Randolph Bedford notified the Mines Department that he had "taken over" these leases.

On 2nd April, 1924, the Secretary of Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead, Limited, notified the Mines Department that his company had, by assignment from Randolph Bedford, M.L.A., secured options to purchase these leases.

Mr. BEDFORD: So far this is no hanging matter.

Mr. KELSO: The sting of my speech will be in the tail.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (to Mr. Bedford): You ought to be shot.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I rise to a point of order. I desire to know if the Secretary for Railways is in order in saying that an hon. member on this side ought to be shot.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I withdraw that, and say he should not be shot. (Laughter.)

Mr. KELSO: On 8th November, 1924, Randolph Bedford notified the Mines Department that Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead,

Mr. Kelso.]

Limited, had exercised its options to purchase the leases.

On 12th November, 1925, an Act was passed in the Queensland Parliament authorising the construction of a railway in the interests of Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead, Limited, and Mount Isa Mines, Limited. There was an agreement dated 22nd February, 1924, registered in Sydney, which discloses the fact that Randolph Bedford agreed to sell Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead, Limited, the above leases, and that the consideration he received was £2,500 in cash and 60,000 shares in the company of a value of £15,000, making a total of £17,500.

Mr. BEDFORD: I blush at my own moderation.

Mr. KELSO: I am very pleased that up to the present the hon. member agrees with me. Now we have something interesting. This company was registered in Sydney, and records in Sydney disclose that the shareholders in Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead, Limited, included Edward Granville Theodore, William McCormack, John Wren, of Melbourne—(laughter)—Kathleen Marshall (care of Henry Marshall, who was then Under Secretary for Mines—

Mr. BEDFORD: I gave those shares to friends.

Mr. KELSO: The shareholders also include Robert A. Dunlop, who was then warden at Cloncurry, where the mines are situated. If my memory serves me right, this Mr. Dunlop also figured in Chillagoe.

Mr. BEDFORD: Those shares were given him by Corbould. I gave Theodore his shares, and McCormack his shares.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member will be wise to hold his tongue, because every time he opens his mouth he gives the show away. I have a little more to say.

On 19th April, 1926, the leases were transferred by Mount Isa Mines Silver Lead Limited to Mount Isa Mines Limited, the consideration received being 125,000 shares of £1 each in the latter company, including 5,000 shares for ore at grass, plant, and machinery.

Mr. BEDFORD: Too little.

Mr. KELSO: It is important to compare this consideration of £125,000 which Mount Isa Proprietary Silver Lead Limited received with the £17,500 which it gave for the leases.

Mr. BEDFORD: We proved millions of pounds worth of ore in the meantime.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member has given his explanation of the matter; but I would remind hon. members that in 1925 there was a Bill passed through this Chamber to authorise the construction of a railway to Mount Isa, in consideration for which the Mount Isa Mines Limited and the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver Lead Limited were to perform certain construction work. Now we begin to see exactly what the position is. If it had not been for that railway being built these properties would have been worth hardly anything. As a result of this arrangement being made, I have no hesitation in saying that the shares of the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver Lead Limited shot up to £125,000.

Mr. BEDFORD: £250,000.

The SPEAKER: Order!

[Mr. Kelso.

Mr. KELSO: Look at the names I have given. What a beautiful party! The hon. member for Warrego has the audacity to stand up here and talk about profiteers and concessionaires. Is it not plain that the hon. member is annoyed because he wanted to be in this later scheme? It is plain to hon. members with any intelligence.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Did the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver Lead Limited get any mining concession?

Mr. BEDFORD: No.

Mr. KELSO: Two years afterwards when all the shareholders of the smaller companies were merged into the larger Mount Isa Company we find the Mount Isa Company approached the Government for certain concession as regards haulage. That I think is an enormous advantage for anybody to get. The Government of the day at the head of which was Mr. McCormack, the Premier, who was then a large shareholder, gave the Mount Isa Mines Limited a certain concession. This concession was given at the expense of the country. I say that Mungana is only a trifle compared with the concession given by these men who ought to have protected the public purse of Queensland. It is one of the biggest scandals that have ever been perpetrated. I am informed that it is impossible to gauge the value of the concession made because it was over a series of years. Probably up to the present time the Mount Isa Company with this concession has been benefited to the extent of £250,000.

Mr. BEDFORD: You want to be told you are only humorous.

Mr. KELSO: On two different occasions our leader when we were in Opposition endeavoured to get certain information in regard to Chillagoe but we were "bluffed off." We know that in regard to Mungana we had a full discussion. Two Ministers who ought to have protected the public of Queensland actually bought on behalf of the Government a worthless mine for £40,000 and cut up the melon among themselves.

We know that Mr. Theodore is "stumping" Australia at the present time in the interests of democracy. He says he is burning with a desire to do something for the people of Australia, and that he wants a certain Government to be put out. Mr. McCormack, the late Premier, is now in England, and he gave away certain concessions to the Mount Isa Company which the people of Queensland will have to pay for. We have another gentleman, Mr. John Wren, mentioned here. I do not need to talk about John Wren. We all know John Wren. Then we have something which needs explanation, and probably the hon. member for Warrego can tell us how it was that a certain lady named Marshall, wife of Henry Marshall, held some of these shares.

Mr. BEDFORD: I do not know anything about him.

Mr. KELSO: I understand that that gentleman was Under Secretary for Mines. He is not now in the department.

Mr. JONES: He was a most honourable man.

Mr. KELSO: Evidently these shares were held by the wife of a public servant, who at that time was Under Secretary for Mines. (Interruption.) Why, the whole thing is a

job, although the hon. member would have this House to believe that he is dead against concessions such as the Bill the Minister for Mines has brought forward in order to develop the country. The share register in Sydney discloses the fact that the following shares in Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited, were obtained, by allotment, by the following:—

Randolph Bedford	48,250
Eric Bedford	200
Mary Bedford	500
Florio Bedford	200

Of course, we all know that the hon. member for Warrego was only holding a large number of those shares in trust for other people.

Mr. BEDFORD: You are giving away the country's property. Will you say that it was wrong to give them to my family?

Mr. KELSO: Another most interesting feature I want to discuss is the way this company got out of income tax that was due. The company was wound up and it appears that the Commissioner of Taxes assessed it on the difference between what it paid and what it got.

Mr. BEDFORD: You are talking of Isa South. You do not know your job.

Mr. KELSO: The amount which would have been received under the ordinary Income Tax Act would have been considerable, but the plea was put up that this was a developmental company. That was accepted by the Commissioner, who, however, referred the matter later on to the Crown Law Office. The Crown Solicitor said he did not think that it was a developmental company, and the Commissioner made a demand on the company, which at that time had been liquidated. There were no assets.

Mr. BEDFORD: That is untrue. The liquidation has not closed.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KELSO: The Commissioner sued the liquidator for the amount and got judgment, which still exists.

Mr. BEDFORD: They appealed.

Mr. KELSO: There were no assets.

Mr. BEDFORD: There are £25,000 worth of shares in the hands of the liquidator. What are you talking about?

Mr. KELSO: The shareholders have got away with a profit of approximately £100,000 and that income tax is still owing. (Uproar.) I hope that the Attorney-General will find some means—personally I think that a debt due to the Crown continues and the liability is on the individual members of the company—of getting that £11,000 of income tax that should have been paid by this company. I hope he will follow it up and that he can make each individual shareholder responsible for the amount.

Mr. BEDFORD: Well, you cannot.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member in his statement tried to make out that everything was fair and aboveboard.

Mr. BEDFORD: So it is.

Mr. KELSO: For my part I consider it is one of the biggest scandals in the history of Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS (*Rowen*): Before proceeding to deal with the report of the Commission, however, I wish to dissociate myself entirely from anything that has been mentioned by the hon. member for Nundah. My character is pretty well known throughout Queensland, and I defy anyone to say that I have done anything wrong in any transaction that has ever taken place.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[2 p.m.]

Mr. COLLINS: I am safe in saying that my party as a party stand for the truth, no matter how unpleasant it may be at the time. We have not only to look to the present, but we must also look to the future.

Mount Isa has been frequently mentioned this morning, and I take it that the Mount Isa mining field is to some extent linked up with the proposal covered by the Bill. The name of Mr. Urquhart has also been mentioned, and he is the gentleman who is concerned with this legislation and is actively associated with the Mount Isa mining field. I have been a member of the Public Works Commission since 1918, and I am still a member of that commission. The personnel of that commission was altered on more than one occasion. The commission had occasion to visit Mount Isa in April, 1924, and again later. The members constituting the commission on the occasion of the first visit were:—J. Payne, M.L.A., chairman, Charles Collins, M.L.A., W. Cooper, M.L.A., J. T. Gilday, M.L.A., and B. H. Corser, M.L.A. The last mentioned was a member of the then Opposition. Mr. T. R. Roberts, M.L.A., now Chairman of Committees, was also a member of that commission at the time, but he did not make the visit. In November of the same year the commission again visited Mount Isa, and on that occasion it was constituted as follows:—J. Payne, M.L.A., chairman, Charles Collins, M.L.A., F. A. Cooper, M.L.A., W. Cooper, M.L.A., B. H. Corser, M.L.A., J. T. Gilday, M.L.A., and T. R. Roberts, M.L.A. Hon. members might ask why we visited Mount Isa on two different occasions. On the first occasion we visited this mining field shortly after its discovery, when very little work had been done, and we felt as a commission that it was impossible for us to make any report on the proposal to construct a railway line to the field because of the little developmental work that had taken place. That was the reason for our second visit in November. If ever there was a railway proposal submitted to the commission for consideration that received careful consideration, then it was this proposal. Never while I have been a member of that commission has a proposal received such close consideration. We recognised that it was proposed to construct a railway line through practically barren country from Duchess to Mount Isa and we were very careful to secure the advice of Chief Geologist Mr. Dunstan and other people before coming to a conclusion. If I remember rightly, Mr. Dunstan was sent to the field by the Mines Department to make an inspection. I for one have very great faith in the Chief Geologist of this State. I have known him for a number of years in my official capacity as a member of Parliament, and I have great faith in his judgment. I am pleased to say that up to the present his judgment has been fairly correct. I repeat that, before coming to a conclusion on this proposal, very careful consideration was given to the matter,

Mr. Collins.]

because we realised that the railway would traverse barren country, and there could be no possibility of its being a paying line to the Government unless a mining centre was established. The Public Works Commission recommended—

"(1) We, therefore, recommend that section D of the Great Western Railway line be constructed on or near the route surveyed under the provisions of the Great Western Railway Act of 1910, without any deviation to serve Mount Isa."

"(2) We are prepared to recommend the building of a railway solely for the purpose of serving the Mount Isa mineral field if the companies largely interested therein are prepared to bear some of the loss (if any) which may occur on its working; subject, therefore, to the completion of an effective undertaking or undertakings to guarantee the Government against loss to the extent of £100,000 to be paid in ten annual instalments of £10,000 each (as offered by Mr. W. H. Corbould, on behalf of Mount Isa Mines Ltd., in his letter of 4th May, 1925), we recommend that a line suitable to the development of the field be built from Duchess to Mount Isa."

All that we as a commission had to do was to make a recommendation and that was our recommendation. Personally, I would never have put my signature to that recommendation without that proviso, as I could not see how the line would pay unless the mineral field turned out in the manner that it was hoped it would.

Coming to the particular proposal that we are now discussing, which is a Bill to ratify an agreement entered into with the Mining Trust Limited, I can see that it will require a great deal of consideration. No hon. member can deny what I am going to say, and that is that never previously in the history of the six States of this Commonwealth has such a proposal been placed before any State Parliament. It is a proposal involving the handing over to a company of the right to prospect 100,000 acres of land. It is a very big proposal indeed. I am quite prepared to admit, with the ex-Secretary for Mines, that changes in mining must take place, and are taking place. I realise, too, that the only way that Mount Isa can be made a profitable proposition is by working it under a system of mass production. I did not hesitate to say that when I saw the field. I realised that, as I said in this House a short time ago, when I was on the field in its very early stages. I remember that well, because we camped on the hard rock, and I know I had a very severe pain in the back early in the morning as the result. As I lay on the ground looking up into the heavens, I thought that the distance between the Bowen coalfield and Mount Isa was between 700 and 800 miles. I thought that coal or coke, or whatever was required in the development of the field, would have to come from that centre. The commission realised that this coal or coke could only be brought to Mount Isa from the Bowen coalfield at a certain amount of expense. Therefore, if ever Mount Isa were to become a profitable proposition, it was necessary that large quantities of ore should be in sight before we could recommend the construction of a railway. Anyone reading the evidence given by the Chief Government Geologist, Mr. Dunstan, which is contained

[Mr. Collins.

in the report, will realise how careful we were. Having worked for twenty-five years at mining myself, I can claim to know something about mining. I therefore realised the importance of obtaining the estimates we secured from Mr. Dunstan before making our report. Later on we journeyed from Mount Isa to Lawn Hill. We made a very close examination of the field. I have just stated that this proposal is something new to the Australian Commonwealth, but I realise what a great field may develop there. In fact, one witness before the commission pointed out that the mineral field at Lawn Hill extended beyond the boundaries of Queensland, and that it went right into the Northern Territory to Borroloco.

We all know what took place at Broken Hill, and, whilst we are anxious for a development of that part of Queensland mentioned in this Bill, we cannot be too careful about seeing that safeguards are provided so that in future we shall not be accused of having given enormous wealth to one or two companies. As a member of the Labour Party, I shall be very careful to see that protection is given in this Bill, which, more than likely, we shall endeavour to improve at the Committee stage. I know the Lawn Hill district, in which there is one of the finest streams to be found in Queensland. I refer to Lawn Hill Creek, about which engineering surveyor, F. J. Calvert, had this to say at page 92 of the Public Works Commission's "Appendices to Evidence on Construction of Railways in the Gulf districts"—

"The flow at the gorge was estimated at 21,600,000 gallons per day during the month of May last, and the corresponding flows, as actually measured in various places on both creeks, are shown on the plan.

"The flows of Elizabeth and Muswellbrook Creeks are considerably less than Lawn Hill Creek, and need no consideration here."

I mention that so that hon. members may realise what may be included in the 100,000 acres referred to in the Bill now under discussion. I am satisfied that, if we can get the mineral development there, it is one of the most suitable places for a township and suitable also for settling people on the land. The hon. member for East Toowoomba was with us as a member of the Commission, and he may feel inclined to give his own experience of that part of Queensland, which I regret to say is not too well known by hon. members of this House. That, by the way, is one of the reasons why I opposed a reduction in parliamentary salaries, because money should be provided on the Estimates to enable those who make the laws of this country to visit those parts of it that should be visited and can only be visited at considerable expense. We had to go by motor car all the way from Mount Isa to Lawn Hill, which will give hon. members some idea of the expense incurred in visiting that district, which I do not suppose is personally known to more than six of the seventy-two members comprising this Parliament. We are, therefore, to some extent legislating in the dark on this particular proposal.

As the Minister stated, Lawn Hill has been known for a long time to the Mines Department and to the people of Queensland. I take a very keen interest not only in Lawn Hill, but in other mining fields. In

fact, I have read nearly all the reports published at one time or another by the Geological Department. I hold in my hand a copy of a report by Mr. Ball, in 1911, on "The Burketown Mineral Field." The reason I am speaking in the manner I am now doing is to enable other hon. members to get acquainted with this proposal. This is what Mr. Ball had to say in his introductory remarks on that field—

"The Queensland Silver-Lead Mines, Limited, in requesting that an officer of the Geological Survey should report on its mines in particular, and on the Burketown mineral field in general, and in undertaking to pay the travelling expenses of that officer, stipulated that he should travel and make his examination with a Southern mining expert engaged by the company. This gentleman was provided with a guide, and was accompanied by the secretary of the company, who had already, before leaving Sydney, decided that not more than four weeks (during May and June) was to be spent on the field, but this was found to be quite inadequate for more than a hurried visit to the more important of the company's leases; and of the numerous other holdings and the innumerable outcrops of the districts the writer had opportunity to inspect only two.

"The indications of the district's potentialities as a future metal producer struck me on every hand, but in view of the short time spent in the field it is not thought advisable to greatly amplify my advance report, drawn up specially for the meeting of shareholders held in Sydney on 20th September, beyond adding some notes on the topography and geology of the district. The abbreviated form of description of the holdings has been retained, as full details are given on the attached plans, where their significance is more apparent than if the matter were transferred to the letter-press."

Mr. Ball, in his introduction to this splendid report, points out that he himself did not have sufficient time to make a thorough examination of this field. On page 10 of his report, dealing with the extent of the field, Mr. Ball states—

"The mineral field as proclaimed (G.G. 1899, 2,600) is nearly square in shape, and has an area of 317 square miles; but it includes only a small part of the known metalliferous tract, and does not even take in all the properties described below."

While I am dealing with the extent of the field I may as well quote from a report made in 1900 by Walter E. Cameron, Government Geologist, on the Lawn Hill Silver-Lead Company, Mended Hill, North Queensland—

"The lodes in the neighbourhood of Mended Hill, belonging to the above company, occur in a series of evenly-bedded fine-grained sandstones, shales, and mudstones, lying with a general westerly dip at angles of up to as much as 30 degrees. This series of bed stretches in a belt of about 30 miles in length in a north and south direction, and about 5 to 10 miles in width, lying to the east of the Constance Range, under the quartzites and limestones of which they dip unconformably."

The point I am trying to make is that in this Bill we are handing over to a company certain rights when we ourselves really know very little about them. I am not going to blame the present Minister or the Minister preceding him. We really know very little from a geological point of view of the real value of that part of Queensland. It may be worth millions to the State later on; but under this Bill we are handing over to a company this valuable area for a period of five years with the right of extension for a further five years on condition that they spend £10,000 in the first year of prospecting, and altogether £100,000 for the five years.

Anyone who has had any experience in mining knows that £10,000 is not a very large sum to spend in prospecting. They might get a geological examination made and be able to put down a few shafts or bores over this extensive belt of country with it. When you come to think that fields like Gympie and Charters Towers are only a few miles in extent, this is a very extensive silver-lead field. It is not poor in the yield per ton. It is only poor owing to the fact that it is a great distance from the place from which the necessary fuel can be obtained to smelt the ore. But I am not too sure about that. I have given a good deal of thought to this proposition, and it may be that coal will be discovered alongside the field. Mr. Ball, on page 30 of his report, says—

"The presence of carbonaceous matter as a constituent of the formations was altogether unlooked for in the field, and its subsequent discovery in material from Carson's, Cant's, and the No. 1 underlie workings on the Silver King, together with the actual separation of small fragments of coal from the ore itself needs special comment, as the country at Coglan's, Lilydale, Tunnel Hill, and Watson's is also distinctly carbonaceous, and similar conditions may there obtain. The country rock where it could be examined on the 200-foot level is light-coloured, but the fissure must have crossed in the vicinity of the 200-foot level some highly carbonaceous stratum, the material of which, being softer than the grits and shales, has been squeezed into the open channel, and now forms the matrix for lead and zinc ore. Dr. Jack thought that the carbonaceous shells at Lilydale might eventually be of some value as a fuel for smelting the ore. The still greater importance of the presence of free carbon in the ore itself is obvious, and yet the analyses show such a small percentage that the association would seem to be of little if any economic importance, however interesting from a mineralogical point of view. Nevertheless, during mechanical concentration of the lead and zinc minerals, it may be possible to save, in a purified state, much of the coal matter, which as briquettes may be utilised for power production. 'Piebald ore,' 'piebald rock,' or 'maggie rock,' shown on the plans, is dark from its carbonaceous matrix, the white areas being due to irregular inclusions of quartz."

Then there is the following note:—

"The possibility that the carbon is of inorganic origin and derived from metallic carbides in the earth's interior has not been overlooked, but there is no strong evidence in its favour."

Mr. Collins.]

I think that is very important, because a certain amount of prospecting has been done. I remember that, when I returned from that field, I drew the attention of the then Secretary for Mines to this particular part of the report. My observations while on the field led me to believe that there is a possibility of getting coal there. One can realise what it would mean to this company in the event of its getting hold of this field and a seam of coal being discovered. It might not be coal of the first quality, but if it was inferior coal mixed with shale it would be able, with the water facilities there—which would amount to a supply of 20,000,000 gallons every twenty-four hours—to wash this mixed formation, and have a cheap form of fuel which would enable the ores to be smelted on the spot. That would be a great advantage. When we consider that the area of the field, according to Mr. Cameron, is 30 miles long and from 5 to 10 miles wide, the possibilities are enormous. In fact, we can look forward to the time when it may be carrying a population of 40,000 or 50,000 people. This party has nothing to fear in that direction, because all through the history of the world miners were never known to vote against a Labour Government.

On page 35, Mr. Ball says—

“The general presence of small quantities of carbonaceous matter or coal (those samples containing none were of oxidised ore) is very interesting, and serves to explain how the metallic sulphides came to be precipitated. The percentage is too low for it to be thought of as a possible fuel supply even with general mechanical concentration; but some of the richest ore from the 200-ft. level, now paddocked at the surface, contains a comparatively large quantity of coal, and stoping will most likely locate the seam from which it has been derived; for that the carbon is of organic origin there can be little doubt. As to the thickness of the seam we know nothing, but the analysis quoted elsewhere shows the coal to be of high grade, specially suited for use in gas-producers (in that it is non-caking) and quite possibly suitable for direct smelting.”

That is very important, considering that the geologist himself says that he did not have sufficient time to make the examination of the field that he wished.

The Secretary for Mines stated that the lodes at Lawn Hill were small lodes. The Royal Commission on Public Works was at Lawn Hill on 15th November, 1924, and took evidence. One of the witnesses examined was Edward Frederick Grey, who described himself as a geologist and as holding the degree of M.I.M.E. To some extent he backs up what I have just quoted from Mr. Ball's report. On page 55 of the report of the Commission he is reported as having given this evidence—

“Do you consider that the shows that are being worked here to-day are extremely good shows?—No. I am asking that a thorough geological survey of this district be made. The longitudinal folds on this field sometimes continue for only a few feet, and sometimes for several hundred feet. In the Lilydale mine the ore gives out at a depth of 50 ft., while at Mended Hill—a single fold—they are down 100 ft. and still in it. On the

[Mr. Collins.

Silver King they are down 200 ft., and, according to Mr. Ball's report, I understand—I have not seen it—there is a lode of 35 ft. of what he calls low-grade ore. I say that, according to his assays, it is high-grade ore in comparison with anything that is being worked at Broken Hill. There are two other lodes, one of which he calls the western and the other the eastern, 4 ft. and 6 ft. wide respectively. I have also found three other lodes both east and west, and I am very confident that the silver will go down to a depth of at least 500 ft. in large bodies of ore.”

Later we examined another witness, George Cant, a miner, who gave this evidence—

“By the Chairman: Where is your residence?—Lawn Hill Station.

“I understand that you managed some of the principal mines at Lawn Hill for some years under the original company?—Yes.

“Would a connection between Mount Isa and an existing railway have any effect on this field?—None on the cartage.

“What is your opinion of the field?—I think a great deal of the mines. I put my money into them some years ago, and I think they still have their chances ahead of them. In the bottom of Cant shaft there is 21 ft. of first-class ore.

“What do you call first-class ore?—That 21 ft. comprises 4 ft. of 75 per cent. ore, 11 ft. of 33 per cent. ore, and 6 ft. of 72 per cent. ore. That is in the crosscut at the bottom of the shaft.

“Is there any other development showing bodies of ore?—No. Cant's shaft was sunk to a depth of 137 ft.

“How long was the crosscut?—Twenty-seven feet.”

[2.30 p.m.]

“By Mr. Collins: What were the silver contents?—Thirty-five ounces.”

There you have a very big lode 20 feet wide high in lead content and high in silver content. I am satisfied that, if this field is developed, the company will more than likely make millions of pounds out of it. This is a tremendous proposition, but at the present time it is not a payable one because of transportation difficulties. It is necessary to bring the coal either from Burketown or from some railhead or construct a railway line from Mount Isa or from some other point. If further development is carried out as outlined by me, it is possible that coal may be discovered, and this mining proposition will then become one of the most profitable ventures in the whole of Australia. The Public Works Commission went to a good deal of trouble to inquire thoroughly into this matter when at that centre. Mr. Cant also gave this evidence—

“What is the greatest length of lode you know of?—In the workings on the Silver King, at the bottom of the winding shaft, it is 100 feet right along the road—that is, on the level.

“Where was all this ore removed to?—It is on the surface now.

“Was any of it shipped away while you were manager?—I shipped between 200 and 300 tons a year for five years.

“What were the returns?—75 per cent. lead and 35 ounces of silver.

"Was that a payable proposition?—
Yes.

"What was the greatest number of men you employed?—Sixteen.

"If a railway were built from Dobbyn to Burketown, could the mines pay by carting the ore to Barrett's Hotel?—In the event of lead falling to below £20, the cost of carriage to Gregory Downs and train freight to Dobbyn or Burketown would be more, relatively, than is paid now.

"What is the extent of the field?—About 22 miles.

"What is the width?—Twelve miles.

"By Mr. Roberts: When you were managing, was there any talk of a railway?—Yes. A survey was made.

"Where was the survey made from?—From the Ballast Ground, 14 miles below Burketown."

Apart from any evidence, our own observations went to prove that this was a very extensive field. I have a slight knowledge of mining, and I admit with Mr. Cameron that huge faults can be seen; but is it not only natural to find huge faults in a field 30 miles long by 5 to 10 miles wide? Even the celebrated Mount Isa field is not more than 3 miles in length and faults can be found there. This is a proposal that requires very serious consideration indeed. I am satisfied that, if the concession is granted and coal is discovered, or even in the absence of the discovery of coal with certain prospecting which will bring in its train new shows equal to the Silver King mentioned by Mr. Cant, the shares of the company will become very valuable. We cannot stop the development of this field. I ask the Minister to give serious consideration to the question of setting aside certain areas for township purposes. My object in making that request is because we have not yet passed the age of industrial upheavals. No one can tell what the future has in store for us in that direction. I do not want to see the miners dependent on the mineowners for the right to live. What I mean is that there shall be set aside a certain area of land over which the mineowners shall have no control whatever, and that the miners can build their homes thereon so that in the event of an industrial upheaval the mineowners will not be in a position to turn them out. That position arose in the Newcastle district thirty or forty years ago. I do not know whether the present Mining Act makes any provision for areas for miners' homesteads, but it may. That is a matter which requires serious consideration so that the wealthy absentee will not be able to use powers in the direction indicated. If the field develops, there will be absentee shareholders. I met Mr. Urquhart about this time, and had a long yarn with him, and I put the claims of the Bowen district before him in regard to coal and other requirements at Mount Isa. I pointed out to him that we had a very interesting field called Mount Coolon at the back of Bowen which might be well worth a visit from him; however, that is all by the way.

I regret that the debate has not been kept on the lines I have adopted. It has drifted into other channels. I want to say in regard to those other channels that, so far as I am concerned—and I can speak for the party as a whole—we stand for clean transactions as a party. Hon. members can rest assured

that in all our legislation we are looking to the future. We know that honesty is the best policy for any party to adopt. We strive to be honest and upright, and, if there has been any wrongdoing, then the bulk of the members of the Labour Party know nothing about it, therefore I am not going to be held responsible for it. At any rate, I am not sure that there is anything wrong about this matter, because we all know that statements are made at times in Parliament which men would never dare to make outside.

Mr. JONES: There is nothing wrong with a member of Parliament buying shares in a mine, or holding shares in a mine.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is a lot wrong in spending public money to that end.

Mr. COLLINS: The Duke of Argyle once said that any man who had anything invested in a proposition at all was a capitalist. Any man who is of a saving disposition must put his money somewhere. What little money I have is in the post office savings bank, where it is quite safe. Supposing a person was in receipt of £5,000 a year, and his spending amounted to only £300 a year what would he do with the balance? Would he not be entitled to invest it?

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I take the opportunity of congratulating the Secretary for Mines on introducing this Bill. After the disclosures that have been made to-day one welcomes a different type of legislation from what we have been having in the past. One could really describe the Bill as a Bill designed to wipe out of the public life of Queensland what one might call "bushranging" tactics. It is unquestionable in regard to previous legislation that certain members who are and were members of the Labour Party or the Labour Government were connected with certain matters, and could be very well described as bushrangers in the political sense. There seems to be no other word to use.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: They are no worse than you.

Mr. KERR: The disclosures made to-day are conclusively connected with this Bill, and it appears that the disclosures have disorganised the present Opposition.

Mr. HANLON: What?

Mr. KERR: Let me add, in addition to the names of Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack that have been mentioned in this Chamber as members of the syndicate referred to by the hon. member for Nundah, the name of the Hon. A. J. Jones, who was then Secretary for Mines. He also was one of the clan—

Mr. JONES: Yes, I bought some shares. I have shares in many mines.

Mr. KERR: To put it in words that mean something, the hon. gentleman and others were utilising public funds and prostituting the high offices they held in this State.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Enoggera in order in suggesting that the hon. member for Paddington prostituted his high office?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Enoggera is not in order, and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. Kerr.]

Mr. KERR: I withdraw. What I intended to say in this regard was not altogether in reference only to the hon. member for Paddington. I include the Leader of the Federal Labour Party.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I rise to a point of order. Mr. Theodore is not the Leader of the Federal Labour Party; he is the Deputy Leader. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order raised by the hon. member for Bowen. It is not out of order to refer to anyone who has not a seat in this Parliament.

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I admit that I have purchased shares in different mines, but I want to know from the hon. member for Enoggera the name of the syndicate to which he refers.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: The name has already been given by the hon. member for Nundah. In addition to Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack, the ex-Premier of this State, we have the name of Mr. A. J. Jones.

Mr. JONES: You can see all that in my income tax returns.

Mr. KERR: I have never mentioned anything about income tax returns. The hon. gentleman is a member of a company that paid £17,500 for certain rights, which they subsequently sold to a more financial company for 125,000 £1 shares. Of course, it is good business; but, in my opinion, they are the greatest band of "schemers" I have ever known.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I again rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Enoggera in order in referring to the hon. member for Warrego or the hon. member for Paddington as being members of a band of "schemers"?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order, and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. KERR: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker, in accordance with your ruling. Let me put it another way: I have never yet come in contact with such a number of persons who desire to get rich at somebody else's expense and on the money of the people of this State.

Mr. BEDFORD: You desire more salary.

Mr. KERR: I desire a lot of things, but happily I do not desire the hon. gentleman. Men occupying the highest possible office in the State have indulged in "engineering" at certain stages in regard to certain leases. After getting control from half a dozen holders, this particular company purchased options, and Mr. Theodore, who is to-day asking for the support of the people of Australia, is one of them.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): I rise to a point of order. Mr. Theodore is no member of any syndicate, and never was, in connection with Mount Isa Proprietary, Limited. As a friend, I gave him and Mr. McCormack 250 shares each.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We know he had over 1,000 shares.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order in the matter raised by the hon. member for Warrego.

[*Mr. Kerr.*

Mr. KERR: If any further information were required in regard to this particular transaction, the hon. member has just given it. Just fancy the hon. member giving Theodore a present of 250 shares! Wonderful! (Interruption.) Of course, there was no collusion of any description in regard to this matter! Let me again criticise Mr. Theodore—and what applies to Mr. Theodore applies to others. (Further interruption.) They had an option on certain leases. They exercised that option for a few thousand pounds.

Mr. BEDFORD: They never did. I did.

Mr. KERR: The option was exercised by the company.

Mr. BEDFORD: I exercised the option.

Mr. KERR: You exercised it on behalf of the company.

Mr. BEDFORD: I exercised it personally (Interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. KERR: Now we are getting hold of things. What transpired? And this is the crux of the whole thing. The Government, of which Mr. McCormack was then Premier, or, if not Premier, he was in the Cabinet at the time, as well as the Hon. A. J. Jones, who was Secretary for Mines—

Mr. JONES: Do you say I was a member of that syndicate? You know I was not a member.

Mr. KERR: Don't put words into my mouth!

Mr. BEDFORD interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. KERR (to Mr. Bedford): You will be silent after this, and your colleagues as well. Having obtained these valuable leases, to enhance their value, public funds were used to build an expensive railway to the field. That is the point. Let me drive that home—that immediately these gentlemen obtained these leases—they knew perfectly well what was going to be done. But did anyone else know? They got hold of these leases, and, under the privilege of Parliament, they "bull-dozed" not only members of their own party but members of the whole Parliament, and they also "bull-dozed" the people of Queensland into building an expensive railway having in view, not altogether the progress of this country, but the putting of money into their own pockets. If they had not used the funds of this State, would the shares of that company have enhanced? If that railway had not been built, probably those shares would not have been worth 2d. That is the position I want to drive home. My own conviction is that a thorough examination of the facts will disclose that this is the greatest scandal that has ever been perpetrated in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: There is more money in it than there was in Mungana, and, what is more, the same people who were in Mungana practically are in this little scheme.

Mr. JONES: Why don't you have an inquiry into Mungana? (Interruption.)

Mr. KERR: You will have it.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Enoggera said that the same people who were in

Mount Isa company were in Mungana. I ask that to be withdrawn.

Mr. KERR: I have nothing to withdraw. I said practically the same people—some of them. So far as the hon. member is concerned, I withdraw, but let me say this: A number of people in Mungana are identical with a number of the people in this particular scheme.

Mr. BEDFORD: Quite misleading.

Mr. KERR: That is quite true. You cannot sidetrack the position in regard to that. Having put that position quite clearly—

Mr. BEDFORD: Quite clearly, but untruthfully.

Mr. KERR: I shall put the position again. No. 1: There were certain leases taken at Mungana. No. 2: The hon. member for Warrego took over six of the leases.

Mr. JONES: You said Mungana.

Mr. KERR: I beg pardon—Mount Isa.

Mr. BEDFORD: There is no milk in it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There is milk in the cream of the 40,000 shares that you got!

Mr. KERR: No. 3: On terms the hon. member for Warrego obtained an option for a company, the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver Lead Limited, for a total of £17,500; No. 4: This company exercised its option on 12th November, 1925; No. 5: Four days afterwards a Bill was passed in this House—being pushed through all its stages in one day—authorising the construction of a railway to Mount Isa.

Mr. BEDFORD: Do you say the railway should not have been built?

Mr. KERR: No! This is what I say: If these gentlemen had not had so many shares to sell, possibly the railway would not have been built. That is the position. They bought these shares some time previously—having long heads—and said, "We will get a railway and make thousands of pounds through the people's money being expended on that railway." (Opposition interruption.) Hon. members opposite are all at "sixes and sevens." This is worse than anything we have had before. Then No. 6: The Mount Isa Proprietary Silver Lead Limited sold its leases to Mount Isa Mines Limited for 125,000 £1 shares. There is no dodging the fact. I understand from the hon. member for Oxley that those shares are worth £2 each to-day—a fairly good proposition. Our Government are out for honesty, and I hope that the time will never arrive when any Minister on this side will have something in view in the distance, get his colleagues to do something, then get his party to agree to it, and later on build a railway, and thus get a big "rake-off."

Mr. BEDFORD (Warrego): The hon. member for Enoggera has said that our "rake-off" was got from putting the Railway Bill through when he has already stated that we were paid this money for the sale of the leases to the Mount Isa Mines Limited.

Mr. KERR: There is no point there!

The SPEAKER: There is not very much in the point of order; but I would ask the hon. member for Enoggera to stick more closely to the question before the House.

Mr. KERR (Enoggera): I have no desire to transgress the rules, Mr. Speaker, and I will try to keep within the bounds of your instruction. There is another important factor which I wish to mention. It is an out-

standing disgrace that this state of things should have been permitted to operate in Queensland for so long. After the shareholders in this company had secured many thousands of pounds from this great State of Queensland, the Commissioner of Taxes billed Mr. Theodore, Mr. McCormack, and the hon. member for Warrego and their colleagues for income tax.

Mr. BEDFORD: The liquidator of the company had 25,000 shares to meet the liability.

Mr. KERR: It is all right to make a distribution of the funds—the hon. member cannot put that up over here. If the company got the funds, and then distributed them, and put the liquidator in when there is nothing left, there is another little bit of side-tracking.

Mr. BEDFORD: There are 25,000 £1 shares held by the liquidator.

Mr. KERR: It amounts to the same thing. The Commissioner of Taxes claimed £11,775 15s. 10d.

Mr. BEDFORD: There are 25,000 shares held by the liquidator to meet it.

Mr. KERR: You say there are shares held to meet it. May I ask in return why it has never been met to this day?

Mr. BEDFORD: Because it is under appeal.

Mr. KERR: There is a judgment of the court against this company in existence now.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is under appeal.

Mr. KERR: Not by this Government. It may be under appeal, but do not forget that the judgment was issued prior to April, 1926, and this is October, 1929. The writ was issued for this income tax owing to the State by the company, but actually owing by Mr. Theodore, Mr. McCormack—

Mr. BEDFORD: Untrue.

Mr. KERR: By Mr. Bedford and others—they owe the income tax. That writ was issued on 1st July, 1927, and they have never paid up yet. The rotten thing is that the late Premier, Mr. McCormack—so far as I can judge—

Mr. BEDFORD: You cannot judge anything.

Mr. KERR: So far as I can draw a conclusion, Mr. McCormack, as Premier of Queensland, should have pressed for the payment of this money but did not do so. It will be interesting to know if he ever pressed for this money to be paid. These things should be broadcast throughout the whole of Australia so that the workers of Australia may know what Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack and others associated with them have been doing. Is this how Mr. Theodore gets his wealth? (Opposition interruption.) One thing is certain—that next Saturday the electors of Australia should turn him down. (Interruption.)

There is just one other phase of this matter that I want to touch upon. I find on page 15 of the Estimates, Premier and Chief Secretary's Department, that the State of Queensland has had to knuckle down to a very considerable expenditure in the interests of this company, for I find the following item:—

"Rebate of railway freight on machinery, etc., for Mount Isa Mines, Limited, £22,000."

That is a concession that has to be made by this Government as a result of this particular transaction.

Mr. Kerr.]

One more thing—and I want the Attorney-General to listen very carefully to this: Standing Order 153 of this House provides—

“A member shall not be entitled to vote either in the House or in a committee upon any question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest and the vote of any member so interested shall be disallowed.”

In the Constitution of Queensland hon. members will find that it is a breach of that Constitution for members of Parliament who have a pecuniary interest in any financial transaction to record a vote in this House upon it.

Mr. BEDFORD: What about the exemption in favour of shareholders in limited companies?

Mr. KERR: The only exemption in favour of them and of promoters is contained in what I am about to read. I just quote it to show the inconsistency of hon. members opposite and the extent to which they will go in certain transactions.

Mr. BEDFORD: You know everything.

Mr. KERR: I know a good deal about the hon. member to-day. The hon. member is like the man in a big platoon who was out of step, but thought he was the only one in the platoon in step. (Laughter.) This document is the title of a Bill introduced into this Chamber in November, 1916. This extraordinary Bill never became an Act, because it was thrown out by the Legislative Council, but this is the title of that Bill—

“A Bill to further amend the Constitution Act of 1867 by disqualifying for membership of Parliament persons who are directors or attorneys or solicitors for monopoly companies or alien companies.”

I believe that at one time the Labour Government had ideas in regard to administration which were particularly desirable and open—that at one stage of the party's history its members really held those sentiments.

[3 p.m.]

The people of Australia should be made aware of the fact that the great Labour movement—the sentiments of which are accepted to some extent and put into practice by hon. members on this side—is being prostituted by the leaders of the movement. To-day the big question in another sphere is that of arbitration, but a leader of the great Labour movement is not courageous enough to advise adherence to the policy of arbitration, nor is he prepared to submit his record to examination. It is imperative that the position should be cleaned up, as I hope it will be cleaned up, and that once more we shall have purity in public life, to the benefit of the country.

Mr. COLLINS: When are you coming to the Bill?

Mr. KERR: The records of the House clearly show that members of this Parliament who were interested financially in a transaction considered by this Parliament, duly recorded their votes in favour of that proposal. I suggest that the Attorney-General should inquire into the matter with a view to seeing whether there has not been a breach of the Constitution. It is not a very pleasant matter to have to make the speech that I have delivered to-day—(Opposition laughter)—but every man in

[Mr. Kerr.]

public life has a duty to perform. It is a very unpleasant matter to make a speech of this kind; but representatives of the people must perform their duty in this Chamber, no matter how onerous it may be. That is the position I have taken up. I know that it will be contended in some quarters that I have made wild statements; but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that everything I have said can be substantiated and supported by facts and documents any time any hon. member opposite so desires.

Mr. KIRWAN (Brisbane): I have been seventeen years in this Assembly, and I know something about the political record of hon. members opposite. It is rather amusing to find them to-day posing as the champions of political honesty. They belong to a party that was associated with the Abrahams Brothers' case, the greatest political scandal in the history of Australia. They belong to a party who were associated with the Queensland National Bank scandal, the party who compounded a felony with the Abrahams Brothers, according to a statement by a judge of the High Court of Australia. Even after being compelled to secure the necessary evidence by blowing open the safes of these brothers in the city of Melbourne, the Government failed to prosecute them. They belong to a party that has been associated with this class of work, but, through their representatives in the State Parliament to-day, they hold themselves forth as paragons of political honesty. I am tired of hon. members opposite taking advantage of the privileges of this House and engaging in a campaign of slander and innuendo without being prepared to make definite charges. I say, as Acting Leader of this party to-day, that I welcome any public inquiry that the Government may institute. Let them appoint a judge of the Supreme Court as a Royal Commission to go into this question. If any of those concerned, whether they be members of this party or not, are guilty of an offence, then the Attorney-General should prosecute them with the utmost rigour of the law. That is all I have to say about it. The record of this party, both in the Federal and the State sphere, for political honesty and integrity will stand more than favourable investigation when compared with the record of the Government Party.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The administration of the Labour Party was a disgrace.

Mr. KIRWAN: We all remember the time when the party who were the predecessors of the present Government Party went to the London money market for a loan of £2,000,000, and, because their credit was so low in the estimation of those financiers in London who were able to judge the position of the colonies in those days, they could only get a paltry £600,000. This money was placed in the Queensland National Bank, and then the directors of that institution at the period mentioned had the brazen effrontery to declare dividends out of profits that never existed.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is pure camouflage. Get down to the charges made to-day.

Mr. BEDFORD: There are no charges. If you understood prospectuses of public companies, you would understand.

Mr. KIRWAN: The statements I make are correct, and have been previously quoted by me and are in “Hansard,” the official record of Parliament. You, Mr. Speaker,

will recall that, when you spoke on the matter, you opined that it was not a fair thing that I should refer to the political record of the party of those days. I referred to the record of the political party in this State that was led by the late Sir Thomas Mellwraith. Did hon. members opposite ever hear anything of the steel rails scandal?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Get right up to date.

Mr. KIRWAN: These are the individuals who profess to be so much hurt, and who have put up one of their Ministers to provide some very necessary political propaganda for a party that is politically bankrupt and which to-day has to face a storm of indignation without parallel from the electors of this Commonwealth.

Mr. EDWARDS: Your stocks are very low.

Mr. KIRWAN: I had to face the issues at last election, and I was successful at the polls, in spite of the machinations and dirty work of the party now occupying the Treasury benches and the Communist Party—the joint directors of the campaign then against Labour.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Answer the charges made to-day.

Mr. KIRWAN: I repeat my previous statement, and, on behalf of the Queensland Labour Party, would welcome the appointment of a Royal Commission. We invite hon. members opposite to do their worst. We know that they will not accept this invitation, for they are not game to do so. This debate to-day has been specially organised on behalf of their Federal Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What nonsense!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Come right up to date.

Mr. KIRWAN: This is only an attempt on behalf of hon. members opposite to save the Federal Government. Why, during the war they covered their political sins with the Union Jack! They made an appeal to national sentiment. They accused the Labour Party of having been in the pay of Germany and of accepting German gold. We have had an exhibition in this House to-day the like of which I have never seen during my seventeen years as a member.

This is an important Bill we are dealing with. It is one of the most important transactions that has ever been brought before the Queensland Parliament. Despite that fact, its principles have not been touched upon by one speaker, not even the Secretary for Mines except during the last few minutes of his speech, when he endeavoured to elucidate its provisions and give us some necessary information with regard to its main principles.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The less you say about charges the better.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am not going to allow the hon. gentleman to make charges against the Labour Party. If the hon. gentleman thinks that I am going to remain silent when charges are made against the political honesty and integrity of the party to which I belong, then he is mistaken.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Don't talk "tripe"! That is why Mr. Theodore was kicked out of Queensland—for his dishonesty.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am not going to talk "tripe," because I am not an authority on "tripe" like the hon. member who has just interjected. The hon. member for Enoggera worked himself into a state of righteous indignation and asked in a loud tone of voice, "Why was this railway built?" Surely the hon. gentleman must have heard the hon. member for Bowen quoting extensively from a report of the Royal Commission on Public Works, which comprised also two members of the then Opposition in the persons of the hon. member for East Toowoomba and the late hon. member for Burnett! The hon. member for Bowen stressed the fact—which cannot be too much emphasised—that the commission gave serious and lengthy consideration to that matter because the proposed railway would go through country that was practically useless for pastoral or agricultural purposes. No doubt the members of that commission had in mind the fact that they had recommended the construction of other railways in areas comprising valuable tracts of land, and that they would probably meet with the criticisms of their colleagues in Parliament and of the press outside in recommending the proposal that a railway should be built into an area where the land was not so suitable.

Mr. COLLINS: Mr. Corser made a lengthy speech in favour of the railway in this House.

Mr. KIRWAN: With a view to testing the bona fides of the company and making certain that they were seriously intent on opening up the mineral resources of the country, and having regard to the fact that a railway would be necessary to give the company access to the ports and coalfields of the State and enable them to carry out their huge project, the commission made a special recommendation that the company should be called upon, to the extent of £10,000 per annum for a period of ten years, to meet any losses that would probably arise on that railway. That proposal was provided for; but a slight modification was considered advisable by the late Government of another condition, and was given effect to by the present Government, namely to remove the first mortgage to the Crown, and to enable the company to go on the loan market to raise the necessary amount of money required to exploit this very valuable mineral field.

Speaking with regard to the measure itself—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIRWAN: I see no reason why hon. members opposite should be either facetious or sarcastic. They did not display that feeling when some of their colleagues indulged in "muck-raking." (Laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Plain facts!

Mr. KIRWAN: I hear the vacant laugh indicative of the vacant mind! (Laughter.) Some of these people appear to appreciate individuals who get down to a level to which I trust I shall never descend. I would sooner get out of Parliament. If I could not attack the policy of my opponents by carefully considered arguments, then I would be content to go down to them in fair debate.

As indicated by the hon. member for Bowen and other hon. members on this side, this is one of the most important proposals in regard to mining development that have ever been placed before any Parliament in

Mr. Kirwan.]

Australia. The concession is a very extensive one. It gives to this company what might be regarded as an exclusive right to prospect over an area of 100,000 acres. That is to say, when this Bill becomes law, it will ratify the agreement entered into between the Secretary for Mines and this company, and from that day no person, except representatives of the company, will be allowed to prospect in the area indicated in the schedule to the Bill. There is certainly a condition attached that they must expend a certain sum of money. Already reference has been made to the amount, which is in the vicinity of £100,000, spread over a period of years. This agreement is advocated by the Secretary for Mines on the ground that this mineral belt is incapable of being developed except by the expenditure of a large sum of money. I realise—and I am quite sure hon. members who have followed the mining industry of this State for a period of years will realise—that the mining industry is in rather an unfortunate position to-day. We know that some of our gold-mining areas have practically been worked out, and, owing to the low price of copper, lead, and other minerals, it was not profitable to work the Cloncurry and other mineral fields. It is reasonable to assume that no company is going to throw money down a shaft when no return can be expected. One of the reasons why these fields cannot be worked at a profit is that the methods of extraction and the machinery found on these copper fields is obsolete. The result is that the cost of production is so high that it is impossible to carry on the industry, with the result that a large number of men who previously were employed in the Cloncurry belt have had to seek employment in other industries. This has meant a heavy loss in traffic to the Railway Department. When I was first elected to this House the Cloncurry line was paying 6½ per cent. The wagons had to be sent out to Cloncurry for the purpose of loading cattle, and the Railway Department gave the company a special rate for their coke, so that the wagons went forward loaded with coke and came back loaded with cattle. As a result of the wagons carrying loading both ways, the line gave a handsome return. The Minister knows, to his cost, that the Cloncurry railway is not paying 6½ per cent. to-day; but there is no question about it that, if mining development went ahead in that area, we could look forward with confidence to that long stretch of line in the North again doing good service by providing the department with substantial revenue. Provided public interests are sufficiently safeguarded, I see no valid reason why this agreement should not be passed. We have to recognise that nearly all industries to-day are carried on on an extensive scale, and for that purpose it is necessary to secure a large amount of capital. Mass production lends itself to cheaper production. With capital a company is enabled to install up-to-date machinery, with the result that it is able to reduce costs considerably; and a proposition that would not be payable under the old methods of working, such as was followed at Mount Elliott and other places, can be worked profitably with up-to-date methods. The Mount Isa company will be in the position to open up this mineral belt as a payable proposition, and at the same time provide employment for a large number of miners, who to-day can find no employment because of the un-

[Mr. Kirwan.

fortunate position of the mining industry. It is not through the fault of any Government or legislation, but simply because the price of minerals is insufficient to allow these mines to be worked profitably under present conditions.

One of the principles of the Bill is the power given to the Minister to require that, as soon as possible after the passage of the measure, the company shall be required, under the terms of the agreement, to equip a geological prospecting party. I presume that it will be for the express purpose of testing this large mineral area.

I have heard the hon. member for Bowen on more than one occasion, when addressing himself in this House to the question of mining, practically advocate what he termed scientific prospecting; that is to say, that, instead of the present method adopted by the Government, of assisting prospectors with a small weekly payment, prospecting parties should be organised under a geologist who should have the control and responsibility of all the operations of the prospecting party. This company is evidently going to carry out the system which the hon. member for Bowen has advocated for years. I do not pretend to know a great deal about mining; but from a common-sense point of view, I realise that the company is going to have scientific prospecting with the result that whatever minerals there are in that particular belt of country will be discovered. The scientific and general knowledge of the geologist in charge of the prospecting party will be such that, when reports are submitted by him to this company, the directors will accept them in good faith and publish them and ask for the necessary capital to develop the field.

The Minister will probably be prepared to tell us in Committee what the company would deem a reasonable time after the Bill is passed—whether six months, twelve months, or two or three years—before they get on with the job. We all realise that some move should be made immediately the agreement is ratified by this House. Therefore, I hope the Minister will consider the possibility of fixing a reasonable time in the schedule, so that the company will know that it is expected to get on with the work within a reasonable period, and that there will be no possibility of a go-slow policy.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The company has already engaged its geologist.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is good news, because it seems to indicate that the company is simply waiting for the passage of the Bill in order to get on with the business, as the geologist is the most important person in connection with the prospecting. It will not be difficult to organise a prospecting party at Lawn Hill, as it appears from the information given by the hon. member for Bowen that there are a lot of old miners there who have stuck to the field through good and bad times, and have considerable knowledge of that mineral belt, and they will be able to do good work under the direction of the geologist.

I notice that the agreement may be cancelled by the effluxion of time, or by neglecting to comply with one of the main principles of the Bill—that is, in connection with the expenditure of a certain sum of money.

I do not propose to speak at any further length, because I would get too much into detail, and I would come into conflict with you, Mr. Speaker. The Bill does not contain many principles, and the schedule, for instance, can be discussed only in Committee. I content myself with saying that I have no objection to the second reading, and that we hope, when the Bill gets into Committee, that reasonable amendments will receive reasonable consideration from the Minister.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murillo*): The railway to Mount Isa has been discussed freely in connection with this matter, so that I think it only fair and reasonable that, as Secretary for Railways, I should give a brief history of the Bill under which it was authorised and its eventual construction. The Duchess to Mount Isa Railway Bill was introduced on 27th October, 1925, and assented to on 12th November. It authorised the Commissioner, on behalf of the Government, to enter into that agreement with Mount Isa Mines Limited and Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited, with a view to the construction of a line of railway from Duchess to Mount Isa, a distance of 54 miles, and authorised the construction of the said railway. The Act provided that Mount Isa Mines Limited should expend on or before the date of the completion of the line £150,000 and the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited £50,000 during the same period, in each case on opening and developmental work. Mount Isa Mines Limited further undertook to expend a sum of not less than £150,000 and Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited a sum of not less than £50,000 on water conservation and machinery and plant, within a period of six months from the opening of the line. After the Act was passed and before the agreements with the companies were signed, Mount Isa Mines Limited took over the liability of Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited and became responsible for the expenditure of the sums mentioned by both companies under the agreement, so that the company organised by the hon. member for Warrego did not sign the undertaking provided for by the Act, but, before the agreement was made, it disposed of its assets to Mount Isa Mines Limited. In February, 1924, the hon. member for Warrego sold to Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited certain leases over which he held options, and which cost it in all cash amounting to £2,500 and 60,000 shares in the company, the total value of the shares being estimated at £17,500. The shareholders of the company which bought these leases from the hon. member for Warrego included E. G. Theodore, William McCormack, who were then Premier and Secretary for Lands, respectively, of Queensland; A. J. Jones, Secretary for Mines; Randolph Bedford, M.L.A.; John Wren; and Robert A. Dunlop, warden at Cloncurry.

At 3.28 p.m.,

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. COLLINS: There were other shareholders besides them.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; but the point I want to make is that men holding important responsible positions in this House were shareholders in that company. The agreement with the Commissioner

for Railways was signed on behalf of the company by W. McRae and A. M. Hemsley, directors, on 25th March, 1926, assuming the liability of the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited. On 19th April, 1926—about three weeks after signing the above agreement—the leases were transferred by Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited to Mount Isa Mines Limited, the consideration received being 125,000 shares of £1 each in the latter company, including 5,000 shares for ore at grass, plant, and machinery.

It will thus be seen that the lease for which the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited gave only £2,500, and expended money on plant and machinery and ore at grass, upon which a value of [3.30 p.m.] £5,000 is placed, received shares equal to £125,000 owing to the passing of a Bill to construct a railway, and immediately afterwards the shares rose to a greater value. The shares were valued at that time at £1 a share, but immediately after this line was passed and made known they rose to a greater value. It can, therefore, be rightly concluded that, by passing the Bill through Parliament, the leases of the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited would be considerably enhanced in value, and Messrs. Theodore, McCormack, Jones, and Bedford would reap an enormous amount.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I rise to a point of order. Is the Minister in order in reading his speech?

Mr. KERR: He is only referring to his notes.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are not the Deputy Speaker.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This is an important matter, and, in order to be absolutely correct, and so that there shall be no mistake whatever, I have taken very full notes, and I am quoting from those notes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman is in order in quoting from his notes.

Mr. KIRWAN: He is old enough to be able to make a speech from notes without reading it.

Mr. KERR: You rely on newspaper extracts.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: By way of interjection, the hon. member for Warrego stated that he gave shares in this company to Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack. It can therefore be assumed that those shares were given in consideration of a Bill being passed through Parliament to construct the Mount Isa Railway.

Mr. JONES: How many shares did I have? I purchased Mount Isa shares for 30s., and sold them for 27s.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have the particulars here. The hon. gentleman received in all 1,130 shares. On 11th March, 1925, he received 200 shares from the hon. member for Warrego, and on 26th March, 1925, he received 200 shares transferred from George Regan. In all, the hon. gentleman possessed 1,130 shares. (Interruption.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would remind hon. gentlemen that the continued interruption is disorderly. I do not want to deal with any hon. member, but I

Hon. Godfrey Morgan.]

shall have to do so if the interruption continues.

Mr. JONES: This is the only way of getting anything in. I purchased Mount Isa shares, and lost on them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Edward Granville Theodore received by way of allotment on different dates between 22nd April, 1924, and 29th February, 1925, 1,000 shares in this particular company that the hon. member for Warrego was responsible for floating, and, by way of interjection, the hon. member for Warrego told this House that he gave Mr. Theodore 250 shares. We now see that Mr. Theodore received 1,000 shares by way of allotment. After that the company was sold to the Mount Isa Mines, Limited, for £125,000, and naturally Mr. Theodore would receive an enormous amount of money in respect of those 1,000 shares.

Mr. JONES: He may have purchased shares.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then we find that, by way of allotment in the original share-list of this particular company, Mr. William McCormack received 1,300 shares.

We find that in the original company Mr. William McCormack was allotted 409 shares on 23rd February, 1924; that on 22nd April, 1924, he received another parcel of 250 of the same shares, and that he received a further allotment of 650 shares on 11th November, 1925, just about the time when the Mount Isa Railway Bill went through this House.

Mr. KERR: Scandalous!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As I have already indicated, the Mount Isa Railway Bill was introduced in this House on 27th October, 1925; it was assented to on 12th November, 1925, and on 11th November, the day before that Bill was assented to, Mr. McCormack received another parcel of shares.

Mr. KELSO: Ah! Another big job!

Mr. JONES: Did any hon. member on your side have shares in Mount Isa?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: No!

Mr. JONES: Of course they did!

Mr. KERR: If they did, they obtained them under entirely different circumstances.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: On 8th August, 1923, the then Premier, Mr. William McCormack, agreed to quote certain railway rates to the Mount Isa Mines Limited after he had had a conference with the directors of that company.

Mr. COLLINS: Who were the directors?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The rates quoted by Mr. McCormack to the Mount Isa Mines Limited were—hon. members should listen to these railway rates and then ask themselves if there is ever any likelihood of the department making this railway pay—75d. per ton per mile for lead or zinc bullion; .60d. per ton per mile for lead concentrates; .40d. per ton per mile for coal or coke and for returned concentrates, namely, concentrates returning from the seaboard to Mount Isa for treatment. We are carrying the coal from Collinsville, or Bowen, as they desired. Is it any wonder that the railway is not paying?

Mr. COLLINS: That line may yet be a paying proposition.

[Hon. Godfrey Morgan.

Mr. HANLON: That schedule of rates was prepared by the officials of the Railway Department.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KELSO: How many years has the agreement to run?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no special time stipulated in regard to that matter.

Mr. HANLON: It is most unfair the way this debate is being allowed to proceed. The Minister is making charges, and we have no opportunity to rebut them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Do I understand the hon. member for Ithaca to say that the way the Deputy Speaker is conducting this debate is not fair?

Mr. HANLON: No; I said that the Minister was making charges which were untrue because that schedule of rates was prepared in the office of the Commissioner by his staff. The Minister knows that, too. The Minister is unfair in making that charge.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member does not know anything about it.

Mr. HANLON: I do know!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would like to remind the hon. member that hon. members of this Legislative Assembly should assist me in maintaining the dignity which is supposed to prevail in the Chamber. I do not want to resort to naming any hon. member; but, if the hon. member continues to interject, I shall have to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It does not alter the circumstances whether these figures were prepared by the officials of the department or not. If the Premier of the State asks the department to prepare certain figures, the head of that department, whether he be the Commissioner for Railways or any other officer, naturally has to do so. The responsibility for those rates lies with the Minister for Railways, the Premier, or the Cabinet, who decide what rates shall operate. The Commissioner had nothing whatever to do with them.

Mr. HANLON: Do you say that the Minister prepared a false schedule of rates?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The responsibility of decreasing or increasing rates, or of adopting new rates is one that the Government of the day must shoulder, and not the Railway Commissioner. Rates are only prepared by the Commissioner or his officers at the request of the Minister or the Premier, as the case may be. You cannot place the responsibility for that on the Commissioner or his officials.

Mr. JONES: We are not denying that. We fixed that rate deliberately to help the industry.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If that is so, that contradicts the statement made by the hon. member for Ithaca.

Mr. JONES: You will have to do the same, if you want to help Mount Isa.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have sufficient evidence to show that, while Mr. Theodore, Mr. McCormack, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Bedford were holding responsible positions of trust in the Parliament of Queensland, they were prepared to receive,

and did receive, shares allotted to them, as has been shown already; that, so far as Messrs. McCormack, Theodore, and Bedford are concerned, they were allotted shares for nothing. The hon. member for Paddington has stated that he purchased his shares. That may or may not be so. His first 200 were obtained from the hon. member for Warrego, who evidently was giving away shares. To whom was he distributing these shares? To members of Parliament. And why was he giving those shares away? Did he have such a great love for Mr. Theodore—(laughter)—or Mr. McCormack, or the hon. member for Paddington, that he was going to give them shares for nothing? Is the hon. member for Warrego a philanthropist, and is he in the habit of distributing shares for nothing? No; he is not that sort of individual. He expects a quid pro quo. If he throws out a sprat, he expects to catch a mackerel. The reason why those shares were given to these hon. gentlemen—or dishonourable gentlemen if you want to term them such—

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): I rise to a point of order. I am not very much concerned about the hon. member's opinion of myself; but is he in order in referring to hon. members on this side of the House as dishonourable members?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not refer to you as dishonourable.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I did not hear the hon. gentleman make use of that expression; but, if he did, I ask him to withdraw.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I referred to those who received shares for nothing, and, as the hon. member for Paddington said he paid for his shares, he was not included amongst the dishonourable members. We have men occupying high and important positions in the State who are prepared to accept shares in a certain mining venture, and, in order to make those shares valuable, are prepared to spend public money. The railway from Duchess to Mount Isa may be justified. It may become one of the finest ventures in Queensland. The point, however, is this: Why did these gentlemen obtain an option over certain leases from the Mines Department for nothing? It is a strange thing that all the scandals in Queensland have been associated with the Mines Department.

Mr. JONES: Where?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Warrego got them, and did not pay for them.

Mr. JONES: The options were obtained from private individuals.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Practically all the scandals that have occurred in Queensland have been in connection with the Mines Department. Take, for instance, Mungana. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. KIRWAN: What about the bribery scandal?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will not be long before there is an oil scandal—and that is another matter connected with the Mines Department. We are here to expose this barefaced robbery on the part of public men—men who occupied positions of trust and were prepared to use those positions and spend

public money in order that they might become wealthy and benefit themselves. We see these gentlemen associated with a man like John Wren. Everybody knows that John Wren is one of the most undesirable men in Australia. When men like McCormack and Theodore associate with a man of that description, what will the public say? Mr. Wren is known throughout the length and breadth of Australia; yet we find prominent public men associated with him in a transaction that brought to the individuals engaged in the transaction a profit of thousands and thousands of pounds.

Mr. BEDFORD: Why not?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member evidently cannot realise the fact that he is occupying a position of trust. If it were done by an ordinary individual it would be bad enough; but, if the hon. member or any other hon. member of Parliament comes along and, by giving shares to members of Parliament, bribes them—because that is what it means—the hon. member as a member of Parliament admitted that he gave shares to certain individuals.

Mr. BEDFORD: I would have given you some of them if I had liked you.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would not have accepted them. I am not prepared to do anything that will be likely to cause me to give a vote that I would not be justified in giving. The hon. member gave those shares purely with a view to bribing members of Parliament in order to get something for himself.

Mr. BEDFORD: I rise to a point of order. The statement has been made that I gave those shares in 1924 for the purpose of bribing members of Parliament to do something in 1926. I wish to have that withdrawn.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to withdraw.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I withdraw, but the fact remains that he gave shares to men who were holding highly important public positions. The hon. member says that he gave them 250 shares each. I have the figures here, and they show that Mr. Theodore got 1,000 shares.

Mr. BEDFORD: I have already stated that I gave a number of friends, both in and outside Parliament, 250 shares worth £250 10s.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have the figures from the register of joint stock companies, which shows that on 22nd April, 1924, Mr. Theodore had allotted to him—it does not say who allotted them—500 shares in this company, and then on 20th February, 1925, he had another 500 shares allotted to him.

Mr. BEDFORD: Because he paid for them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It does not say they were transferred from anybody.

Mr. BEDFORD: I had 23,000 shares in the beginning, and I ended up with forty-six.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member must have been a very popular man when he was going around giving shares to anyone who would accept them. He is like an individual I mentioned just a while ago, who invited a certain hon. member of this House to meet him in a

Hon. Godfrey Morgan.]

particular room. That gentleman did not know whom he was going to meet, but he did meet this person, and, when he came away, he said a cheque-book was sticking out two or three inches from that individual's pocket.

Mr. BEDFORD: What are you talking about?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was very evident that he was prepared to pay for a certain consideration. Say what they may, or do what they like, they cannot deny the fact that men occupying the position of Premier of this State—Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack—obtained shares.

Mr. BEDFORD: For which they paid.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And that, before those shares were sold, a Bill was put through this House to construct a railway that was going to enhance the value of those shares by 500 per cent. or 600 per cent., which it did. These shares were sold out to another company, and they reaped the reward by bringing in a Bill and passing it through the House in one day, telling the people it was for the benefit of Queensland, when it was for the benefit of those individuals. Nobody knew that better than Mr. Theodore, Mr. McCormack, the hon. member for Cairns, and Mr. Bedford, the hon. member for Warrego, that, if that Bill went through the House and the railway was constructed, they were going to reap a considerable amount of money, and they did so. The public will want to know all about it and why they voted in the House for something they were personally concerned in. I feel sure that under the circumstances, knowing that that railway was going to be constructed, had those gentlemen been straightforward and honest, they would have got up on the floor of the House and stated that they possessed so many shares in this particular company and would have walked out of the Chamber and not voted in connection with the railway at all. That was the only straightforward thing to do, but they did not do it; and I am sure the people of Queensland and Australia will condemn them for their action in connection with this particular matter.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*): It is with deep regret that I rise to speak in this debate. I rise to offer my protest against what I consider one of the most despicable, low-down political charges that I have ever heard of. I say that deliberately, in view of the fact that one Minister here this morning, when introducing the measure now under discussion, made some vicious statements and then resumed his seat. Later another hon. member arose, and made serious statements, continuing the attack. I can only assume that the debate to-day was unmeditated. I can only believe that, since Parliament gave the Treasurer certain powers in connection with the Commissioner of Taxes, the hon. gentleman has searched the income tax files and secured the information that is being used here to-day.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order? I would ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I do not desire to argue the point with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but, if my remarks are further away from the subject than the remarks of hon. members opposite, I was not aware of

[*Hon. Godfrey Morgan.*

it. It is an undisputed fact that hon. members opposite, by some means or other have secured a supply of information for the purpose of "muck-raking." Behind all this exhibition of spleen is the prospect of their friends in the Federal arena being defeated at the election on Saturday week next. The whole of this agitation has been brought up with the purpose of discrediting one public man in Australia to-day. That is Mr. Theodore. Why should they bring up this agitation? They realise that their forces are on the run; that their Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce, is facing defeat; and it has been the policy, not only of members opposite but of the present Tory propagandists outside, to concentrate on that one man, Mr. Theodore, in an attempt to damn him in the eyes of the people of Australia. To clinch this matter let me say that hon. members opposite have the power to order an investigation in regard to these charges. If the position is as serious as hon. members opposite would have us believe, I would ask them not to talk about it here, but to get to work and clean up the scandal. I think it is more of a smoke screen than an evidence of sincerity on their part. They have been talking for months—years, in fact—about Mungana and other matters. It seems they only talk for the simple reason that they fear to put an inquiry into effect because their ammunition will be gone and they will not be able to frame an accusation against hon. members on this side.

I repeat very emphatically and definitely that this is only an attack on a public man in Australia to-day in order to achieve a certain purpose on Saturday week. Hon. members opposite are continually asking members on this side to make Parliament an example to people outside as a place where the finest traditions of free speech and fair play are observed. I ask you, in all sincerity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether fair play has been shown here to-day, whether any attempt has been made to extend fair play to the men mentioned in the course of this debate? The hon. member for Nundah definitely made the charge that the Mount Isa Railway was constructed as a result of political bribery, in the face of the report by the Royal Commission on Public Works, which favoured its construction. The Secretary for Railways—a gentleman who should know better, but one who is recognised as one of the greatest slingers of mud that this Parliament has ever seen—his speech was not a surprise to me—should have known the conditions under which that railway was agreed to be constructed. After listening to hon. members opposite, it appears that they would have everybody believe that they are "lily-whites" in the political arena, that they are paragons who can do no wrong, whereas, on the other hand, members on this side are supposed to be unable to run straight. It would be as well, therefore, if we recalled some of the episodes of the past. It is hardly necessary for me to repeat what the hon. member for Brisbane said of the infamous bribery case of a few years ago.

Mr. EDWARDS: Which you rigged up yourselves. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. member says that this party rigged that up, but it is a well-known fact that the money used in that bribery case was subscribed by friends of hon. members opposite, and that members opposite knew that the whole joke was in operation. Could we have anything lower,

therefore, than the exhibition of hon. members opposite, who claim that they alone are fair and square, and that members on this side are always in the wrong? The hon. member for Brisbane rightly reminded our friends of the Abrahams taxation scandal.

Mr. KIRWAN: Compounding a felony!

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Those gentlemen broke the law in every way, yet hon. members opposite and their friends in the Commonwealth Parliament allowed them to do it, and made no attempt to bring them to book. It was compounding a felony—deliberate robbery—yet never a word was said by hon. members opposite. Yet they posed as men of character who would not dream of political rascality, men who stand steadfastly for the principles this Parliament is supposed to represent. I say that when the people realise the depths of political meanness to which hon. members opposite have descended, they will say they are no longer fit to hold power in the State. Their actions suggest that they are destitute of any constructive policy or sound argument with which to keep the Labour Party out of power; so, in accordance with their narrow vision and small conscience, they bring forward this despicable propaganda for the purpose of doing this party harm on Saturday week next.

[4 p.m.]

It is very noticeable that, during the present Federal election campaign, the newspapers are exhibiting the most filthy propaganda, and for the purpose of the Federal election hon. members opposite—they believe themselves to be honourable—have carefully prearranged the episode to-day in the hope of smashing Labour next Saturday week.

I wish to deal with the construction of this railway. The Public Works Commission was given by the Labour Government the task of investigating the proposal to construct the line. They investigated the proposal, and recommended that the line should be constructed. The hon. member for Enoggera said that this was a dishonest transaction; but I would remind him that he casts a reflection on our Chairman of Committees in this House, who was a member of the commission, and he also casts a reflection upon a former colleague, the late hon. member for Burnett, Mr. Corser, who was also a member of the commission. I believe that Mr. Corser spoke in favour of the proposal in this House. In the face of those facts, how can it be honestly argued by hon. members opposite that this was a deliberate and dishonest transaction, and one that was not fair to the State?

Mr. BEDFORD: It is only a smoke screen.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The commission investigated the proposal from all angles, and I intend to quote passages from the report to prove that the commission was of the opinion that it was necessary to construct the line to the Mount Isa field. The report states—

“We do not propose to recapitulate the evidence given to us as to the production which may be expected from Mount Isa, other than to mention the opinions of a few authorities. Mr. Saint-Smith, then superintendent on the field for Mount Isa Mines Limited, but formerly and now the Government Geologist, said that it was one of the most promising fields that had been discovered in Australia for many years.

Mr. Rodda described it as a wonderful field, and Mr. Corbould, a director of Mount Isa Mines Limited, said it was the best show he had seen since Broken Hill, and called it a wonderful show.”

Other names were mentioned, and the evidence went to prove conclusively that there was an absolute necessity for constructing a railway to this mining field as soon as possible in order that the field might be developed. The report further states—

“After careful consideration we came to the conclusion that Mount Isa field does deserve development, and that a railway is necessary if that end is to be effectively achieved.”

That is a passage that cannot be refuted, and, following on this report, the Government put into effect the recommendation of the commission. For the sake of gaining a dirty political advantage and of spreading propaganda, hon. members opposite have introduced this subject to-day. The report further states—

“We are prepared to recommend the building of a railway solely for the purpose of serving the Mount Isa mineral field if the companies largely interested therein are prepared to bear some of the loss (if any) which may occur on its working; subject, therefore, to the completion of an effective undertaking or undertakings to guarantee the Government against loss . . .”

This report is signed by John Payne, chairman; Charles Collins, John Theophilus Gilday, William Cooper, Bernard H. Corser—at one time a member of this Parliament and now Federal member for Wide Bay—Thomas R. Roberts, our respected Chairman of Committees.

The hon. member for Enoggera is not fair or just towards his own colleague, for he must connect their names with the guilty. However, the hon. member does not care how many ridiculous and unfair statements he makes. I deplore the fact that this Parliament has no power to force an hon. member to keep strictly to facts and be, at least, fair in his criticism. Apparently an hon. member can do or say what he likes in this Chamber. Frank A. Cooper was the last member of the commission to sign the report.

There is not much more to be added to this proposition. The fact that the Public Works Commission recommended the railway proposal to the Government and urged its construction was sufficient for the Government to proceed to construct that railway. The Secretary for Railways had a lot to say about freights on products and material to be taken from and to Mount Isa. If the schedule of rates, which, I understand, was drawn up by the Railway Department, is incorrect or unfair to the interests of the people of this State, then what has the hon. gentleman been doing during the last four or five months that he has been in control of the department?

Mr. KIRWAN: Will he undertake to sack the man who wrote out the schedule?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: That is the point! If the hon. gentleman discharges his duty, he will make inquiries, and, if any official is responsible for having drawn out this schedule of rates, then he should punish him.

Mr. Brassington.]

Personally, I have nothing to fear in this matter. I belong to a party which stands definitely for straight principles—a party which can only exist by carrying out a definite, honest policy. I again challenge the Government, if they think they have anything on any member of this party, and if they think any member or members of this party have done something in conflict with the interests of the State, to come out into the open and appoint a Royal Commission or commission of inquiry to clear the whole matter up not only to the satisfaction of Parliament, but to the satisfaction of the people of Queensland.

At 4.7 p.m.

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I repeat that challenge definitely. I challenge the Government to come forward with some such proposal instead of carrying on a campaign of innuendo that has been pursued ever since their members have occupied the Treasury benches. It is rather disheartening to sit here day after day listening to the Government relying solely on defaming members of this side of the Chamber instead of going ahead with the definite policy which they promised the people of Queensland.

Mr. KIRWAN: With a policy of £2,000,000 and 10,000 jobs.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I, for one, want to see the Government come out into the open and have this matter cleared up by a special inquiry. If a wrong has been done, I will not criticise the action taken to punish the wrongdoers.

Before resuming my seat, I want briefly to review the measure which, in effect, makes certain concessions at Lawn Hill to the Mount Isa company. There are many angles from which this question can be reviewed. First, there is the angle of the company taking an option of that area and developing it as soon as possible, thus aiding development and making this State much richer as a result. I subscribe to that policy; but, if the present Government give an option to the present Mount Isa company over the Lawn Hill show, then the company may have too much work to handle, and, as a consequence, developmental work on Lawn Hill will suffer. The Government should be very careful in its policy in this regard. It is little use tying up that show on a special lease if it is not going to be developed as soon as possible. It is a problem which requires the patient study of members of this Chamber in order that the right thing may be done.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremer*): The circumstances surrounding the debate this afternoon are more than remarkable, and I am satisfied that disclosures have been made, such as they are, for one purpose only—to divert the attention of the people of Australia from the issue in the Federal election on Saturday week. If hon. members on the other side think that it is going to do that, then I am very sorry for their thoughts. The tactics employed by the Government have been described as despicable, and I think the description fits the case beautifully. To hear the great noise of members of the Government, one would think that these matters were being discussed for the very first time; that they were never known before; and that nobody had any idea of the existence of any such thing. Yet members of the

[*Mr. Brassington.*

Government, who were then in opposition, were well aware of the whole circumstances of the case when the Duchess to Mount Isa Railway Bill was being discussed.

Mr. KELSO: No!

Mr. COOPER: I say "Yes!" and I shall prove my statement from "Hansard." Before doing so, let me say that the share register was open for inspection when the Bill was going through; that the returns in the Supreme Court were open for inspection; and that all the information that hon. gentlemen opposite have allegedly disclosed now was available at the time.

Mr. KELSO: Not all of it. You ought to qualify your statements.

Mr. COOPER: You certainly could not find in the Supreme Court things that had happened afterwards, but you could have found the things that happened in 1923, 1924 and 1925.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The share register does not disclose anything.

Mr. COOPER: Then where do you get your information from now?

Mr. KELSO: You don't like it?

Mr. COOPER: Let me read some of the remarks that were made during the debate on the Duchess to Mount Isa Railway Bill. If anybody could have made a frank and free statement on that occasion, it was made by the hon. member for Warrego, whose statement was very full, and, I am sure, to the satisfaction of the whole Chamber. He said—

"It is with pleasure that I attempt to destroy the argument or want of argument of the Leader of the Opposition, even though it should be at the expense of stating that I am interested in this proposal. And, lest there should be any doubt as to whether I am interested or not, let me say at once that I am well interested. If anybody desires to know how far I am interested and he can read, he can find out by going to the share register of the company and seeing for himself."

Nothing could have been more definite than that. Let me go on. When the hon. member for Enoggera was speaking, I asked him on half-a-dozen occasions if he knew anything of mining, and, if he had ever invested one penny in mining activities. The hon. member, shaking his head, said, "No, I have never invested one penny in mining."

In 1925 the hon. member for Enoggera, speaking on the Duchess to Mount Isa Railway Bill, said—

"We would all feel gratified if a real live industry could be established at Mount Isa, in the northern part of Queensland. Every statement concerning Mount Isa has contained glowing reports as to the possibilities of the field. There has been a tendency for the share market with respect to the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited to fluctuate. I believe that the lowest point was reached by those shares in July last, and, if this railway were constructed to the field, it would place the 'hallmark' on those shares."

There was no doubt about the actual position; yet to-day the hon. member says he

never had any interest in mining—that he never spent one penny in mining.

Mr. KERR: I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. COOPER: The hon. member said so this afternoon in answer to a question by me.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I rise to a point of order. The hon. member must accept my assurance that I said nothing of the kind.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Bremer must accept the assurance of the hon. member.

Mr. COOPER: I accept the hon. member's assurance that he said nothing of the kind. I asked "Did you ever invest a penny in mining in your life," and he shook his head, and I ask him to accept my assurance.

Mr. KERR: I did not say it.

Mr. COOPER: Here is what the hon. member did say on 22nd October, 1925, as reported in "Hansard," page 1523:—

"The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What do you know about mining?"

"Mr. Kerr: The Secretary for Mines may not realise it, but I have had a few years' experience in mining, and I have lost some money in mining."

(Laughter.) See where the hon. member for Enoggera is getting himself! Let me go a little further and show that the whole of the circumstances were well-known within the precincts of the House; and I again take the hon. member for Enoggera as my authority. As reported on the same page of "Hansard," he said—

"It is freely acknowledged"—

Not rounoured, supposed, or suspected—

"It is freely acknowledged that some members of the Government are interested in these mines."

Yet the Government come along to-day with this alleged disclosure as though it were known for the first time. It is to be supposed that they had discovered something that nobody had any knowledge of in the days that are gone; yet, when the Duchess-Mount Isa Railway Bill was going through Parliament the hon. member for Enoggera stated—

"It is freely acknowledged that some members of the Government are interested in these mines."

There were no denials to that statement. It was freely accepted by this House. There is nothing new in this.

Mr. KELSO: We did not know it was as bad as it is.

Mr. COOPER: The hon. member for Nundah said he did not know anything about it, and now he says he did not know it was as bad as it is.

Mr. KIRWAN: He has been "sticky-beaking."

Mr. KELSO: I have been "sticky-beaking" to some effect to-day.

Mr. COOPER: It may be seen now that this tremendous exposure is not an exposure at all. This is an attempt to wake Australia up to the fact that something terrible happened in 1926; and it can now be shown that it was publicly known in 1926, and was

stated in this House at the time the Mount Isa Railway Bill was going through.

Mr. KERR: By whom?

Mr. COOPER: By the hon. member for Enoggera in his speech.

Mr. KERR: "One swallow does not make a summer."

Mr. COOPER: On 27th October, 1925, the hon. member for Enoggera said—

"It is freely acknowledged that some members of the Government are interested in these mines."

"Freely acknowledged"—not suspected, or supposed, or hidden, but "freely acknowledged." There was no denial. I presume the members of the Government were sitting in their places on the front bench—nobody denied it—when the hon. member for Warrego made a statement that he was interested in the mine.

There is another thing we might as well mention—it was stressed to a certain extent by the Ministry, but not very strongly. There were two companies in this matter—a big company and a very small company. If the little company had made all the representations and offered all the guarantees in the world, it would not have carried any weight whatever. The big factors in the construction of that railway were the assurances given by the big company, which I think was the Mount Isa Limited. The Public Works Commission, in its investigations, paid no attention whatever to the small company. It was keen to get an assurance from those interested in the big company that the prospects were there. I remember the whole of the investigations particularly well. I remember the pains to which some of the members of the commission went to assure themselves as far as possible that the ore-bodies were there. When you come to think of two gentlemen getting on in years, like the hon. member for Bowen and the late hon. member for Mitchell, Mr. John Payne, going down into the deepest shaft of that mine by a windlass—a rope—and walking along an unventilated tunnel for some distance, stooping to the ground for a considerable time, to examine the ore-bodies as well as they could, you would be satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that every possible investigation was made as to the presence of these ore-bodies. I have seen no investigation so thorough, nor do I know of a time when the commission went so deeply into matters to assure themselves that there was every possibility of that mine becoming a paying proposition. The commission was satisfied also that there was every possibility of the line paying; but it did not overlook the fact that it would be built solely for the purpose of mining; and it desired to make doubly sure that it would not be like a number of other lines in this State which are at the present time a big burden on the taxpayers. For that reason the commission put in its report recommendation No. 2, which was read by the hon. member for Bowen. I want to draw attention to one or two things in it. The guarantee to the Government was offered by Mr. W. H. Corbould on behalf of the Mount Isa Mines Limited. Mr. Corbould was looked upon as the authority upon those deposits. He was a very careful man, and keen to know that everything was right before he said anything that could be held up in evidence against him afterwards. We examined Mr. Corbould

Mr. Cooper.]

on 24th April, 1924, and it was over twelve months afterwards that we made the report. The report was delayed for no other reason than to get an assurance from Mr. Corbould that he was satisfied that this proposition was going to be everything that it gave indication of being.

Mr. KELSO: What are you trying to prove?

Mr. COOPER: I am trying to prove that all these wonderful alleged disclosures are not disclosures at all. I want to prove that the railway line was recommended upon the mining prospects.

Mr. KELSO: We say that, if the line had not been built, the shares of Mount Isa Proprietary Limited would not have been worth £125,000.

Mr. COOPER: I want to show that the value was there before the railway was built, and the railway was built because the value was there. That is the only reason why the railway was recommended. It was not recommended until the commission was absolutely satisfied that the value was there. On 24th March, 1924, Mr. Corbould gave the following evidence in answer to questions asked by the hon. member for Bowen:—

“Do you think that sufficient work has been done on the Mount Isa field to justify the building of a railway, whether from Cloncurry or Duchess, at once?—I do not think so, but I feel certain that, as development gets ahead—in a very short time—it will be justified.

“How does it compare with other places you have had charge of in different parts of the world?—Judging from surface indications, it is far superior. It is a wonderful show.

“Am I right in understanding that you are interested in one of the companies on the field?—Yes; Mount Isa Mines Limited.”

That goes to prove that in March, 1924, Mr. Corbould was not satisfied, and he said that we would not be justified, on the development work that had been done, in recommending the construction of a railway at once. What induced the commission to make that recommendation in July, 1925? Only additional evidence. In July, 1925, this very same gentleman came forward with a guarantee against loss to the Government on the railway to the extent of £100,000, to be paid in ten annual instalments of £10,000 each. This guarantee proved that Mr. Corbould was then satisfied that the show had been sufficiently developed, and was far enough ahead to warrant the undertaking of the building of the railway, and he and the big money interests associated with him showed it by saying they were prepared to guarantee £100,000 spread over a period of ten years against losses on the railway.

Mr. JONES: He backed his opinion.

Mr. COOPER: He backed his opinion, as I am reminded, to the extent of £100,000, and that ought to have been sufficient evidence for anybody that the value was there, and, as the mines have developed, the value has been shown to be there. The building of the railway has been amply justified, and, as a matter of fact, it will go on in the way in which the commission thought that it would go on and be a wonderful asset to the development of North Queensland.

Just one other point—that is the statement that has been made that, because certain

[Mr. Cooper.

members were interested in this matter, they should not have voted upon it. There is no evidence whatever that they did vote upon it. The Opposition were also satisfied as to the decency of the proposal—because they knew of the proposal; they knew that the hon. member for Warrego was interested in it; they knew that members of the Government were interested in it; they knew that the share register was open, because the hon. member for Warrego offered it to them; they knew that the documents at the Supreme Court were open for inspection; and they were so far satisfied with the proposal that they did not call “Divide” upon the second reading of the Bill. That is the astonishing thing, and the suggestion of the hon. member for Enoggera that certain members who were interested voted on the proposal cannot “hold water” for the simple reason that nobody knows that their votes were with the “Ayes.” All that anybody knows is that the Speaker was satisfied that there were sufficient “Ayes” to carry the Bill, and he declared it carried, and, if any of these members were in the House at the time, there is nothing to show whether they voted, because hon. members opposite did not call “Divide.” The suggestion that they voted in favour of a proposal in which they were interested does not “hold water.” It is not recorded in the minutes of the House or in “Hansard.” That is another “ghost” that goes back to its grave. I think we have successfully “laid these ghosts” raised by the Government to the effect that there has been some tremendous scandal. We have “laid the ghost” that nobody knew anything about this proposal; we have “laid the ghost” that the Opposition did not know anything about members of the Government being interested, because the hon. member for Enoggera said that it was “freely acknowledged” that members of the Government were interested in Mount Isa, and we had the statement of the hon. member for Warrego that he was interested, and there was no denial from members of the Government that they were interested. If anything “went up like a rocket and came down like the stick” it is the wonderful disclosures that have been made by the Government to-day.

[4.30 p.m.]

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*): In taking part in this debate it is with great regret that I find that public men have seen fit to abuse the privileges extended to them by the people of Queensland by obtaining holdings in companies which their position enabled them to do.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You want to be careful. You are interested in companies.

Mr. NIMMO: My interest in companies has been acquired by means of money I have earned.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: We could just as easily say, as hon. members opposite have said concerning others, that you are dishonest.

Mr. NIMMO: After listening to the debate, I decided that I should secure accurate information, and I have had turned up the files of the Mount Isa Mines showing the shareholding transactions in that company.

Mr. BEDFORD: Five years old!

Mr. NIMMO: “Be sure your sins will find you out.”

Mr. BEDFORD: Poor thing!

Mr. NIMMO: I am not a poor thing. I am not here to secure a benefit at the

expense of the people of this State. The Mount Isa Mines Limited share register shows Mr. Theodore's holding in Mount Isa Mines Limited. On 4th February, 1926, T. W. Biggs transferred to him 5,000 fully paid-up shares in the company. It is to be noted that Mr. T. W. Biggs was the solicitor who registered the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited.

Mr. BEDFORD: He did not register the proprietary.

Mr. NIMMO: It might well be asked if Mr. Biggs was a trustee of those shares for Mr. Theodore. On 25th February, 1926, Mr. Theodore received, by allotment, a further 480 fully-paid shares in Mount Isa Mines out of 125,000 shares, making his interest 5,480 shares, which he disposed of.

Mr. BEDFORD: Which he paid for.

Mr. NIMMO: The register further discloses the fact that Mr. William McCormack had a shareholding in this company. On 15th February, 1924, Mr. William McCormack, registered as at "Lands Department, Brisbane," received by allotment 160 shares of £20 each in Mount Isa Mines Limited. On 11th June, 1925, out of 712 shares allotted at a board meeting held on the same date, he was allotted 100 £20 contributing shares. On 1st December, 1925, these 200 £20 shares were subdivided into 4,000 £1 shares. On 25th February, 1926, he received by allotment a further 625 fully paid-up shares out of 125,000 fully paid-up shares, in accordance with the contract with the proprietary company, making his total 4,625. Dispositions were later made which reduced his holding to 300 shares, and this included a transfer to London of 1,500 shares. On 17th February, 1927, the 625 shares allotted in February, 1926, were recalled and cancelled, and this left his shareholding interest at 2,600. By subsequent dispositions, including the 1,500 shares transferred to London, his holding was reduced to 300. On 3rd March, 1927, he received by allotment 562 fully paid-up shares transferred to London, his holding leases in accordance with the contract with the proprietary company. This brought his holding, so far as the New South Wales register discloses it, to 862 shares, which were eventually disposed of.

Now we come to the shareholding of Mr. Alfred James Jones, "Ban Ban," First avenue, Eagle Junction, Brisbane." On 10th December, 1925, F. Hambridge transferred to him twenty fully paid-up £20 shares. On 1st December, 1925, these were subdivided into 400 £1 shares.

Mr. BEDFORD: Terrible!

Mr. NIMMO: In February, 1926, Mr. E. C. Saint-Smith transferred to Mr. Jones 1,300 shares, making his total holding 1,700 shares.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh!

Mr. BEDFORD: Ghastly.

Mr. NIMMO: I find that this Mr. Saint-Smith was formerly an employee of the Mines Department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh!

Mr. BEDFORD: He is now general manager of the Mount Isa Company.

Mr. NIMMO: Well, the least said about it the better. On the same date 543 fully paid-up shares were allotted to Mr. Jones, in accordance with a contract dated 7th December, 1925, making his shareholding interest 2,243 shares.

Mr. JONES: What was wrong with that? Can't he register those shares?

Mr. KIRWAN (Brisbane): Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Oxley in order in reading his speech?

Mr. BEDFORD: It is not his speech.

Mr. NIMMO: I am not reading my speech. I want to have the facts on record.

The SPEAKER: I understand that the hon. member is not reading his speech, but is giving particulars regarding holdings of shares from a document. (Opposition interjections.)

Mr. NIMMO: Hon. members opposite do not like it. I have to read these figures, which I have had extracted from the register in the Supreme Court. Mr. Jones then had transferred to him 200 shares, making his total allotment 2,443 shares. By transfers he reduced this allotment to 1,143 shares. In February, 1927, the 543 shares previously allotted under agreement were recalled and cancelled, then leaving him with 600 shares. By transfer, he received another 100 shares, making his total 700. By transfers from him again this was reduced to 100. In March, 1927, 454 fully paid-up shares were allotted to Mr. Jones, in accordance with contract dated 17th February, 1924, making his total 554.

Mr. BEDFORD: This is dreadful!

Mr. NIMMO: Why I have arranged all these transactions is just to show hon. members and the people of Queensland that we have had men in this Parliament, elected by the people of Queensland, who were using their positions with advantage to themselves in regard to these allotments and transfers of shares.

There is another lot of shares of which I took a note. That is the history of the shareholding interest of a man named Randolph Bedford.

Mr. KILSO: Who is he?

Mr. BEDFORD: Member for Warrego.

Mr. NIMMO: On 15th February, 1924, he received fifty fully paid-up £20 shares in Mount Isa Mines Limited, in accordance with contract dated 17th February, 1924, and a letter of 12th February, 1924. His holding on 24th November, 1925, was fifty-six £20 shares, which on 1st December, were subdivided into 1,120 £1 shares. Of these 720 were transferred to John Wren.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh!

Mr. NIMMO: That left a balance of 400 shares which Mr. Bedford held.

Mr. BEDFORD: I sold them.

Mr. KIRWAN: If it was John Brown, it would be all right.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is that the John Wren who gave you £10,000 to fight your election?

Mr. NIMMO: On 25th January, 1926, Mr. Bedford's shareholding interest increased from 400 to 20,760 shares by the allotment of 20,360 fully paid-up shares in accordance with contract dated 7th December, 1925. Of these he sold 400, and the balance, namely 20,360, were cancelled in accordance with the agreement of 7th December, 1925. In February, 1927, he acquired a further 800 shares which were subsequently disposed of.

Mr. JONES: What is wrong with a member investing in an Australian industry?

Mr. Nimmo.]

Mr. NIMMO: In March, 1927, he received 17,805 fully paid-up shares in part consideration for purchase of leases in accordance with contract of 17th February, 1927.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are reading your speech all right.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NIMMO: I have recourse to a copy of the official register because I desire to deal with this matter very fully. These were the last shares acquired by him. He has since disposed of the whole of his shares, with the exception of 200, which were held by him on 18th April, 1929. The dispositions included the transfer of 1,400 shares to London.

Then we come to the shares of "Mary Bedford, care of R. Bedford, Parliament House, Brisbane." In February, 1926, she was allotted 240 fully paid-up shares in accordance with contract dated 7th December, 1925. In February, 1927, these were recalled and cancelled, and in March, 1927, she was allotted 216 fully paid-up shares in accordance with contract dated 17th February, 1927. These shares she disposed of.

Mr. GRIMSTONE: That was not his "Little Mary!" (Laughter.)

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Shut up talking about it, and give us an inquiry.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NIMMO: Continuing further, I come to the shares in the name of "Florio Bedford, motor engineer, care of R. Bedford, Parliament House, Brisbane." I find that in February, 1926, Florio Bedford was allotted 100 fully paid-up shares in Mount Isa Mines Limited in accordance with contract dated 7th December, 1925. In February, 1927, these shares were recalled and cancelled, and in March, 1927, he was allotted 90 fully paid-up shares in accordance with agreement dated 17th February, 1927. These shares he disposed of.

Mr. JONES: What is wrong with that?

Mr. BEDFORD: Nothing at all; he does not know. Shoddy mind! Shoddy business!

Mr. NIMMO: The history of the shareholding interest of "Eric William Bedford, care of Randolph Bedford, Parliament House, Brisbane," shows that on 25th February, 1926, he received 100 fully paid-up shares in Mount Isa Mines Limited in accordance with contract dated 7th December, 1925, between that company and Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited. In February, 1927, these were recalled, and in March, 1927, an allotment of 90 fully paid-up shares was made in accordance with the contract with the proprietary company dated 17th February, 1927. These shares were later disposed of by him.

Another lot of shares registered was in respect of "Randolph Edward Bedford, care of R. Bedford, Parliament House, Brisbane." In February, 1926, he was allotted 100 fully paid-up shares in accordance with contract dated 7th December, 1925. In February, 1927, these were recalled and cancelled, and in March, 1927, he was allotted 90 fully paid-up shares in accordance with contract dated 17th February, 1927. These shares he disposed of. My reason for collecting all that information—

Mr. KIRWAN: You never collected it. Why not tell the truth?

[*Mr. Nimmo.*]

Mr. NIMMO: Was to be sure that we were on the right ground.

When we see public men abusing the confidence which the people have placed in them, it makes one's blood boil, particularly when we think of the master-mind behind all these tactics. We know why that man was brought from the Southern States, given a safe seat in this Parliament, and why these men used him to distribute these favours amongst themselves.

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

Consideration of the Bill in Committee made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

POSTPONEMENT OF ORDER OF THE DAY.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*): I move—

"That Order of the Day No. 2 be postponed until after the consideration of Order of the Day No. 3."

Mr. KIRWAN: For what reason?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Because of the absence of the Treasurer, who is in charge of that Bill.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I think the hon. gentleman might be a little more courteous to the Opposition. This morning the hon. gentleman asked leave to move a motion without notice. I had no idea what that motion contained, but I agreed to it. I think the least the hon. gentleman might do is to let the Opposition know the necessity for this alteration.

Mr. KERR: Because the Treasurer is absent.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member is not the Leader of the Government.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He expected to be.

Mr. KIRWAN: I do not know what position the hon. member expected to hold. I suggest to the Secretary for Public Instruction that he should show some consideration for the Opposition. It will be admitted that when we occupied the Treasury benches, if it was contemplated to make any alteration on the business-sheet the Leader of the Opposition was consulted. This morning the hon. gentleman asked leave to move a motion without notice, and did not indicate what it was. He never spoke to the "Whip" or any other hon. member on this side, but I allowed it to go, and when I attempted to discuss it, you, Mr. Speaker, pulled me up. I am surprised at the attitude adopted by the hon. gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*): I am very sorry indeed that the hon. member has taken up the stand that he has. As a matter of fact, I had no idea that he was acting as leader.

Mr. KIRWAN: You knew who the "Whip" was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I certainly did. When the hon. member asked me just now why I desired the postponement of this Order, I said that it was because the Treasurer, who is in charge of the Bill, is not present. Let me tell the hon. member that I have shown a great deal of consideration to the Opposition. This morning when I moved for leave

to place the Babinda State Hotel Sale Bill on the business-paper for to-day, in reply to the hon. member for Brisbane I said that it would be second on the list. Since then I have reviewed the position as an act of courtesy to the Leader of the Opposition, who is at present in the North. That hon. member went away knowing that the Babinda State Hotel Sale Bill was on the business-paper for Tuesday next, and, as he had moved an important amendment in Committee, I thought it was only fair to him not to bring that Bill on to-day.

I have met the Opposition in this matter. I have moved that Order No. 2 stand over until after the consideration of Order No. 3, simply because Order No. 3 is purely a machinery Bill and is not likely to cause discussion.

Question (*Mr. King's motion*) put and passed.

REAL PROPERTY (COMMONWEALTH DEFENCE NOTIFICATION) BILL.

SECOND READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*): This Bill is introduced in accordance with section 124 (1) of the Defence Act of 1918, which reads—

“The Governor-General may make regulations, not inconsistent with this Act, prescribing all matters which by this Act are required or permitted to be prescribed, or which are necessary or convenient to be prescribed, for securing the discipline and good government of the Defence Force.”

Then we come to subsection (n) of the same section—

“The regulation of the quartering or billeting of members of the Defence Force in time of war.”

Section 124 was amended by the Act of 1927 to read—

“Section one hundred and twenty-four of the Defence Act, 1918, is amended—

(a) By inserting in subsection (1), after paragraph (n), the following paragraph:—

“(na) The regulation, control, or prohibition of the construction of buildings or other erections within areas proclaimed by the Governor-General to be areas in which such regulation, control, or prohibition is necessary for the defence of the Commonwealth.”

At an earlier stage the Leader of the Opposition made some reference to compensation in regard to land that might subsequently come within the ambit of the Commonwealth Act by proclamation.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is the main question!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is the main question, but it is no concern whatever of this particular Bill. If anyone has a claim for compensation, it is a matter which must be brought before the Commonwealth, and this machinery Bill has no bearing on such a claim for compensation. It is simply a matter of passing the Bill, and, if there is any claim, it will have to be dealt with by the Defence Department. For the information of hon. members, I will quote a letter of 24th December, 1928, written by Mr. Marr, for the Prime Minister,

to the Premier of Queensland. He also forwarded the “Commonwealth Gazette” of 26th December, 1928, containing a proclamation by the Governor-General, in which certain defence areas are set out. I am only going to read the relevant parts of the letter—

“I should be glad if you would assist in the administration of this statutory rule by instructing the shire, county, and municipal councils concerned to withhold permission for the construction of buildings or erections in the areas concerned which would contravene the regulations, and in such cases to refer the applicants to the District Base Commandant.”

The letter deals with other things, and then Mr. Marr finally states—

“It should be stated that these regulations will be administered by the Commonwealth Government in the most sympathetic manner.”

Instructions were given by the late Government to the various local authorities, so that they were prepared to take steps to comply with the Commonwealth's request. This Bill was the result of a conference between the Commonwealth and States in May, 1929, at which the following memorandum was presented by the Commonwealth:—

“Under section 124 of the Defence Act 1903-27, power is given to the Governor-General to make regulations for the regulation, control, or prohibition of the construction of buildings or other erections within areas proclaimed by the Governor-General to be areas in which such regulation, control, or prohibition is necessary for the defence of the Commonwealth.

“A proclamation proclaiming such areas was published in the ‘Gazette’ of 26th December, 1927, and full descriptions of all the areas affected were given.”

I think our areas were four—Southport, Lytton, Enoggera, and Thursday Island—

“The Control of Defence Areas Regulations (1927) were promulgated specifying the restrictions operating in each area.

“Regulations made under the above power operate in respect of areas which have been proclaimed, and the combined result of the regulation and the proclamation is that the titles of the owners of land within the proclaimed areas are affected, but no provision exists in the regulations or otherwise, for placing a notification of the proclamation upon the title, so that any intending purchaser of the land may become aware of the fact that the proclamation has been made.

“On the 24th December, 1927, the Prime Minister addressed a letter to the Premier of each State forwarding a copy of the proclamation and regulations and inviting him to bring the regulations under the notice of the Registrar-General of Titles, so that any notification that he may consider necessary may be made on titles affected.

“In order to deal with this position it is suggested that the following procedure should be adopted in connection with this matter:—

(i.) A regulation should be made under the Defence Act providing that the Minister shall, by registered letter, send a copy of the proclamation to the

Hon. N. F. Macgroarty.]

Registrar of Titles or other officer in charge of the land titles registration system of the State in which the land is situated, and that he should send a similar notification to the owners of the land affected as appearing by registrations in the Office of Titles or Registrar-General's Office of the State.

(ii.) That the States should take steps to amend the law so that the necessary notification shall be recorded upon the documents of title in the office and so that there shall be power (where necessary) to require the production of documents of title from the owner for making any duplicate memoranda which may be necessary."

The Bill provides that the Registrar of Titles may register on certificates of title notifications of the proclamations under the Defence Act. There is power for the registrar to call for certificates of title and enforce their production, under a penalty not exceeding £20 for refusal. I quoted the regulations previously. I have them before me now, and they are very long, and it is not necessary to read them again. They make provision with regard to the storage of oil or explosives, and the restriction of buildings to a certain height, etc. A purchaser of land should know what land he is buying, what restrictions there may be upon its use, and what proclamations have been made, so that these registrations of notifications are really for the benefit of purchasers of land.

Mr. KIRWAN: For their protection.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes. This resolution was passed at the Premier's Conference on 28th May, 1923:—

"That State legislation should be passed to enable the Commonwealth to obtain registered titles to land acquired by the Commonwealth and to provide for notifications rendered necessary by the proclamation under section 124 of the Defence Act."

[5 p.m.]

In 1924 the Queensland Parliament passed an Act enabling the Commonwealth to obtain titles, and this Bill merely provides that the proclamation shall be notified upon the title. The object of the Bill is to provide that no inconvenience shall be suffered by the Commonwealth Government, and that people will be fully aware of the conditions under which the land is purchased. I do not know that I can give any further information to the House. I beg to move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): The Bill is a very simple one, and one based on a resolution carried at a Premier's Conference. No doubt the Federal Government consider it necessary that, with respect to any area reserved for defence purposes, all titles should be marked in such a way that purchasers of land will be aware of any disadvantages. The Attorney-General has pointed out that very drastic regulations are promulgated by the Commonwealth Government relating to the height of buildings and with respect to the construction of a certain type of building. Therefore, it is only fair that purchasers of land should be protected and should be aware of any disadvantages attaching to the land, and that these matters should be marked on the title showing that

the land is subject to regulation by the Defence Department.

There is another matter on which I require some information, although, perhaps, the Attorney-General may not have it at his disposal, seeing that it does not affect his department. He stated that the Commonwealth Government were prepared to give sympathetic consideration to the question of paying compensation on the resumption of land. The Attorney-General will realise that it might be necessary in the course of a few years for the Defence Department to extend the area required for the effective defence of Australia. It may be necessary to resume certain land, and I should like to know if, in the event of buildings being already constructed, the owners will be compelled to comply with the regulation or to abandon the buildings, and, if so, would the Commonwealth Government be prepared to pay reasonable compensation? I quite realise that it is a matter entirely for the Commonwealth Government; but, if the Attorney-General could give the information, it would be reassuring to people who will come within an area by virtue of the regulations. It is necessary that they should be protected to the extent of receiving reasonable compensation for expenditure incurred in the construction of buildings prior to the proclamation of the area as a defence area. No reasonable objection can otherwise be taken to the Bill. It is absolutely essential for the purpose of defence. I quite understand the position of the Government, and this House cannot take any objection to a Bill of this character.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*), in reply: I would like to repeat what I read—a short extract from the letter dated 24th December, 1923, written by Mr. Marr, for the Prime Minister, to the then Premier of Queensland, Mr. McCormack—

"It should be stated that these regulations will be administered by the Commonwealth Government in a most sympathetic manner."

That means that the Commonwealth Government would compensate anybody unjustly injured. If an area were proclaimed to-morrow wherein a building had to be demolished because it was not of the right type, there is no doubt that a claim for compensation against the Commonwealth Government or the private individual who demolished it would be sustained. There is not the slightest doubt that any Government would administer this matter in a sympathetic manner and compensate the owner. There is nothing to fear in this respect on the part of any individual who may be concerned.

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

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Maxwell, *Townsville*, one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, and the schedule agreed to.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

Third reading the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 5.10 p.m.

[Hon. N. F. Macgroarty.]