

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 1929

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER, 1929.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. R. A. DUNLOP, MINING WARDEN.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Premier—

“Is the Mr. R. A. Dunlop, who was warden at Chillagoe and who is figuring in the Mungana transactions, the same Mr. R. A. Dunlop who was selected by the late Government as one of the Commission appointed to redistribute the electorates?”

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, Aubigny) replied—

“Yes.”

FINANCIAL LOSS ON STATE STATIONS
RECENTLY SOLD.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“What was the financial loss on the State stations—Dotswood, Wando Vale, Strathmore, and Vanrook—(a) during last financial year or to date of sale; (b) during whole period they were owned by the Government?”

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) replied—

	Loss 1923-29.
	£
" (a) Dotswood	7,823
Wandovale	9,169
Vanrook (including Strathmore, Dunbar, and Waterloo)	24,515
	Accumulated Loss to 30th June, 1929.
	£
" (b) Dotswood	92,041
Wandovale	53,047
Vanrook (including Strathmore, Dunbar, and Waterloo)	232,520

The above figures are exclusive of interest for the six months ending 30th June, 1929, which was not charged by Treasury, and amounted to approximately £20,000."

PREFERENTIAL FREIGHT RATES GRANTED TO MOUNT ISA PROPRIETARY LIMITED.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Towong*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"With reference to the suggestions made during the debate on the Mining Trust Agreement Bill, that the preferential freight rates granted to Mount Isa Proprietary Limited were arranged solely by the departmental officers, will he inform the House of the full circumstances relating to the fixing of such rates?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"A conference was held at which the then Premier (Hon. W. McCormack) and the Minister for Railways, and Commissioner for Railways met Messrs. Urquhart, Mitchell, and Corbould of the Russo-Asiatic Company, and at the conclusion of the conference, the then Premier (Hon. W. McCormack) quoted the rates in question."

RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NEW ZEALAND AND QUEENSLAND.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) asked the Premier—

"1. Has his attention been called to the paragraph appearing in 'Brisbane Courier' of Tuesday, 1st instant, in which it is stated that during debates in the New Zealand Parliament on the unemployed position the Premier, Sir Joseph Ward, stated that the passage of the Government's land legislation and completion of railways would remove unemployment from the main centres, and further added that, within five weeks, all the unemployed in New Zealand will be absorbed?"

"2. Has his attention been called to the paragraph in to-day's 'Courier' dated, Auckland, 7th October, which reads as follows:—

Over 1,800 unemployed will be given work by the Government, immediately absorbing half the total unemployed in New Zealand. The men will be engaged on roads, railways, forestry, land, and drainage work. The Government's objective is employment for

every idle man, totalling 4,000, within seven months?"

"3. In view of the promise made to the electors by Premier Moore during the elections in May last, that if returned to power he would in the meantime make available £2,000,000 and find jobs for 10,000 unemployed, will he state why, after a period of five months, that promise is unfulfilled?"

"4. If he cannot provide the £2,000,000 and the 10,000 jobs promised, will he communicate with Sir Joseph Ward, New Zealand Premier, and ascertain details of his methods for the solution of unemployment?"

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) replied—

"1 and 2. Yes; and I feel confident that similar land legislation now introduced in this Parliament and other measures dealing specifically with employment, which it is intended to introduce in the near future, will have a similarly beneficial effect on this State. I would remind the hon. member that the Government led by Sir Joseph Ward in New Zealand has been nearly eleven months in office, while this Government has been in office less than five months. I would further remind him that the hon. member for Bowen has stipulated three years as the minimum period necessary for a Labour Government to secure results from its policy.

"3. and 4. See previous answer."

(Opposition interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like to remind hon. members that I will not have interruptions during the period that questions are being asked and answered. Such interruptions are absolutely disorderly, and will not be permitted.

LOAN EXPENDITURE ON MARYBOROUGH AND GYMPIE RAILWAY STATIONS, 1925-1929.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"What amount of loan money has been spent in connection with the under-mentioned railway stations and yards during each of the financial years 1925-26, 1926-27, 1927-28, and 1928-29—(a) Maryborough; (b) Gympie?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"The information is being prepared."

RAILWAY FREIGHT CONCESSIONS TO MOUNT ISA MINES, LIMITED.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Quenton*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What is the ordinary freight on—(a) ore; (b) matte from Mount Isa to Townsville?"

"2. What is the amount of concession per ton granted by the late Government to the Mount Isa Company?"

"3. If, as he stated on Friday last, an undue concession had been granted, will he take steps to see that the Railway Department gets what is due to it?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"The information is being compiled."

SUGGESTED SUPPLY OF LUGGAGE BARROWS AT CENTRAL STATION.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"In view of the fact that the luggage porters at the Central Station are handicapped in the performance of their work due to lack of the proper facilities being provided for handling of passengers' luggage, will he issue instructions that a suitable luggage barrow, similar in design to those in use at the railway stations of Sydney and Melbourne, be provided for these men without delay?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"The conditions at Sydney and Melbourne are dissimilar to those at Central Station, Brisbane, but the question of supplying barrows is being considered. No request has, so far, been made by the luggage porters for a special type of barrow. When barrows are required the luggage porters use the small type of three-wheel luggage barrow which is easy to propel and turn."

CHARGES AGAINST THARCOMINDAH HOSPITAL COMMITTEE.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrago*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Has he received from Tharcomindah Hospital Committee any reply to the charges made against that committee by Mr. Walter Williams, late Government representative on that committee?"

"2. Does he intend to institute a public inquiry into the matter as previously requested, as Mr. Williams has alleged fraudulent practices by that committee?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*), for the HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*), replied—

"1. No.

"2. The question of further inquiry will be decided when the committee's representations are received."

ACCIDENT IN BLACK STAR SHAFT, MOUNT ISA.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. Is he aware that following on an accident at the 450-foot level of the Black Star shaft at Mount Isa, owing to ignorant methods of charging and firing, three men were injured, one of them being permanently disabled?"

"2. Did not the board of inquiry into the accident, held at Mount Isa, return a finding that the accident had been caused by the ignorance of the foreman?"

"3. Did not that jury find that the foreman was not a fit person for the position?"

"4. Despite that finding, has not the foreman been re-engaged by Mount Isa Mines Limited at an increased salary?"

"5. In the interests of the safety of the miners, will he make full inquiries into this matter?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"I have no knowledge of an accident having occurred at the 450-foot level of the Black Star shaft at Mount Isa."

REMOVAL OF MEMBERS FROM ROCKHAMPTON HOSPITAL BOARD.

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

"Seeing he seems to have misunderstood the third question I asked on the 4th October in connection with the appointments to the Rockhampton Hospital Board, viz., 'What were the names of those persons who were approached prior to Mr. Cullen's appointment and who declined the position offered them?' will he now say definitely if it is not a fact that four or five prominent townspeople were approached prior to Mr. Cullen's appointment and declined the position, and then only was Mr. Cullen approached and accepted the position?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*), for the HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*), replied—

"I did not misunderstand the question. The answer to this question is 'No.'"

EXPENDITURE BY FORESTRY BOARD ON FRASER ISLAND.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Lands whether he has an answer to the following question which I addressed to him on 19th September:—

"1. What was the expenditure by the Forestry Board on Fraser Island for each year from 1915-16 to 1928-29?"

"2. What are the assets on the island and value of same?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. A. Deacon, *Cunningham*) replied—

	£	s.	d.
"1. 1915-19	*4,429 12 5
1919-20	†1,156 12 2
1920-21	†5,156 19 7
1921-22	†3,577 4 10
1922-23	2,586 13 8
1923-24	2,618 0 6
1924-25	3,285 8 8
1925-26	4,675 16 4
1926-27	†11,534 18 1
1927-28	3,652 0 10
1928-29	1,800 19 5

£45,074 6 6

*Figures obtained from Lands Department records.

†Returned soldier operations under Commonwealth Loan.

‡Includes purchase of 12 miles of tramline.

"2. (1) Hardwood regeneration areas, 10,517 acres. (2) Softwood plantations, 793 acres. (3) Steel tramline, 11 miles 70 chains, with locomotive, forty trucks, jetty and wharf, etc. (4) Road construction, 12 miles 55 chains. (5) Firebreaks, 40 miles 30 chains. (6) Forest nursery and water supply. (7) Two houses, ten bunkhous, office, toolroom, quarters, six sheds, stable, and galley, etc. (8) Six paddocks. (9) Miscellaneous equipment. In addition, the natural stands protected amount to 105,000,000 superficial feet. To give present value of above assets would involve accurate surveys and measurements with succeeding computations. It does not appear to be necessary to undertake this expenditure at the present time. Careful record is being

kept of the assets and their condition, and these records are available in the department. Regeneration areas and soft-wood plantations are progressing satisfactorily; the tramline was purchased at scrap value to complete the logging operations so that regeneration work could proceed; roads and firebreaks are in good order and constitute an essential service; forest nursery is being reduced as regeneration methods are developed; housing and paddocks are rent producing."

INQUIRY INTO ATTEMPTED BRIBERY.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Has he received a letter from J. H. C. Sleeman, Sydney, which contains the following extracts:—

The Pastoralists and Graziers' Association decided that a man should be bought to cross the floor of the House.

Certain members of the Opposition were approached and agreed that to give the bought man a chance to cross the floor of the House, a no confidence motion should be moved.

The position is that the Pastoralists' Association was officially responsible for the attempt, not to bribe Brennan, but to buy the political support of the House.

Nearly every member of your party who was in the House in August, 1922, was prepared to accept the dissolution which the defection of Brennan would have brought about.

There were several interviews with members on the subject.

"In view of the fact that a no confidence motion was moved by the Leader of the Opposition and seconded by the present Premier, Mr. Moore, on the 15th August, 1922, does he not consider sufficient grounds exist to grant the official inquiry as asked for by Mr. Sleeman, in the interests of the honesty and probity of Queensland?"

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) replied—

"No. I have not received any letter at all from Mr. Sleeman."

EMPLOYMENT OF RAILWAY MEN IN POLLING BOOTHS ON ELECTION DAY.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Has any special regulation been issued regarding railway men working on election day—I mean so far as working in the polling-booths is concerned?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"Yes, regulations similar to those issued last year."

TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES TO HON. MEMBERS.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rochampton*), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Now that the Salaries Bill has been disposed of, will the hon. gentleman feel disposed to make known to the House what scale of allowances he has decided

upon as regards country members from the far distant centres and those nearer Brisbane—that is, on a sliding scale—and if he proposes to give the House the right of saying whether the allowances are reasonable or unreasonable?"

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) replied—

"I do not intend to give the House any opportunity of saying whether they are reasonable or unreasonable. As soon as the Estimates come on they will be able to see the full list of allowances. They vary from £25, £33, £55, to £76."

Mr. HANLON: Are there no "nothings"? (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: Oh, yes, a lot of them. (Laughter.)

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Police Investment Board for the year ended 31st December, 1922.

Report of the Commissioner of Police for twelve months ended 30th June, 1922.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Amended Regulation under the Inspection of Scaffolding Act of 1915.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

MOUNT ISA PROPRIETARY, LIMITED, SHARE TRANSACTIONS.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): I desire to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for Warrego be permitted to make a personal explanation.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEDFORD: Following wild statements made by the Secretary for Railways, the Secretary for Mines, the hon. members for Nundah, Enoggera, and others in this House last Friday, the Premier makes the following statement in the "Daily Mail" of to-day, and thereby supports the statements made about myself and other members of the Opposition. Mr. Moore said—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in referring to anything that another hon. member may have said in connection with a personal explanation. He may make a personal explanation in connection with anything he himself may have said or done, but references to what has been said by other hon. members are not permissible in a personal explanation.

Mr. BEDFORD: I wish to suggest later a quicker and more conclusive way of bringing this case to the judgment that Mr. Moore would like to leave to the unsatisfactory verdict of—not public opinion, but political party opinion.

Mr. Moore said that "I do not help my case by my statement that I gave shares to Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack." My case needs no help; and, if it does, I hereby further prejudice it against myself by supplying this full list of the shares given

away by me in February, 1924—two and a-half years before it was known beyond argument that there was sufficient ore at Mount Isa to warrant a railway, and about two years before the Public Works Commission reported on it.

List of Mount Isa Proprietary Shares given by me in February, 1924.

Members of my family ...	1,700
V. J. Saddler, Melbourne ...	2,000
J. Millican, Sydney ...	2,000
H. B. Jamieson, secretary, Isa Proprietary ...	500
A. Cherry, Melbourne ...	200
F. Talbot, Melbourne ...	200
E. G. Theodore, Brisbane ...	500
W. McCormack, Brisbane ...	250
L. McDonald, Brisbane ...	200
W. R. Crampton, Brisbane ...	200
J. Hanlon, Brisbane ...	200
A. Campbell, Cloncurry ...	200
J. Harding Cloncurry ...	500
W. H. Corbould, Cloncurry ...	2,000
T. McMahon, Sydney ...	100
S. H. Prior, Sydney ...	250
K. Marshall, Brisbane ...	200
Harry Coyne, Judge of the Land Court since May, 1923 ...	200
Mrs. T. J. Ryan, Brisbane ...	100
W. A. Ackers, Townsville ...	100
A. J. Jones, Brisbane ...	280
	11,830 shares of 5s.

On the same day Mr. Jones bought 200 Isa Proprietary shares and paid over 5s. each for them.

Of these, 1,700 represent gifts to members of my family. Saddler and Millican are old friends, who have done me many kindnesses: both of these gentlemen were directors of Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited; they applied for big blocks of contributing shares, and also paid cash for their directors' qualification shares. Cherry and Talbot are my mates from boyhood; McDonald, Crampton, and Hanlon are Brisbane friends for twelve years; Arthur Campbell and J. H. Harding, both of Cloncurry, have been my friends for twenty-three years; Bill Ackers, of Townsville, a friend for thirty-two years. Mr. Ackers was an old-age pensioner when I promised him the shares in December, 1923. I could not find him for four years, but met him and gave him the stock in Townsville in 1923. I am glad to know that the money he got from the sale of the shares gave him a little ease from the cancer that last December killed him. Mr. Ackers had never any influence on the Mount Isa Railway Bill.

Mr. Corbould, the then managing director of Mount Isa Mines, Limited, received the 2,000 shares for services rendered in the flotation; some of these shares, I believe, he gave to Dunlop, and some to McGillivray, both of Cloncurry; McMahon and Prior, both of the Sydney "Bulletin," have been my friends from boyhood; Harry Coyne, to whom these shares were given in May, 1924, was appointed judge of the Land Court in May, 1923, and was an intimate friend of mine to the time of his death, as Theodore, Jones, and Marshall still are. The shares given to Mrs. T. J. Ryan were given in recognition of a loan to me by the late Mr. T. J. Ryan, also long since repaid; and the date of the gift was three years after Mr. T. J. Ryan's death, he having left State politics four years before Mount Isa was discovered.

I applied for my full quota of reserved shares in Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead, Limited, and my quota was 23,000; and I paid the company £5,750 cash for them. All the other shareholders in this list, except Mr. Ackers, Mrs. Ryan, and Mrs. Marshall applied for their quota, share for share—and paid cash to the company for them.

The value of the shares I gave away to friends, in mere goodwill, would be to-day about £11,000; and I don't expect mean little suburban "pikers" to understand either mateship, gratitude, or generosity. A furtive man could have covered up these gifts, but I never had any reason for concealment, and all the facts and figures, at which a few members pretended to be shocked last Friday, were public property nearly five and a-half years ago.

If any of the slanderous statements made of me in this House on Friday last, as propaganda against Mr. Theodore, are made outside, I shall give the offender a writ. I am sorry the hon. member for Enoggera is not in his place to take his share in the warning. I include in this warning the newspapers which have been misled by the cowardly attacks here, so cowardly that, for instance, the Minister for Railways said on Friday that Mr. John Wren was the greatest scoundrel in Australia. Since then he has altered "Hansard" to read that John Wren is an undesirable person.

I ask for a royal commission to inquire into all the transactions of Mount Isa Mines, Limited, and Mount Isa Proprietary, Limited, from December, 1923, to date, including the concession to the Mining Trust, Limited, of 100,000 acres at Lawn Hill.

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): I desire the permission of the House to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for Paddington be permitted to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. JONES: In view of the personal explanation made by the hon. member for Warrego, I deem it incumbent on me also to make an explanation.

During the debate on the second reading of the Mining Trust Ratification Agreement Bill, on Friday last, 4th October, the Secretary for Railways, the hon. member for Oxley, and the member for Enoggera stated that 1,300 Mount Isa Proprietary, Limited, shares were transferred to me from the hon. member for Warrego in consideration of support to the Mount Isa railway proposal. To this I give an emphatic denial.

On 3rd March, 1925, I received from Mr. Bedford 400 shares, and he received from me £50, cheque No. H.6343, Australian Bank of Commerce. On 17th July, 1925, I received from Mr. Bedford 200 shares, and he received from me £50, cheque No. H.15271, Australian Bank of Commerce. On 6th October I received from Mr. Bedford 1,000 shares, and he received from me £262 10s., cheque No. H.18967, Australian Bank of Commerce.

Thus it will be seen that the 1,600 shares in the above company, received from Mr.

Mr. Jones.]

Bedford, cost me £362 10s., the par value of the shares being 5s.

I had during the 1925 year share transactions in the Mount Isa Proprietary Company, through the firms of F. L. Dawson and Company and Corrie and Company, the prices I purchased at ranging between 4s. 6d. and 8s. 4d. The prices I sold ranged at between 5s. 6d. and 7s. 3d., with the exception of a few which were valued at under 10s. when the two companies merged. All my transactions in connection with Mount Isa will stand the light of day, and I have yet to learn that a man is a bad Australian because he dares to invest his earnings in an Australian industry—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JONES: Be it mining or otherwise. My life's work has been in the mining industry, and naturally I prefer to invest my earnings in mining.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was received very coldly by the Opposition.

Mr. JONES: I put £362 10s. into it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why don't you admit that you got 200 shares for nothing?

Mr. BEDFORD: Why don't you admit that you falsified a "Hansard" proof the other day?

PROPOSED INQUIRY INTO MOUNT ISA PROPRIETARY SILVER-LEAD LIMITED AND MUNGANA MINES LIMITED SHARE TRANSACTIONS.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore. *Aubigny*): Mr. Speaker, I desire the permission of the House to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the will of the House that the Premier be permitted to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Yesterday, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition gave notice of a motion appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into certain matters connected with the passing of the Dutchess to Mount Isa Railway Act. As hon. members are aware, the Standing Orders and the Sessional Orders do not permit of that motion being discussed, but in view of the grave disclosures made in the Bankruptcy Court on the examination of the witnesses in the Fred Reid bankruptcy concerning the half interest of the Hon. William McCormack in Mungana Mines Limited, the secrecy surrounding the shares held by him and his nominees, the questionable circumstances under which the Mungana Mineral Leases were purchased by the Government at the time when the Hon. E. G. Theodore was Premier and the Hon. William McCormack was Home Secretary, and of the admission made in Parliament by the member for Warrego that he had made a gift to both the Hon. E. G. Theodore and Hon. William McCormack of Mount Isa shares, presumably at a time when both those gentlemen were Ministers of the Crown, I want to assure the House that the Government will be pleased to give careful consideration to the proposal of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire, not only into the affairs of the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited, but also into

Mungana Mines Limited and other matters for the purpose of taking appropriate action.

Mr. HANLON: Is that a definite promise of an inquiry?

REQUEST FOR INQUIRY INTO ATTEMPTED BRIBERY.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): Mr. Speaker, I desire the permission of the House to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the will of the House that the hon. member for Herbert be permitted to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PEASE: I am quite prepared to accept the statement by the Premier if he will include the Sleeman case.

The PREMIER: There is no occasion to do that. I will conduct the business of this House.

Mr. HANLON: You have made a definite statement that an inquiry will be instituted.

INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

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

Question stated—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced 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."

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*): When the House proceeded with the consideration of the Estimates yesterday there was very little more that I wished to add to my remarks. I should like to know from the Premier whether it is the intention of the Government to advance money at a reduced rate of interest to any companies or persons who propose to establish secondary industries, or is it merely the intention of the Government to guarantee the interest payment to private investors. One would be justified in using either hypothesis, based on the explanation of the Bill given by the Premier yesterday. There is an idea outside that the Government are prepared to make loan money available to prospective business enterprises and to make that money available at a reduced rate of interest. Hon. members would like some information on the point before voting on this motion.

Mr. JONES (*Puddington*): This motion is intended to do something to encourage the expansion or development of secondary industries in this State. No true Australian would object to any resolution, or to the introduction of any Bill in this Chamber, or the adoption of any method by the Government that had for its object the fostering of secondary or manufacturing industries. It is not quite clear to me what the Premier means by secondary industries as mentioned in this motion.

In my opinion, secondary industries have never been correctly defined. It would be very nice to know the definition of secondary industries as mentioned in this Bill. For instance, we know that the sugar industry passes through many stages in the course of the manufacture of sugar; but it is very

[*Mr. Jones.*]

difficult to define what is the primary stage or the secondary stage of the business. Does the Premier mean manufacturing industries? If this motion is intended to foster manufacturing industries in this State—to establish new industries here—to encourage new industries, or to expand industries already established here, then nobody could object to it; but personally I cannot see that there is very much power in the hands of this Government or in the hands of any State Government to encourage to any great extent the establishment of secondary industries. The Premier knows that the matter is a Federal matter, and that the Federal issue is wrapped up in this motion. The greatest encouragement that can be given to the establishment of new industries in Australia and to the expansion of manufacturing industries here is through the tariff and by the adoption of a protective policy. This Parliament or any State Parliament has no power to protect an industry in that way. The encouragement of manufacturing industries is really a Federal matter, and one of the things which should be made the issue of the present Federal campaign in which we are now engaged. I fail to see that there is very much real business in this motion unless it has for its object the subsidising in some form or other of industry which the Government may desire to encourage by subsidy. Have the Government not that power now?

The PREMIER: We only want to make it clearer. You did it with the alcohol industry.

Mr. JONES: That is so. The point I wish to make is that the encouragement of manufacturing industries is a Federal matter. Australia will never prosper until our secondary industries are encouraged to a greater extent. My second point is: What will be the best method of encouraging the establishment of secondary industries? There is a great difference in the meaning of a secondary and the manufacturing industry. It will be difficult in many instances to define what is the primary and what is the secondary stage of an industry. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was very wise when he said that we must wait and see what this Bill contains.

The PREMIER: He said he was against it.

Mr. PEASE: Against the principles—decidedly.

Mr. JONES: I hope that we shall have a free discussion on the all-important subject of establishing secondary industries to make our own goods here rather than to import them from overseas. A friend of mine who recently visited Melbourne told me that a firm there exhibited a notice to this effect—

“No Australian goods sold here”—that Japanese and foreign goods only [11 a.m.] were sold in that shop. That sort of thing should not be permitted in Australia. Something requires to be done to foster our manufacturing industries, because that is the only way to cure the unemployment evil and to assist in populating Australia.

Question—That the resolution (*Mr. Moore's motion*) be agreed to—put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

Resolution agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) presented the Bill, and moved—

“That the Bill be now read a first time.”

Question put and passed.

Second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—THIRD AND FOURTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

(*Mr. Roberts, East Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY, SCAFFOLDING, AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Question stated—“That £34,378 be granted for ‘Inspection of Machinery, Scaffolding, and Weights and Measures.’”

Item agreed to.

THE GAS ACT OF 1916.

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

“That £2,970 be granted for ‘The Gas Act of 1916.’”

This is the only vote in connection with the Department of Public Works that it has been found necessary to provide for an increase, that being accounted for by £40 extra being required this year on account of classification increases. The item “Contingencies” includes provision for a retaining fee of £100 to the gas referee, Mr. Brady.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That £17,422 be granted for ‘Department of Mines—Chief Office.’”

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): I am not aware whether the Deputy Leader of the Opposition received an intimation that the Estimates for the Department of Mines would come on this morning.

Mr. CLAYTON: You never told us.

Mr. JONES: When I was Secretary for Mines, I always intimated to the Leader of the Opposition when the Mines Estimates would come before the Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You ought to be ready. You ought to know everything about the Department of Mines.

Mr. JONES: I know more than the hon. gentleman does, and I know more about the Department of Mines than the hon. gentleman knows about the Railway Department or is ever likely to know.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. JONES: The Minister interjected to me, and, in a spirit of retaliation, I think I am entitled to reply.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. JONES: I notice that a greater amount is required for the Department of Mines this year than was voted last year, and no doubt the extra amount is properly accounted for. Having been in the Department of Mines for a period of twelve years,

Mr. Jones.]

I want to say that it would be difficult to improve upon the officers of that department because of their knowledge of the mining industry and the general work of the department.

Quite recently the late Under Secretary, Mr. Henry Marshall, was retired. Last Friday, under parliamentary privilege, the name of Mr. Marshall was bandied about this Chamber—I do not say by the Minister; but his name was mentioned by hon. members opposite in connection with certain transactions; and I want to put it on record that it is known generally throughout this State that Mr. Marshall is one of the most respected citizens of Queensland, and, as Under Secretary for Mines, was not only a capable man, but one of the most honourable and upright men it is possible to come in contact with. During my long experience in Parliament I have never known the privilege of Parliament to be so misused or so much abused as was the case on Friday last. In introducing the Mining Trust Limited Agreement Ratification Bill, the Secretary for Mines dealt fully with the agreement, but, apart from my reply, few of the speeches delivered by hon. members had anything to do with that Bill. For four hours Lawn Hill was not mentioned at all. The debate shifted right on to Mount Isa and the building of the Mount Isa railway.

I have not a note in my pocket, as I was not aware that the Estimates of the Department of Mines were coming on this morning. I would have liked to have the opportunity of dealing with the whole transaction in connection with the building of the Mount Isa railway. I was a member of the Cabinet at the time, and I make no apology for my attitude with regard to Mount Isa. I make no apology for my own private transactions. During the time I have been in the House I have never known of Ministers and members' private affairs so much delved into as they were here last Friday. The chief work of my life has been in the mining industry; I have speculated in mining to my sorrow. If, as an Australian, I care to invest my money in mining enterprises, there is no law in the land—I challenge the Attorney-General to prove that there is any law in this State to prevent a Minister from investing his money in any company, be it mining or otherwise.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In my opinion it would be more respectable to invest in outside mines—not something which in some way affects the Government. Do you think it right that Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack should have held shares in the Mount Isa Proprietary Company?

Mr. JONES: Probably it would have been more respectable to invest it on the race-course, but I do not care much for racing—my hobby is mining. For the shares which were mentioned here this morning I paid £362, which is a lot of money to me, as it represented my earnings. Does the hon. gentleman think that would sway any vote of mine?

Mr. MORGAN: What do the public think?

Mr. JONES: The public can think as they like, so far as I am concerned. I have only one person to please, that is Alf Jones, and my own conscience. My transactions have been straight, honourable, and aboveboard. I may have made hundreds of mistakes in administration, and have done things which

hon. members opposite would not do because of the different policies of the two parties. Every man makes mistakes, and I may have made a mistake in connection with mining enterprises; but, while I was Secretary for Mines, I never delved into previous transactions of my predecessors in office, nor, if I went back there to-morrow, would I do so, because it would not be my concern. While I was Minister, under the guidance of Under Secretaries like Mr. Macdonald, Henry Marshall, and the present Under Secretary, the department was an honourable and upright department. The records are there to prove it. Candidly speaking, I think Parliament was degraded on Friday last, because it is an institution which should be the highest in the land.

Mr. KELSO: In what respect? We are trying to get at the truth.

Mr. JONES: An impression has been created—and the Secretary for Railways tried to create it—that all these things pertained to the Department of Mines. Let me tell the Secretary for Railways that a mining share transaction does not appertain to the Department of Mines, and has nothing to do with it. If I were to ask the Secretary for Mines to give me the names of shareholders in the Mount Morgan, Mount Isa, or any other mining company, he could get in his Under Secretary and staff, but they could not give me the list of shareholders.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The department has a lot to do with the issue of leases.

Mr. JONES: The department has nothing to do with the issue of share lists. Men who desire to protect themselves may, and are allowed to, register a deed of trust at the warden's office to protect their interests. But no Secretary for Mines could have the register of shareholders in any company, because transactions in shares in mining companies pertain to another department. It is only fair to the Department of Mines to say that, because the impression no doubt will get abroad that officers of the department must have known who were shareholders in some of the leases under discussion. The officers of the department would not know, the Minister does not know, and he has no power in his department to find out. He has to go to the Attorney-General, the Treasury, to some other department, or to the Supreme Court to get a list of shareholders—I do not know which it is.

Mr. KELSO: He has to go to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies.

Mr. JONES: Whilst I was Minister for twelve years I was never sufficiently inquisitive to find out whether members of the Opposition were shareholders or not in mining companies.

I read in this morning's paper some references to the Mungana leases in the electorate represented by the Minister. Counsel in a certain bankruptcy case put questions to one witness, a former warden at Chilla-see, as to the time at which the leases were taken up by Mr. Fred Reid, and the witness answered these questions—not too correctly, in my opinion, perhaps in view of my ignorance of the papers in the department. He gave the impression that the forfeiture of the Mungana leases was applied for by Mr. Reid. I am speaking now from memory. I have not my papers with me here to-day, although I want to inform the Committee that I am well prepared in regard

[Mr. Jones.

to Mungana, but, from memory, let me say that these particular leases—the Mungana leases, embracing the Lady Jane and the Girofla—were taken up under a special Act of Parliament passed by a previous Government. There were no labour conditions, but there was a condition that, if the rent was not paid on 31st December in any year, the leases became automatically forfeited on 31st March of the succeeding year; and no Minister had the power either to forfeit or to stop the forfeiture of those leases. If the Secretary for Mines investigates that point he will find that the original company which held the Mungana leases forfeited them for non-payment of rent. They became automatically forfeited, and to reinstate those leases on the same conditions they would have required another Act of Parliament or they could have applied for them under the ordinary lease conditions of the Mining Act.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member for Warrego said the other day that no leases had been forfeited for fifteen years.

Mr. BEDFORD: That is not a forfeiture. They were under a special Act of Parliament.

Mr. JONES: They became forfeited under a special Act of Parliament, and a man named McLennan took up the leases as claims, and later on Reid took them up as leases. All we had to do was to refuse the leases or grant them. No Minister in charge of the department, whether a Labour Minister or any other Minister, had power to stop that forfeiture; yet Mr. McGill, according to this morning's paper, suggests that the original company tried all it could to prevent that forfeiture. All it had to do was to pay the few pounds rent. It was a very few pounds—£1 per acre—and by paying that rent it could have prevented forfeiture for months afterwards.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is a pity they did not do that, and then we would not have had McCormack playing with his own Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You must admit that it was a dirty business all through.

Mr. JONES: I do not admit that there was anything dirty with the Mines Department or with myself during the time that I was there.

Mr. KIRWAN: Not as dirty as the bribery case.

Mr. JONES: I hail with delight any inquiry into Mungana with respect to shares or anything else. The Government should immediately have instituted an inquiry when they became a Government. There is nothing in the argument that we should have instituted an inquiry into Mungana.

The PREMIER: Why not?

Mr. JONES: We knew that there was nothing wrong.

The PREMIER: What about the evidence in the court?

Mr. JONES: I have referred to some of the evidence in the court. It is the duty of the hon. gentleman to appoint an inquiry if he so desires.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You know that it is wrong for a Minister of the Crown—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already called the attention of Ministers to the fact that the ex-Secretary for Mines has stated

that the Estimates of this department were brought on unexpectedly for consideration. He is interested as an ex-Minister, and desires to make a statement. I ask Ministers to contain themselves, and allow the ex-Minister to make his statement.

Mr. JONES: I was about to repeat with all emphasis to the public of Queensland that I for one favour an inquiry into the Mungana transactions and into the transactions of the department.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You said there was nothing wrong.

Mr. JONES: It is for you to prove that there is anything wrong. You have had an opportunity since May last.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What about the undertaking given to the ex-Premier?

Mr. JONES: Have I not an equal right with the ex-Premier to be considered? Have I not an equal right with anybody else, being an ex-Minister? I have as much right to consideration, and I am entitled equally with anyone else to any of the privileges of this House respecting any inquiry whether it be into the Sleigh contract, Mungana, or Mount Isa. I have an equal right to be considered with any man, whether he is absent or not.

The PREMIER: I cannot break my word to the ex-Premier. I told him that I would give him notice.

Mr. JONES: Why was not someone else consulted as to whether there should be an inquiry or not?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You were not in charge at the time the undertaking was given.

Mr. JONES: No.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Then what are you kicking about?

Mr. BEDFORD: Give us a separate inquiry with regard to Mount Isa.

Mr. JONES: The Secretary for Railways said the other day that it was a strange thing that these transactions were connected with the Mines Department.

Mr. KIRWAN: He said there would be another scandal.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There might be, too.

Mr. JONES: The Mines Department had no transaction whatever with shares, and the same may be said of the officers of the department, and to a very great extent concerning myself. The Mines Department has a staff of officers of which Queensland can well be proud. The past Under Secretary was a splendid man and an honourable man, and I regret that his name has been dragged into the matter. I believe that the Minister can be proud of the present Under Secretary. I am glad that Mr. Staines has received the appointment, but I regret that his position was held in suspense for such a long time.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Who was responsible?

Mr. JONES: The Minister knows that it was in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Under Secretary may have controlled you as Minister, but I can tell you that the Under Secretary does not control me as Minister.

Mr. JONES: I am glad to know that. The Public Service Commissioner never did

Mr. Jones.]

control me. It is most unfair that the Secretary for Railways should indulge in a campaign of innuendo, instead of making straight-out charges. He said that there would be an oil scandal. I challenge him to prove that there was anything wrong with my administration respecting the oil industry. I challenge him to follow me in this debate and prove anything wrong against me. The present Minister may be following a different policy from that approved by me. My policy in connection with the oil industry was one of leniency. I did not indulge in wholesale forfeitures.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I was approached last night by a very prominent man, who offered to give evidence in respect of an oil scandal.

Mr. JONES: Probably so.

Mr. KIRWAN: Like Wandovale.

Mr. JONES: I quite conceive that the present Minister may have a different oil policy. My policy was to grant a big extension of areas under the 1927 Act. He dare not alter that because of the attitude he adopted the other day in regard to Lawn Hill agreement. If he did alter that condition, he would not be consistent in his attitude. There is a rumour current that petroleum leases are to be curtailed. I hope that is not true. The Secretary for Railways speaks by way of innuendo. He said that the next scandal is to be an oil scandal. Let him come forward in this Chamber with his oil scandal.

Mr. KIRWAN: Let him say it outside.

Mr. JONES: I challenge him to come forward with his alleged oil scandal. The only crime he can lay against me is that I have dared to invest my money in mining enterprises in order to encourage mining. I am sorry to say that my mining investments have been rather disastrous. That is the result with 90 per cent. of people who invest in mining. Mining investments are more speculative than in any other industry; but I have as much right to put my money into mining as the Secretary for Railways has of putting his on racecourses, which, I believe, he is rather fond of doing.

We shall have an opportunity of discussing the coalmines. This morning I gave notice of a question with a view to eliciting information as to whether the Railway Department receives its supplies of coal from the Mount Mulligan mine, which is now being worked by the miners on tribute, at the same price as it did when the mine was worked as a State enterprise. I have always contended that the Railway Department should pay a bigger price for its Mount Mulligan coal supplies. They have never paid an adequate price for that coal. We showed a loss on the Mount Mulligan coalmine, but, if the Railway Department were charged a price for that coal commensurate with what it would cost them to get coal from the Bowen State coalmine, or of bringing its coal supplies up from the South, then the Mount Mulligan State coalmine would be in a much better position to-day than it is.

Mr. NIMMO: Why should the Railway Department have to pay more for it?

Mr. JONES: We never got a fair price from the Railway Department for the Mount Mulligan coal. The departmental records will show that I always wanted the Railway

Department to pay a higher price than 32s. per ton for it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Railway Department says that it is paying too dearly for Mount Mulligan coal, and that it can get it from the Bowen State coalmine for 32s. per ton.

Mr. JONES: The Railway Department cannot procure coal from the Bowen State coalmine cheaper than the price at which it is supplied with Mount Mulligan coal, unless it is supplied at very much less than the cost of production.

The PREMIER: Only one man can do that.

Mr. JONES: Why does the Premier, when making reference to State enterprises, not make reference to the profits from the Bowen State coalmine?

The PREMIER: There are no profits from the Bowen coalmine.

Mr. JONES: There are not?

The PREMIER: There are not to-day.

Mr. JONES: During the time that I was in charge of the Mines Department the Bowen State coalmine showed a profit, and the last figures that were available to me showed that it was making a profit of £1,900 per fortnight.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is showing a loss on Sleigh's contract at the present time.

Mr. JONES: Of course, that may be under the cost of production, but, if the production were increased Sleigh's contract would not show a loss on those prices. A grocer might show a loss on some part of his business, but not on his whole turnover. I want to emphasise the point that Mr. Sleigh got the run-of-mine coal; he never got the quantities of screened coal that hon. members may think he did. He took 67 per cent. of small coal, and we sold some small coal to Swifts at less than the price Sleigh paid. Sleigh did not take the best screened coal produced at the mine. He had to take about 60 or 70 per cent. of the small coal. That is quite another matter. I have the Sleigh agreement. I was glad that the Minister, when dealing with the Sleigh agreement, stated that, under the agreement, Mr. Sleigh could demand the delivery of 500 tons of coal every twenty-four hours.

[11.30 a.m.]

Although the agreement mentions 500 tons every twenty-four hours, there is a qualification that that operates as far as possible having regard to the power of the Secretary for Mines. Sleigh could not demand it whether we could supply it or not; and we had to make some arrangements—for example, for the supply of trucks from the Railway Department as the contracts came in. In that respect there was nothing wrong in the Sleigh contract. I took the matter along to the Cabinet, who deliberately offered Sleigh the agency for a straight-out sale—no commission—at the prices mentioned in the agreement. We stood to that agreement.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): Before these Estimates are passed, I hope the Minister will tell the Committee the definite policy of the Government regarding the State coalmines. Earlier in the session the hon. member for Burrum gave us to understand that the Government were in favour of closing all the State mines with the exception of

[*Mr. Jones.*

Bowen. I notice that the Mount Mulligan coalmine has been closed down recently.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Mount Mulligan is working to-day. That is another of your falsehoods.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. PEASE: If the Minister will restrain himself for a moment, he will gain some information.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No one will gain information from listening to you.

Mr. PEASE: The Minister must listen to me. Is it the Government's intention to close all the State coalmines with the exception of the Bowen coalmine? Last Thursday two trucks of Bowen coal passed through Mareeba going to Chillagoe. The people of Mareeba are very concerned to see that, when right at hand the Mount Mulligan mine is available to supply any requirements. As Mareeba is the trading centre for Mount Mulligan, it follows that the closure of the Mount Mulligan mine will be attended with serious consequences, not only to the people employed in the mine but to business people generally. I was seeking information in that regard when the Minister so rudely interrupted me.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You don't know the definition of the word.

Mr. PEASE: I want the hon. gentleman to give me the information which the people of Mount Mulligan and Mareeba claim that he should give. They are very anxious to see the hon. gentleman, and I shall be pleased to be in the district when he visits it, because, naturally, as that is his electorate, he will have to give the people the information which I now seek. The closure of the State coalmines will be most serious to many people. The main question is not that of the coal produced in those mines. If these mines are closed, what is going to happen to the persons previously employed? Will not their being thrown out of employment aggravate the unemployment problem? The hon. member for Paddington, replying to the interjection of the Secretary for Railways that the Sleigh contract meant a loss to the Bowen coalmines, said that it would not mean a loss if the production of the mine were brought up to a certain standard. It was unfortunate that the hon. member's time had expired when he was proceeding to elaborate that statement. It must be realised that the question of turnover, whether in mining activities or in a grocery business, for example—

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The smaller the turnover the greater the cost.

Mr. PEASE: Will the hon. gentleman be good enough to keep quiet?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. PEASE: Let him have a bit of decency.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You have not got any.

Mr. PEASE: When I was so rudely interrupted by a man who does not understand even the rudiments of good manners—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. PEASE: Well, the hon. gentleman has none, and he must keep quiet. The idea of the Sleigh contract was to get rid of coal

which previously was unmarketable. Hon. members on the Government side who understand something about the coal business realise the position. The Bowen coalmine produces certain grades of coal which are not readily saleable, and, if you do not get a market for that coal, what are you going to do with it?

The PREMIER: It is all marketable.

Mr. PEASE: The Minister knows that this Bowen coal had been sold before the Sleigh contract to Swifts and others at a lower price than Sleigh is paying for it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Sleigh never had any of that description of coal.

Mr. PEASE: If the Sleigh contract is cancelled, the people of Bowen are going to feel it. The hon. member for Bowen who, unfortunately, is ill and not able to be here to-day, pointed out to the House that he had received letters—the Premier has received letters, too—from the Essential Service Committee at Bowen and from the Mayor of Bowen pointing out what this trade of Sleigh meant to Bowen—what the effect of ships coming there meant to the port. The Government must take all these matters into consideration. The hon. member for Bowen also stated that, if the Government destroy the trade that Sleigh has brought to Bowen, then they will have to get something else to take its place. How are the Government going to get rid of that coal, which, until Sleigh came into the market, was unsaleable? They will have to sell it at one-third the price that Sleigh is paying for it. I want to know what is happening in regard to the Government's policy in connection with State coalmines. Are they going to close all these mines down?

A considerable amount of discussion has taken place recently in regard to Mungana. Everybody here knows that members of the late Upper House went to the North and investigated the Chillagoe deal. The Government of the day was a Labour Government, but we had an Upper House in possession which was not a Labour House at the time. That Upper House appointed a committee, and its report is in the library for anyone to read. This committee reported favourably on the taking over of Chillagoe. I was a member of the Cairns Harbour Board at the time, and we formed a committee in Cairns to meet the Upper House Committee to give evidence, because the people in that district realised what a great thing it would be to have Chillagoe restarted. We were able to put such information before the members of the Upper House Committee as to induce them to agree that Chillagoe should be restarted. Later, the late Auditor-General (Mr. Robertson) was sent to Chillagoe, and surely to goodness, if anything was wrong, it was his job to find it out! Mr. Robertson reported that Chillagoe should be kept going. His report was presented to Parliament, and is in the records for anyone to read. Later on a Commission of Inquiry was asked for by members of the Opposition. Why Mr. McCormack did not grant a Commission I cannot say. I myself and a good many members of the Labour Party were in favour of the appointment of a Commission because we wanted the truth, and we still want it. But Mr. McCormack sent the present Auditor-General to Chillagoe with full powers, and he gave him the services of a metallurgist. He gave him power to do anything he wanted

Mr. Pease.]

and to make a full investigation in regard to Chillagoe.

Mr. WARREN: He did not.

Mr. PEASE: Mr. Beal, the present Auditor-General, is a most honourable gentleman—more honourable than most hon. members opposite.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL interjected.

Mr. PEASE: The people outside your district would not listen to you the other night.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was the Paddington hoodlums who disturbed the meeting.

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): I rise to a point of order. Is the Attorney-General in order in referring to my electors in those terms?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was the hoodlums of Paddington.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. PEASE: Mr. Beal was sent to Chillagoe with a free hand to investigate anything and everything in connection with Chillagoe.

Mr. KELSO: No.

Mr. PEASE: He was. The hon. member read his report when he came back.

Mr. KELSO: He was not.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member for Nundah not to interrupt the hon. member for Herbert continually.

Mr. PEASE: Evidently the truth hurts, and the truth is all we want. We want a Royal Commission in connection with these mining industries. We ask the Premier immediately to appoint the Chief Justice of Queensland as a Royal Commission to inquire into the Mount Isa business, and we make that request in all sincerity. The Premier made a statement to-day to the effect that he was going to do certain things, and every hon. member on this side is anxious to hear the truth. We do not care whom it hurts; we stand up for the honour of the Labour Party of Queensland and the honour of this Parliament. The Premier, in answer to our request, uses the plea that he is holding it up because Mr. McCormack is overseas and he made a certain promise to him. The hon. gentleman can go ahead with the Mount Isa business if he likes—everyone knows that, and even the Attorney-General, who does not know much about law—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am going to keep this debate within reasonable bounds. I must ask the hon. member for Herbert to restrain himself in his remarks which lead to so much interruption. I would ask him to try to be a little reasonable in his criticism. I am referring more particularly to his reference to the Attorney-General.

Mr. PEASE: I will withdraw that. We want to know everything about these mining transactions. It is said that the mining industry is full of scandals, and that an oil scandal is also going to develop later on. Everyone knows that the Minister is simply the executive head of the Department of Mines. The officials of the Department of Mines and other departments must all be corrupt if they permit things which hon. members opposite say are done—from the

[*Mr. Pease.*

Under Secretary of each department right through. Everybody knows what is going on. Do hon. members opposite realise that the officials of every department are honourable men? What has been said here is a slur on the Under Secretary and other responsible officials in the Department of Mines. When I mentioned that the late Auditor-General, Mr. Robertson, and the present Auditor-General, Mr. Beal, were appointed with full powers to investigate mining affairs and to go into matters regarding Chillagoe and other places, I was told by hon. members opposite that it is not so; but everybody knows that that is the case. We realise what the mining industry has meant to the far North. We read with interest the report of the late Auditor-General, Mr. Robertson, in which he counselled the Government to continue its operations in the Chillagoe district. Mr. Beal was also sent up there and made an interesting report. It was not cloaked over. The then Premier, the hon. member for Cairns, had it printed for everyone to read. We do not desire anything else but the truth. I might conclude by going back to where I started—that we demand this Royal Commission. We say that the sooner it is appointed the better. We contend that it is not wise to link up Chillagoe with Mount Isa and Mungana. Let us have a Royal Commission to deal first with Mount Isa, and then, if the Premier is concerned about the absence of Mr. McCormack, he can appoint the same judge to proceed with the Chillagoe and Mungana inquiry. I have been in the North all my life, and spent many years in the Chillagoe district. I know the place, and I know the people of Chillagoe and of North Queensland. They are not at all concerned as to anything but a commission to clear up all these matters. They realise the facts of the case, and they say, "Why can we not have this commission to clear the matter up?" The sooner the Premier appoints a commission and lets the people of Queensland know the truth the sooner will the people of Queensland and those representing the Labour Party be satisfied.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): The hon. member for Paddington has informed the Committee at great length that he thinks he has a perfect right to hold shares in any company. That is so. He has a legal right; but the question is not whether he has a legal right to hold shares in any company, but whether it is expedient for a Minister to hold shares in certain companies which may be concerned in governmental action.

Mr. JONES: Do you intend to challenge my vote on the Mount Isa Railway?

Mr. KELSO: I will explain what I propose to do. When the question of Mungana came up some years ago, the point was not whether it was legal to do what members of the Opposition then suggested had been done, but whether it was right for a man occupying a leading public position as a Minister of the Crown to do what certain members opposite have done—that is, accept as gifts shares in a company from which they might draw a very large profit.

Mr. JONES: I had no shares in Mungana.

Mr. KELSO: I am not suggesting that the hon. member had. So far as the hon. member is concerned, I am going to confine my remarks to Mount Isa. I want to be quite fair. I think that the hon. member himself will remember that, when I was

talking about Mungana on a previous occasion the hon. member challenged me by way of interjection—"Hansard" will show it—and I said that I had never found in my investigations that the hon. member for Paddington had anything to do with Mungana. I am dealing with the hon. member on the stand he made this morning. He practically made an ad misericordiam appeal to the Committee. He told us the other day that he bought shares for 31s. and sold them for 27s., and thereby made a loss. I still agree with the Attorney-General that, even if we agree that he did buy and sell those shares like that, sometimes it is not prudent for a Minister of the Crown, occupying in this case the position of Secretary for Mines, to buy shares in a company which later on may be concerned in the Government's actions. He should fight shy of them. But just at present I am taking what the hon. member said in Committee this morning, and what he had the opportunity of saying last Friday, when he only told us that he had bought shares and sold at a loss. He did not tell us that the hon. member for Warrego had given him shares.

Mr. JONES: I bought 400 shares—

Mr. KELSO: I would ask the hon. member, is not the hon. member for Warrego right this morning in saying that he gave the hon. member 200 shares in Mount Isa?

Mr. JONES: I bought from Mr. Randolph Bedford 1,600 shares at a cost of £362 10s., which was about par value.

Mr. KELSO: That may be quite correct, but I am asking the question again—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot continue to ask the hon. member for Paddington questions.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member has tried to justify himself, and now we are told that the hon. member for Warrego gave him 200 shares.

Mr. JONES: As a matter of fact, I had no right to speak on Friday on this question. I had made the first speech after the Minister, and after that the wrangle began, and, naturally, I could only get in a few interjections.

Mr. KELSO: You say, Mr. Roberts, that I cannot ask the hon. member questions. Very well. We were told this morning that the hon. member was presented by the hon. member for Warrego with 200 shares as a gift. All this "hot air" by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition with reference to an inquiry and all that sort of thing is "begging the question." We must come down to the question of propriety when dealing with what these gentlemen have done.

Mr. BEDFORD: What a gem you are on that! You are too small and mean and miserable to help anybody.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the expression.

Mr. BEDFORD: All right.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. gentleman to rise and withdraw.

Mr. BEDFORD: I withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: I want the hon. member to get upon his feet and withdraw.

Mr. BEDFORD (rising): I withdraw.

Mr. KELSO: We can associate all these people with these shares, and we have the ex-Minister to-day stating that he would not be influenced by a gift of shares. One reads in this morning's paper that Mr. E. G. Theodore states distinctly, with a sneer, that a present of 500 shares to himself and Mr. McCormack would certainly not influence any action on their part. He says it is a mere trifle. Of course it is a mere trifle. We all know that he is a rich man; but it is the principle of the thing that is involved. Before ex-Ministers accepted one share, they should have remembered that for men in their positions it is well to avoid even the appearance of evil. The hon. member for Paddington knows that a man who is a trustee for a beneficiary—the Attorney-General will bear me out in this—has to be more particular with trust matters than with his own private affairs. The hon. member was the trustee for the public, and occupied a high position. The Secretary for Mines occupies a high position, or at least we on this side of the Chamber think so. The former Premier, Mr. Theodore, and the late Premier, Mr. McCormack, accepted gifts of shares from the hon. member for Warrego, and so far as the public outside are concerned, I think any reasonable man would say that the only object the hon. member for Warrego had in giving those shares to those prominent people was that they should do something for him in return.

Mr. BEDFORD (Warrego): I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Nundah has stated that the only reason I had for giving those shares was that somebody should do something for me. In the list read by me this morning appears the name of Mrs. Ryan and others who received gift shares. What does the hon. member mean?

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member for Nundah has made the statement that the shares were given for the purpose indicated, then I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. KELSO: I can hardly follow why I should withdraw.

Mr. KIRWAN: Withdraw!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member for Nundah said that the shares were given to Ministers so that they should do something for the hon. member for Warrego, and that is the interpretation of his remarks, then I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. KELSO: The public outside—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KIRWAN: Obey the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I say quite definitely that I am not concerned at the moment with the public outside. The hon. member for Warrego has stated that the hon. member for Nundah has accused him of giving shares to Ministers in anticipation of the Ministers giving him some reward. If he made that statement, then I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. KELSO: I did not say that. (Opposition interruption.)

Mr. BARBER: Of course you did.

Mr. KIRWAN: You did say it.

Mr. KELSO: I said that the only interpretation that could be placed by people outside upon the action of the hon. member for Warrego—

Mr. BEDFORD: You did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. Kelso.]

Mr. KELSO: In giving shares to men in high positions—

Mr. BEDFORD: You said the hon. member for Warrego.

Mr. KELSO: You are the member for Warrego.

Mr. BEDFORD: Do you not know that?

Mr. KELSO: Mr. Randolph Bedford—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEDFORD: Mr. Chairman, I really insist on a withdrawal of the statement. It was made, and should be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am most anxious that the statement should be withdrawn, if it was made. The hon. member for Nundah says that he did not make the statement, and I cannot go any further.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Withdraw! Withdraw!

Mr. KELSO: In deference to you, Mr. Roberts, and in order to clear the matter up, if I did say that the hon. member for Warrego did it with that intention, then I withdraw it. I shall put it in another way, which I think is quite within my rights. The public of Queensland—and of Australia by this time—can come to no other conclusion, and are expressing it outside, that the hon. member for Warrego gave these shares to these highly-placed officials for a certain ulterior motive.

Mr. BEDFORD (Warrego): Mr. Chairman, I ask that that statement be withdrawn. The hon. member has just stated that the hon. member for Warrego gave those shares to highly-placed officials for an ulterior motive.

Mr. KELSO: I did not say that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I followed the hon. member for Nundah very closely on this occasion, and I can assure the hon. member for Warrego—and I have to decide the point—that my interpretation is that the hon. member for Nundah is making a reference to the opinion of people outside. I would ask the hon. member for Nundah to try to continue the debate and get away from this subject.

Mr. KELSO: I also should like to get away from this subject, Mr. Roberts, as it is certainly a most unsavoury one; but it is not of the making of hon. members on this side of the Committee. As the Secretary for Mines said yesterday, the muck which the Opposition talk about has not been made by us, but it is our duty, as custodians of the public purse, to try to clean up the mess that has been made.

Mr. KIRWAN: It would be more to the point to clear up the bribery case.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member for Paddington has tried to dissociate himself from anything in connection with this matter.

Mr. JONES: I will please myself what I do with my own cash. My behaviour will compare with the behaviour of any member of this Assembly.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member may be quite right; but there is a bigger judgment than his—the judgment of the people outside, who think that there should be no appearance of evil in the doings of Ministers of the Crown. I say distinctly—not from my point of view, but from the point of view of the

[Mr. Kelso.

great majority of the people of Australia, who hold that our public men must possess a high moral sense of their duties—that it was distinctly wrong for any Minister, under circumstances such as this, to have taken shares.

Mr. JONES: I bought them.

Mr. KELSO: Those shares were taken by these ex-Ministers of the Crown.

Mr. JONES: I bought them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You did not buy the 200 that the hon. member for Warrego gave you.

Mr. KELSO: We have to come down to this fact that, if highly placed officials of the Government had not decided to build a railway to Mount Isa, the shares in Mount Isa Proprietary Limited would not have been worth the paper they were written on. The whole thing is morally wrong, though not legally wrong. It is not necessary to have an inquiry. There are the facts. We have them here. We say that what hon. members opposite have done is not legally wrong—that is my own view of it—but it is morally wrong, and to my mind it is a greater sin to do a moral wrong than a legal wrong.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO: When the public of Australia depart from that high moral sense, then I say God help Australia; and, when public men depart from that high moral sense of duty, I say that we shall deteriorate very rapidly. If the hon. member for Warrego has a high sense of public honour, which I do not think he has—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement.

Mr. KELSO: In deference to you, Mr. Roberts, I withdraw it. Australia will be the poorer when the moral sense of the community accepts the actions that have taken place in regard to Mount Isa as being the perfectly right thing to do.

This morning the hon. member for Paddington spoke with reference to Mungana. We are circumscribed in our dealings with the Mungana question at the present time, although no inquiry has yet been held about it. I take my stand in regard to Mungana in the same way as I do with Mount Isa. When we debated the Mungana question a few years ago, the then Premier, Mr. McCormack, challenged me to make my statements outside of this Chamber. He repeated those statements during the election. He was merely raising a "smoke screen." He said publicly in the North that he challenged any person to make those statements in public.

Mr. JONES: Why did your party employ Jackson to make the statements, instead of making them themselves?

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member is the "smoke screen" himself this morning.

Mr. JONES: I am not. Why didn't your party make the statements, and not have them made through Jackson and O'Brien?

Mr. KELSO: I say that what Mr. McCormack did in the Mungana transaction was quite legal—what Mr. Goddard, Mr. Theodore, and Mr. Reid did in "cutting up that melon"—that syndicate which held Mungana—was quite legal; but the whole thing was very smelly. It was shown that at

that time the mine was a worthless one, or, as the hon. member said, it was a forfeited mine.

Mr. JONES: According to Mr. Poole's report—and he is one of the best engineers in Australia—the machinery was valued at £19,050.

[12 noon]

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member for Paddington, as the former Secretary for Mines, cannot deny these facts. When the matter was discussed previously, it came out that it was reported that the mine was worthless. We have that on the word of the geologist.

Mr. JONES: No; Saint-Smith reported in favour of it.

Mr. KELSO: When it was taken up by the syndicate comprising Theodore, McCormack, Goddard, and Reid he reported that the mine was worthless. According to evidence which we had at the time—

Mr. JONES: We did not buy it without a report.

Mr. KELSO: That syndicate got it for a mere song—for the taking. It was reported that it was worthless. I am not talking about the hon. member; I am talking about these four men whose names I have mentioned. It was a worthless mine. The report says they immediately borrowed £1,200 from the Government to pump that mine out. Then there was another inspection made by the geologist, and, strange to say, that same man came to the conclusion that there was a new lode found there, and that it was a very valuable asset to the State.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: There was a lot of pumping going on!

Mr. KELSO: Yes; but it was necessary to keep Chillagoe going. We find that some time after that these four men floated their syndicate into a company, and, of course, they are protected to the extent of limited liability under the Companies Act. I have stated more than once that, according to the register in the Supreme Court, William McCormack was the holder of 338 shares. The hon. member for Cairns did not deny it. Now, I think it is perfectly fair to state that, according to the recent information we have got, William McCormack got four lots of 900 shares—3,600 altogether—and his cut out of it was 50 per cent.—it was a 50-50 cut—and, in addition to that, he got £1,500.

Mr. JONES: He said in this Chamber that he was a shareholder.

Mr. KELSO: Of course he did, when I put it up to him. Hon. members will remember that we were trying to find out who were the syndicate. Neither the hon. member for Paddington, who was then the Secretary for Mines and who was asked about it, nor the ex-Premier himself, would admit that William McCormack was a member of that syndicate.

Mr. JONES: The share list was never in the Mines Department.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member for Paddington knew that the ex-Premier was a member of a syndicate, but he would not admit it. It was only when I found out and told this Assembly that the ex-Premier admitted that he was in that syndicate. That syndicate formed themselves into a limited liability company—and this is the gravamen of the charge I make against these

people: When sitting in the Cabinet as Ministers of the Crown, Messrs. Theodore and McCormack agreed to purchase from Mungana Mines Limited for £40,000 a mine which, when they started on it, was simply worthless, and in which they were largely interested.

Mr. JONES: Surely it could not be worthless with £20,000 worth of machinery on it?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The machinery was only worth scrap iron.

Mr. KELSO: Surely the hon. member for Paddington will admit that the public could only draw one inference—that, as Ministers of the Crown, charged with the responsibility of conserving the public funds of the State, these people agreed to pay £40,000 for a mine that was worth very little and in respect of which they were vitally interested? Then these men "cut up the melon," so to speak.

Mr. JONES: How many tons of ore did they take out?

Mr. KELSO: I have stated on every occasion that the hon. member for Paddington has not been connected with Mungana, but surely, if he tries to impress the House regarding his high moral sense, he cannot defend what these men did. He cannot defend them, because he must know that it is wrong.

Mr. JONES: I defended the action of the department regarding the forfeiture.

Mr. KELSO: That is only a side issue. I am dealing with what these men got out of it. Relatively the same applies to Mount Isa. The hon. member can throw what smoke-screens he likes; but there is not the slightest doubt that shares were given to men in high positions—to the Premier (Mr. Theodore), Mr. McCormack, Mr. Jones, and Warden Dunlop.

Mr. BEDFORD: The warden did not get any shares. I was not friendly with him. (Government laughter.)

Mr. KELSO: Well, the wife of the warden got shares. At all events, those men, who could do something to push forward the mine, were presented with shares.

Mr. JONES: I tell you that my Mount Isa shares cost me £352 10s. I gave cheques for them, and I can show you the butts.

Mr. KELSO: We were told this morning that you got shares presented to you. The public outside are seized with this fact—that it is an immoral thing for men who hold important public positions to touch these things, because they must be biased in favour of pushing their own business on. While it is perfectly legal, what they have done is immoral, and we have a perfect right to say to this Committee that it was an immoral thing to do; yet hon. members opposite tell us that we are muck-rakers! If it is muck-raking, we ought to be proud of the muck-raking, because we have the honour of this House at stake. We have the honour of Queensland at stake, and it will be a poor day when hon. members, such as we have on the other side of the House, support these things—or, at least, some of them, because some of them do not agree with what has been done. I am not going to include the whole of them, because I know there are some honourable men on the other side who do not agree with this. I do not include the hon. member for Brisbane, who is waving his

Mr. Kelso.]

hands. Probably that hon. member would have liked a cut as well as the others, and perhaps he is jealous because he was left out of it. We have to be careful in regard to any matter where there is the slightest appearance of evil.

Mr. PEASE: Your Agent-General will have to be careful, too.

Mr. KELSO: We have a public right to bring these things up, and all the speeches made since on this question have clouded the issue. They get away from the basic facts. You cannot alter basic facts, and I believe that the judgment of the people of Australia will be against the action that these people took. The prime mover in the whole matter and the leading spirit at the head of it was the hon. member for Warrego.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): I hope that the Department of Mines will soon cause Mr. Dunstan's report on his geophysical experiences in Europe to be published. While on that subject, it is well that the public generally should be warned against the fact that the present geophysical crowd operating in Queensland have been in too much of a hurry over a new job to give the Roma oilfield a fair chance. On the very widely distinct evidence of two holes, distant 10 or 15 miles from one another, bottomed in granite, Geologist Dr. Jensen, who allows his imagination to run away with his knowledge, immediately invented a sunken granite range. Immediately on that the geophysical crowd, who had only examined a few square miles—probably only a few hundred acres—out of 200 000 square miles, decided that failure at Roma had to be recognised and should be accepted.

They did this to my mind for the purpose of "keeping their marble" good so that they should get work at the very remunerative prices charged by them on areas examined in Queensland. During the last four days Australia Roma Oil, No. 2, has bottomed on Blüthedale, and the reports are that the last 4 feet show the core to be saturated with oil. In this way, and probably on the same line, Stewart's Mooga is in an excellent position for getting results. Naturally the Attorney-General—who has already stated that a Socialist should not have a complete pair of boots—will probably believe that an Archbishop of a religion largely founded on the glorification of poverty should not have anything to do with drilling for oil. I myself applaud the Archbishop for it. That is an ordinary citizen's right. If he does strike oil, it will be a good thing.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I did not say anything about the Archbishop.

Mr. BEDFORD: The hon. gentleman did not say that about the Archbishop, but he made the remark about the Socialist not having a pair of boots. He would, perhaps, suggest that it is not a Christian thing to do on the part of the Archbishop.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you suggest anything to him like you did to McCormack and Theodore?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEDFORD: I wish to refer to the debate of last Friday on the Mining Trust Limited Agreement Ratification Bill, which Bill was immediately lost sight of in the necessity for the muckraking during the day, and certain results were obtained by that. In the first place, quite a lot of

political propaganda was put out for next Saturday. In the second place, the Bill itself got through its second reading with very little scrutiny. Nothing could be worse for the general benefit of mining in this country than that Bill. The Secretary for Mines left the Bill alone, and attacked me in connection with Mount Isa with such ferocity that it looked like fear—either fear or the necessity for side-tracking. During his speech he made this ridiculous statement—

"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 larger 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?"

I do not know how he would "make ends meet" by "branching out in a large way." Apparently he means that they wish to play both ends against the middle.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I know how you make ends meet.

Mr. BEDFORD: The Secretary for Mines said it was decided that this concession must be given because the Mount Isa Proprietary Company had made the Mount Isa Mines, Limited, pay £125,000. He led us to believe that; he even used the term "blackmail"; and went so far as to say that men had sat down on leases and refused to do anything with them, and that it was necessary to pay £125,000 "blackmail" to get them out of it. What were the facts? In order to give hon. members the facts, I shall read the statement made by Mr. J. Millican, who is well known and respected in this State.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: A member of their party.

Mr. BEDFORD: Yes, and he was at one time an anti-Labour member for Charters Towers with Mr. Paull. The "Brisbane Courier" report states—

"Mr. J. Millican, who was chairman of directors of the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver Lead, Limited, from the time of the formation of the company to its liquidation, made a statement yesterday regarding the charges which were made in the Legislative Assembly on Friday regarding the control of the company, Mr. Millican, who is making a visit to Brisbane, is well known as a partner in the late firm of E. D. Miles and Company, of Charters Towers, and at one time he represented that electorate with Mr. W. J. Paull, in the Legislative Assembly.

"The attempts to make a scandal," he said yesterday, "are ridiculous. I joined the Board of Mount Isa Proprietary, Limited, at its inception, in February, 1924. We paid the prospectors £25,000 in cash, and spent £27,000 in development, proving the Ibus ore-body at 250 feet wide down to 600 feet.

"Mount Isa Mines offered us first £35,000 to take over our options (they

[*Mr. Kelso.*

to pay the prospectors the £25,000 purchase money), and we refused it. We also developed the Black Rock ore-body in the Out-on-her-Own, and then Mount Isa Mines, through Mr. Corbould, agreed to pay us for the group £150,000 in shares."

Mr. Millican forgot to say that later Mount Isa Mines Limited, in an attempt to get these properties at a lesser figure—after they had attempted practically to "jump" them, which is their favourite game—rushed our shares on the market at 3s. so that we could not get 5s. par value for reserve shares in order to get the £25,000 to pay the prospectors. At the same time they offered the prospectors £10,000 extra cash if they would break our option and give the leases to that company—and thus did not give us anything for expenditure—

"This, however, Mr. Millican added, was not carried into effect. When the Mount Isa Proprietary tried to put out the reserve shares to pay the purchase price of £25,000, its stock was quoted at 3s., so that most of the shareholders would not take up their quota at 5s. The £25,000 could not be raised when due, but Mr. Bedford went to the field, paid £14,000 to the prospectors, and secured an extension of time for the payment of the balance. Subsequently, Mount Isa Mines bought the Mount Isa Proprietary's leases for £125,000 in shares.

"Mr. Bedford took up his full quota of reserve shares—23,000—and paid the company 5s. each for them," Mr. Millican continued. "The statement that he gave away shares—several thousands in all—to friends in Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane, is quite true. Our operations as Mount Isa Proprietary Silver Lead Limited, had developed such a tonnage of ore that we were unwilling to sell Mount Isa Mines Limited; and Mr. Bedford fought against the sale of the property at any price, as he wished to operate the mines for our own company. To say that there was anything but the cleanest and most honourable dealing on our part is absolutely false. Our shareholders were nearly all small people, and we fought as much in their interests as our own. We were pleased to be able to give every shareholder nearly 10s. in Mount Isa Mines scrip for every 5s. invested in Mount Isa Proprietary, and our shareholders who held Mount Isa Mines shares until they were £2 got 20s. for every 5s. invested. After the first allotment of shares in February, 1924, not another share was allotted except for cash, par value, paid to the company. The statement of one speaker in Parliament last Friday that the "public was left lamenting," is simply foolish. The public concerned were the shareholders. For 260,000 Mount Isa Proprietary shares of 5s., shareholders received 125,000 shares in Mount Isa Mines, which are now standing at about £2, so for each 5s. invested, Mount Isa Proprietary shareholders received nearly £1."

As I said myself in a letter to the "Courier"—

"I wanted to hold these mines and work them separately, because the methods of Mount Isa Mines Limited showed me that production was far off. The field—discovered in 1923—would not be a producer till 1931."

In regard to the railway, the Government were secured by an absolute debenture. Of course, it was done in the time of the previous Government, and that security was, in the first place, held by the Commissioner for Railways as security for the £150,000 that the company was to guarantee against operating losses on the railway; but this Parliament has since agreed to a proposal to waive that security, because the company could not get money in London because it could not give a first mortgage.

The position now is—that the company has 200,000 shares under offer at £2 due in 1930, and 400,000 shares under offer at £2 10s. in 1931, and against this the English company is advancing certain moneys for the development of Mount Isa on a very slow scale of progress indeed. Hon. members can see that if the price of lead were suddenly to take a big drop, the easiest thing in the world would be for them to come in with their debentures and seize the property, leaving the shareholders to get out as best they could, because the debenture is only taken up at the company's convenience, as and when required, and in this way they would be able to get the property back into a few hands. For this reason I have sold my shares, and have given that advice to my friends. The point about the transactions of Mount Isa Proprietary Silver Lead Limited is that they are so clean that the man who does not agree is wilfully blind or does not understand. For the rest of it, the shares given by me to any of my friends will, I hope, be an early subject of the inquiry by the Royal Commission that I asked for.

In the meantime, what kind of statements were made about this on Friday last? Three or four of the most irresponsible members of the House, including the Secretary for Railways, made certain remarks. The Secretary for Railways was so cowardly that on Friday he described John Wren as one of the greatest scoundrels in Australia, but on Saturday on receiving his "Hansard" proof he altered the words to "undesirable person." If Mr. Wren is an undesirable person to a person like the Secretary for Railways, then I congratulate Mr. Wren. The fulmination on Friday was intended only for the purpose for which it was used, and that was to make political propaganda against Mr. Theodore, just as the coincidence of the Reid bankruptcy case being tried at this moment also requires explanation. Strangely enough, the Sunday papers did not touch this at all, but immediately the stuff was out—and even before it was uttered, I believe—arrangements had been made for this stuff to be sent all over the country. It was referred to in such terms as "Shocking Scandal"; "Charges made in the Assembly"; "Randolph Bedford and Mount Isa"; "One of the Biggest Scandals ever Perpetrated."

Mr. MAXWELL: What are you quoting?

Mr. BEDFORD: The Bundaberg "Times." "Did the Hon. Member for Warrego Receive £40,000?"—inferring that he had been "pinching." The statements by such distinguished muck-rakers as the hon. member for Nundah—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask that that word be withdrawn.

Mr. BEDFORD: Certainly. We had the efforts of those distinguished critics, the hon. member for Nundah, the hon. member

Mr. Bedford.]

for Enoggera, the hon. member for Oxley—after seeing him I like Elphinstone, although I never liked him when he was here—and the distinguished critic, the Secretary for Railways—who failed not only because of his lack of intelligence but also because of his high literary research. All these gentlemen joined in the general statement that it was the greatest crime and the greatest scandal that had ever been committed. I invite them now, as I invited them this morning, to say this outside. I include the Secretary for Mines, too. If they will do that, and tell me the time and place—

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You will run away and hide.

Mr. BEDFORD: I shall have witnesses there, and give them a writ within twenty-four hours.

Mr. KELSO: Good old writ!

Mr. BEDFORD: I do not mind giving them writs, because I am not afraid of getting into the witness-box. The hon. member would be afraid to go there because it is too close to the dock.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not going to permit the debate to continue along these lines. I ask the hon. member to withdraw his remark, as applied to another hon. member, that the witness box would be too close to the dock.

Mr. BEDFORD: I withdraw the statement that it is too near the dock.

Mr. KELSO: It is a dirty thing to make a statement and then withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask that the statement be withdrawn.

Mr. BEDFORD: I withdraw it, Mr. Roberts. All kinds of things have been said about us, and were permitted to be said about us last Friday, but no attempt was made to compel hon. members to withdraw them.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are now in Committee, and I am the Chairman.

Mr. BEDFORD: It happened last Friday. I have made the offer to hon. members that they should go outside and make the statements that they made last Friday. I dare them to do it, because I assure them that a writ will issue within twenty-four hours. I give the same warning to those newspapers who might be misled into believing that there is something behind the statement made by the hon. member for Nundah, the hon. member for Enoggera, the hon. member for Oxley, and the Secretary for Railways. For the rest I leave this matter until—I hope it will be quickly done—the appointment of a special Royal Commission to inquire into Mount Isa, if nothing else.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Marilla*): The hon. member for Warrego, who just resumed his seat, is, unfortunately, leaving the Chamber. I am sorry for that, because he has made an attack on certain hon. members and, like a coward, runs away.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KIRWAN: Say it outside.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would sooner the hon. member for Warrego remained because I do not like to say anything in his absence.

[*Mr. Bedford.*]

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): Mr. Roberts, I rise to a point of order. Is the Minister in order in calling a member of this Assembly a coward?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said, like a coward, he runs away.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Is the Secretary for Railways in order in making that statement?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I heard what the Secretary for Railways said. I was on the point of asking him to withdraw, but he did not say that the hon. member for Warrego was a coward.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: He said like a coward.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the Secretary for Railways that he withdraw.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Roberts, if you suggest that I should do so, then I withdraw. If a man does not stand up and take his gruel, what is he? He rose and made his speech in this Chamber, attacked certain hon. members, and then did not remain here to take his gruel, but ran away. The hon. member for Warrego said that, in his goodness of heart, he gave a certain number of shares to certain ex-Ministers in the late Government and others. His friends included certain men holding high public positions. His friends did not include the honest hon. member for Bowen or the meek and mild member for Balonne.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in referring to an hon. member as being meek and mild. He does not say so in any sincerity at all. I would ask him to make his speech in another way.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Certain ordinary members of the rank and file of the late Government Party were not included in the list of friends who received free gifts of shares in Mount Isa at the hands of the hon. member for Warrego. The men who received free gifts of shares from him were men holding high important positions in this Parliament. They included Mr. Theodore, the Premier at the time, Mr. McCormack, the Secretary for Public Lands at the time, and Mr. Jones, the then Secretary for Mines.

Mr. JONES: Do you understand that my shares cost me £762?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not going to deal with that. These three men were men who could do much to improve the value of the property held by the company at Mount Isa. They were in a position to increase the value of that property by 60 or 70 per cent., and I have indicated how that something was eventually done. These three ex-Ministers of the Crown at the time naturally gained considerably by having these presentations made to them by the hon. member for Warrego. The hon. member for Paddington would make his case much better if, as the hon. member for Warrego admitted in this Chamber this morning, he admitted that the hon. member for Warrego presented him with 200 shares.

Mr. JONES: On 3rd March I got 400 shares, which cost me £50. If you call that a present, then I do not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The point is that the hon. member for Paddington is trying to make us believe that he

gave £50 for 400 shares. The hon. member for Warrego states that the shares were valued at 5s. each. What really happened was this: The hon. member for Warrego presented the hon. member for Paddington with 200 shares for nothing, and, as the latter has indicated, on the same day he purchased 200 shares for £50. Now the hon. member for Paddington wants to tell this Chamber that he got 400 shares for £50.

Mr. JONES: I bought 400 shares.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Paddington did not purchase 400 shares on that particular day. It would be much better for him if, as the hon. member for Warrego admitted was the correct position, he admitted that the hon. member for Warrego gave him 200 shares and that the balance of the shares were paid for. I quite honestly believe that the hon. member for Paddington purchased the balance of the shares, but, with the information at our disposal, there is no doubt that he received 200 shares as a present from the hon. member for Warrego, notwithstanding that he, with tears in his voice, has endeavoured to mislead hon. members into believing that he was an honest, straightforward man.

Mr. JONES: So I am.

Mr. HANLON: Do you suggest he is not?

Mr. JONES: Bring up your oil scandal.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Never mind about the oil scandal. That will come sooner or later, and the hon. member for Paddington will be very sorry when it does come; but it is coming as sure as night follows day. There will be an oil scandal, and the hon. member will be connected with it.

[12.30 p.m.]

The hon. member for Paddington tries to infer that there is nothing wrong in a responsible Minister of the Crown, in charge of the Department of Mines, holding shares in mining companies. I grant that, provided the Minister concerned has paid for those shares. But we find that the hon. gentleman, when Secretary for Mines, was given 200 shares, and accepted them as a gift. Why did the hon. gentleman, occupying the high and important office of Secretary for Mines, accept a gift of 200 shares? Had the hon. gentleman paid for those shares, nothing could be said; but the hon. gentleman cannot convince the members of this Parliament or the people outside that he did not receive 200 shares as a gift.

Mr. JONES: I received 1,600 shares, for which I paid £352 10s.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member received 200 shares as a free gift. The hon. member cannot deny it, seeing that the hon. member for Warrego has stated definitely that he gave the ex-Secretary for Mines 200 shares as a gift. It is an extraordinary thing that the rank and file of the Labour Party, when they occupied the Government benches, were not approached with free gifts, but only men who occupied high and important positions, and who would be able to introduce a Bill in this Chamber to build a railway or do something else which would make certain shares valuable. They were the people who were approached, and who, according to the hon. member for Warrego, were given a

personal interest in a certain mining company.

On the question of coal supplied to the Railway Department, I propose to quote evidence to show that the ex-Minister, who was in charge of the Department of Mines for a considerable period, is not acquainted with the facts of the case. I have had a statement prepared on this matter by the Commissioner for Railways—

Mr. JONES: Where was I wrong?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will show the hon. gentleman. As Secretary for Railways, I am naturally desirous of getting coal for the Railway Department at as cheap a price as possible; and it is not my intention to pay a higher price simply to bolster up a State mine if I can get my coal requirements at a lower price from private enterprise. The statement which has been specially prepared for me reads—

“ORDERS ON STATE COALMINES.

“STYX NO. 3 STATE COALMINE.

“The total coal orders placed by this department on the Styx mine during last financial year were 43,369 tons for £49,874. The price charged was 24s. per ton, but under an agreement entered into in October, 1928, with the Mines Department a rebate of 1s. per ton has been allowed, which reduces the charge to 23s. per ton.

“Of the total tonnage supplied by the Styx mine, 23,754 tons went to Rockhampton; 5,146 tons to Gladstone; 2,030 tons to Mount Morgan; and 12,439 tons to Mackay.

“The cost (including freight) to the abovementioned depots compared with that from other pits in the Central Division, and Collinsville to Mackay, is as shown hereunder—

	Rate per ton at pit.	Rate per ton at depot, including freight.
To Rockhampton—	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
Ex Hartley (State mine)	23 0	26 6½
Ex Blair Athol	13 7	23 7
Ex Blackwater	17 6	22 5½
Ex Bluff	16 9	21 2½
To Gladstone—		
Ex Hartley (State mine)	23 0	26 5
Ex Blair Athol	13 7	26 5
Ex Blackwater	17 6	25 3½
Ex Bluff	16 9	24 0½
To Mount Morgan—		
Ex Hartley (State mine)	23 0	27 6½
Ex Blair Athol	13 7	23 8½
Ex Blackwater	17 6	22 7
Ex Bluff	16 9	21 4
To Mackay—		
Ex Hartley (State mine)	23 0	27 10½
Ex Blair Athol	13 7	31 11½
Ex Blackwater	17 6	30 10
Ex Bluff	16 9	29 7
Ex Collinsville	16 0	22 11

Collinsville coal is recognised to be a first-class coal for railway purposes—

“It will be observed, therefore, that it is not an economic proposition to place orders with the Styx State mine at all. If that mine were not operating, there would be a saving to the department of, approximately, £11,450 in obtaining the coal now supplied by the Styx mine to Rockhampton, Gladstone, and Mount

Hon. Godfrey Morgan.]

Morgan from the Bluff and other collieries in the Central Division, and for the Mackay depot from Collinsville; but there, no doubt, would be difficulty in obtaining additional supplies from these collieries so long as the trouble in the Newcastle district lasts."

Owing to the trouble in the South these people are able to sell all the coal produced in those places.

COLLINSVILLE MINE.

"The total orders on the Collinsville State mine during the last financial year were 62,385 tons of unscreened coal at 16s. per ton and 1,103 tons of screened coal at 20s. per ton—total £51,011. According to a recent answer to a Parliamentary question asked by Mr. Collins (vide 'Hansard' No. 3, page 440) the Secretary for Mines supplied the information that the average cost of production of the coal from the Collinsville State mine for the year ended 30th June, 1929, was 13s. 11.9d. per ton. It would, therefore, appear that the charge of 16s. per ton to the Railway Department is excessive and should be reduced.

MOUNT MULLIGAN MINE.

"The general manager advises the same rates are charged to the public as to this department.

"The total orders placed on the Mulligan mine during the last financial year were 15,416 tons at 32s. per ton, equal to £24,665; but less coal is now being obtained from that mine, more of the requirements for the Cairns district being supplied from Collinsville.

"Including freight, the cost of Collinsville and Mulligan coal at Cairns is about the same for screened coal, but 3s. 8d. per ton in favour of Collinsville unscreened, which is the principal supply. In addition to that, Collinsville coal is stated to be about 30 per cent. better quality for locomotive purposes than Mulligan. It would be better to obtain supplies from Collinsville."

Mr. JONES: They do not give the value of coal per train mile.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are carrying Collinsville coal at .5d. per ton per mile, and we are losing a considerable amount of money through carrying it at that rate.

Now I want to deal with Mount Mulligan mine, which was specially mentioned by the hon. member.

The Commissioner states definitely that the Collinsville coal is better than Mount Mulligan coal owing to the fact that it is cheaper in price, and it is also 30 per cent. better for locomotive purposes than the Mount Mulligan coal.

Mr. JONES: I think the Mount Mulligan coal is the better.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is only right to make this public. The Commissioner for Railways is thus advised by his officers, and the engine-drivers, who use the coal and who ought to know, say definitely that the Collinsville coal is 30 per cent. better quality for locomotive purposes than Mount Mulligan coal. In the face of that opinion, it would be foolish for the Secretary for

Railways to give orders to the Mount Mulligan coalmine simply to keep that mine in operation. It would not be right to do it, because other people would be penalised thereby. I am looking at matters from a railway point of view. We ought to buy, other things being equal, in the cheapest market. That is our duty to the people who own the railways, and who are taxed to make up for the losses which take place every year. The Railway Department has been practically paying through the nose for coal in past years in order to bolster up State coalmines so that they may show a profit, or not show such a great loss. So long as a mine only showed a small loss, the Government of the day were prepared to compel the Railway Department to use coal at a greater price than it could obtain it for elsewhere.

Mr. JONES: Can you get the Bowen coal to the Cairns district cheaper than the Mount Mulligan coal?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is definitely stated. I must be guided by my officers in the matter. The Department of Mines will be able to show whether the Commissioner for Railways is right or wrong in this particular case. The Commissioner is undoubtedly doing his level best to carry on the railways as economically as possible, and it is up to me as Minister to help him in that direction.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*): I have listened with great interest to the debate on this particular vote. Needless to say, as an independent member, I am rather disgusted—and rightly so—at the heat which has emanated from both sides. I may say quite candidly that I stand by anything I have said outside, as I do by what I say here; and what I say here I am prepared to say outside. I may say quite candidly that I quoted outside an extract regarding the Mungana business, and then pressed for and hoped that an inquiry would be held as soon as possible. I hold no brief for either side. I regret the electricity that went through this Chamber last night; I really felt that I was going to be electrocuted by what was flying through the air.

No matter what Government might have been in power, a Royal Commission should have been appointed long ago to inquire into Mungana. If a person had to give a vote on the question, no matter how clear things might seem on the surface so far as one side was concerned, no Australian with a spark of British justice would assume that anybody was guilty of a thing until he had heard both sides of the question. Anyone present in a court of law—even a jurymen—might think, after hearing the evidence and the side of the case so ably put up by the barrister prosecuting a person, that the case was up and he was guilty. But, when a clever legal man on the opposite side gets up and puts his case, even a jurymen is in doubt as to exactly how to decide.

I regret very much that the ex-Premier and the present Premier did not hold an inquiry long ago instead of allowing this business to come up during the present week. It is a very delicate affair, and, whether it has been introduced for propaganda purposes or not, you never know how anything which happens at the eleventh hour is going to swing votes. I hope that no time will be lost in pushing on with the commission

[*Hon. Godfrey Morgan.*]

the appointment of which the Premier announced this morning, so that the thing may be cleaned up once and for all, with due regard to the honour of this Parliament and the officers of the Mines Department, because the only ideal we should let go abroad is that the Queensland Government and men in every walk of life should be fair, clean, and above-board. It is to the interests of the department as well as of the Government that it should quickly be shown whether there has been anything "crook" or not "crook."

Since others have quoted the evidence which has been given in a certain case, I would like to take the opportunity of saying that Robert Alexander Dunlop is in no way related to me. (Laughter.)

There has been some suggestion that the Minister intends to cut out the use of coal from certain mines. I think that the Styx has been mentioned, but I hope he will think twice before he sends that mine into oblivion. It produces coal of quite a good quality, and quite a lot of people have their eyes on the hon. gentleman in this respect. If he does what has been suggested I am afraid that the electricity that was in the air last night will be as nothing to what electricity will be in the air then.

I regret very much what took place on Friday last, and if an inquiry into such things is held immediately it can only be in the interests of the dignity of Parliament. I feel sure that it is the ambition of the Premier that what we have seen going on on the floor of this Chamber should not continue.

The PREMIER: You will get an inquiry.

Mr. HANLON: Why not give a definite promise, instead of saying that the matter will be considered? Why not give a promise that there will be an inquiry at a reasonably early date.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*): The hon. member for Warrego took the opportunity of saying something that I want to contradict.

He said that I was one of those who did not want to see the Socialist "booted." On the contrary, I would like to see the Socialist—the true Socialist—"booted," just as well "booted" as I would like to see the hon. member for Warrego well "booted," but in a different direction. I remember that the hon. member made some reference on a previous occasion to perfect Socialism. He almost threatened that he would go out and take his clothes off. I was a bit concerned, I must admit, that the hon. member should threaten to take his clothes off, because we all know that even with them on he is half naked. (Government laughter.)

I am sorry that the hon. member for Paddington is not here. I want to be quite frank with him. I came into this Parliament with a very high opinion of that hon. gentleman, but that high opinion has gone in some respects by reason of the fact that he has said that he has a perfect right to invest his money in a company having transactions with his own Government. He has a perfect legal right to do so, but I consider that it is improper for him to do so, especially when we know there are hundreds and hundreds of other companies in the State of Queensland of no concern to the Queensland Government in which he could have invested his money. It is an extraordinary coincidence that he should see

fit to invest his money in a company having transactions with the Queensland Government. So far as the interests of Messrs. Theodore and McCormack in Mount Isa are concerned, it is a terrible thing to think that any member of a Government would take shares for nothing from another member of his own party in the same Parliament. It is a great pity, in the interests of public morality and in the interests of the high standing of Parliament, that Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack should ever have seen the hon. member for Warrego. Hon. members will remember that, when speaking on the Address in Reply, I said that the hon. member for Warrego had been pitchforked into the Upper House by Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack because he followed them round the streets of Brisbane and told them funny stories. Possibly something has arisen that may have altered my opinion in that respect.

It is a great pity for the Government of Queensland of that time that, when these companies were floated and shares issued, the hon. member for Warrego should have forsaken his fields in the South to seek fresh fields and pastures new in Queensland. It is a fact that the hon. member for Warrego did interest himself in Mount Isa. No doubt he went and viewed the scene of the activities. He returned and got together the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited. He gave shares in that company to Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack, two Ministers of the Crown. It was not long after that that the Queensland Parliament, of which Mr. McCormack and Mr. Theodore were Ministers, passed a Bill for the construction of a certain railway. That Bill was carried through all its stages in the one day—a thing almost unprecedented in the history of the Queensland Parliament. It is also extraordinary that that Bill was pushed through three readings in the one day on the last day of the session. It is a fact that Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited, in respect of which company Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack accepted gift shares, was to expend upon the opening-up and development of the said properties a sum of not less than £250,000 on or before the date when the said railway was completed and opened for public traffic. It is also a fact that Mount Isa Mines Limited was to expend upon the opening-up and development of the said property a sum of not less than £150,000 before the date when the said railway was completed and opened for public traffic. It is a most significant fact that, within a few days of that contract, Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited, inaugurated by the hon. member for Warrego, sold to the Mount Isa Mines Limited its rights for 125,000 £1 shares. Why was not Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited given an opportunity to expend the £50,000 which it had contracted to expend? I make that bald statement, and will content myself with saying nothing more at this stage. I do not want to say anything unparliamentary. Within a month of the time that the Duchess to Mount Isa Railway Bill was passed the £125,000 was paid to the hon. member for Warrego, to Mr. Theodore, to Mr. McCormack, and other members of the company. What on earth has happened to those 125,000 shares? What did Mr. Theodore make out of it? What did Mr. McCormack make out of it? The hon. member for Warrego admitted in this Chamber

[Hon. N. F. Macgroarty.]

that he made £40,000 out of it. It is not right that a member of Parliament, who, on his own admission, gave away shares to Ministers of the Crown, should make £40,000 out of a transaction like that.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This is the man who poses as a Socialist! The whole transaction is wrong. It is certainly legal, but it is improper. Mr. Theodore, in a statement made in the press to-day, admitted having 500 shares in the company. What did he make out of the company? What did Mr. McCormack make out of the company? Further, why did Mr. McCormack and Mr. Theodore associate themselves in a company with a man by the name of John Wren? Mr. Wren may be a man who is respected by some people in Australia—I do not know—but we do know that Mr. Wren is beyond doubt one of the wealthiest men in the Commonwealth of Australia. I want to know why men like Mr. Theodore, Mr. McCormack, and the hon. member for Warrego—men who were leaders of the Labour Party in this State, and a man who aspires to become Leader of the Federal Labour Party—associate themselves with a man of wealth while, at the same time, they pose as socialistic champions of the people? The people of Queensland and Australia can form their own conclusions. I repeat that I want to know what proportion of the total money received for the Mount Isa mine Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack obtained. I say without fear of contradiction that their conduct was improper when they accepted those shares. It is a positive fact that, after Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack accepted those shares, they sat in deliberation on the wisdom or otherwise of constructing a railway to Mount Isa. They decided to construct that railway. Immediately afterwards the company in which they were interested sold out for £125,000, which represented 125,000 £1 shares.

Mr. HANLON: Why don't you tell the truth?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I merely, in error, transposed pounds for shares. Because I did so, the hon. member for Ithaca said that I was telling lies.

Mr. HANLON: You were when you said that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am doing nothing of the sort. I ask the hon. member to ask Mr. Theodore how much he made out of the transaction, and then we shall know how much he made out of his shares.

Mr. HANLON: You said that the company sold their interests for £125,000, whereas they were paid in shares.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You said that I was telling lies; I am not telling lies.

Mr. KIRWAN: You said that they sold for £125,000.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will not stand the hon. member for Ithaca saying, by way of interjection, that I was telling lies.

Mr. HANLON: You will have to stand a lot more than that before you are finished.

[2 p.m.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will not stand it from the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

[Hon. N. F. Macgroarty.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The deal by which 125,000 £1 shares were given by Mount Isa Mines Limited to the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited was finalised twenty-five days after the passing of the Duchess to Mount Isa Railway Bill, although the clear understanding of Parliament was that the Mount Isa Proprietary Silver-Lead Limited was to spend at least £100,000 in opening up and developing that property—£50,000 before the railway was opened and £50,000 after it was opened to traffic. It is a fact worth noting that that sale was completed twenty-five days after such an understanding as that. Seeing that the hon. member for Warrego got £40,000 out of the deal, what did Messrs. Theodore and McCormack get out of it?

Passing now to the incidents connected with the Mungana mines, I wish to emphasise that, if Mr. McCormack claims legally to be entitled to dabble in Mungana, as a politician and a member of the Government he was guilty of improper conduct in having anything whatever to do with Mungana.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Will you say that outside?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will say outside anything I say in here that suits me. (Opposition laughter.) I have already spoken outside, and I am not afraid of the Leader of the Opposition or anybody else. Prior to the 1926 elections Mr. McCormack denied having any interest in the Mungana leases. At meetings at the Trades Hall and in Parliament the late Secretary for Mines stated that he knew nothing whatever about who were the shareholders other than Reid, and who shared in the £40,000 which the Government gave for the leases in February, 1922. I am only stating that as a fact.

Mr. JONES: That is true.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman has said that.

Mr. JONES: And I stand to it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Government refused a commission of inquiry into this sale on many occasions. As a private individual, I remember reading of the refusal of the then Labour Government to hold such an inquiry. During the 1926 election campaign Mr. McCormack threatened an interjector at Rockhampton and Mr. W. J. Vowles at Dalby with a writ because they dared to associate his name with the Mungana scandal. When it was discovered from the share register at the Supreme Court that Mr. McCormack was the holder of 388 shares in the Mungana company, the ex-Premier made a great show of making a full disclosure of his connection with the case and received the applause of the members of the Government. On that occasion—4th November, 1926—the ex-Premier said—

“In 1917 the leases were taken up by Reid. He was the man who selected them and took them up. He formed a syndicate to work the show, and I was one of the syndicate. There were quite a number of people in that syndicate. The hon. member for Nundah was at much pains to go to the registrar and find the list of shareholders of that company.”

Now, Mr. Roberts, we find from the evidence in the bankruptcy proceedings that Mr. McCormack was a half-shareholder with

Frederick Reid, and that, as a Cabinet Minister, he assisted to put through the purchase of the mines by the Government for £40,000.

At 2.5 p.m.,

Mr. Fry (*Kurildou*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Again, I repeat that that was undesirable for a Minister of the Crown. It was improper conduct for a Minister of the Crown to do that.

The leases were taken up in 1917, and were worked profitably for some years. Mr. McCormack stated in Parliament on 4th November, 1926, that lead was selling at £60 per ton at the time. The price was high for some years during the war period; but, after the war, it gradually declined, as in the case of other minerals, until at the date of the sale to the Government it had slumped to £20 15s. per ton—an unprofitable price. Again, in the bankruptcy proceedings it is disclosed that, while the mines were working, a profit of £3,000 was made. The mines generally became unprofitable to work, and it was then decided that a change of ownership was desirable, and they were unloaded on to the Government at a cost of £40,000 of public money.

Speaking at the Townsville Labour Convention in May, 1928, Mr. McCormack, referring to the Chillagoe smelters, said—

“ He knew that, as lead had dropped from £40 to £20 a ton, it was an impossible proposition, and he did not favour subsidising an industry to the extent it was being subsidised.”

Because of the fall of lead to £20 a ton, the Government closed down the smelters and threw hundreds of men out of work. The same Government, however, decided upon the purchase of the Mungana mines for £40,000, when lead was practically at the same price—£20 15s. 4d. a ton. That is how they proved to be friends of the workers.

Coming back to Mount Isa, I repeat that it is an unfortunate thing that the hon. member for Warrego was able to bring this mine before Messrs. Theodore and McCormack, and give them shares for nothing. It is a great pity that such a thing was ever brought in here—that men like the hon. member for Warrego, a mining company promoter, could bring into Parliament such a thing, and induce or get these men to take these shares for nothing. I regret that Ministers of the Crown in any Parliament at any period did not see that there was a higher obligation on them morally than to participate in any mining venture with which the Government of the day had anything to do, when there were hundreds and hundreds of companies, mining and otherwise, outside which did not touch the Government and in which they could have invested.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I desire to participate to some extent in this debate. I listened with some attention to that portion of the Attorney-General's speech that I heard since my return from the North.

The first matter I heard him deal with was the matter of the construction of the Duchess to Mount Isa railway. That railway was approved by Parliament on the recommendation of the Public Works Commission, on which both sides of the House were repre-

sented. An exhaustive inquiry was made by that commission, which made certain recommendations. Those recommendations were embodied in a Railway Bill, presented to this Parliament, and carried without division and without dissent. It was known and stated in the course of the debate, as “ Hansard ” will show, that certain individuals were shareholders in certain leases on that field. That was openly stated in this House, and it was common knowledge to those members of the House who were interested in the debate.

I want to call attention, however, to what the Attorney-General said with reference to the passing of that Bill through all its stages in one day. If the Attorney-General were as well acquainted with parliamentary practice as you are, Mr. Fry, he would know that towards the end of every session of Parliament the Standing Orders are suspended to provide for the passing of a Bill through all its stages in one day. As a matter of fact, the first Bill introduced by the Government of which he is a member was carried under the same procedure. The Premier can move at any stage that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent a Bill passing through all its stages in one day. It is done frequently in every session of Parliament so that business can be concluded and the House given an opportunity to adjourn and go into recess. I venture to predict, having regard to the late opening of Parliament, that if the Government have much legislation not yet given notice of, the Premier will do the same thing in this session; so that there is no significance whatever in the point the Attorney-General sought to labour.

Let me quote this further point: That railway was built for the purpose of developing what was known as a very valuable mineral field. Everyone qualified to report on that matter indicated that it was a field with a very rich and extensive ore-body, which, worked on a large scale, would give avenues of employment for large numbers of men and materially assist the resources of this State by bringing to the surface wealth which at that time was down in the bowels of the earth. The passage of that railway was justified in every detail. The Government of any country are justified in providing facilities for the development of any mineral fields, provided that the bona fides of a company are established and it is proved that the ore-bodies are there. The people who are developing that field will probably spend anything in the vicinity of £2,000,000 before actual lead bullion is being produced. At any rate, a large amount of money will be spent in development, wages, and stores, which will materially benefit Queensland. Any hon. member who refused to pass such a Bill would be doing a wrong thing.

We are often charged with driving capital out of the country. Judged by some of the speeches made in this Chamber, hon. members opposite are accusing us of passing a Railway Bill which had the effect of bringing large amounts of capital into the country. I am satisfied that a review of the whole position will establish the fact that the building of that railway was in the public interests and in the interests of the development of the State.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And of some of the Ministers.

Mr. Smith.]

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am putting the case as it appears to me. I mentioned earlier in my speech that it was well known when this Bill was before the House that certain members of Parliament were financially interested in a certain company. The speech of the hon. member for Enoggera to that effect can be looked up in "Hansard."

As to the propriety or otherwise of members of Parliament interesting themselves in mining or any other form of development, that is a matter for the individual concerned. Does the Attorney-General or any other Minister in the Cabinet say that, because they are Ministers of the Crown, they shall be denied the right of ordinary citizens in taking shares in a company or speculating in mining ventures? Everyone knows that all forms of investment with regard to mines are a speculation whereby large profits may be made or, as frequently happens, the investor or speculator loses the lot.

What has been established is that certain members were shareholders in that venture, and that they were fortunate enough to be shareholders in a venture that was profitable to them. There is nothing illegal at all in that practice. It has not been laid down at any time either in this or any other Parliament that a member of Parliament, because he is such, is denied the ordinary rights of any other citizen of the State.

I want to raise this point: Certain statements and allegations have been made in this Chamber which are of a very far-reaching character and involve the honour of various members of Parliament and public men in this State. The names of Mr. Theodore, the hon. member for Cairns, the hon. member for Paddington, and the hon. member for Warrego have been used in this connection. Again I repeat that, when the Bill was passed, these men were known to be interested in the Mount Isa field.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not true. Only one was.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I do not propose to take any notice of any interjections that come from the front Treasury bench. I am making my own points. Certain allegations affecting the honour of members of Parliament have been made in this Chamber. I do not stand for wrongdoing, malpractice, or corruption on the part of any individual, no matter how highly placed he may be. The more highly placed a man is the higher standard he should have.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Certain allegations have been made to the effect that members of Parliament, for a consideration to be obtained, made use of their office to obtain certain conditions. If the statements made by hon. members opposite mean anything, they mean that. They mean, so far as anything can be definite, that members of Parliament on the Government side at that time agreed to build a railway because they were financially interested in the development of that field. That is the gravamen of the allegations that have been made. I was a member of that Government. I am not aware of any wrongdoing by any member of that Government. So far as I am concerned, I am not interested one penny one way or the other in the Mount Isa field or any other field. Hon. members opposite know that.

[Mr. Smith.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did you know the others were?

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: As Leader of the Labour Party, I take this opportunity to challenge the Premier of this State to formulate charges against the individual or individuals concerned, and deal with them according to the ordinary legal processes.

Three courses are open to the Government. One is this: If charges could be formulated and a prima facie case established, then the men concerned should be proceeded against under the Criminal Code. If a Minister has been guilty of any offence against the law, the Attorney-General knows that it is his duty to proceed against him according to the ordinary processes of the law. Another course available to the Premier is that, if the circumstances surrounding the whole case give rise to just suspicion—justify the people in having grave doubts about the bona fides of any action on their part—then the Premier can appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter under the Official Inquiries Evidence Act and have the whole thing probed to the bottom.

Mr. JONES: They will not do that.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Another course available to the Government applies particularly to the individuals who made these allegations. It is open to them to get on the public platform in Brisbane and repeat on the public platform what they said in this Chamber.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Those three courses are open to the Government, the third one being open to the individuals who made those allegations. I contend that parliamentary privilege is a matter that is capable of grave abuse in the hands of men who are prepared to say things for purposes other than for the public good. Under parliamentary privilege a member of Parliament can tear every shred and tatter of a man's reputation away, and that man has no legal remedy for anything that is said in this Chamber. But, if the legal processes of the law are invoked, British justice operates, and the parties concerned can be heard in defence and evidence sifted by a proper body not influenced to the slightest degree by political malevolence. These avenues are available to the Government, and on behalf of the Labour Party I take this opportunity of challenging the Government to do these things. If the Government fail to proceed according to the lines I have mentioned, then I am justified in saying, and the public are justified in concluding, that these things have been merely stirred up with a view to obtaining a political advantage due to the forthcoming Federal election. That is the position clear and definite. There is no ambiguity about it. I challenge the Premier to come out from the coward's castle of parliamentary privilege and take action according to the ordinary legal processes set out in the statutes of this State.

Mr. BEDFORD: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: This case reminds me of a very important case that happened some years ago with regard to the Marconi Company. The Marconi Company was launched many years ago, and, due very largely to the extraordinary development of wireless and the commercial and international need of that service and that facility being

made available to the people, certain things were done. The British Government control the postal services in Great Britain, and they have a controlling interest in various cable companies. They have an agreement with these companies to do certain things for and on behalf of the British people. A contract was entered into by the Postmaster-General of that day with the Marconi Company which gave the postal authorities certain rights that were patented by that company. These rights were sold to the British Government, or to the British Postmaster-General, for a considerable sum of money. Immediately the British Government bought an interest, so to speak, in the Marconi Company, its shares naturally rose on the various exchanges where they were listed. The fact of the Postmaster-General entering into a far-reaching agreement with that company indicated to the investing public generally that this company's affairs were sound, and that it was a company that was likely to develop its ramifications over a period of years. As a consequence, shares rose from a very small amount to a very large amount. After this had been done, it was discovered that Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer in Great Britain, Sir Rufus Isaacs, Lord Birkenhead, and various other prominent members of Parliament and members of the British Government held vendor shares in that company.

Hon. members on the Government benches who are speculators will understand the significance of that term. Charges were made in various circles about the propriety or otherwise of Mr. Lloyd George and other members of the British Cabinet holding shares in a company with which the Postmaster-General had just concluded a contract remunerative to that company. A judge of very high standing was appointed as a Royal Commission to investigate the charges thoroughly. The whole matter was investigated right to the foundations. All the affairs of the company, and all the affairs of the individuals implicated were investigated most thoroughly by the Commissioner. When the Commissioner presented his report it was to the effect that nothing illegal had been done and that no malpractice of any kind whatsoever had been disclosed at the inquiry. That was the basis of the report. The men concerned were given ample opportunity to have their case fully and freely stated before a tribunal free from political malevolence.

Let me repeat again that I am not concerned at all about the affairs of any private individual. I am satisfied that the building of the Duchess to Mount Isa railway was a good policy and would have been carried out, no matter what Government had been in power. I believe that to be so, but I take this opportunity of again challenging the Premier to come out into the open, if he has any foundation in fact for the allegation made by his colleagues, and give these individuals concerned British justice, and have the question dealt with by the ordinary legal processes.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Arb'gny*), who was received with Government cheers, said: The Leader of the Opposition has put up an extraordinary case for a man who behaved in the way he has behaved in this Chamber during the last

three years. I want to say quite definitely that I supported the Duchess to Mount Isa Railway Bill. I see nothing wrong with it. It was for the benefit of the State.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: If you had been Premier of the State, would you have built it?

The PREMIER: Most decidedly. I say that quite openly. There has never been any question that the Duchess to Mount Isa railway meant a good deal for this State. The only question at stake is the propriety or decency of the action of one individual who was vitally interested making a distribution of shares for nothing to certain Ministers of the day and others.

Mr. BEDFORD: Two and a-half years before the railway started.

The PREMIER: It would be nothing if these gentlemen had purchased those shares.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Some members of your party had shares listed on 'Change.

The PREMIER: It was not the right and proper thing for those Ministers to accept shares in the company from a man who was vitally interested. If they did so, then it was their lookout. The point of view we have to face is that one member of this Assembly, very much interested in the building of the railway, made gifts to Cabinet Ministers.

Mr. BEDFORD: And to twenty other people outside.

The PREMIER: It does not matter if the hon. member for Warrego gave shares to 5,000 people outside of Parliament; the only people that he, who was interested in the building of the railway, should not have given shares to were Cabinet Ministers in this House.

Mr. BEDFORD: The only thing that matters is the motive.

The PREMIER: I do not say that there is any corruption, but I do say that the whole matter bears a very unsavoury appearance. If it were hon. members on this side of the Chamber who had been implicated, hon. members opposite would have raised a hue-and-cry throughout Queensland as to the propriety of their doing so. I say in this case that, while there may have been no malpractice, yet it was very undesirable. It is true that the railway would have been built in the same way as it was built, whether shares had been given away or not. Looking at the matter from the point of view of fairness and decency, I do see wrong in Ministers accepting shares from another hon. member of their party when they were about to adjudicate upon the construction of a railway which would have enhanced the value of those hon. members' interests by 300 or 400 per cent. Nobody can justify it.

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr. JONES: I certainly purchased shares.

The PREMIER: I am not doubting that the hon. member purchased some shares, as did also Mr. Theodore and Mr. McCormack—I am not talking about that. All the same, they were interested, and nobody can justify a Cabinet Minister interesting himself most vitally in a speculation of this kind.

Mr. BEDFORD: Is \$50 worth of shares "vitally interesting" himself?

Hon. A. E. Moore.]

The PREMIER: Mr. Theodore had a lot more than that, as had Mr. McCormack. He purchased 250 £20 shares.

Mr. BEDFORD: That was a matter of purchase.

The PREMIER: It is unwise for Cabinet Ministers to get into an affair of that sort when they are in a position to build a railway which will enhance the value of shares which they hold. After all, it is not a speculation.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is not a speculation; it is the development of a mine.

The PREMIER: I am admitting the development of mining; but it cannot be for the development of mining that these gentlemen should interest themselves in the purchase of shares or the gift of shares which, by their own actions, are going to be enhanced in value.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are only discussing the matter of individual propriety, which is entirely different from what some of your colleagues said.

The PREMIER: It is a matter of individual propriety, but at the same time the whole party must accept responsibility for what the leaders of the party did. It is not merely a question of an individual member doing that. When the Leader of the Government and two of his Cabinet Ministers accept those presents, then it bears a different complexion altogether, and the members of that party must accept the responsibility for that sort of thing. They cannot get away from it. I am not going to say for an instant that there was corruption, because the building of that railway would have gone on exactly the same. At the same time, no one can justify that point of view. I remember well the great stir which was created in this Parliament in 1914, when Mr. Paget was accused of purchasing three bags of cement from the Railway Department. One would have thought that he had sold the whole Railway Department; yet that was nothing in comparison with the sort of thing that has gone on here.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEDFORD: You say yourself that there has been no corruption.

The PREMIER: I do not make a charge of corruption, but I say that these individuals personally benefited by a parcel of shares given to them by another member.

Mr. BEDFORD: Will you let Sleeman meet your Agent-General?

The PREMIER: I do not want Mr. Sleeman dragged into this.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Of course you don't.

The PREMIER: It is all very well for hon. members opposite to be upright to-day. They had an opportunity of having the inquiry which they suggest. (Opposition dissent.) For seven years they had the opportunity of instituting an inquiry; yet they did nothing. The Attorney-General in the late Labour Government stated definitely in this Chamber that he knew who the guilty parties were.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Where is he?

The PREMIER: He cleared out overseas.

Mr. KIRWAN: Where is the statement?

[Hon. A. E. Moore.]

The PREMIER: It is in "Hansard." I do not want to get on to that question or to other points of view on the Estimates dealing with the Department of Mines. Further opportunity will be given to discuss those other points of view. What I want to get to is that the Leader of the Opposition raised himself up and said he demanded that we should hold an inquiry or take legal action.

Mr. BEDFORD: Why not?

The PREMIER: What did the hon. gentleman do when sitting on this side of the Chamber, when we, as an Opposition, made the same demand? At page 552 of "Hansard" for 1927, the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who is now Secretary for Public Instruction, said—

"That the circumstances connected with the purchase by the Government of the Mungana mines for £40,000 furnished grave reasons for suspicion that the present Premier (then Home Secretary) and perhaps other members of the Government (present or past) wrongfully used their public positions for the purpose of the acquirement of private gain, the relevant facts of this case being as follows;—"

Then the hon. gentleman proceeded to cite the relevant facts.

Mr. PEASE: The Auditor-General was sent up to examine.

The PREMIER: This was after the Auditor-General had been up. The Auditor-General was sent up in 1926. When the Auditor-General did go up, he discovered that every allegation I made in this Chamber was true.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEDFORD: I would have given you a commission on Mungana at any moment.

The PREMIER: But the Government of which the hon. member for Warrego was a member would not give the opportunity. We made a definite charge that hon. members who were Ministers had personally benefited by the acts of the Government.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Who personally benefited?

The PREMIER: The then Secretary for Public Lands, for one.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You said "Ministers." Who were the others?

The PREMIER: Mr. Theodore was another Minister.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Theodore was not in the Cabinet at that time.

The PREMIER: He was when Mungana was purchased. I am talking about the time the purchase took place. I am pointing out the attitude adopted by the Leader of the Opposition to-day, when he gets up in this Committee and says he demands that these people shall get an opportunity to state their case.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I challenge you!

The PREMIER: We challenged the Government of the day to hold an inquiry, when their honour was at stake; yet they were prepared to sit down rather than have that inquiry. Why? Because we know from the bankrupt proceedings that have taken place within the last few days that they were not game to have an inquiry. This statement was made by Mr. McCormack, as

reported on page 1529 of "Hansard" for 1926:—

"I need never have admitted any interest in Mungana. I could have held it in somebody else's name. I need never have had the shares registered in my name. I entered it as a legitimate speculation, and I may say that I have not got anything out of it compared with the abuse I have got about it. I can at least stand before my fellow-men and say that there is nothing dishonest or unfair in the whole transaction as far as I am concerned."

What is the evidence that comes out?

Mr. PEASE: Go ahead with your Royal Commission. That is what we ask.

The PREMIER: I am going ahead with it. If I were to go on with it now, every hon. member on that side would accuse me of breaking my word to the late Premier. After the election Mr. McCormack saw me in my office, and he asked me about the inquiry, and I told him that it would have to be held. He asked me if he could get away, and I said, "Yes, and I will give you ample time to get back before the inquiry is held"; and I am not going back on my promise.

Mr. BEDFORD: You can hold an inquiry into Mount Isa.

The PREMIER: They are all wrapped up together. There are quite a number of other inquiries that can be held.

I should like to quote what the Auditor-General had to say in his report of 1927 in regard to the transactions of the Fluorspar Mining Company with the Chillagoe Smelters—

"At 30th June, 1926, the undermentioned credit to the company was passed through the Smelters' books:—

'Fluorspar, 188,462½ tons at £2 15s. per ton, £518 5s. 5d., and this credit cleared the amount owing by the company. The Smelters' stock-sheets at 30th June, 1926, and at the time of my visit (31st January, 1927) denoted that this quantity (188,462½ tons) was on hand at the Fluorspar railway siding. A senior audit inspector, in company with Mr. H. Nichols, who is temporarily in charge of the smelters, visited the siding and the mine on 7th April, 1927, but there was no fluorspar the property of the Smelters at either the siding or the mine.

'Although the 188 tons were paid for by credit entry to the company at 30th June, 1926, and had not been delivered at 30th June, 1927, a parcel of 16 tons purchased from the company in August, 1926, and 302 tons in November, 1926, were duly delivered to the smelters. The fact that the Fluorspar Company borrowed 132 tons from the Smelters' stock-pile in June and August, 1926, makes it questionable whether the 188 tons were available for delivery between these dates. The Smelters closed down on 17th June, 1926, for the campaign of 1926.

'To adjust the matter the company has been debited with the sum previously credited (£518 5s. 5d.) and it remains for the Smelters to collect the amount.'

Mr. Theodore held £1,000 worth of shares in that Fluorspar Mining Company also. All these things are peculiar. We must

have an inquiry, but I am not going to have an inquiry until Mr. McCormack has an opportunity to be represented at that inquiry. I told him so before he went away. I would have had the inquiry before this but for that reason. It is ridiculous for hon. members opposite to get up, and say they challenge me to hold an inquiry. I am prepared to hold it. I have been asking for this inquiry for years.

Mr. PEASE: So have we!

The PREMIER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition says, "So have we," but, when we sat on the Opposition side of the House and asked for an inquiry, they denied it. Hon. members opposite always try to get away from the real position. When they find the position as stated by us in this Chamber is being proved up to the hilt—first, in the Auditor-General's report, and secondly, by the examination in bankruptcy, where it was proved that even the nominees of Mr. McCormack signed their own receipts after the money was paid—

Mr. PEASE: The judge had to "shake up" the barrister who was prosecuting.

The PREMIER: It may be a little comfort to your souls to try to find fault with the judge.

Mr. BEDFORD: Not with the judge. The judge found fault with Mr. McGill.

The PREMIER: There are various other suggestive things connected with this. Fancy the warden—the man who has to do with the granting of these leases—being given credit to the value of thousands of pounds! Does it not look peculiar? Would not hon. members opposite have thought it extraordinary if that sort of thing went on while we were in power?

Mr. BEDFORD: Mount Isa mines did that.

The PREMIER: I do not care who did it. When that extraordinary position occurs, it seems to me that we must have an inquiry to find out the real position.

Mr. BEDFORD: The quicker the better.

The PREMIER: I quite agree with the hon. member.

The hon. member for Ithaca questioned the value of these shares as being £125,000. What is their value? This was published in the "Daily Guardian"—

"The 'Guardian' was not interested in Mr. Theodore's market speculations until the former Queensland Premier made statements at the Labour Conference about his shareholding.

"He told the conference that, while he held shares in Roma Oil, it was 'not a capitalistic organisation.'

"In regard to Mount Isa, the following question and answer is taken from the 'Labour Daily' of 9th April:—

A delegate: Is Mr. Theodore a director or a big shareholder in any of the Mount Isa group companies?

Mr. Theodore: No; I have no interests whatever.

Yet, four days later—Friday, the 13th—Mr. Theodore's name still appears on the Mount Isa Mines, Limited, register as holder of thirty-two shares, balance of 5,912 shares formerly held by him. . . .

"Possibly Mr. Theodore had sold the thirty-two remaining shares prior to

Hon. A. E. Moore.]

addressing the Labour Conference, but the Mount Isa register doesn't show it.

"The deal was profitable.

"The market price for Mount Isa when Theodore bought the first 5,480 shares was 20s. 10½d.

"These were resold in parcels ranging up to 39s. 9d.

"The profit, on market quote, would be a little over £1,000."

That shows the value of the shares. I have already said that I think that, for the sake of the honour and probity of the Assembly, it is absolutely essential that we should get to the bottom of this matter and find out exactly what has happened up at Mount Isa, Chillagoe, and Mungana.

Mr. BEDFORD: I gave you evidence.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may have given us part of the evidence. If he will read back in 1926 and 1927 "Hansard," he will find that Mr. McCormack, when standing on this side of the House, said that he had told the truth and nothing but the truth. He said: "I have given you all the evidence, and there is no occasion for further inquiry." But we find, when the examination of a bankrupt comes up, that there is every justification for further inquiry.

Mr. BEDFORD: I am not interested in Mr. McCormack.

The PREMIER: But I am.

Mr. BEDFORD: You bring on this inquiry as quickly as possible.

The PREMIER: I will bring on the inquiry when it suits me, and not when it suits the hon. member.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You bring on this debate when it suits you, too.

The PREMIER: Oh, no!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: As a matter of fact, the newspapers had the headlines before this debate took place.

The PREMIER: Is it not rather amusing to hear the hon. member say that? The Leader of the Opposition gave notice of a resolution in this House to disallow an income tax regulation. We gave him an opportunity to debate it, but not one hon. member on that side of the Chamber was game to open his mouth on the subject. They were all as tame as kittens, and made all sorts of excuses, wondering how they could get out of it. Then the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Herbert, gave notice of a resolution about an inquiry into Mount Isa. We called "Not formal" to give him the opportunity of having something to say on it, but he was quite disappointed at the opportunity to do so. He wants to keep quiet. (Government laughter.) He does not want to say a word about it. He merely wants to put it on the business-paper so that he can go to his electorate and say, "I asked for an inquiry." I am not satisfied with that. I want to get into a position where I can get to the bottom of the thing and see who is guilty. We want to see if we cannot prosecute those who are guilty. We do not want to get in the position that the late Government got into when they sent the late Auditor-General, Mr. Robertson, and later Mr. Beal and others to go into the Chillagoe business. Those gentlemen came back and said, "We have found malpractices and false balance-sheets";

{Hon. A. E. Moore.

yet nothing was done except that the general manager was dismissed.

Mr. PEASE: Was it not referred to the Department of Justice?

The PREMIER: I do not know.

Mr. PEASE: Well, I say it was.

The PREMIER: When it is definitely stated by the Auditor-General that a false balance-sheet has been issued, there is no occasion to refer it to the Department of Justice.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: They have to see if they can take action.

The PREMIER: Hon. members opposite had ample opportunity to go straight ahead if there were malpractices.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You cannot make your own rules in the law courts, as you can here.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is inferring that the Crown Law Office was against a prosecution. He was a member of the Government at that time, and he should have known.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: He was not a member of the Government.

The PREMIER: If these men were so careful about the honour and honesty of Parliament, and they had directed an inquiry, and it had turned out like that, it was their duty to know. It is no use waiting until they are out of power and then saying, "Why do you not go ahead?" (Government laughter.) They had the opportunity to go right ahead; but, now that the chickens are coming home to roost, they say, "We challenge the Premier to give us an inquiry." (Government laughter.) That is all very well. This inquiry will come on when it suits me, and when the proper opportunity arises.

Mr. BEDFORD: Prior to the next elections.

The PREMIER: I will give the hon. member for Cairns time and notify him. I shall not notify him by cable, but I shall notify him and give him the opportunity to be here. I do not want to hurry him back, or I would have had the inquiry before.

Mr. BEDFORD: Have an inquiry into Mount Isa straight away.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): The Leader of the Government is always interesting when he gets up, but a perusal of "Hansard" will show him that he has said a great deal more than he intended to say when he got up.

The PREMIER: Oh, no!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Let me repeat that certain definite statements have been made under the cover of parliamentary privilege. I do not believe that any of these statements are true, and I challenge the Leader of the Government that, if he believes they are true or has evidence by which they could be sustained in any court of law, it is his duty to proceed against the parties concerned. He has decided, however, that he will not do that. In fact, he says he will choose his own time and place to do these things.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He is playing the game with McCormack.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: That interjection suits me. What happened in connection with that is that the hon. member for Cairns

interviewed the Premier, and told him that he was in bad health and desired to receive medical treatment overseas.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: He further asked him when he intended to proceed with the Mungana inquiry, because, naturally, he desired to be here when the inquiry took place.

The PREMIER: Quite right.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Premier told the hon. member for Cairns that he could safely go overseas, and that, if an inquiry was to be held, it would not be held in his absence, and he would have an opportunity to attend.

The PREMIER: Quite right.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Quite right. There is nothing wrong with that. Had the hon. member for Cairns been told by the Premier that he intended to proceed with the investigation straight away, he would not have gone. Is that not clear and definite? So far as that is concerned, the sooner that investigation or inquiry takes place the better.

The PREMIER: He told me that there was no occasion for any inquiry into Mungana.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I do not think there is myself. I intimated to the Premier that I was not concerned about what he or any of his party knew, but what I was concerned with was what they said they did not know. Let me repeat that. It does not suit hon. members opposite to probe things to the bottom. If they can create suspicion in the public mind and keep that uneasiness going as long as possible, then it suits their purpose far better than having the whole thing finalised. There are some members of the Government who are very capable in some directions, and in discussing the Estimates of the Mines Department it is necessary to refer to the matter. I want to say definitely that, if "dirt" were gold, the present Government would have the richest goldmine in the world. So far as this party is concerned, we desire that this matter should be probed to the bottom. We consider that it is the duty of the Premier to do that. If he does not do it, then we can draw our own conclusions, and the public will draw their own conclusions, too. The Premier said that the Government of which I was a member had seven years in which to probe the matter to the bottom.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: As a matter of fact, all the investigations that we made at the time and since failed to elicit satisfactory evidence on which a prima facie case could be based. However, a new factor has now entered the arena. One of the principals has approached the Premier. It is rather remarkable that immediately he becomes Premier one of the principals approaches him with a view to the return of £3500. That same individual has now made definite charges, so that the whole position is entirely different from what it was when we were a Government. I repeat, if the Ministry are anxious to get at the facts rather than create an atmosphere favourable to their party, they will accept the challenge I have made.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*): The business before the Chamber is the consideration of the appropriation of £17422 for the Department of Mines for 1929-30. To me, a new member, the procedure seems somewhat

strange. It appears that an hon. member can speak on any subject at all in connection with the mining industry. Since I have been sitting in this Chamber the remark has been hurled across at us that the new members on this side are Parliamentary new-chuns; that we do not understand the procedure; and that we should follow the example set by hon. members opposite. Their method is so strange and so cumbersome that I do not feel inclined to follow the procedure. Of course, I presume that, as I become experienced, I will have to drop into line and do exactly the same as every other hon. member does. Hon. members seem to get away from the subject altogether; but to me it seems clear that we could vote this amount immediately and get right on with the business of the country. Why are hon. members always playing to the gallery and to the people outside?

Mr. HANLON: So that the Government can get in their slime for the elections.

Mr. TOZER: Why are hon. members playing to the outside gallery—to the man in the street?

Mr. KERSON: We have told them the truth, and they don't like it.

Mr. TOZER: Playing to the gallery does not appeal to me a bit. In connection with mining, what does appeal to me is our vigorous mining policy, with generous assistance for prospecting. One of the best things that could happen in the interests of Queensland and in the interests of the unemployed would be the development or the discovery of another mining field. I think it was in 1851 that gold was discovered in Australia, and it was the means of bringing Australia to the front, and practically making Australia a nation.

Then, in 1857, when things were at an exceptionally low ebb in Queensland, and there was unemployment, industrial unrest, and all the accompanying evils, gold was discovered at Gympie, only 105 miles from Brisbane, which gave new life to the State. It gave employment to the people. In a very short time there were something like 25,000 men on that field. That is the very thing we want at this time—the discovery of some new goldfield which would create industry and give employment to the people.

I have been following mining for a considerable number of years. I have been interested chiefly in Gympie, but I have had interests at Croydon, at the Starcke River in the Cooktown district, Charters Towers, Ravenswood, at Mount Cannindah on the Dawes Range, and at Mount Morgan and the Devil's Mountain. If we could develop a mining field in Queensland, we would be doing something of some use and conferring a considerable benefit on the people of Queensland by creating employment.

I wish to refer to an article published in the "Daily Mail" of Tuesday, 27th August last. It is in connection with mining, and is so much to the point that I decided to quote from it. It says—

"The decline and fall of the mining industry in Queensland constitutes one of the most tragic pages in the annals of Queensland's history. All the country owes to its mining pioneers will never be known. The discovery of precious metal in Australia was an epoch-marking event, for it precipitated Australia into manhood. It was the discovery of gold in payable quantities in 1851 that first

Mr. Tozer.]

attracted population to Australia. The rapid strides made in the mining industry in the early days were sensational, and scarcely less sensational, though far more poignant, has been its decline and fall."

The decline and fall of the gold yield was a most disastrous thing. We want to find out if we can get to the bottom of it, discover its cause, and try to remedy it. The article continues—

"The industry can be resurrected, but it needs vast sums of capital to do it. There is no dearth of capital available for the purpose; but the men—the big men with funds at their disposal on the other side of the world, as well as in the Commonwealth—are not going to band themselves into a benevolent institution for the purpose of helping lame dogs over stiles. Altruism is a sentiment and not a business proposition, and the production of mineral wealth is a business pure and simple. Freed from abnormal burdens, in the shape of strangling taxation, there is no question but that a thorough exploitation of the large mineral resources of the State would eventuate without any spoon-feeding from departmental sources."

At 2.53 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. TOZER: I respectfully submit that this article is right to the point. We want to see if we cannot devise some means by which we can get some other mineral field going in Queensland. The only way I can see of doing so is by encouraging prospecting. One of the original prospectors discovered Gympie. He was a man named James Nash. A prospector found Charters Towers. These fields were not found by the aid of the Government or geologists. It was the men who went out prospecting who found these places. Those are the kind of men we want to go out prospecting now. Every encouragement should be given to prospectors to go out and discover new fields. There are many places in Queensland which are not known and which have not been tested; indeed, our undeveloped resources cannot be estimated.

[3 p.m.]

Some little time ago certain geologists stated that there is no place where they could say that a particular mineral would be developed. I cannot imagine that, because in my own district there are many places in the scrub, known to very few persons except possibly a few timber-getters, where traces of gold can be got. That is only on the surface, and it is not until you go down that you find the gold in any quantity. At Gympie, for example, gold was found all round the district, from north to south and from east to west. I have seen lumps of gold from all parts of the district. Down as far as Imbil and Chinaman's Creek there are prospectors doing a little on their own. They get a little gold, which they store in bottles; and it strikes me that where those little nuggets of gold are there must be other gold. If we could only discover a place and a rush took place, we would do more to benefit the State than by talking here till we are blue in the face. The only way is to encourage prospectors to go out and develop places which may eventually prove to be extensive gold diggings.

Speaking on the question of mining generally in the Gympie district and the causes

of decline, hon. members may say that the depression is due to the working out of the ore-bodies and to the lower values obtainable for low-grade ores. At the same time, there are many places which would prove payable propositions if different conditions obtained. Some of the present conditions can be rectified; others cannot. Taxation in connection with mining has been too heavy, whilst labour conditions have also contributed to the decline. Further, too many regulations have had to be complied with, while the hours of work have been shortened and the wages increased. Then the prices of materials used in mining have increased tremendously of late years. Coal, for example, costs 45s. per ton, although years ago it could be purchased for 18s. Similarly with explosives and other materials. Hon. members may know that in ropes, for example, there has been a considerable advance in price; a rope which at one time could be purchased for £50 now costs about £400, and, of course, the life of the rope depends to a great extent on the mine being worked, on the mineral in the water, and the depths at which working is taking place. Some ropes will last seven or eight years; others only two years. One might say, therefore, that the depression in the mining industry has been brought about by a combination of many things which have been forced upon those engaged in mining activities. There are many low-grade propositions in Gympie which could be worked if certain concessions were given. Of course, at the present time the presence of water is a serious trouble to anyone commencing mining. There is a big cross-course, known as the Smithfield dyke or cross-course, which cuts across the field from west to east practically cutting the gold-field in two, the water on the north side of the cross-course making east, and that on the south side south and then east. Ultimately it all makes east.

We had two drainage boards there—the Northern Drainage Board and the Southern Drainage Board—which were subsidised to the extent of £2,000 each—that is, pound for pound. The object of those boards was that we could impose a tax—it is in the nature of a tax—on the companies and get a contribution from them. Then we were able to cope with the water. However, the water has beaken us there now, and the consequence is that anyone starting mining there now will be under the necessity of incurring increased cost of bailing, which practically stops mining. When you take up a lease you have to pay £1 per acre to the Government. If you take up a 50-acre lease, that means you have to pay £50 straight away. Immediately you do that you come under the taxation of the City Council. They tax you on a valuation of twenty times the annual rental. Their tax amounts to 1s. in the £1. Then there is a water rate amounting to 8d. in the £1. That makes 1s. 8d. in the £1, in addition to the rental. Next you have to form your company, and you have to pay stamp duty and registration fees before you get the company started, and before you can put a man on you have to comply with the Workers' Compensation Act. The Workers' Compensation Act is bearing fairly heavily on mining because the premium amounts to 120s. per £100 on the wages that you actually expend during the year. That has "cruelled" us in connection with mining. Originally we had our own

[Mr. Tozer.

workers' compensation scheme operating in Gympie, and we only charged 50s. per £100; yet we were told that we were profiteers and everything that was bad. I am getting used to being told that I am not what I thought I was at one time. However, we were told that we were profiteers, and that we would have to get rid of the funds that we had accumulated. Although only half the number of companies operating joined the local association, in the course of a few years we accumulated £5,000 or £6,000.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Department of Mines did not interfere with you.

Mr. TOZER: I admit that we received every consideration from the Department of Mines. I happened to be the president of the Mineworkers' Association, and I know that the Secretary for Mines was always courteous and received us in just as nice a manner as any man could, and I take this opportunity of thanking the hon. gentleman and the Department of Mines for the assistance given to Gympie while he was Secretary for Mines. We had to abandon that association, and we were told that the State Insurance Department would give a better return to the men and would reduce the actual amount of the premiums, but the result was that in a very short time we were paying a premium of 80s. per cent. Then we had a deputation to Brisbane, and we were told that industrial diseases had increased and that they did not see their way clear to give us a reduction then, but that they might be able to do so in the course of twelve months. We came back in twelve months, but we did not get a reduction. As a matter of fact, the premiums went up to 120s. per cent. The point I wish to place before hon. members is this: The present industry has to pay for industrial diseases contracted in the past—particularly miner's phthisis. That is a wrong principle. It is the present mining companies which have to find the compensation, and that is the reason we find it so heavy. At one time there was no miner's phthisis in Gympie, but of late years the disease has developed, with the result that we have to pay increased premiums.

One remedy for the present depression in mining is that we do away with the taxation on mines. I do not see why we should not do away with it altogether in order to encourage the mining industry. The Government would get it back in various ways through having a flourishing industry. That industry will eventually save the situation in the State, if it is given encouragement in that direction. Take the small mine I was in at Gympie—No. 4 North Phoenix. We happened to get on to good gold although the mine had been working for forty years and paying its way with dividends from time to time. In connection with that mine we were paying a tax of 3s. in the £1 to the State, 1s. to the Federal Government, and 20 per cent. super tax. Our taxation worked out at 7s. in the £1. That was too high a tax on mining; we want to get rid of that excessive taxation.

I wish to give a quotation from the "Courier" of 26th August last in regard to mining in Canada—

"COMPARISON WITH CANADA.

"Whilst farming agricultural produce has been regarded as the chief wealth of Canada, that country has made marked progress in the development of her

mineral resources. In 1905 the total value of the mineral production in the Dominion was under 70,000,000 dollars. But, realising the value of offering attractions for the investment of capital in mining ventures, the Canadian Government provided low rates of taxation of profits derived from such sources, with the result that by 1926 development had reached such a stage that the mineral wealth had increased to 240,000,000 dollars, or more than one-half the value of the wheat crop. The following extracts, taken from an official pamphlet, which has been extensively circulated, give some indication of the efforts of the Dominion to make the mining industry attractive for the investment of capital:—

Inquiries are frequently made regarding mining taxation in Canada. The big mining man operating in many countries and States finds in Ontario and Quebec a pleasing surprise. He finds that his Provincial mining taxes are on the net income and, better still, on a favourably graded net income as follows:—

On annual profits in excess of 10,000 dollars and up to 1,000,000 dollars, 3 per cent.

On excess above 1,000,000 dollars and up to 5,000,000 dollars, 5 per cent.

A proportional increase of 1 per cent. for each additional 5,000,000 dollars net profits.

The Dominion Government rulings on mining income tax returns on silver and gold are also a further favourable surprise. The income department bases the tax on 50 per cent. of the profits or income from mining, wisely deciding that the other 50 per cent. should rank as return of invested capital due to the depletion in reserves as ore is mined from year to year. It allows receipts from the sale of mining property by individuals or companies (unless such companies are organised for the purpose of carrying on the business of procuring and selling of mining property) to be non-taxable. Shareholders in a mining company are not subject to the sur-tax (extra tax) on dividends, but there is imposed the normal tax on 50 per cent. of the amount of dividends received."

If we could do away with mining taxation, it would be of wonderful benefit to the industry and give it a chance of recovery.

Let me also quote the following return with regard to the Scottish Gympie Gold-mines, Limited, in Gympie—

"STATISTICS TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1917.

"Capital:

"700,000 shares of £1 each ... £700,000
"Original lease was purchased from the Eastern Monkland Company in March, 1895.

"Value of machinery erected... £100,000
"Output to date—

Tonnage	1,472,542 tons.
Gold yield	563,497 oz.
(Equals 17.4 tons.)	

Money value	£1,999,267
Dividends paid	592,242
Dividend duty	23,936
Lease rents	2,718

Mr. Tozer.]

" Expenditure for working expenses—	
Wages	£819,912
(Present annual amount of wages paid, £47,000)	
Furnishings	£152,282
Fuel	184,039
Timber	21,102
Explosives	56,464
	£1,233,799
" General expenses—	
(Not including head office, Glasgow, expenses)	
Sundry charges	£57,565
Insurance, employers' liability and fire	20,620
Rates and taxes	3,879
	£82,064
Total number of men employed	330
" Present total cost per ton—	
Mining, milling, cyaniding, and all office charges, in- cluding head office	20s. 8d."

That is a mine that was three times tried and abandoned as being of no use at all. A party went home from Gympie to raise capital there, and they were able to interest a Glasgow millionaire named Dick and get the money and start the mine again. Shortly after that they obtained money to start several other mines to the east of the Scottish Gympie. These people wanted a 200-acre lease, but, when it came before this House, the Labour Party voted against it, their argument being that it was not right to give anyone a 200-acre lease, and, as a consequence, the promoters were not able to go on with that particular mine. That land lies there now as it was then, and it may lie there in that condition for ever. That land would have been proved if, because of the shortsightedness of hon. members opposite, they had not voted against that proposal. Had they not done so, we might have had a new Gympie to-day. Gympie Goldfield practically only was worked for about three miles by two miles and surely there are any amount of places in the district which if developed might turn out to be another Gympie Scottish.

That brings me to the Lawn Hill proposal. I agree with the Bill which has been introduced in regard to that field, because it encourages capital to come into Queensland. We want capital to come here for the benefit of the people. Look at what a benefit Mount Isa is to Queensland! Consider the amount of work it gives to Queenslanders! The Mining Trust Limited Agreement Ratification Bill proposes to give certain rights over 100,000 acres at Lawn Hill to a certain company. What are 100,000 acres at Lawn Hill when we have 429,120,000 acres of land in Queensland? Hon. members may say that it is not all mineral land. How do they know? Nobody knows until it is proved.

Mr. JONES: A lot of it is mineral land.

Mr. TOZER: A lot of it is. If you want to encourage capital to come to Queensland, you have to give men with capital some inducement to spend their money here. If they put their money into a mine here, the mine stays here. It does not go to the other side of the world. From what comes out of the mine the Government get their taxes and rent. In the case of Lawn Hill the company is developing the land. It is not costing the country anything to do it. It is all foreign capital that the Government are

[Mr. Tozer.

encouraging to develop the field, and they get their own returns coming in all the while. If they did not encourage foreign capital to develop it, that land would lie idle. We might all be dead for any benefit it would be to Queensland. To start with, it is about 200 miles from a railway. It may be said that the Government are losing 10s. per acre by giving this concession—I think the hon. member for Warrego said that it meant a loss of £50,000. That is not so, because nobody would take up every particle of that ground and lease it. This concession merely gives the company concerned the right to take any part of it. As has been pointed out, the company is to continue to pay the rent on 700 acres odd covered by leases already in existence, and so far as I can see, it has not the right to surrender that area. It has to pay the rent and the rates. If it discovers anything anywhere else, it immediately applies for leases under the Mining Act, for which it also pays rent and rates. If it can develop that field, all the more credit to it, and all the more benefit to Queensland. We want to encourage that sort of thing.

The charge is repeatedly thrown across the Chamber that we on this side are not genuinely trying to get work for the people. I can assure hon. members that I shall do all I can to develop the country. I have had that idea all my life, and I know that it is a sound idea, and I cannot do more than endeavour to put it into practice.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I can quite understand that the hon. member for Gympie is surprised at the turn the debate has taken on this vote, but, if he wants an explanation of the cause, he may well ask his friends on the front bench, because they are responsible for it. However, I leave these "pilgrims of the night" to their favourite peregrinations, for, while they say the subject is distasteful to them, they seem to have revelled in it, and now proceed to deal with other questions.

Again and again opportunities have been provided for them to make statements and re-statements, when, after all, they frankly admit there was nothing wrong from the standpoint of the law. It reminds me very forcibly of a wealthy old gentleman in North Queensland who owned one of the meat-works and was under no obligation to work again. It was said of him, and I think quite truthfully, that he was never happy except when he was in the verd stirring up of a, and we all know what a very unpleasant odour emanates therefrom. It seemed to have a fascination for him, and it does seem that the same thing applies to some hon. members opposite. They pose as people who stand for high ideals and a high standard of public morality. I listened to the remarks of hon. members opposite, and they frankly admitted that what had taken place in connection with Mount Isa was not in any way illegal; but, from the standpoint of morality and from the standpoint of equity, they thought that what had been done by members of a previous Government was wrong. Coming from a party that was associated with the bribery case, who were prepared to get to the Government side of the House by members being bought and their party degraded—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It has been discussed.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement that a certain party was prepared to gain access to the Government benches by bribing members of Parliament.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I withdraw. The statement has been made that an effort was made by the party opposite to get to the Treasury benches by means that were not fair.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not allow the hon. member to proceed on those lines. I ask him to withdraw without any qualification.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I have withdrawn. Evidently the last has not been heard about it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WINSTANLEY: If I am not permitted to say any more about it, then someone else will. By-and-by we shall know what is the actual truth, and what credence can be given to the statements made. There is an idea pervading the minds of quite a number of hon. members opposite that a mine may be worthless to-day, and that, because of that fact, it is for ever worthless. Anyone who has any knowledge of a mining field knows that a mine may be worthless to-day and may be worth a fortune to-morrow. I know of quite a number of instances where ground was held by people, worked for a while, and the holders have come to the conclusion that they were wasting their time and energy, and have turned up the holding and gone away. By-and-by someone else has taken it up, carried out a certain amount of work, invested a certain amount of capital, come to the same conclusion, and dropped it and gone away.

I know of one particular case where the individuals were practically "down and out," and unable to get any other ground. They found a backer to pay them £1 10s. a week to continue operations, and in a very few weeks after taking over the ground they struck the reef on the underlie, went down the reef, and in a very short time they were not only paying wages but were paying dividends. The syndicate was converted into a company, and regular fortnightly dividends were paid for years. Eventually the show was placed on the market for about £300,000. That goes to show that the assumption that, because a mine said to be worthless, on which over £19,000 worth of machinery has been installed must remain valueless, is not correct. The development of that mine, like the development of any other mine, might prove it to be worth a great deal of money in a short time. Evidence proved that later developments resulting in the production of ore went to show that there was something in and about the mine that was well worth the money.

I listened with a great deal of attention to the Secretary for Railways dealing with the question of coalmines. I can quite understand his point of view, but I have some difficulty in understanding how a party that claims to have been elected on a policy of governing and not trading can justify its continuance of State coalmines or any other State industry. The Government made it quite clear during the election campaign that their policy was the abolition of State trading. It is quite evident now that they are going to abolish some State enterprises and

not others. That shows that on that particular point they are not prepared to carry out their platform. It also shows that they are not consistent. There may be some grounds on which it suits them to get rid of some State trading propositions and not others, but that attitude is inconsistent. They are clinging to some State enterprises because it suits their purpose to do so.

There can be no question about the fact that mining in Queensland at the present time and for some time past has been under a cloud, but a number of reasons can be adduced to account for that state of affairs. The hon. member for Gympie pointed out, amongst other things, the difficulties confronting mining were taxes, insurance, and rents. He pointed out what wonderful assets would come to the Government, and the great development that would take place if mining companies could obtain concessions from the Government. Before there was any Workers' Compensation Act in force, before there was a 5 per cent. tax on dividends, and before there was any Board of Trade and Arbitration, the argument against the wages paid in the industry was just as strong. At that time the wages of miners were supposed to be £3 per week on Charters Towers. The wages and hours on the Charters Towers field were better than on other fields for the simple reason that most of the mines were practically owned locally; consequently, the miners made their own conditions. It was argued then that, if the miners accepted a reduction of 5s. per week in wages, more men could be employed in the mines. Quite a number of things have tended towards the decline of goldmines particularly.

The Government in their election pledges and in the Governor's Speech promised generous assistance to mining. I would like to see some evidence of that assistance. In the past when Nationalist Governments ruled I have seen fairly substantial sums placed on the Estimates in aid of mining, but the trouble has been that it has often remained there. No one has been able to get that assistance, and, instead of the vote being expended, in a great many instances it was revoted the following year.

The hon. member for Gympie mentioned quite a number of goldfields, including Ravenswood. In all probability there was more evidence of the old style of mining at Ravenswood than anywhere else in Queensland. There are men there who have been mining all their lives, and who, if possible, will do no other work. Notwithstanding that mining has slumped and is under a cloud, the men on that field, when compelled to engage in other occupations, immediately return to some pet locality of their own when they are in funds to see if they can fossick out something. There are a few men engaged in alluvial mining and making a little better living than they would if they were in receipt of the old-age pension. A few others are working lodes.

At Ravenswood they worked for many years a mine that was exceptionally rich, although the difficulty was that it was exceedingly small. At any rate, it was worked for as long as it could be made to pay, later on going on to tribute, and, [3.30 p.m.] unfortunately, eventually going out altogether. There is another lode in that locality in which some people have a lot of confidence. The previous Government gave the people who have the

Mr. Winstanley.]

ground rights there £1,000 to enable them to develop the property, and the present Government might do worse than give another £1,000, even if they have to specify what shall be done with the money. Of course, it may be said that the shareholders should find the money, but, when calls have to be made monthly, there is a limit to what can be collected for goldmining at the present time. As a matter of fact, the people there are finding it difficult to continue development work under such conditions.

Dealing with the matter of compensation for industrial diseases, there was a time when the unfortunate sufferers got nothing. It is a fair thing that provision should be made for these people, but the mining companies at the present time do not pay the full amount, with the result that the funds have to be supplemented from another source. Of course, it will be difficult to make a few mining companies at work to-day bear the responsibility of paying those unfortunate people who contracted the disease in days gone by, whilst at the same time it would be unfair and inhuman to say that the sufferers should not get anything.

One thing which more than any other has accounted for the decline in goldmining in Queensland is that the reefs have been worked down to the bottom until there is practically nothing left.

So far as the water trouble mentioned by the hon. member for Gympie is concerned, the Government were subsidising the amounts subscribed by the people concerned. They contributed £3,000 per annum to keep the water below the working level at Charters Towers. The trouble was that, as one mine ceased to work, the waters from that mine flowed into the adjoining mine, which really brought about the closure of some of the mines in Charters Towers.

In a discussion recently in the Maritime Industries Bill in the House of Representatives, Mr. Grosvenor Francis, the hon. member for Kennedy, had this to say on the principle of arbitration—

“I said that I regarded mining as a hazardous employment, and that the men could not possibly be paid a wage which would compensate them for the work they did and the risk that they were obliged to take—”

Of course, everyone will subscribe to that—

“but it was a question for the court to decide whether the men should take what the industry could pay, or should get a nominal award for higher wages and close the mines.”

Now, the men at Charters Towers did not get an award for high wages which closed the mines. For a long time the miners there worked for less than the ordinary award rates for mining in order that the mines should not be closed. Mr. Francis continued—

“The result of the hearing was that an increase of about 20 per cent. in wages was given. At that time over seventy mines were working in the area covered by the inquiry, but five years later only two mines were working, one on the tribute system, and another on wages.

“Mining had been killed and ceased to be a factor in the production of the State. Charters Towers, at one time one of the most famous gold-producers in Australia, has ceased to be a mining

[Mr. Winstanley.

centre. The ore-reduction batteries have all gone out of existence, but not because of the exhaustion of the mines, because it is well known that on that field there are large bodies of ore awaiting development. On such fields as Black Jack and Broughton the surface has only been scratched.”

It just goes to show that the decline in mining is used as an evidence that the State Arbitration Court practically killed the mining industry on those fields. Nothing could be further from the truth. Quite a number of things have helped. In the first place, reefs that were worked previously were worked out, and in other cases where they got down to 4,000 feet vertical depth the conditions were such that the men were unable to live and work, consequently it was not worth while working those reefs. Perhaps what helped more than anything else in the decline of mining is the fact that costs increased in quite a number of directions besides wages, while the price of gold is a fixed price. During the war time, when the price of gold was £6 10s. an ounce, quite a number of mines had no difficulty in paying dividends; but, when gold got back to the nominal price of £4 5s., it was another proposition altogether. I frankly believe that there are lots of places in Queensland where there is not only gold but baser metals such as copper, silver, lead, etc., if they are looked for; but they will have to be looked for much more diligently than has been the case in times gone by. The bulk of the fields worked in Queensland were fields that had outcrops on the surface and were not difficult to find; and, when once they began to be worked, it was not difficult to follow the different reefs. Mount Isa is a case in point. That deposit existed for ages past close to a main road; yet for a very long time no one took any notice of it. Eventually someone gave it a trial, and my own conviction is that there are quite a number of other mineral deposits in Queensland just as rich and just as extensive as Mount Isa. We shall have an opportunity later of dealing with Lawn Hill, so I do not desire to deal with it now. If these mineral deposits which exist practically all over North Queensland are to be discovered, some special effort must be made. There can be no doubt that the old-time prospector is very largely an individual of the past. Very few of them are to be found except at a few places such as Ravenswood. There are few people who go out in the bush, take their tucker, and work hard, in the expectation of finding something in the shape of a gold reef or other minerals. There may be a few who do that, but, in comparison with thirty or forty years ago, the number is very small indeed. Therefore, those who are willing to take the risk and put up with the hardships should be encouraged, not only by help from geologists but by direct help from the Department of Mines. My contention always has been that mining fields not only benefit the State directly, but benefit it indirectly. Everybody knows that a tradesman spends money in advertising. He knows that the advertisement itself brings him nothing back direct; but he does know that it arouses interest in and draws attention to what he has to sell, and that is where his return comes from. I know of nothing that advertises a country so effectively and so efficiently as a good mineral field; and if one were discovered in Queensland to-morrow

—particularly if it were an alluvial field or an easily worked reefing field—it would solve the unemployment problem quicker than anything else. Men would require little more than a pick and shovel and rations, and once they got on their feet they would be all right. The Department of Mines has now an opportunity of doing something which will be for the benefit and wellbeing of this great State of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*): I have listened very carefully to the debate since 11 o'clock this morning. I was under the impression that we would have had the Estimates of the Department of Mines discussed; but most of the discussion to-day has been principally a lot of inaccuracies, misstatements, and untruths, which have been indulged in by the Opposition. The hon. member for Herbert, as usual, was in the lead. The first untruth he uttered this morning was that the State coalmine at Mount Mulligan was closed, inferring that it was "down and out" and was not going to work any more. Apparently the untruthfulness of the hon. member for Herbert must be a contagious disease.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Evidently the Minister is going to make reference to something which occurred this morning. The hon. member for Herbert was corrected this morning with regard to the statement the Minister has just made and accepted the correction. I therefore ask the Minister not to proceed on these lines.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: As I was saying, the hon. member for Herbert made the statement that the Mount Mulligan mine was closed down.

Mr. KIRWAN: As a State mine.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I want to state definitely that Mount Mulligan is not closed down, and is producing to-day at the same rate as it has done in the past. There was no foundation for the statement made by the hon. member for Herbert this morning.

The hon. member for Paddington got on to the Bowen State coalmine. I understood him to say that during his term as Minister the Bowen State coalmine always showed a profit.

Mr. JONES: Yes—annually. There may have been one month that it did not pay.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I quite admit that the Bowen State coalmine has always showed a profit annually, but those profits have fluctuated according to the amount of coal which Mr. Sleigh has taken during particular months. As to that mine not having shown a loss during the late Minister's term of office, each fortnight's transactions at the mine from January to May, 1929, showed a loss. These losses were mainly due to the operation of the Sleigh contract.

Mr. JONES: And a less production.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Those four months show a loss, due principally to Mr. Sleigh exercising his option and taking a larger amount of coal than he had been in the habit of taking. A fairly extensive business outside the Sleigh contract for the month of June resulted in a profit for that month, because the big proportion of business done outside the Sleigh contract

counteracted the loss on that contract and showed a profit for that month. In my answer to the hon. member for Bowen, as reported at page 92 of "Votes and Proceedings" for this session, it was shown that during the last two financial years coal was supplied to Mr. Sleigh at from 1s. 11d. to 2s. 8d. per ton below the cost of production. I understood the hon. member for Paddington this morning to suggest—he did not exactly say so—that Mr. Sleigh was responsible for taking dumped coal.

Mr. JONES: No, small coal. We sold dumped coal at 5s. a ton.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member said this morning that we sold this dumped coal to Swifts.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister and the hon. member for Paddington cannot have a dialogue. If the Minister is not prepared to make a definite statement, he will be out of order.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am quite prepared to do that. I just wanted to let the hon. member for Paddington understand thoroughly what he did say this morning. At the time the Sleigh contract was entered into the quantity of small coal dumped at the mine was 1,527 tons of screened slack, 24 tons only of unscreened run-of-mine slack, and 11,523 tons of duff. The duff is the refuse after the coal has been screened a second time. The bulk of the duff was sold locally. The coal sold to Mr. Sleigh to the 30th June, 1929, totalled 32,241 tons, which did not represent one ounce of duff.

Mr. JONES: It was not all screened coal.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The unscreened slack from 31st March, 1929, when the hon. member was in power, represented only 32.4 per cent. of the total sales, although the hon. member stated that it represented 67 per cent.

Mr. JONES: That is the information I got from Mr. Sleigh. Your information is from your own department, so it should be correct.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I should also like to read the report of the Supervisor of the State Coalmines, dated 18th September, 1929—

"Referring to the letter from H. C. Sleigh, particularly the remarks contained in the sixth and following paragraphs, in which he states that at the time of his visit to the mine he confirmed the fact that considerable quantities of slack or small coal had been dumped at grass, and quotes his sincere effort to market this class of coal. I must definitely state that this was not the class of coal Sleigh found a market for. His main inquiries were for screened slack, and it was only after considerable persuasion (due to the impossibility of screening the slack in sufficient quantities to load and boat expeditiously), and the fact that the dump at grass was increasing as a result of the duff coal being extracted to satisfy his demands for screened slack, that we induced him to take the ordinary run-of-mine slack, reserving only as much screened slack as the mine had orders for duff.

"Sleigh was not responsible for the sales of slack at grass because he did not require this. A great proportion of this coal was washed away by flood

Hon. E. A. Atherton.]

waters or destroyed by fire, and the remainder sold at very low rates to local consumers to avoid further loss. In fact, reference to his original orders for screened slack shows a desire for freshly-mined smalls, he evidently not being keen on that lying on the surface.

"Sleigh, therefore, cannot take credit for relieving the stocks at grass.

"Further, no doubt owing to short supplies due to the strike, shipments of ordinary run-of-mine slack have been increased, while demand for any class of steam coal has been excessive, and to supply as great a tonnage as possible, orders filled have been mostly run-of-mine coal. Therefore, very little smalls are now available, and I would certainly prefer if it were possible that demand for this class of coal would continue in the future.

"Regarding his reference to my deductions that screened coal would be largely called for for export, I still maintain that under ordinary conditions this would still hold good, and in support of this I would refer to Mr. Sleigh's letter of 29th June, in which a request was made, after inducement by Sleigh, to take 60 per cent. of screened and the balance in smalls (presumably screened smalls). Sleigh's remarks re cost to produce slack and large screened coal is incorrect. The mine produces only run-of-mine coal, and the separation of smalls from large certainly adds to the cost, and at the same time tends to reduce output under existing conditions, particularly when in producing screened coal the average production is 50 per cent. screened and 50 per cent. small, and on rescreening the smalls the duff coal amounts to approximately 40 per cent. of the screenings."

I just wish to show that Mr. Sleigh has not taken any of that coal up to the present time, and has taken only small unslacked coal under pressure.

Mr. JONES: He wrote and told me that it represented 67 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It represents only 32 per cent.

In reply to the remarks of the hon. member for Warrego this morning, I wish to state that he came to my office shortly after I had taken over the portfolio of Secretary for Mines, and he stated to me in my office that Mount Isa Mines Limited wanted to jump his lease and that, if he were Secretary for Mines, he would not entertain it for one moment. I think my reply to him was that, unfortunately for him, I was Secretary for Mines and not he. Before he went any further, I also told him that I thought it would be better if he did not discuss the proposition that he came to discuss with me, and that he should have a conference with Mount Isa Mines Limited, when, possibly, they might be able to come to some agreement. Apparently, the hon. member for Warrego thought otherwise, and immediately informed me that it was no use seeing them—that all that they had offered him was a peanut when he had asked for a watermelon. That was the expression he made use of, and I leave it to the public to decide what he meant. After he had discussed the matter with me for about half an hour, he decided that, if I would give him time to go to Sydney to discuss the matter with Mount Isa Mines Limited, he

would take the opportunity and leave by train the following morning. I told him that I would give him a week, and in the meantime I would not discuss the matter with Mount Isa Mines Limited. The hon. member for Warrego insinuated this morning that Mr. Macartney, of the firm of Thynne and Macartney, solicitors for the Mount Isa Mines Limited, was in tow with me, and said definitely that they could get anything. I want to say right here that I did not discuss Mount Isa with Mr. Macartney. Mr. Macartney came along the following day, and I told him the very same thing that I had told the hon. member for Warrego: That I thought that at that juncture it was wiser not to discuss the leases concerned. I also told him that I had given the hon. member for Warrego a week in which to go to Sydney to confer, I believe, with Mr. Draper, representative of Mount Isa Mines Limited, and that I would not give a decision on the matter one way or the other until I had given the hon. member a week in which to return from Sydney.

Mr. JONES: I tried to bring them together before you entered the department.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Now the hon. member for Warrego endeavours to lead the people to believe that I did not keep to my word and give him that week. It was on a Friday that the hon. member for Warrego had the meeting with me, and on Saturday, 25th May, he left for Sydney. He did not return until Monday, 10th June. It was my intention to proceed North on Monday, 10th June, and I did not give my decision until 12 noon on Monday, 10th June, so that, instead of giving the hon. member a week, I really gave him sixteen days. I held back my decision as long as I possibly could. I tried to play as fair with the hon. member for Warrego as I do with anyone else. I can assure you, Mr. Roberts, that, while I occupy my present position, I do not intend to favour or fear anyone. I intend to do my duty in the interests of the State.

When speaking on the second reading of the Mining Trust Limited Agreement Ratification Bill, the hon. member for Warrego is reported in "Hansard" as having said—

"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."

The hon. member for Warrego forgets that it was Tuesday week when he came back to Brisbane. He there attempts to discredit and besmirch the honour of the Agent-General for Queensland, who is not now in the State, and who cannot defend himself. It is no use the hon. member attempting to put that

[Hon. E. A. Atherton.]

over the people of Queensland, because the confidence of the people of Queensland to an individual is behind the Agent-General, and that being so the hon. member for Warrego cannot possess their confidence. The hon. member also stated—

“Having put me off . . .”

That had nothing to do with me. When he came to me I dealt as fairly as I possibly could with him. I asked him in the interests of all the parties concerned to endeavour to settle the matter amicably. The reply that I received was “They offered me a peanut, and I wanted a watermelon.” After discussing the matter with him, he informed me that, if he were Secretary for Mines, he would not entertain the application of the company. I asked him quietly did he own those leases. He said he did. I said that I had yet to learn that he did own them.

Mr. JONES: He said he owned them under option.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I said to the hon. member, “Have you complied with the labour conditions?” He said “No, I cannot say that I have.” I also asked him if he had had the courtesy to apply for exemption from the labour conditions on those leases. He said he could not say that he had done so. It was not until I passed these remarks that the hon. member for Warrego condescended to go to Sydney to interview the representatives of the Mount Isa Company. Previous to that the attitude he adopted was that, as I was a new Minister, he could bluster and put the confidence trick over me, as it were, and thus get what he wanted. When he saw that I was not to be so easily influenced, he asked me—in fact, almost begged of me—to give him the opportunity to go to Sydney and discuss the matter with the representatives of the Mount Isa Company. That was the whole interview the hon. member had with me in regard to those leases. I say definitely that I was not acting in collusion with the present Agent-General, and that nothing of the sort ever entered my mind, and I am sure it did not enter the mind of the Agent-General. I refused to see the representatives of the Mount Isa Company until the time I gave the hon. member for Warrego to visit had elapsed. I never saw the company's representatives afterwards, as I left for the North that afternoon, and I placed the oversight of my department in the hands of the Attorney-General. I am sure that, on the facts as I have given them to the Committee, no one can accuse me of any collusion.

[4 p.m.]

As there was really no discussion on the vote for the Chief Office, there is nothing much for me to say, except to mention that the Estimates for this year are based on the expenditure for last year. I desired, however, to take the opportunity of clearing the different people whom the hon. member for Warrego tried to implicate in his remarks.

Item (Chief Office) agreed to.

IN AID OF MINING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That £12,000 be granted ‘In Aid of Mining.’”

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): I notice that there is an increase of £4,000 provided this

year for prospecting. This is a very difficult vote to administer—a fact of which I made no secret during my tenure of office. I should like to see a very much larger sum placed on the Estimates in aid of mining in order that prospecting might be assisted in the State. Hitherto no Government has done much in that direction, and I should like to see the amount £100,000 instead of the £10,000 provided now. To allocate £10,000 in a big State like Queensland and give general satisfaction to prospectors is one of the hardest things in the world.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Of course, we have to cut our suit according to our cloth.

Mr. JONES: I am not complaining of the increase which has been provided this year; I merely condemn the general prospecting system in force in Queensland to-day. Whilst I do not for a moment decry the wonderful service rendered by the old pioneers and prospectors, and realise that they should be assisted in their declining years, I think the present system is wrong, and have held that opinion for many years. Prospecting so far has not been properly defined. I do not think that the term means merely the going out into virgin country and looking for shows. Rather do I think—and the hon. member for Gympie may agree with me—that prospecting to-day might be applied to an older field, like Gympie, which had been previously discovered. The question is not so much one of discovering new fields but rather centres on ore-bodies already discovered. We know of huge deposits that would go as high as from 5 to 10 per cent. which are lying idle to-day, simply because our methods of treatment are obsolete. That is one phase of the mining industry to which some attention should be given.

Prospecting should not be defined as merely going out and searching for a capital lode and then developing it. Prospecting should be regarded as treating and developing some of the ore-bodies and fields already discovered. I know that it is very difficult for the Minister to abandon the present system altogether. The handing out of a few pounds a week—he cannot give full wages—is not meeting with the success that a great many people think. Mount Isa was discovered by two prospectors who had never received any Government assistance at all. If we are to help the mining industry as it should be helped, we want to alter the present system, and, instead of the Minister having to come to this House to ratify agreements, he should have power under the Mining Act to deal with these questions even when Parliament is not sitting. He should be empowered to subsidise the industry to a greater extent, and I always thought so when I was in charge of the department. I know the Minister can retort, “Why did you not do that when you were here?” I would point out that I had to fight for the industry, as he will have to fight for it. The industry should be dealt with in a much bigger way, as I suggest.

Item (In Aid of Mining) agreed to.

MINING FIELDS.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That £39,290 be granted for ‘Mining Fields.’”

Mr. Jones.]

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): As one who has had a long connection with the Department of Mines, I would not like this vote to pass without some comment, as it may be the only opportunity I shall have to express my great satisfaction with the Geological Survey Department of this State. In the Geological Survey Department of Queensland we have some of the finest men and most capable geologists in the State. The strange part is that we have not more. I think the time is opportune to make some plea for the training of some of our young university students in this profession. The time will arrive in Australia very shortly—in Queensland it has arrived—when the various Governments will find difficulty in maintaining a staff of geologists. When adding to the staff a year or so ago, Professor Richards, of the Queensland University, told me that after Mr. Dennead, a bright young man, came from the university to the Geological Department, he had no young men in training as geologists.

I do not know whether the position is due to the small salary paid, and under our system of government I have to take my share of responsibility in that regard. It is regrettable to think that a man like Mr. Ball, Deputy Chief Government Geologist, is still on a salary of £700. I do not want the Minister to interject and say, "You should have raised the salary." He knows the difficulty one is confronted with. There we have a man who is worth a great deal more than he is getting. Speaking generally, the Government Geologist and the other members of the staff are a fine body of men. The mining industry will depend a great deal in the future on this branch of the department. Geological survey work before developmental work, particularly in the petroleum industry, is very important. What the geologist can do in that direction is to point out the structures most favourable for the accumulation of oil. I know there are people in the State who expect the geologists to say, "There are oilpools here and oilpools there." Mr. Ball, who is equal to the best geologists in the world, points out what the geologist can do and what he cannot do. The geologist can prevent the expenditure of large sums of money in useless prospecting, drilling, or blind-stabbing. That is where a man of the ability of Mr. Ball is of great value to Australia in regard to petroleum geology. He can point out the locations which have favourable structures for oil. The public may expect more than that, but we know that scientific geology does not permit of more being done.

I rose chiefly to pay a tribute to the geological survey staff, including the officers conducting operations in outside mining fields. The Minister knows by this time that he has a staff of which he may well be proud. If my anticipations are correct, he has taken charge of the department at a very fortunate time for himself and the State. Hon. members opposite may call me optimistic if they wish, but the hon. gentleman has taken over the department just at the time when Mount Isa will develop, and the Herberton and other tinfields in the North are capable of great development. Oil-prospecting also is now at a stage when he can reasonably hope for success.

The TREASURER: You are generally regarded as being optimistic.

[*Mr. Jones.*

Mr. JONES: Yes. I know the struggle that has taken place in regard to oil-prospecting. I have never stated in this Chamber that oil has been definitely discovered in Queensland in commercial quantities, but, after careful study, I anticipate—and I am supported by the opinion of the State geologists—that the prospects of finding oil in commercial quantities in the western portion of Queensland, particularly at Longreach and in the Roma district—are still very promising.

In this search for oil what was regarded as a fact yesterday may be an absurdity to-day, or an absurdity to-day may be a fact tomorrow, but I believe that Mr. Ball and others in the department associated with him have done signal service by the very careful reports they have made. I believe eventually we shall be successful.

This vote also embraces geophysical prospecting. I was responsible for Mr. Dunstan, the Chief Government Geologist, going to Germany to inquire into geophysics in that country. I am hoping that geophysics will be the link that the geologists have been looking for—knowing as I do that geology is not an exact science. The report that we have had so far is the report by the commercial representatives of the Elhof Institute. We have to be very careful in this matter. I have submitted certain questions to the Minister on this line of argument, and he has answered them. I know that he cannot compel the Elhof Institute to supply him with the scientific report on which the commercial representative's report was based, but he has promised to ask for it. If that report were supported by men like Mr. Ball or the Chief Government Geologist, Mr. Dunstan, their deductions would be of value to the department and the people of the State, but at present we are at sixes and sevens. We do not know whether to take the report seriously or not. I do not think that we have yet had a scientific report. Personally—not because the report was unfavourable—I am not prepared to accept it. It is like a geophysical report on ground where we have had two drills put down, but we thought that geophysical methods would discern the geological character of the country before the drills, and determine not only the structure but also the mineral or oil content that might be there. It is easy to make a report after two drills have gone down in the area over which the survey has been made. A weak part of that report is that it makes a wholesale condemnation of the Maranoa basin, although the geophysicists surveyed only 2 or 3 square miles of that area. I do not think that it is fair to the geologists or the science of geology that a report like that should go out without some further investigation, and I hope that we shall be able to get the scientific report of the Elhof Institute so that it can be submitted to the geologists.

At any rate, I pay my tribute to the Geological Survey Department and the men engaged in the outer fields of the State, because I believe they are rendering signal service to Queensland.

Item (Mining Fields) agreed to.

STATE MINING OPERATIONS.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That £2,650 be granted for 'State Mining Operations.'"

Item agreed to.

"QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT MINING JOURNAL."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That £2,325 be granted for 'Queensland Government Mining Journal.'"

Item agreed to.

RAILWAYS.

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT—CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*): I beg to move—

"That £112,800 be granted for 'General Establishment—Chief Office.'"

The apparent saving over last year's appropriation is £384 and £13 over last year's actual expenditure; but the saving is much more, as the year's provision includes automatic award increases totalling £1,190. The total appropriation sought for the department is £6,203,220, including £8,220 for the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau hitherto provided for in the Chief Secretary's Estimates. The corresponding provision for last year was £6,324,211, so that £115,991 less is asked for this year than was provided for in 1928-29. The strictest economy, consistent with safety and without impairing efficiency, has been observed in framing the Estimates. The amount asked for is £2,059 less than the actual expenditure last year, notwithstanding that there are 102 more miles of line open than at the beginning of last year; that £42,932 has to be provided to meet automatic increases due under the award; and also an additional £25,000 has been included for boiler replacements and several other items of additional unavoidable expenditure. With the continuance of the strictest economy in every avenue of working, I am convinced the reduced provision will be sufficient to meet the department's requirements, the figures for the first three months of the year confirming my views, as the expenditure for the period is £49,336 less than for the corresponding period last year.

The probable revenue for the year 1929-30 has been set down at £7,675,000, or £107,719 more than last year's receipts. Though the effects of the drought conditions which still obtain in several parts of the State are reflected in the railway receipts, improvements in traffic in other directions is looked for. Motor competition is still affecting the department's revenue, particularly in short distance passenger traffic—the bulky and lower classified goods being left for the railways to carry—but this competition is being firmly grappled with by the department, and some of the traffic previously diverted has been regained. Everything possible will be done to popularise the railways. Railway motor services will be extended or established where they can be arranged economically, in order to provide a quicker service than is possible with mixed trains. Special attention will be given to the expeditious handling and transit of livestock and goods traffic. The institution of rail motors has had a very beneficial effect on the revenue of the department. In many cases where the department was subject to very keen competition, that competition has been removed completely by the institution of rail motors. It is the intention of the department to extend that service wherever possible. Applications have been received from all over the State, and at the present time a large number of rail motors

are under construction with a view to engaging in that competition. In some instances that may mean fewer goods or mixed trains. The department is finding that the people prefer the quicker motor transport. That motor transport does not interfere with the conveyance of goods owing to the fact that we run goods trains on those lines also. Special attention will be given to the transportation of livestock and of the goods traffic.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I expected that the Minister would have given this Committee some information on the policy that the Government, after five months' mature consideration, had decided to adopt in connection with the Railway Department. We can all recall that, when the hon. gentleman was sitting in opposition, he had a great deal to say about the management of the railways. It would be very interesting to know what recommendations he has made to the Cabinet with a view to making the railways pay. I would also like to know what has been done in the direction of getting rid of what he and his colleagues, when in opposition, described as the political control of the railways. Quite recently the hon. gentleman—I presume on the advice of his responsible officers—decided to close certain stations between Stanthorpe and Warwick and convert them into gates, while in other instances he decided to convert gates into wayside stations. The conversion of gates into wayside stations means that goods are put down at those stations at the risk of the owner.

Mr. JONES: That will not aid the revenue of the department.

Mr. KIRWAN: It will also be interesting to know certain facts concerning the transfer of station-masters from certain important metropolitan suburban stations and the substitution in their place of gatekeepers. One of these stations—Woolloomin—had been recognised as an important station ever since I can recollect, and my recollection carries me forty years back. The same policy is contemplated in connection with Milton, Taringa, and Auchenflower, and, whether that policy will be extended to equally important stations between Ipswich, Sandgate, and Pinkenba I do not know. If the Minister has in mind the transfer of gatekeepers from such places as Clayfield, Virginia, or Geebung to the stations I have mentioned, will he inform this Committee whether it is expected that these women shall do the work appertaining to their duties at those stations for the same pay and allowances as they are now receiving? Is it the policy of the Government to transfer station-masters in receipt of, say, £5 per week, and replace them with gatekeepers at £2 17s. 6d. per week to do the same quantum of work, in an effort to reduce the railway deficit and to attain greater efficiency?

I would also like the Minister to make some definite pronouncement on the policy of the Government in regard to retrenchment. We know that a considerable amount of retrenchment is going on in the railway service, and hon. members are anxious to learn whether any definite decision in this respect has been arrived at by the Cabinet.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition stated the other evening that the Railway Department had dispensed with the services of fourteen men at Townsville recently; and

Mr. Kirwan.]

there is a rumour current that drastic retrenchment is contemplated in the Railway Department, where the axe is hanging over the heads of unfortunate employees who have been in the department for long periods of time.

[4.30 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Who is spreading that rumour?

Mr. KIRWAN: Not!!

Mr. MAXWELL: You may be getting others to do it for you.

Mr. KIRWAN: As the Treasurer would say in that characteristic manner of his, "It has been generally reported." (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For political purposes!

Mr. KIRWAN: I am astounded that the Secretary for Railways should suggest that the Treasurer would do anything for political purposes.

The TREASURER: Surely you are not accusing me of doing anything for political purposes?

Mr. KIRWAN: There is no need for me to do so; the Secretary for Railways has already accused the hon. gentleman.

The Minister made reference to the tremendous competition which the Railway Department is facing from the increasing motor traffic. Unquestionably, motor transport has become very popular in the carriage of passengers and goods. The problem is not confined to Queensland; it is Commonwealth-wide, and extends to New Zealand, where, recently, the responsible head of the Railway Department told the public in certain country districts that the railways would be closed down if the public did not patronise them. He expressed views similar to those expressed by the Secretary for Railways here, when he stated that it was not proposed to utilise the railways merely for the carriage of non-paying bulky articles such as galvanised iron, machinery, etc., and allow motor transport to cater for high-class goods for which high rates of freight were obtainable.

Mr. NINHO: Our Minister has expressed the same sentiments here.

Mr. KIRWAN: If the hon. gentleman had listened to me, he would have heard me state that the problem is not only an Australian one, but affects the world. In the United States, for example, I am told that the railways will not cater for traffic for intermediate stations on a line similar to that from Brisbane to Toowoomba, the traffic for the intermediate stations being handled by motor transport, which is run in conjunction with the railway services. In England, too, the privately-owned railway companies are faced with the same difficulty, particularly so as there are many good roads there, and considerable development is taking place in creating new roads for motor transport. On one main road which will connect two cities there, a sum of £5,000,000 is being expended; so that it will be apparent that the question of the increasing motor competition with the railway services is not confined to the Secretary for Railways and his responsible officers.

I do not wish to take up the time of other hon. members, but, as this is perhaps one of the most important departments of the State, I wish to deal with one or two other matters. I should like some information

[Mr. Kirwan.

from the Minister in connection with facilities for dealing with luggage at the Central Railway Station, in regard to which I asked a question this morning. I happened to be down at the Central Station yesterday, and I found these luggage porters carrying two or three portmanteaux, which is not a proper method of dealing with luggage. As the hon. gentleman knows, on both the Sydney and Melbourne platforms the porters are provided with special luggage barrows.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is very little room at the Central Station. In Sydney and Melbourne they have to carry the luggage perhaps a quarter of a mile, while here it is only necessary to carry it a few yards.

Mr. KIRWAN: The distance from the platform in Sydney to a motor vehicle in the main street is not very great.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There are stairs at the Brisbane Central Station.

Mr. KIRWAN: If the hon. gentleman was travelling by the Western mail with two or three members of his family and he had four or five portmanteaux, it would not be a very nice job for the porter to pick up those portmanteaux and carry them down No. 1 platform. Surely provision for half-a-dozen barrows would facilitate the work and be a convenience not only to the luggage porters but also to the passengers. There is sufficient room on the Central Station platforms for a couple of barrows.

Mr. MAXWELL: How are you going to get the trucks down the stairs?

Mr. KIRWAN: During the whole of my time at the Central Station I never saw a truck being wheeled down the stairs from No. 4 platform. As a rule, passengers who land at platforms 4, 5, and 6 pick up a motor-car on that side of the station in the same way that passengers who land at No. 1 platform pick up a vehicle in Ann street. There is no necessity for a person who arrives by the Northern mail to ask a luggage porter to take his luggage out to Ann street. I trust the Minister will give the Committee the information asked for. In view of the discussion that used to take place when the hon. gentleman and his colleagues occupied this side of the House, it is reasonable to assume that they have given consideration to this problem, particularly as they have stated that they are going to put the railways on a commercial basis. I think the Committee is entitled to a declaration of policy from the hon. gentleman, particularly in regard to the intentions of the Government with regard to the staff.

Some extra consideration ought to be given by way of an increase in salary to a woman who is asked to do work, say at Milton or Taringa, which was previously done by a station-master. I hope the Minister will give a considerable increase in salary in that direction.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*): I was somewhat surprised at the statement made by the Minister to-day. Prior to the last election, and in fact for many years past, hon. members opposite, including the present Secretary for Railways, continually criticised the late Government for what they termed their lack of policy regarding the railway system. They also stated during the election campaign that they were going to introduce a system of control on the railways which would do away with the yearly deficit and

place the railways on a sound basis. The statement made by the Minister this afternoon does not even suggest any definite policy in that regard. If the hon. gentleman has a definite policy to overcome the evil, he has modestly concealed it from us, and I hope that, when he rises again, he will give us information which will justify us in hoping that, when we are discussing this Estimate next year, the railways will be in a better position than they are now.

The only thing the Government have done, so far as I can see, since coming into power, has been to introduce a policy of retrenchment. I have in mind that certain stations throughout the State are being closed down, and I understand that the officers on those stations have been offered employment as lengthsmen or on construction work. I hope the Minister will give us definite information on that point. It is hardly fair to men who have served the Railway Department faithfully and well to be removed from their positions and sent to lower-grade work, or possibly be put out of the service altogether.

I desire now to refer to the question of railway passes. Some time ago the Minister startled the State by saying that in future the Railway Department would not bear the expense of the passes issued. That statement was interpreted by people outside to mean that in future no free passes would be issued by the Railway Department. In fact, the hon. gentleman was looked upon as a wonderful administrator, and as one who had the courage to tackle this problem and introduce a salutary reform. I understand that the responsibility for a number of those passes is being placed on the shoulders of another department, and the cost of the passes for the future will be debited to the Treasury. Is there any wonderful statesmanship in that action? Can that honestly be claimed as a reform in the railway service? Is that an example of the way the Minister is going to tackle the difficult problem of railway administration and place our railways on a sound basis?

He also forgot to add that, as a result of the Government's tampering with the issue of free passes, he has cut out passes to railway employees and their dependants who may become ill and need medical attention. Formerly they were entitled to passes to enable them to come to town and receive such attention. Only the other day a case came under my notice in which the wife of a fitter had occasion, before the defeat of the Labour Government, to come to Brisbane to receive attention. After the elections the husband was informed that passes in such cases as hers would no longer be issued, and she was faced with the possibility of having to pay her fare back to the West. I want to be fair, and say that, when I brought the case under the notice of the authorities, they were good enough to give her a pass, but I understand that in future such passes are to be cut out. I deplore that action, because the pass was an emergency one, and I hope the Government will reconsider the decision.

The hon. gentleman is always talking about making the railways pay. I suppose that next year he will show a reduction in the deficit, but he will carefully hide the fact that the profits from the railway refreshment-rooms have been included in the railway revenue. That and other methods will be adopted by him to cut down the deficit, but

I suggest that, if the Government wish to make progress in that direction, they should at least bring forward some sound policy instead of a policy of cutting out necessities and introducing side issues.

The last hon. member who addressed the Committee had something to say about motor transport. He pointed out the difficulties in the way of the railways successfully competing with motor transport. The amusing thing about this problem is the fact that past Governments—I make no apology for what I am about to say—introduced a policy of building fine main roads parallel to our railways—for instance, that from Brisbane to Ipswich—and I see that the present Government are going to follow the same practice. The road between Ipswich and Toowoomba is being further improved to make it as easy as possible for motor traffic to compete with our railway system. I deplore that policy, and I say that a great department like the railways, in which approximately £60,000,000 is invested, should be protected as far as possible from unfair competition. I think it would be wise, as far as possible, to avoid building these fine main roads parallel with railways.

I am one of those who are interested in knowing when the Minister will submit the report of the committee which recently inquired into the railway workshops of this State. I understood about five or six weeks ago that it would be made available within three weeks, but we have heard nothing of it. It may be that the committee found very little to report on, and consequently the Government are not keen on submitting its report to us.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have not got the report yet.

MR. BRASSINGTON: Then why did the Minister not tell us that five or six weeks ago? He gave us to understand that it would be ready in three weeks. I hope that report will be made available as soon as possible.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will be.

MR. BRASSINGTON: Let us hope that hon. members opposite will be able to institute some reform following on the creation of this expensive commission—one that might very well have been done without.

I wish to refer to several matters affecting my own electorate, and in drawing attention to these matters I have the whole-hearted sympathy of the Secretary for Railways, or at least he told the people in my electorate that he favoured the construction of a railway to St. George and the completion of the railway from Meandarra to Surat.

I shall deal with the latter railway first. That railway has been in the course of construction for many years, its terminus being now at Meandarra. So long as the terminus remains at that point, the railway cannot be a paying proposition. It must be extended until the Surat district is tapped, and the line ultimately constructed to the town of Surat. If the wonderfully rich Surat district were tapped, the line, if not a payable proposition, would at least earn more than it is earning at the present time. The Surat district is a wonderfully rich pastoral district, productive of thousands of bales of wool annually and of thousands of head of stock, etc. In addition, the district is eminently suitable for the cultivation of wheat and other crops, all that is required for its development being a railway.

Mr. Brassington.]

The case for the St. George railway is even stronger. For many years the construction of this line has been a political football. Away back in 1837 the residents of that town agitated for a railway; but, owing to pressure being brought to bear, considerable haggling took place as to the route. One section claimed that it should be constructed north to the Western line. Another section contended that it should be constructed from Pittsworth; and still another section claimed that the line should be extended from Warwick. Eventually the construction of the line was commenced, but, when it neared St. George, political influence was brought to bear to such an extent that the line did not proceed to St. George, but was diverted 50 miles to the south through the properties of the Australian Pastoral Company, thereby considerably enhancing the value of its land. That is the position to-day. Continued agitation for the construction of the line to St. George met with little encouragement at the hands of the former Tory Government. I have no doubt that, had the Government which I had the honour to support been returned at the last election, they would have constructed the line and opened up this wonderful district of St. George.

MR. WARREN: They were fifteen years thinking about it.

MR. BRASSINGTON: During those fifteen years the late Government constructed many miles of railway with great benefit to the people of the State. In the St. George district we have some of the finest country in Queensland—country capable of producing practically anything that may be desired. All that is required now is a railway, and I respectfully request the Minister this afternoon to give the proposition his consideration with a view to having the railway constructed in the near future.

There is another little matter that I must touch upon before concluding. The Minister made reference to the institution of rail motors, and claimed that the rail motors are a wonderful success, being instrumental in winning back to the department a considerable quantity of traffic that previously had been lost.

I can suggest a way whereby an improvement in the earnings on the South-Western line can be effected, and that is by continuing the motor train now running to Goondiwindi to Dirranbandi, the terminus of the line. I hope that the Minister will see his way clear to do that, as it will make for the convenience of the people in the Dirranbandi district, and inspire more confidence in the south-western portion of Queensland in the efficiency of the railway system.

Another matter which concerns my constituents in the Cunnamulla district is the question of running the sleeper carriages on the Western mail as far as Cunnamulla. For many years it has been the practice of travellers to engage their sleepers in Brisbane, but, on arrival at Charleville, the sleeping-coaches are disconnected, and passengers have to change into another carriage in order to complete the remaining 120 miles of their journey. They are thus compelled to put up with some inconvenience and to travel with a lesser degree of comfort. I would suggest to the Minister that these sleeping-coaches be allowed to run from Brisbane to Cunnamulla, and thus give to the people in our far south-western district

[Mr. Brassington.

the greatest measure of comfort possible when travelling.

I make these suggestions to the Minister in the hope that in the very near future he will be able to give them his earnest consideration, and extend a measure of relief to the people living in our western areas.

At 4.53 p.m.,

MR. MAXWELL (*Toowong*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

MR. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): The Railway Department requires very serious consideration from any Parliament. The large capitalisation, the wide services it gives to the people, and the problems that are presented to the Government in running railways are becoming more acute each year.

It is interesting to review some of the figures relating to railway revenue and railway expenditure and the general effect of motor competition on railway revenue. In his Financial Statement the Treasurer referred to the railway indebtedness and various other matters dealing therewith. One of the statements I wish to call attention to is one, not made by the Treasurer but frequently heard in various portions of the State—that is, that there is an accumulated railway deficit in the vicinity of £19,000,000. That is a most misleading statement and is perfectly untrue. There is no such thing as an accumulated railway deficit, as the Treasurer and Secretary for Railways well know. Those hon. gentlemen know that each year the railway deficit is a charge on consolidated revenue.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is a loss, nevertheless.

MR. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is a loss certainly, but not an accumulated deficit, which is an entirely different thing. The Treasurer deals with this matter in his Budget speech, and makes reference to what has occurred in New South Wales. The Treasurer of New South Wales, Mr. Stephens, has introduced a system which separates the railway accounts from the general accounts of the State, and by that means is able to show a budget surplus, which does not take into consideration any railway deficit, which might alter the position entirely. That system would enable the Treasurer to show a surplus, when, as a matter of fact, there was no surplus at all. The Treasurer does not agree with that move on the part of the Treasurer of New South Wales, and I am inclined to agree with him. After all, the railway account affects the State balance-sheet, and it is just and proper that any deficit on the railways should be taken into account, just as the figures of any other department are taken into account. At any rate, whatever benefits may accrue to the Treasurer of New South Wales by this system, it is misleading from the point of view of the general public in regard to the revenue and expenditure of the State.

[5 p.m.]

In 1915 the capitalisation of the railways was set down at £37,532,930 for a mileage of 4,833, whilst at the end of last financial year the capitalisation was £63,064,333 for 6,447 miles of railway, or an increase in mileage during the period of 1,609. The interest bill in 1915 was £1,381,318; in 1929, £2,969,826, or an increase of £1,588,508 during the period under review. Furthermore,

having regard to the capital invested, the interest fluctuates each year. In 1910-11 the interest was £3 18s. 10d. per cent.; in 1914-15, the last year of the Denham Government, it was £3 15s. 9d. per cent., showing a difference of 5s. 1d. per cent. between 1911 and 1915. In 1924-25 the interest on capitalisation was £2 19s. 4d. per cent.; in 1928-29, £2 3s. 3d. The earlier year, 1924-25, was a year of record production in this State, particularly with regard to our primary products. This year the Treasurer is budgeting for an increase in railway revenue, notwithstanding that the record revenue was in the past year, and that in 1924-25—the year of record production—the railway revenue was less than that for which the Treasurer has budgeted.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Freights have been increased considerably since then.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Quite so. I understand that all those things are factors in the matter; but I am calling attention to the unfortunate position we are in during the present year. Due to the protracted dry weather, the state of the country is bad, and in some portions of the State, particularly in the South-west, the conditions give rise to considerable misgivings as to the future. For example, although a large area was placed under wheat and got a good start, no one will say to-day that the anticipations of a couple of months ago will be realised in the wheat harvested. In other parts of the State, too, the dry weather is having its effect. The conditions for October plantings of cane are not at all promising, and there is every likelihood of a considerable shrinkage in railway revenue in the present financial year, due to climatic conditions over which no Government has any control. I hope the Treasurer's estimate of railway revenue will be realised, although the Secretary for Railways knows full well that there is little likelihood of that being so. Last year the railway revenue amounted to £7,567,231, which was £132,719 less than the estimated revenue, although it was £193,329 in excess of the receipts for the previous year. On that the Treasurer remarked—

“which is a considerable improvement, and the largest revenue collected by this department in any year.”

The estimated railway earnings for the present financial year amount to £7,675,000, which is £107,719 in excess of the earnings of the previous year, which was a record. In view of the circumstances I have alluded to, there is little likelihood of an increase in revenue to that extent.

It is interesting to note that the saving on the estimated expenditure last year was £115,268, which improved very considerably the position from the point of view of railway revenue and expenditure.

There are certain matters in connection with the railways to which we must give full consideration. The Minister has said that, owing to motor transport, the public generally are not giving the support to the railways—a State institution—that they ought to give. That affects the position of all the States very considerably. In Australia imported American motor cars are displacing workers who otherwise would be employed in building locomotives, railway carriages, trucks, and so forth. That is taking place in every State, and seriously affects the railway position. In addition to that, the

shrinkage of traffic on certain lines, according to the Minister's statement last week, is such that he will seriously have to consider whether those lines can be kept open or not. In America, owing to similar circumstances, they have closed down many branch lines. In New Zealand, where they have very good roads and good roadmaking material, the Government have pointed out that State roads are a charge on the accumulated wealth production of the State, as are the railways, and that they cannot afford to construct and maintain both roads and railways, and consequently they are putting it to the people in certain districts that they must decide which they intended to use, as the State cannot afford both. It was proposed that, if the people voted in favour of continuing to use the roads, the railways would have to be closed down. The position is more acute here because of our large railway mileage and the large area over which settlement has taken place. There is a vast social service attached to the Railway Department that cannot be estimated in a profit and loss account or in a general budget statement. In considering railway losses you must have regard to the effect a railway has on land settlement and to the advantage it is to the people in enabling them to market their goods. Having regard to our small population and the scattered nature of that population, it will be many years before the railways can be expected to pay. That is the fact, no matter what Government may be in power. A lot of bluff can be indulged in on the political platform about the railways, but that is the position which faces every Secretary for Railways, no matter what Government may be in power. If the railways were transferred to private enterprise, probably they would only run those lines that pay, increase rates, and close down others. From the State point of view, it must be remembered that railways promote settlement, increase land revenue, and in countless different ways help the State. Apart from any wasteful expenditure, I am satisfied that, if you take into account the fact that the Treasury has only one till into which all revenue flows, the railways are a good asset to the State.

Land revenue, income tax revenue, and land tax revenue would be entirely different were it not for the railways. It has often been argued that the Railway Department should get credit for some of the revenue obtained through new railways being built. A good argument can be put forward to deal with the railways as a separate entity, but it does not matter in the last analysis what is done, because all the costs and revenue go into one central fund, and it is on that basis that you have to consider the respective advantages or otherwise.

I would like to know what the Minister intends to do with regard to the branch lines that he mentioned, and whether he proposes to take any action in connection with motor competition. It was proposed at one of the Premiers' conferences I attended that all the States should face these difficulties simultaneously, and that a general policy as between the States should be put into effect. There is no doubt that the position is becoming more serious every year. Take the suburban districts of Brisbane for instance. At Northgate, where I used to live a few years ago, large numbers of people came into town by train between 8 and 9 o'clock. There were four trains

Mr. Smith.]

available between those hours, and they were all full. You had to stand in one train if you were a bit late. That position is changed, as a large number of people are now coming into town in their own motor cars, and fewer trains run, as fewer passengers are being carried. All the States are affected in the same way. It was suggested by the Treasurer of New South Wales, and supported by the Victorian Government, that simultaneous action should be taken by the respective States to deal with this question of motor competition. It represents an economic loss to the State, and, if a satisfactory system can be devised, action should be taken at a very early date. Of course, we cannot hope to stand in the way of progress—the internal combustion engine has come to stay. We must recognise that fact, and adapt our State methods of transportation to the new conditions; but we cannot continue for an indefinite period to provide roads which will reduce the value of State assets in the way I have stated. The position has to be faced, and the sooner it is faced the better. Personally, I think the position should be put clearly before the people. We have low freights on the railway lines for the carriage of produce, whereas the motor lorry is getting all the goods that pay a higher freight. In that connection something may be done to assist the department by a general appeal to the public to use their own assets, and such an appeal should find a response from every decent citizen. The position is getting worse every year; the eyes of the trade are being picked out by the motor lorries, and railway trains are being run for a return which does not pay for axle grease. Motor transport is getting the cream of the traffic and at the same time breaking up the roads.

The present Government have taken certain action with regard to the general administration of the railways which has meant dispensing with the services of a number of men. I understand that the Minister's explanation is that that is due to the reversion to the contract system. Men who were formerly employed as bridge carpenters and general tradesmen are paid off and contracts are being let. I do not agree with the wisdom of that course. From the point of view of effective work, and having regard to the public safety, I think the old system of employment of railway servants was the best. I have no doubt that the Government will in time revert to the employment of labour on bridges and other classes of railway work on which the public safety depends. The painting and repairing of iron bridges over waterways is work which it is not safe to let contracts for, because bothheads and things of that kind have to be clean and dry before paint is applied, and, if a contract is let where keen competition takes place, the tendency is to get over the work as quickly as possible. That is a matter that will have to be seriously considered by the department.

With regard to the employment of apprentices I think that the department, having a considerable number of carpenters and workshops properly equipped where skilled men can be trained, should train as many boys as possible. I know that the position has been difficult for many years; but the Minister should take steps as soon as possible in this direction. A number of apprentices complete their training each year, and at least an equal number of new boys should be brought

into the department. The theory that a boy in his first year would displace a journeyman cannot be sustained, because apprentices have to be broken in and until they are about two years in the shop they cannot be entrusted with much work. You cannot put a boy of sixteen or seventeen years to a job that only a properly trained man can do. The Railway Department should co-operate with other employers outside to train apprentices as far as is humanly possible. We should not get into the habit of having only a small proportion of our own citizens carrying out the work of trained artisans. I took out the figures for Canada only a few years ago, when I was Secretary for Public Works, and I was astonished to find that less than 5 per cent. of native-born artisans were employed there. Canada drew them from other countries to a very great extent. The same thing applies to a large extent in the United States of America, with whose Department of Labour I have been in touch for many years. That country is very largely dependent on trained artisans from Great Britain and employs only a small percentage of locally trained men. That is not good for any State. We should not willingly contemplate the spectacle of our own boys growing up condemned to be labourers for other people. We should give them a decent chance to learn trades. Given a chance, they compare well with tradesmen from overseas, and it should be part of the economic policy of any country to provide its own artisans as industry expands and new enterprises arise.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): It will be a relief for hon. members opposite to find that, notwithstanding the reports which have been assiduously circulated regarding reductions in the railway service, the appropriation for this year is almost equal to that of last year. Personally I am very glad, because in every centre men have been very much alarmed as to what might take place. I hope that reductions will not be necessary. I am aware, as has been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, that the contract system has been adopted in some cases—perhaps in many cases—and that men inevitably will be affected thereby. The gangs which have come under my observation include men who are very excellent tradesmen, and I bespeak for them the best consideration that can be given. I hope that they will be favourably considered for permanent work or employment under the contract system.

I speak very feelingly on the matter, because of my association with many of these men who have done very excellent service for the State. Some people are inclined to speak very disparagingly of railwaymen, but my experience has convinced me that the majority of them render the best possible service to the State; and that applies from the Commissioner right down to the porter or to the fletcher on the lengths.

On the whole, we have a right to express pleasure regarding the service rendered by our men. I have to admit that we have been wanting on occasions from the point of view of discipline, and that to some extent that discipline was broken down during the administration of the late Government. Disciplinary measures result in a fine and efficient service. However, I am not going to harp upon that. Bygone in that direction are bygone. It is for the department and for every man, especially in these days

[Mr. Smith,

of stress through which we are passing, whether he be a railwayman or not, to "put his shoulder to the wheel" and help to straighten out the conditions of life which exist around us, and which are so apparent. If we are to get on a firm footing again, it can only be by every man doing his utmost.

There are several matters to which I would like to refer concerning the Railway Department. I have already stated that I am glad to note that there is no very great idea of retrenchment. I wish that to be particularly noted, so that the news will be spread far and wide. Much has been said regarding competition with our railways, and it has been remarked that the railways are not yielding what they should have been yielding. The fact is that, although we have increased our mileage from year to year, we are carrying practically very little more goods than we did years ago. Yet we have increased our obligations. The real answer is that, although the value of things has increased, the quantity of primary products has not increased. We have not supported the Commissioner for Railways by giving him the goods to carry—that is the long and short of it. We have not considered agricultural development and development generally. We must lay ourselves out for it, if the railways are to pay.

Harking back to the competition mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, it is surprising how competition is entering into our life in connection with the railways. Going home last week I glanced out of the carriage window, and noticed a motor-lorry scurrying along carrying three pianos. That is not fair. These pianos should certainly be carried by the railway instead of being conveyed to their destination by road. I know that the temptation is great. Inducements of this kind are held out to my firm in Warwick, but, on account of our loyalty and our sense of obligation, we have not considered these temptations, but we may be forced into line in that direction and to respond in a way in which others have responded to such representations.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: A lot of those things are beyond the control of individuals.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: They are beyond the control of the individual to a large extent, but they are not beyond the control of the Railway Department. I did not intend to mention it at this juncture, but, in the interests of the State, and considering the vast sum of money which has been expended in our railways at the instigation of the people who have pleaded for railway construction, it is right for us to say what ought to be done in order to conserve the prosperity of these vast interests.

Mr. KIRWAN: We have to protect our own interests.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is so. However grating it may be to give expression to such a sentiment, and however it may interfere with the contemplation of many, there is only one way of conserving these vast interests of the State, and that is by reserving the whole of that kind of transport to the Commissioner for Railways. He should take the problem of competition in hand wherever it exists. He can easily do so. The power is in the hands of the Main Roads Commissioner to issue or refuse to issue licenses for motor vehicles. If the Railway Commissioner is prepared to pre-

serve the trade which should be carried by the railways, he should take steps in that direction. We have not gone too far up to the present; but in the course of a few years we shall be up against this question to a far more serious degree than now. If we undertake the problem now, it will be a comparatively small one, and only a few men would be upset. I have indicated personally to the Minister what should be done to develop our railway service and retain the trade which should come to it. I maintain that, no matter where a clip of wool is, we should lift it by lorries working under contract to the Railway Department—not our own particular service. These contractors would go out to the station-owner, lift his wool, and deliver it to its destination on the railway line. That is the only way we can conserve to ourselves the vast trade which belongs to the railways. If the Government take that matter in hand and arrange in a comprehensive way to bring these commodities to the railway, it will bring about a revolution in the railway traffic. A vast quantity of wool along our Western line is finding its way down to New South Wales. Let us put our hand upon it wherever it is, and carry it to its proper destination, which might not be quite the destination that the other fellow may design and determine. It may seem a high-handed scheme. Of course, if it does not serve the interests of the people, it cannot be done. We are out to give such a service as the people will appreciate.

I was very glad to hear the hon. member for Balonne take up the matter of the St. George railway. For many years I have been the only country member to advocate that line on the floor of this Chamber, and I am glad to have his support.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I have always been an advocate for that railway.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The border railway is certainly by far the most important railway enterprise that could be undertaken in Queensland. It is the only way in which the trade of Queensland can be conserved. [5.30 p.m.] served for the ports of Queensland. Some people imagine that the 46 miles from Dunwinnie to St. George would be a branch line; but, as a matter of fact, that line would lift wool from that great district and convey it straight through. We want to hold trade in its own geographical area; once in our hands, the trade will be for the benefit of Queensland. I am glad that the hon. member for Balonne supports the proposal for the border railway, which we should endeavour to get by every means in our power. If there is no money available in Queensland, our steps not be taken to build the line under an agreement with the Migration and Development Commission, whereby blocks of land would be exchanged for financial assistance?

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Railways do not come within the scope of the Migration and Development Commission's scheme.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: We might possibly have to forgo some land which would be available for settlement under the Migration and Development agreement. The 12,000,000 acres of land available are sufficient to permit of the settlement of a portion of it by people from abroad. The job is a big one, but it must be tackled if we are to protect our own trade.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

I support the contention of the hon. member for Balonne regarding the running of rail motors to Dirranbandi. As the Minister doubtless knows, a great amount of trade is being contested for in that district, and is going over to New South Wales. Let us stimulate the trade in our own State; and, if the convenience of a rail motor will be helpful in that direction, then by all means extend the motor service beyond Goodwindi. The services already rendered could be immeasurably increased by going out still further.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You cannot run rail motors at night time—that is one of the troubles.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That difficulty might be overcome by commencing the journey early in the morning. Further, the motor conveyances might be improved so that greater comfort could be enjoyed by passengers. The installation of sliding windows, for example, would be a convenience, and should not be a difficult matter to take in hand.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are building improved cars now.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am pleased to hear that.

I thought that possibly the Minister would have given the Committee some information regarding the scheme of co-ordination between railways and roads. That must be part and parcel of our life. One cannot emphasise too strongly the absolute need for undertaking every possible kind of transport, and again I say that should be retained in the hands of the Railway Department.

Mr. NIMMO (*Ozley*): In the first place, allow me to pay a tribute, as was done by the hon. member for Warwick, to the railway workers in Queensland. No doubt a lot of criticism has been levelled at these men, but I say without fear of contradiction that in Queensland we have a very fine class of railway servant. If any work is required to be done, particularly at the Ipswich workshops, it is well carried out. The trouble is that in the past the railways have not had a fair chance. The management of the railways now is very much better than it was for a long period. The saving that has been effected by the substitution of the contract system for day labour is going to be very large. Already I know of several works being carried out by contract, in regard to which a large saving has been effected. Money must be saved in connection with small matters, such as the painting of wayside stations and the boardings in connection with these stations. This may seem a trivial thing, but that work can be done very much cheaper by carpenters living in the district than it can be done by sending tradesmen long distances to do it. As a result of the small savings already effected, the Government propose to make a reduction in suburban fares and in other fares. There is no doubt that fares have been increased to such an extent that the people cannot really afford to pay the prices asked, with the result that this traffic has been driven to motor transport. There are many other factors which have operated in driving trade away from the railways. The employees themselves, in the disastrous strike, caused a lot of trade to be lost to the railways which has never been regained, but I believe

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

that by a judicious reduction in fares, we shall regain that traffic for our railways.

Another matter that I would like to impress upon the Minister is the question of fares between suburban stations and in other parts of Queensland. When the late Government increased fares, they were increased by so much per cent. The fares were fixed at the nearest penny, with the result that many of the fares for single journeys for short distances are double what they were previously. The charge is altogether excessive, and if women in these suburbs wish to visit a friend living at the next station they make use of motor buses.

Another question is that of parcel rates. The carriage of parcels should be a profitable business to the Railway Department. Take where I live. I bought a motor car tyre in Brisbane some time ago, and had it sent out by rail. I paid 1s. 6d. to take it to Corinda—a distance of 7 miles—and then I had to pay a man 6d. to bring it down from the railway station to my home. The next week I ordered two tyres from the same people, and I said, "Send these out by Bryce." They were delivered to my home at Corinda at a cost of 1s. for the two tyres, and there was no further bother. The trains are running now, and we could carry small parcels to these suburbs at such a low rate that motor competition could not live. Probably the employees would have to work a little harder in looking after these parcels at the cheap rate, but there would be plenty of traffic to keep the thing going.

At 5.40 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. NIMMO: I am also very pleased that the Government propose to have no wholesale retrenchment in the railway service. There may be isolated cases where people have to be put off, but the Government have decided that there is to be no wholesale retrenchment—although we know the Railway Department is over-staffed.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What do you say?

Mr. NIMMO: Although we know that the Labour Government had too many men in the railway service and that it is now over-staffed, our Government have decided that no retrenchment shall take place, because they do not wish to add to the existing unemployment. I am pleased to know that for the sake of railway workers.

Another thing which I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister, although I do not know whether it comes under his department, is the need to encourage the carriage of coal to the wharves for overseas shipment. I think that a crane should be erected at Pinkenba. I would not recommend that the Government should pay the whole cost of doing so, but a certain percentage could be borne by the department, provided the other people concerned paid a certain proportion of the expenditure. Through not having proper facilities for loading coal we are losing a certain amount of overseas coal trade, as ships will not come to Woollongabba wharf. If we had a crane at Pinkenba it would facilitate the shipment of coal.

Although certain so-called cheap fares have been charged on trains running to the seaside, no encouragement is given to people to use the trains in the way that was done in the old days, when a firm with 500 employees,

for instance, could go to the department and say, "We can guarantee 500 passengers," and the whole of the employees would be carried to Southport for 2s. 6d. return. I would advocate the giving of these cheap fares in order to encourage firms to take their employees on picnics to the seaside. We have to popularise train travelling, instead of allowing it to drift, as it is gradually doing. Although I do a good deal of motor-ing myself, I realise that, if a railway carriage is loaded with people who know each other and can have a friendly chat together, train travelling is very pleasant.

The Minister should also go seriously into the matter of the speed at which our trains are travelling. There is no doubt that our suburban trains travel too slowly, and the department should hurry them up. The stops at the stations, for instance, could be shortened, and the travelling in between the stations could be quicker.

Mr. JONES: We have a good service.

Mr. NIMMO: I admit we have a good service on express trains. If we could only cut ten minutes off in a 7-mile run, for instance, it would popularise train travelling very much, and I think that could be done. It is very painful travelling in some of the trains which take half an hour to get people home on a comparatively short run.

I am very pleased that the apprenticeship question has been mentioned. I realise that had the department not been overstaffed, more apprentices could be put on; but I understand that, so soon as the matter is rectified, the Government intend to put on a considerable number. To my mind nothing is so tragic as to have boys growing up without learning trades. Even if it means a loss to the State, the Minister should encourage the employment of apprentices. I think that boys who have learned their trade in the Railway Department should be allowed to get a job in an outside shop for a term, and then be brought back into the department.

I am glad that the department is adopting the practice of rewarding ability. If a man is showing ability, even if he is a very young man, he should be promoted. Already I can see at our railway stations and amongst other staffs that the men are very anxious to help the department and get trade for the railways. It is in their own interests, because, as they work up their stations, so they will reap promotion.

A matter to which the Minister should give serious consideration—I suppose he will as time goes on—is the appointment of more than one Commissioner. I realise that a Commissioner should be appointed as a practical man, but there should be another Commissioner who is a financial expert.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you mean by a practical man an engineer, an accountant, or what?

Mr. NIMMO: He need not be an engineer. He should be a man who has been trained in the traffic department.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: They are all practical men in their jobs.

Mr. NIMMO: I am speaking of a thoroughly practical accountant, who is thoroughly versed in finance.

Mr. KIRWAN: There is no better man in the service than Mr. Murton.

Mr. NIMMO: He is secretary to the Commissioner, and is not a responsible officer. I am glad to see that once more encouragement is to be given to the man on the land, because that will help to increase the quantity of goods carried. Although a great deal of noise has been made about the Government not honouring promises, they did honour their promise in regard to the rural workers' award, and their action has resulted in bringing more produce to the railways. I notice in the "Daily Standard" of last night that there has been an increase of 10,000 voters on the Federal electoral rolls, and, strange to say, the only decreases have been in the large industrial centres, showing that the people are again getting out into the country. Brisbane and Moreton show decreases, for instance, but the country divisions all show increases.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What has that to do with the railways?

Mr. NIMMO: It has everything to do with the railways, because, as the people go into the country, they will produce more stuff for the railways to carry.

Another matter I would like to bring under the notice of the Minister is the necessity for a new railway bridge at Indooroopilly.

Mr. JONES: Whose electorate is that in?

Mr. NIMMO: It is between my electorate and that of the hon. member for Toowong. There is no doubt that the department will have to build a new bridge there within a very few years. All the engineers admit that the present bridge is too light for the axle-loads of to-day.

If a bridge capable of carrying the heavier loads were constructed at the present time, it would be an asset to the whole State, and, in addition, would provide employment which is very badly needed in that particular branch of industry. I warn the Minister that, if the department does not construct this bridge, a concrete bridge will be constructed across the river, and the Railway Department will receive practically nothing for the present bridge. To-day the department is in a position to secure for the bridge a price practically sufficient to cover its original cost of construction. The Minister should give the matter very serious consideration, because it will mean employment for a large number of men. I understand that the whole of the material can be secured within the Brisbane district. In conclusion, I feel sure that the policy of the Government in connection with the Railway Department will be in the direction of restoring the Railway Department as a paying concern.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*): I do not envy the Secretary for Railways his new job. I think I am safe in saying that it will not be all "beer and skittles."

The loss of £19,000,000 or anything else in the past does not concern me very much at present. I am concerned with the important factor of the transport difficulty facing Queensland to-day. It is the duty of every hon. member to assist the Minister to try to clean up the mess in which the country is placed. I have heard a lot about the late Government being in power for fourteen years; but I am fortunate in that I

Mr. Dunlop.]

cannot be held up to criticism, as is the case with hon. members in opposition. Let us admit all their faults and that the losses are there.

I have already made certain statements outside, and what I say outside I want to say here. When the next elections come around and I am opposed by one or two candidates as I expect to be, out will come "Hansard," and I shall be asked, "Did you not say so-and-so?" I want to say right off the reel that I am in favour of the removal of the railways from political control. I have heard enough here about political control to chloroform me, if not sufficient to make one sleep for ever and a day. I take it that the removal of the railways from political control will mean the creation of a controlling authority in the shape of a board; and I advocate representation on that board on behalf of the employees, who are a very important factor. I am not divulging any secrets when I state candidly that I suppose "wire-pulling" has been indulged in by hon. members from both sides. It is no use the "not calling the kettle black." No doubt the present Cabinet Ministers have learned in their short period of office that politicians are prone to approach them, and ask them if they can do this or do that. I think the Secretary for Railways will agree that, when I approach him, I try to make out a good case, and that I intimate to him that I am not asking that he should exert any political influence on my behalf. I make it clear to him that I am stating my case, and it is merely a matter for him to say "Yes" or "No."

There is no doubt that a lot of free passes have been issued through political influence, and that a number which have been issued should not have been issued. I can understand the position of the Secretary for Railways. It would be his desire to be in the good graces of hon. members, and therefore issue these passes. I have no desire to "wash any dirty linen," notwithstanding that I was for many years employed in the railway service. I intend to be discreet concerning the internal conditions in the railway, and will not say too much of what I noticed, but it is the duty of every hon. member to help the Minister in the stupendous job he has before him. If I think that he is not out to give the railway employees a square go, then I will give him a "Roland for his Oliver."

The hon. member for Oxley spoke on the question of the appointment of an additional Commissioner. I desire to stress the question of decentralisation. If there is one thing more than another that I desire to see brought to a successful fruition during my lifetime, and of which I would be proud, it is the decentralisation of the railways. There is too much Brisbane in everything. The Commissioner for Railways practically governs the whole service in Queensland with the assistance of the general manager at Rockhampton and the general manager at Townsville. Too many trivial matters have to be referred from Townsville and Rockhampton to Brisbane, when the officers in those centres, if given a greater measure of control, could deal with them competently. The officers there have sufficient brains to deal with many of the questions which now have to be referred to Brisbane. The Minister should confer greater powers on those officers. It has been nuzzling to me why officers holding responsible positions in

the railway service have never been sent abroad to study modern railway methods.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Mr. Fihelly went to America.

Mr. DUNLOP: I am talking about officers of the railway service.

[7 p.m.]

I urge the Minister to go into the question of decentralisation with the Commissioner. The matter has been left in abeyance for many years, and it is time that some concrete proposal was put forward whereby greater powers will be given to the two divisional railway officers in the Central and Northern portions of the State. The Minister should have no hesitation in urging the Commissioner to delegate greater powers to these officers, particularly when they are well fitted to exercise those powers, and in doing so will facilitate the working of the railway service.

I listened with interest to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition on the transport question. The hon. member, who is one of the most connected speakers in this Assembly, would be a second T. J. Ryan were he equipped with a knowledge of the law. That is by the way. The serious competition of motor cars and buses is affecting the tramway system in Rockhampton just as it is affecting the railway service generally throughout the State. The unfortunate thing is that the people of Rockhampton, in common with the people of Queensland generally, do not realise that they should support this enterprise. If the rates being charged by the Railway Department are too high in comparison with those offered by motor bus companies, etc., surely the Commissioner should be in a position to deal with the problem so that he may regain the lost traffic! It has been suggested that the control of motor traffic should lie with the Secretary for Railways, in that the Main Roads Commission under his jurisdiction controls the issue of licenses for motor transit. That is a suggestion well worthy of consideration. I know that on the Yeppoon branch railway, in the Keppel electorate, the goods traffic is affected because the business people of Yeppoon utilise motor conveyances, although they benefit from the travelling public who visit Yeppoon by excursion trains run by the Railway Department. The railways will never pay until the traffic is considerably increased; and in that connection some good may result from the legislation which is forecast by the Secretary for Public Lands, by which it is hoped that considerable areas of country through which the railways now pass will be opened up for settlement.

The Secretary for Agriculture knows that in the Central-West and other places large numbers of stock are lost through drought, disease, and so forth. If the Government instituted a system of scientific research with a view to preventing these losses the saving through the prevention of these losses would pay the interest on the public debt. If more money were spent in that direction, the railway system would benefit. I hope that everyone will assist in their respective divisions in trying to obliterate the "cut-throat system" of those who are trying to compete with the railways so that our railways may be made a paying concern.

We have already furnished the Secretary for Railways with particulars as to the trade

[Mr. Dunlop.]

which rightly belongs to the Central division, and I would ask the Minister, in conjunction with the Commissioner, to go into the question of long haulage rates, and, if necessary, appoint an expert to see that each division gets its fair share of its own trade. To make a success of the railways, everyone concerned must give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, and in doing so they should be properly reimbursed. In that connection I would point out that the Railway Department has what it calls a "Suggestions and Inventions Board," and I am sure the Minister will agree that the employees in the department, especially the mechanics, have saved the Railway Department many thousands of pounds. Any employee who makes a useful suggestion does not get a very big bonus, although he certainly gets something. Just lately I noticed that two railway employees got a bonus of £20 each, and I would like to know what the Railway Department is saving through the brains of these two employees, who received the munificent sum of £20 each.

I regret very much indeed that the Secretary for Railways or the Cabinet saw fit to go outside Queensland for two experts to inquire into railway matters, especially in view of the fact that the railway system in the State from which those experts came is in no better condition than are the Queensland railways. I have great confidence in our own Queensland people. Any idea that the Secretary for Railways may have, that if two Queenslanders were appointed they would not give an impartial decision, is pure "bunkum." Anyone "worth his salt" would give an opinion without fear or favour; and while I am here, no matter what Government may be in power, I shall oppose the bringing of people from outside the State to fill important positions in Queensland. Queenslanders are holding some of the highest positions in the Commonwealth to-day.

While I do not wish to use the "parish pump," I desire to refer to an important matter that affects my electorate. The Ipswich workshops have recently been getting work that rightly belongs to the railway workshops in Rockhampton. That has been going on for some years, and work has been sent to Ipswich that had no right to go there, as the work could be efficiently done by capable mechanics in the Rockhampton workshops. I hope that the Minister will see that this practice is stopped, and that the workshops at Rockhampton, as well as those in the North, are given the work which rightly belongs to them.

Before the election the new station was started at Rockhampton. No doubt my friends on the right are responsible for that; but I am not going to say whether it was for political reasons or not. I hope that, when there is an improvement in the finances, the work at the station will be restarted. Anyone going into Rockhampton and having to walk over the overhead bridge to go round to the refreshment-room will know how awkward it is for passengers to get to the refreshment-room. Certainly, trains are now backing into the station, which is the greatest farce I ever saw, and I hope that better arrangements will be made. I do not know whether politicians down here know that there is such a place as the Central district, of which Rockhampton is the capital, which is entitled to a station in keeping with its position as the third city in Queensland.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition referring to the appointment of apprentices. This was a matter with which I dealt on the hustings. To my inquiries on the subject I was unable to elicit any official information, but I did get a little "oil" all the same, which showed that there were 180 apprentices who had sat for the examination but none of whom had been appointed. I say that apprentices should be put on; but, according to the Secretary for Labour and Industry, there is a report to come from the South which he has to consider before that can be done. The Government should keep their promise and put apprentices on, as it is necessary to do something for our boys.

I am also pleased that the old system of retiring employees at sixty-five years of age has been cut out and that a man is to be treated on his merits so long as he can do his work.

I hope that the Minister will see that the exorbitant railway fares charged to Emu Park and Yeppoon from Rockhampton are altered. If the department wants to make the railways pay, it can do so by making more reasonable charges. It is impossible for a worker with a family to pay the present charges. The railway service to those two seaside resorts will pay if only the fares are made more reasonable.

The same thing applies in connection with the refreshment-rooms, where the prices charged are too high. People will not pay 2s 6d. for a meal, so why not reduce the charge to 2s. and give the people a chance?

The Government should also accelerate the mail train service and cut out stops at so many intermediate stations. Meals are provided at certain stations, and the trains stop five minutes here and ten minutes there at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. The department could easily cut out an hour or half an hour on the mail train from Brisbane to Rockhampton by limiting the number of stopping places on the way. If a person is not satisfied with his tea when he gets it, he has no right to be permitted to get out at Gympie or any other place at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

I would like to mention the travelling expenses paid to mechanics and others in the Railway Department. At the present time the department is paying mechanics and others in the workshops a travelling allowance of 10s. per day with a maximum of £2 a week. If a mechanic is away ten days he should, in my opinion, get 10s. for each day, whereas he only gets a maximum of £2 for the first seven days and three-sevenths of £2 for the other three days, whereas the general manager gets £1 1s. a day, and certain other officers 15s. a day and 17s. 6d. a day for each day they are away.

I hope the Minister will use his influence with the Cabinet with a view to giving the railway mechanic 10s. for every day he is travelling. I know that what I say is correct, because I have worked out these vouchers for years; and I hope the Minister will turn over a new leaf. I would go further and say that, if the bosses are worth what they are getting, the wages men are worth 10s. or even 12s. 6d. a day for the whole ten days they are travelling.

Mr. Dunlop.]

Another matter to which I wish to refer is that the department has an expensive moulding shop in Rockhampton—it cost several thousand pounds—and it has only three or four moulders in it. I asked a question about this matter not long ago. That shop was erected for the purpose of doing moulding work in Rockhampton, and the sooner it is fully utilised the better for everybody.

At 7.17 p.m.,

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. JONES (*Paddington*): In a young and sparsely populated country like Australia, which depends for its progress and development largely on transportation, it is unfair to expect the railways to pay, especially in a State such as Queensland, where mining and other resources are peculiarly dependent upon transportation. We must remember that the railways give an essential service to the country; and certain forms of revenue come to the Government because of the building of railway lines. As a matter of fact, the great bulk of land revenue is dependent upon and is the outcome of the building of railways. I remember that, when the Legislative Council had submitted to it certain propositions for the building of railways in the Upper Burnett and they were referred to a Select Committee in accordance with the Standing Orders of that Chamber, the Commissioner for Railways said in evidence that the loss on the working of those lines would be a pretty large sum of money, but the Under Secretary for Lands, the late Mr. Gordon Graham, who was a good authority, pointed out that the revenue that would be derived from that area by the Department of Public Lands as a result of their construction would be three times as great as the loss anticipated on them by the Commissioner. I think the figures have proved that since. The huge revenue that comes into the Department of Public Lands from the settlement of the Upper Burnett district is due to railway construction, although probably the railways are showing a loss.

I would also ask the Minister whether it is not a fact that the building of the railway from Duchess to Mount Isa has improved the returns on the line from Townsville through Cloncurry to Duchess. Years ago, when mining was active in the North-West, the railway to Cloncurry was a paying line, and it will pay again as a result of the development of that great field at Mount Isa.

The last speaker, in common with others, referred to competition with our railways by motor traffic. Well, to try to sweep back that competition is like the action of the old woman with a broom trying to keep back the tide. This country depends on transportation, and the people will choose the cheapest form. That is patent to the average mind.

Although we have an extensive railway system, I do not think that it is possible in the future in Australia, and particularly in Queensland, to construct trunk lines and avoid the new form of traffic. I travelled along a road at one time from Chicago to the Gary iron and steel works. We hear quite a lot about the scrapping of railways in America, but the railway along that road was the only one that was scrapped,

[*Mr. Dunlop.*

due to the fact that it was subject to competition with water traffic on the one side and with road traffic on the other. In the future we should consider whether it will not be better to construct roads instead of small branch railways, and whether road traffic will not serve the purpose equally as well, if not better. At the present time our main highways must be our railways; but it will be very difficult for the Minister who controls both the rail and road transport systems to resist the new form of traffic, which is coming as surely as night follows day—motor traffic. It will be very difficult for him to resist that traffic; and indeed I do not think he would be wise in so doing when oil is supplied at a cheaper rate in Australia. In the city of Brisbane we are paying as high as 2s. per gallon for petrol. What will be the magnitude of the motor transport system if oil can be produced here in commercial quantities and it can be secured at less than 1s. per gallon? Competition will then be keener, and I do not know that we can or should resist it.

Mr. NIMMO: We will then use petrol on the railways.

Mr. JONES: Motor traffic is the coming traffic, and oil is the dominant feature in the progress of the transport system. To-day the possession of oil means possession of the control of the seas, with oil-driven vessels. He who has oil has empire. Oil is responsible for the conquest of air. Ultra-refined petrol has enabled us to conquer and control the air. Oil has been responsible in Queensland for shortening distances, abolishing the half-way house.

Mr. NIMMO: We have not yet secured it in Queensland.

Mr. JONES: No, but we have the imported oil. With petrol at 2s. per gallon it is very difficult for the Railway Department to compete with motor traffic; how much more difficult will it be to compete with motor traffic when oil is produced here in commercial quantities?

Mr. KELSO: The department will have to conduct a motor service of its own in conjunction with the railways.

Mr. JONES: It may be necessary to link up certain railway systems and to construct certain trunk lines, probably from the South to the North of Australia; but we should hesitate before we build any more railway lines in Queensland, when good roads and motor traffic will serve the purpose equally as well, if not better—I think a great deal better. I do not think it is possible to resist the coming motor traffic. What must we expect if we construct good roads parallel to the railway lines? No Secretary for Railways should construct, nor do I think the Minister is prepared to construct, roads that are likely to compete with the railway system. It would be a sorry thing, probably, for the Railway Department. I quite realise that it is only natural that every departmental head likes to see his department grow. That form of motive power cannot be resisted.

The question of the appointment of extra Commissioners to administer the railways has been mentioned. In the present Commissioner and his staff we have a body of men who discharge their duties with credit to the State. Travellers and visitors to Queensland speak of the great courtesy they receive

at the hands of the Railway Department. I do not favour government by commission, neither do I favour the appointment of too many Commissioners. I am not so well acquainted with the railway service as some hon. members who have been brought up in it and know it in detail, but I do know that the Commissioner and his officials—particularly Mr. Crowther and Mr. Chambers in the Northern and Central Divisions respectively—get every encouragement to run the railways in their districts.

It has been stated by an hon. member sitting behind the Minister that there has been no reduction in the number of men employed in the service, or, in other words, that there has been no retrenchment. I understand, nevertheless, that there is a lesser number of men in the service to-day than hitherto. That is particularly so in Brisbane, where licensed porters now handle passengers' luggage. I understand that these licensed porters are not giving the same satisfaction to the travelling public that obtained prior to their appointment. The system then existing was an excellent one, and the employees were encouraged to be courteous in the discharge of their duties. Any number of complaints have been received by me of the licensed porter system, particularly in the case of ladies travelling with children and luggage.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have not received one complaint up to the present time.

Mr. JONES: I recognise that the Minister can be guided only by the complaints he receives officially, but complaints have been made to me by ladies with children. They state that under the new system a permanent porter dare not assist a lady with her children or luggage because the licensed porters are specially licensed to do that work. The system of licensed porters is probably more costly to the travelling public than the former staff porters. I understand that retrenchment is taking place in the service, and I would like to know to what extent. Probably we shall get the figures at a later stage.

Mr. KELSO: The system of licensed porters works well both in Sydney and Melbourne.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): The hon. member for Paddington and previous speakers have commented upon the motor competition with our railways. It is a very difficult problem. On previous occasions I have sympathised with the railways for not getting a fair deal either from the public or from the people owning motor trucks. All things being equal, no motor truck can compete with the railways. Of course, the motor traffic can compete success-

[7.30 p.m.] fully if no allowance is made for the damage which it causes to the roads but if the actual damage to the roads resulting from the use of motor trucks were taken into consideration I am convinced that the competition would not be so serious. For many months past motor trucks have been plying on the North Coast road as far as Nambour, and, under dry-weather conditions, have been able to get along pretty well, but, if the owners of these trucks were compelled to pay for the damage which the trucks cause to the roads, then the motor truck traffic would not last a week. I agree with the hon. member for Paddington that the motor traffic cannot be stopped, but at least those responsible can be made to pay for

the damage done to the roads, the maintenance of which is a charge on the producers and the country generally, to the benefit of these individuals. Only recently a member of the Caboolture Shire Council told me that a 5-ton truck had been responsible for £50 worth of damage to the road. Such a thing is quite possible.

I do not agree with the statement that the railways cannot be made to pay. At one time in the past they did pay, and there is no reason why that happy state of affairs should not prevail again. If the railway workers, realising their position, will become agents for the Commissioner in his endeavours to stimulate a better feeling amongst the public, much good may accrue. Considerable ill-feeling was caused by the interrupted railway services following on the unfortunate strikes which took place in Queensland. I do not blame the workers for that; they were wrongly led. At the same time, as happened also in the old country, we can trace the decline in railway traffic from the period when the continuity of operations was broken by the railway strike. It appears to me that, if main roads are built parallel with the railway lines, some control will require to be exercised over motor traffic. It is all very well to say that the internal combustion engine has revolutionised transport. Mr. Hughes at one time said that nothing could stop it, but why not control it? If we could dispose of the existing trunk lines under satisfactory conditions, the position would be different, but so long as these trunk lines exist—and they are necessary—it is the business of any sane Government to formulate a scheme to control the motor competition.

Mr. JONES: You cannot stop it—that is the trouble.

Mr. WARREN: We can stop it. Are the Government not all-powerful? Furthermore, the public are beginning to realise the seriousness of this problem. In the North Coast district action has been taken by certain local authorities to stop this traffic by building light-traffic roads. The Pine River Shire has gone so far as to refuse to issue licenses for heavy trucks.

Mr. JONES: That is a backward step.

Mr. WARREN: It appreciates that the roads are a charge upon the producers and the country generally, and, what is more, that the heavy motor traffic should be regulated, as the railway service is languishing for want of traffic.

I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Paddington in regard to passenger traffic. I do not believe that we are ever going to recapture the passenger traffic. I do not use the railways, although I have a free pass. It is not convenient for me to use the railways.

Mr. JONES: I use the railways because I have a free pass.

Mr. WARREN: It is more convenient for me to use a car, as by that means I can save twenty minutes both ways. I give the Minister credit for doing what he thinks is best in the interests of the country. I am not going to grouch because he has done something in Murrumba that I do not like. I believe that he acted with the very best of intentions. There has been so much miserable mismanagement, waste, and stupidity that it does not need a very brainy

Mr. Warren.]

man to do much better than has been done in the past few years. I give the Minister credit for trying to make matters better. He is making a good attempt, and I believe that the Commissioner and his officers are also making a good attempt. Numbers of men are working in the Murrumba electorate, and, although they may not be altogether pleased with what has been done, they give the Government credit for attempting to bring about better conditions. Had the Labour Government kept in power for another ten years, there would have been no railways in existence at all. It was the greatest luck for Queensland that the Labour Government were turned out, and that at last we have business management in connection with the railways.

Mr. CONROY (*Murrumba*): The hon. member for Paddington pointed out the difficulty of making country lines pay. I agree with what that hon. member said.

During the course of his speech the hon. member for Murrumba said that in the past the railways had paid. Take the Roma to Injune railway as a case in point. When that railway was started the Railways Guarantee Act was in force, and, if that Act were still in force, in all probability the Roma to Injune line would pay at the present time. Under that Act the people in the benefited area had to make up the loss on the railway. One of the first acts of the Labour Government was to repeal that Act. The loss on the Roma to Injune line during the last twelve months was £22,000, and the loss on the line from Roma to Cunnamulla during the same period was somewhere in the vicinity of £55,000. How is the Minister going to make these railways pay? The line from Roma to Injune serves the settlers in that district by bringing their cream and other produce to Roma. If the Minister is going to make that railway pay, then the people living on the land are going to be the sufferers. I understand that hon. members opposite have always professed to have the interests of the man on the land at heart; and, if that is so, it will be difficult for the Minister to make the Roma-Injune line pay. The chief difficulty in the country is the want of population. As the Minister knows, you can travel miles and miles in the South-west without seeing a single person or any habitation. That is one of the difficulties the Minister has to face, and I do not know how he is going to make these railways pay unless at great disadvantage to the men on the land.

Mr. JONES: They never will pay until we have more population.

Mr. CONROY: I wish to refer to the question of contract work on the railways—not in connection with large contracts, but I understand that under the system now in operation maintenance men, carpenters, painters and men doing small repairing jobs in the service are being dispensed with, and that these little jobs are going to be done by contract. The Minister will find that this system is going to cost the department much more than by having permanent employees to do the work by day labour. The Minister must know that the difficulty will be to get men to do many small jobs by contract. If the work is to be done by contract, there will be great delay, whereas the work could be done in a few hours by permanent employees. The Minister will find out before very long that the introduction of

this contract system will result in much greater expense to the department.

The system introduced by the Minister of having gatekeepers to do the work previously done by station-masters may result in a certain amount of economy, but I do not think it is a wise step. In many centres in Western Queensland it will be necessary to have a station-master or a night officer to carry out the necessary duties, as a woman will not be suitable for the work.

I wish to call attention to the passenger traffic between Brisbane and Cunnamulla. Passengers on the trains leaving Brisbane on Tuesday and Friday afternoons by the Western mail are put to some disadvantage by having to change trains—sometimes at Chinchilla and at other times at Roma—when they are asked to change and are bundled out of the carriages in the early hours of the morning and have to find accommodation in some other carriages. If a change of carriages is necessary, the Minister should arrange for it to take place at Mitchell, because the trains arrive there at about 8 o'clock in the morning for breakfast, and it would not be inconvenient for passengers to change into another compartment, as it is at Roma, where the train arrives at a quarter to 5, or at Chinchilla at about 2 o'clock in the morning. The present arrangement is a great disadvantage to the travelling public, and I hope the Minister will give some attention to the wants of the travelling public in this direction.

I wish to refer to another matter, and I am now getting nearer home—that is the question of buildings. The railway station at Roma was built about fifty years ago, and, when it is raining, people getting in and out of trains have no shelter. The veranda only extends to within about 9 feet of the railway carriages. Roma has grown considerably—more particularly during the last ten or twelve years—and it is now a very important inland town. I think the Minister has had an opportunity of seeing the conditions existing there. No doubt he knows of the agitation by the people of Roma for a new railway station, and I ask him to make a detailed examination of the figures showing the amount of business done there, for if he does—knowing the station as he does—I am sure he will realise that it is not at all suitable or adequate for the work done there.

Mr. BOYD (*Burnett*): I have something to say about the railway system generally and the railways in the Burnett district in particular. I know that hon. members will say that I am working the parish pump, but I am going to work it for all I am worth. I am not ashamed of my parish—in fact, I am here to represent it. I do not suggest that I am going to offer a complete remedy for all the troubles in the department, but there are a few suggestions I would like to make, and I hope the Minister will take note of them.

I know perfectly well that motor traffic is here to stay; and, although it has been said by one or two hon. members that it can and should be excluded from competition with the railways, that seems to be rather a tall order. The Minister in charge of the Railway Department is also in charge of main roads—an arrangement which I believe will be a good one; but I do not see why we should not take advantage of the motor system of transport, which is to a certain

[*Mr. Warren.*

extent depreciating the value of our railways, because motor cars are running on roads more or less duplicating our railway lines. Many years ago the McKeen cars were purchased for use on the railways, and to-day we have a few rail motors in use. From what I can gather, they are not operating with the full amount of success they should achieve. It seems to me that, when we can use English, European, and American cars so successfully on our roads under the very adverse conditions which obtain in this country—good roads, bad roads, and no roads at all—surely it is possible to get a suitable motor-driven vehicle to operate successfully on a set of rails such as we have laid down as railways throughout the country! It seems to me that advantage could be taken by the department of this section, particularly on branch lines. I am not going to say that the rail motor is a suitable form of transport on a main line, because it is not; but on the smaller lines it could be worked very much more economically than the ordinary trains. On a branch line we have what we call mixed trains, with passenger and goods carriages running tandem; but quite a lot of time is spent in waiting at wayside stations—some of it necessary, some of it quite unnecessary—to pick up and put down goods and passengers.

I suggest that the Minister should investigate the problem thoroughly in this country; and, if necessary, in America and other countries to a greater extent than has been done hitherto, with a view to inaugurating a better system on branch and short railway lines. I am not advocating the construction of further branch lines, but I am suggesting their utilisation by motor traffic. We have already constructed a number of branch lines, and, unfortunately, we are committed to the interest involved on the capital expenditure; and it is necessary to provide from revenue sufficient funds to meet any deficiency in interest and working expenses. We know that the disastrous policy of the Labour Government has resulted in the conversion of the railway system from a paying proposition to a gigantic financial octopus. The loss on the railways last year was about £1,500,000, and the accumulated loss over their term of office was £19,000,000. I do not suggest that the present Government should construct additional railway lines, but some attempt should be made to reduce this enormous loss.

I should like to draw the attention of the Minister to the uncompleted lines commenced by the previous Government. The late Government expended a considerable sum in the construction of certain lines, but, unfortunately, for reasons best known to themselves, they simply shifted the plant and the men, and left the railways uncompleted. Earthworks were constructed, bridges built, and in some places station-houses erected, together with a telephonic system and fences. Everything was carried out, with the exception of laying down the sleepers and the plates. I strongly urge the Minister to complete these lines at the earliest possible moment. I quite realise that this cannot be done unless funds are available, and I also realise that money is very tight at the present time. If the work cannot be carried out this year, I sincerely hope that during the next financial year provision will be made on the Estimates for the completion of these lines. I particularly refer to the

unfinished line from Thangool to Mount Scoria. Settlers went on to that country on the promise of the late Government to construct the line, but, unfortunately, the construction ceased about 2 miles from Thangool. There is another uncompleted line in the Goodnight Scrub. Settlers have been in that scrub from fourteen to fifteen years, and they have been heavily handicapped by lack of transport facilities. In fact, during flood time they are absolutely cut off from civilisation, being situated at the junction of the Burnett River on the one side and the Perry River on the other. Although a low-level traffic bridge was constructed in the locality recently, it does not altogether remedy the trouble. At the back of the Goodnight Scrub is a State forest—I am sorry that the Secretary for Public Lands is not here to make a note of my remarks—containing an enormous amount of timber. It is estimated that there is in the vicinity of 70,000,000 ft. of beautiful pine. There are in that forest matured pine trees actually dying and the lack of transport facilities does not enable the timber to be placed upon the market.

Timber is being cut in that forest and transported by motor truck to the end of the line at Wallaville. Unfortunately, the roads are quite unsuited for the purpose, and costs are unduly high. I hope that the Minister will be able to see his way to make provision in the coming year for the completion of the railway into the Goodnight Scrub. Up to the present a large amount of public money has been expended on the uncompleted line.

Much has been said in connection with the railways paying or otherwise. I know from experience that motor cars purchased for the Central and Northern Divisions in Brisbane are driven to their owners under their own power. In other words, it pays the local agents to travel to Brisbane by rail, pay their fare, waste a day or two coming down, and then drive the new car overland to its destination. Something is wrong when that obtains, because some of the roads over which they have to travel, particularly in the Upper Burnett area, are very rough and primitive. The trouble is probably one of the rate of freight. The Minister might go into the matter and possibly compete for that traffic, otherwise the public will utilise the method of transport that suits them best. It is all very well to appeal to sentiment and say that we own the railways; but the public will not put their hands into their own pockets for the purpose of giving business to the railways in preference to motors. It has always seemed to me to be a crying shame to see dozens and dozens of motor cars being driven from Brisbane through the Upper Burnett to their destination, when the Railway Commissioner, by quoting an attractive rate, should be transporting them by rail. I know that the Commissioner now transports many motor cars under the long-distance haulage rates. There are instances where trainloads of cars have been conveyed to the North by the railways in competition with water carriage, but there is no reason why our mixed trains should not convey new cars over the much shorter distances.

Another matter I desire to bring before the Minister is the construction of facilities for loading stock. Having been connected with stock all my life, I have always contended that it is the duty of the Railway

Mr. Boyd.]

Department to provide facilities for loading and unloading stock at railway stations. I know that there is a scarcity of finance, and that very little money is available for expenditure in this direction. Nevertheless, it is very hard to expect settlers in country districts to construct their own loading facilities. The settlers have had to do so in the past in some instances, and there is no doubt they will have to do so in the future, although I am in hopes that the new Government will realise their responsibilities in the matter, and, if they cannot build the facilities themselves, that they will assist in doing so to a greater extent than has been the case.

I trust that suitable trucking facilities will be provided at reasonable distances, so that it will not be necessary for the small settlers to travel their stock long distances in order to secure trucking facilities.

[8 p.m.] Fares and freights are high, although the settler sending stock to market at the present time is certainly realising good prices. I know of instances where the public have built their own yards, which are now practically the property of the Commissioner for Railways. In that connection, I would be sorry if the present Government followed on the lines of past Administrations.

It is pleasing to note that the present Government are seized with the necessity for continuing the railway line to 88½ Miles, recently known as Waratah, but at present known as Mungungo, within 12 miles of Monto. I hope the Minister will make provision in the Estimates next year to complete that missing link, so that the line may be continued right into the settlement of Monto. Tenders should be called for that work, having in mind how successful the contract system has been in connection with main road construction. As the Secretary for Public Lands is aware, about 1,500,000 acres are still available for closer settlement in the Upper Burnett, and it is to be hoped that that area will be opened for closer settlement after the enactment of the Land Act Amendment Bill now pending, and as soon as the existing settlers there have been furnished with additional areas. Hon. members will appreciate the great possibilities from the opening up of such a large area of land, which will be within 40 or 50 miles of existing railway lines at its furthest point. Monto will be the natural centre of the whole of that area, and the output of that district will be brought within 100 miles of the best port in Queensland—Gladstone—where cold storage and meatwork facilities are available. Instead of being travelled by road as at present, the cattle from the back areas will be transported over these railways when the extensions to which I have referred have been completed. While I realise that it is not the policy of the Government wildly and blindly to construct railways here, there, and everywhere, I believe it is necessary for the economic working of the existing lines and for the good of the country generally that certain missing links should be completed. I commend my remarks in that direction to the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murrilla*): I thank hon. members on both sides of the Committee for the moderation of their criticism of the Railway Department. They doubtless realise the colossal task with which I am faced, and

[*Mr. Boyd.*

which will require the exercise of the closest attention. It is my desire to do my level best to make the railways not only of service to the people of the State and beneficial to those people who find it necessary to use the railways, but also of assistance in the development of outback portions of the State. I also desire to see that the employees in the Railway Department get a fair "spin" and receive full-time employment. I recognise that the money-lenders in different parts of the world have their eyes on Queensland, and I suppose on every State in Australia. We must remember that £65,000,000 have been borrowed overseas for the purpose of constructing our railways, and those who lent this money are naturally looking to us to see that that asset is kept in good order and repair, and eventually is made a payable concern. It has been stated to-night by several hon. members that it is almost impossible to make the railways pay. At one time that was said in connection with the Canadian railways; yet, after years and years of enormous losses, it has been found that the Canadian railways can be made to pay. At present they are profitable and of benefit to the people of that Dominion. Unfortunately, to-day our losses are so enormous that the railways are really becoming a burden upon the people of this State. Considering that the community is taxed to such an enormous extent to make up the deficit that occurs each year on our railways, it is up to the people of this State to do their level best to bring about a better state of affairs.

Mr. HANLON: You can make the railways pay the same as Canada did if the Treasurer will relieve you of the interest burden.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will be necessary to relieve the railways of a certain amount of the interest burden. In every State in Australia, with the exception of Queensland, the Railway Commissioner is allowed a certain amount of money each year for what are known as developmental losses. That is not the practice in this State, but I hope that within the next twelve months the Government will see their way clear either to allow a certain amount of money each year for that purpose or else will agree to the wiping-off of a certain amount of the capital indebtedness. In New South Wales the Government allow the Commissioner £800,000 a year to make up losses that occur on lines built for the purpose of developing that State; and in Victoria the Government allow the Commissioner £200,000 per annum for losses made on spur lines that were built to open up the country.

The Railway Department in Queensland is not allowed a single shilling in that respect. We should receive a certain amount of money from the consolidated revenue, or else we should be allowed to wipe off a certain portion of the capital indebtedness. It would be a very good thing if the Government decided to wipe off £20,000,000 from the capital indebtedness of the railways and inaugurated a sinking fund which would wipe off the debt in fifty years. If there should be a surplus on the railways at any time after that amount was wiped off, it could be used for the payment of our loan indebtedness.

I also wish to refer to the remarks made by some hon. members in regard to the retrenchment that it is alleged has occurred in connection with our railway employees. Not one hon. member gave one concrete case

where retrenchment had taken place. In the Premier's policy speech it was stated definitely to the electors that, if we were returned to power, we would introduce the contract system wherever possible.

We are only fulfilling our promise to the electors when we call for tenders for certain repair work and new work in connection with our railways. With regard to maintenance work such as bridges, culverts, and maintenance of lines, it is not the intention of the Government to call tenders for work of that description. We intend to have that work done by our permanent employees as at present; but there is other work in connection with which we can make considerable savings, and get it equally as well done by contract as has been the case during the last twelve or fourteen years by daywork. Owing to the policy of the Government, we have found it necessary to dismiss a certain number of carpenters and men of that description, but only very few. In every large centre we keep a number of permanent men to do work which is necessary to be done every day; but we have found from experience—and I advocated this during the discussion on the Estimates when I was on the opposite side of the Chamber, and hon. members who were then on this side advocated the same thing—that it is a wasteful policy to send men 150 miles or 200 miles from a centre into the country to do work, taking a day to go to the work, for which they drew an "away-from-home" allowance and other travelling expenses which amounted perhaps to £3, and then returned to the depot from which they were sent. In these little towns there is usually a man who is quite capable of doing the work needed. We can get the work done for 15s. or £1 where previously it cost £4 or £5. By that means we are also doing a service to carpenters in small country centres. A man living there is entitled to have local work. Why should we send a carpenter from Brisbane or Toowoomba to distant places like Chinchilla or Roma when we can get men living in those centres to do the work? That is one of the reasons why we thought it necessary to let men living in those centres do the work required.

Hon. members will admit that station-masters generally are capable and trustworthy employees on whom we can depend. We allow station-masters to arrange for such work to be done locally up to a certain cost. They can make arrangements with a local carpenter or plumber to do the work, and see that it is done properly. Just to illustrate what the result has been up to date, I will give instances, and these are not specially picked cases. We have only had this system in operation during the past few weeks—

South-eastern Division—	£	s.	d.
Departmental estimate	...	16	4 11
Successful tender	...	8	12 6
Saving	...	£7	12 5
South-western Division—			
Departmental estimate	...	205	1 6
Successful tender	...	124	15 0
Saving	...	£80	6 6
Central Division—			
Departmental estimate	...	903	1 3
Successful tender	...	517	9 0
Saving	...	£385	12 3

Northern Division—			
Departmental estimate	...	428	10 0
Successful tender	...	299	15 0
Saving	...	£128	15 0
Totals—			
Departmental estimates	...	1,553	7 8
Successful tenders	...	950	11 6
Saving	...	£602	16 2

Mr. BRASSINGTON: That is a long way from wiping out the deficit, all the same.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then we called for tenders for the erection of fettlers' quarters, labour only, on the Longreach-Winton section, with the following result:—

	£	s.	d.
Departmental estimate	...	746	0 0
Successful tender	...	414	0 0
Saving	...	£332	0 0

I think those figures prove definitely that the policy we have put into effect has resulted in an enormous saving to the people of the State. It is not going to do anybody out of a job. In fact, in some cases, men who lose their permanent employment tender for the work; and, if the contract is obtained by someone else, they have the opportunity of obtaining employment from the successful tenderer. I think I have justified the policy of calling for tenders in this regard. I have already indicated that we do not intend to adopt the contract system in the maintenance of the lines in a safe condition for rolling-stock.

With regard to dismissals, about which so much has been said—although I suppose I am wrong there, because very little has been said about it to-night, apparently because hon. members opposite do not know of any great numbers of dismissals other than those I have mentioned—I say that there have not been any wholesale dismissals. We have dismissed fewer persons in the last four months than the Labour Government dismissed during a similar period for many years.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You will put in the "dirty work" after next Saturday.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is not a question of "dirty work" at all. I am giving this information to show exactly what has happened. Let me quote the following figures to show the total dismissals in the last three financial years:—

Year.	Permanent Employees.	Temporary Employees.	Other Cessations.	Total.
1926-27	183	75	558	816
1927-28	105	37	523	665

As against that, the total dismissals during the financial year 1929-29 was only 445.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In a large department such as the railways, with between 18,000 and 20,000 employees, there will always be a certain number of dismissals, because there is not work at all times for everybody. Of recent years the Railway Department has lost a considerable amount of revenue through motor transport competition, with the result that we have many carriages and trucks for which we

Hon. Godfrey Morgan.]

cannot find work. If we had the work, we would put on more men.

Before the motor transport system became a serious competitor with the railways, we were able to employ several thousand more workmen; but, unfortunately, that form of competition—which is world-wide and not peculiar to the State of Queensland or to Australia—has made the position very difficult. No Government would be justified in paying for the services of three men to do the work that could be comfortably performed by two men.

Mr. HANLON: Is it a fact that seven shunters were booked off at Roma Street the other day, and that, when the accident occurred, there were only three on duty?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I understand that there were only two men suspended.

Mr. HANLON: Did the accident occur because men had been booked off?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The accident was not due to any shortage of men. I can assure the hon. member that there will be a thorough and full inquiry into that accident; and while I remain Secretary for Railways I shall see to it that a full and thorough inquiry is made into all accidents. In every case I shall want to know who is to blame. If it is found that a bridge collapses and that is due to white ants or to dry rot, and the inspectors are not doing their duty in notifying the condition of these structures, then I shall want to know the reason why. If inspectors and other responsible officers are to blame, they will have to answer for what happens in that direction. I intend to protect the lives of the travelling public and the property of the people. I promise the hon. member for Ithaca that there will be a complete and thorough inquiry into all these matters. Since I have been Secretary for Railways the number of permanent employees dispensed with is 57 in the aggregate—a mere bagatelle.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: How many are on short time?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: When we assumed control of this public utility, I made it clear to the Commissioner that I was not desirous of placing a number of railway employees on the scrap-heap. I am fully alive to the seriousness and the callousness of any Government placing railway employees on the scrap-heap after they have given fourteen to twenty years of service to the department. Usually, after serving a long period of time in the performance of certain work in the department, these men are not fitted for any other occupation. It is cruel on the part of any Government, especially during a period of depression such as exists at present, to turn these officers adrift, and thereby deprive them of their means of livelihood. What have the Government done in this matter? Where we have found that we had more than sufficient station-masters to carry out the work of station-masters, we have permitted them to drop to a lower grade and become night officers; the night officers, in turn, have become porters; and in the large centres the porters have been asked to pool the work by working two, three, and four days a week. We are not dismissing these men.

[Hon. Godfrey Morgan.

The same conditions apply to the running staff. We are not dismissing engine-drivers. If we have not sufficient work for engine-drivers, they are allowed to become firemen; the firemen to become cleaners; and so on. We are pooling the work, and we are not dismissing the men at all. My figures indicate that over a period of five years about 600 men per annum leave the department in consequence of deaths, retirements, resignations, and such like. So that, if it is estimated that there are from 1,200 to 1,500 more employees in the railway service than are necessary, the position can be remedied without any detrimental effect to the service. By that process, within two years we shall get the service down to normal. I want to say definitely that not one additional employee has been engaged in the Railway Department during the period I have been Minister. It would be wrong for me to employ new men and at the same time dispense with the services of permanent employees. Certain tradesmen who were dispensed with were given the opportunity of accepting employment as bridge carpenters rather than be dismissed from the service.

The hon. member for Brisbane made some remarks in connection with the removal of the station-masters at Woolloowin, Auchenflower, and Taringa. That has been found necessary because, from figures at our disposal it is shown that the receipts from passenger traffic at Woolloowin, Auchenflower, and Taringa have, unfortunately, fallen by 50 per cent.

Mr. KIRWAN: My word, the motor-bus competition and private cars have been cutting into your traffic.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no doubt about that. We did not dismiss those station-masters; we simply transferred them because there was not sufficient work for them to do at those stations. It was more economical to employ an officer of a lower grade to do the work. It was not economical to employ a station-master at, say, £6 10s. per week performing work that another individual could do and be well paid for at £2 10s. or £3 per week.

The hon. member for Balonne referred to the necessity for the construction of a railway to St. George. That is a railway that I have advocated, and which I would like to see constructed. Some day it should be constructed. It is rather strange that the electorate of Balonne has for the last fourteen years at least been consistently returning a representative of the Labour Party to Parliament, and, notwithstanding that millions of pounds were being spent on railways in the North and other districts, no money was spent in that electorate.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You promised to build that railway. I never made the promise.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I admit that the railway should be built, and I am hoping that before long we shall have sufficient money to commence its construction. The St. George railway will receive favourable consideration when the list of new railways is being considered by the Government. I have asked the people of St. George to call a public meeting and decide which they prefer—a really good road or a railway. I have informed them that they cannot have both. While I am Secretary for Railways and Transport, I do not intend to construct both a good road and a railway to any locality. I placed a similar proposition

before certain people in my own electorate who desire the railway from Wandoan continued on to Taroom. I have informed the people that it must be one or the other, and they have to decide which particular form of communication they desire.

[8.30 p.m.]

The hon. member for Balonne also made reference to the fact that emergency passes had been withdrawn. That action was taken because of the abuse of the privilege. On the most trivial excuses railway employees could get an emergency pass, not only for themselves but for their wives and families. Up to the present no complaint has been made because of its withdrawal; indeed, railway officials to whom I have spoken have said, "Mr. Morgan, you did quite right in doing away with the emergency pass." It was quite a common thing on a race day for employees to ask for emergency passes, at the same time producing telegrams, generally inspired, to show that someone or other was ill.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I referred to cases of sickness.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Cases of that description will be dealt with on their merits. Only the other day I gave permission for the issue of a pass in respect of a station-master's wife who was very ill. Similar action will be taken in cases of that description: but each case will be treated on its merits.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I shall be satisfied if you do that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: With reference to the inquiry by the hon. member for Balonne as to when the report of the Commission of Inquiry which recently investigated railway matters would be available, I would point out that the two gentlemen concerned completed their inquiry only three weeks ago, and have scarcely had time to furnish me with a report, which I am hoping will not be a hurried and ill-considered one, but one on which we shall be able to work. There has been no delay in this matter, because, as the hon. member well knows, matters of that description cannot be fixed up in a day.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I was merely seeking information.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Leader of the Opposition referred to the contract system. I think I have satisfied him that we do not intend to introduce the contract system in regard to maintenance work on the permanent way.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you expect to get the increased revenue budgeted for by the Treasurer?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. Of course, it will depend on the seasons to a great extent.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I think the Treasurer has inflated your estimate of revenue.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He may have done so; but we must live in hope, even if we die in despair. (Laughter.)

The hon. member for Rockhampton referred to the expenses allowed to men travelling away from home. These are purely "travelling away from home" allowances, which are fixed by the Board of Trade and Arbitration.

Mr. DUNLOP: You can easily alter them, if you desire, when your representative goes before the Board of Trade and Arbitration.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: An enormous amount of money is being expended in these allowances, which is one of the reasons why we are endeavouring to obviate the necessity of sending men out.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Are many men taking advantage of the offer of a year's leave without pay?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That only came into operation during the past week, but I am hoping that that suggestion of mine will bring forth a number of applicants.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Will you give the six months' long-service leave plus another six months?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. Every railway employee gets twelve months' leave of absence. That is to say, he can notify the head of the department that he requires twelve months' leave of absence, and that leave is granted, and any long service leave due to him is allowed at the end of the twelve months if he retires from the department. He would have twelve months to go into business or go on the land, if he so desired; and, if at the end of the twelve months he is doing so well that he does not desire to come back into the department, he need not do so; but, if he does come back into the department after the twelve months, he would be put on at the same status as he occupied when he left the department. He would lose nothing in any shape or form. That was my own idea, and it was placed by me before the union representatives, and they thought it a splendid suggestion. A great number of railway employees were afraid to leave the department, however, as they did not know whether they would be successful outside, and they did not like to give up a permanent job and take the risk. This is an opportunity for men who desire either to start in business or to go on the land. It also helps the department inasmuch as it avoids the dismissal of other employees. We are doing everything we possibly can to avoid dismissing permanent men. It would be a wrong thing to place on the unemployed "scrap-heap" men who have had long years of service in the department.

I also desire to deal with the question of apprentices.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Is it a fact that none of the parents of the boys who sat for examination have been notified as to whether their boys passed the examination or otherwise? The parents should have been advised.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I could not say whether that is a fact or not. Although 191 boys have passed their examination, we have not appointed any apprentices up to the present, for the reason that the Commissioner sent along a notification that, if we employed fifty new apprentices, we would have to get rid of fifty men; and these men may be married.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: That won't "wash."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will "wash." The hon. member knows that we have first-year, second-year, third-year, fourth-year, and fifth-year apprentices.

Hon. Godfrey Morgan.]

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I claim that a number equal to those who have finished their time should be put on.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It has not been the practice in the Ipswich workshops, as is done in private shops, to dismiss boys after they have served their time as apprentices. The Railway Department has adopted the policy of keeping these boys on. If we adopted a similar policy to that followed in private concerns of a similar description, at the end of five years we would only keep on sufficient boys to do the work offering, and the others would have to find work elsewhere. Suppose there are fifty boys at the present time who have served their fifth-year apprenticeship, am I to sack those fifty and put on fifty apprentices? The hon. member knows perfectly well that at the Ipswich workshops we have more men than we require.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I do not know that at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then the hon. member ought to know it. The hon. member was Deputy Premier in a Government that found it necessary to close these works down at different periods. There was not sufficient work to keep all the men engaged full time, and they were put off for short periods. Why did the previous Government find it necessary to close these works down? Because there was not sufficient work to keep the men employed.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: They were never closed down.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were closed down time after time for short periods. That is to say, the men were asked to work short time. Out of 2,000 men employed in the workshops, at the present time about 600 are working short time.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Don't you agree with the principle that the Railway Department should train its quota of skilled artisans?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; and we are going to do it. When the report comes from the two commissioners appointed to inquire into the railway workshops throughout the State, we may find it necessary to close down some of the workshops altogether, and to establish others. These men were appointed for that purpose. Although the present moment is not a good time for making the change, it would be ever so much better to have a certain number of men employed in our workshops full time for the whole twelve months than to have them overstaffed as at present and liable at certain times of the year to have work for only three or four days a week. It is not a good policy to overstaff any department or business, and we should endeavour to prevent that state of things: The department is overstaffed, so that when a slack time comes it involves dismissals, when some of the men suffer very severely. I hope we shall be able to provide a scheme so as to be able to keep the men in the Ipswich workshops and other workshops where it is advisable to have them employed for the whole twelve months of the year; but, where a workshop has been established for political reasons, we are not justified in continuing it. This matter was brought up by a question asked by the hon. member for Rockhampton. The sum of £9,000 was spent on the railway workshop in Rockhampton for moulding purposes, and

only one moulder and two labourers have been employed at that particular work. The thing is ridiculous. How can the railways or any other concern pay under conditions like that? I hope that things like that will not occur while I am the Minister, at any rate, and business methods will be observed.

It has been stated that the railways should be taken away from political control, and we are going to endeavour to do that.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Will you let those boys know whether they have passed the examination or not?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are endeavouring to get a capable man to hold a thorough inquiry into the railway system in this State, as promised by our leader, and I hope to be able to inform hon. members in a few weeks that the commission has been formed for that purpose.

I intend to bring a Bill before the House later on requiring those who are benefited by the railways to give the railway service the work to which it is entitled. We are going to prevent competition by heavy motor vehicles with the railways. We shall encourage those which are run as feeders for the railways; but we are going to endeavour to do away with the competition of those which run past railway stations.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is a fair thing.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hon. members know that graziers get a special rate for the conveyance of starving stock and on fodder for starving stock; but some of these men use motor vehicles when they can do so instead of railways. They ask us to convey fodder at a special rate; yet, when the sheep are ready to shear, they use motor transport for conveyance of wool. We are going to endeavour to prevent these men from getting a refund. If the graziers will not give us their work on the railways, we will not give them a rebate on freights.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are entitled to their business if you give them this concession.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are going further, and will endeavour where we possibly can in connection with renewals and extensions of leases to provide that they must support the Queensland railways, and that they must give us their traffic, whether they like it or not. We are entitled to adopt that means of assisting the railways. The State has spent the money; it has the railways; and the people of Queensland should endeavour to assist to make them pay. If they do, we can reduce fares and freights, which I think are exceptionally high. We shall have to bring them down eventually; but we cannot bring them down by entering into cut-throat competition with motor transport. I am referring now particularly to heavy vehicles. They pay comparatively nothing towards the upkeep of roads, and shire after shire is writing to the Main Roads Commission asking it to prevent these heavy vehicles with 5 or 6 ton loads from passing through from distant parts and cutting up their roads. They have a right to ask for protection, and it is up to the Government to give it to them. We all agree that the railways are an asset of which we are justly proud; and the Government desire, with the assistance of the employees, to give to the people that service to which they are entitled.

[Hon. Godfrey Morgan.]

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): During my recent absence in the Rockhampton and Mackay districts, certain parents of boys who sat at the last examination for railway apprentices interviewed me and complained, first of all, that no boys had been engaged. Their chief complaint, however, was that they had not been notified as to whether the boys had passed or not. If the department refuses to employ additional boys there can be no appeal from that decision; but it is obvious that a parent would like to know whether his boy has passed. As a matter of fact, the passing of an examination with a decent percentage would obviously be a reference in an application for other employment, and I would like an assurance that the injustice will be remedied.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will see that they are notified.

Item (General Establishment—Chief Office) agreed to.

INTELLIGENCE AND TOURIST BUREAU.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*): I beg to move—

“That £3,220 be granted for ‘Intelligence and Tourist Bureau.’”

The Intelligence and Tourist Bureau has been under the control of the Railway Department for the last two months. We are now reorganising the space at the George-street offices, and the Tourist Bureau will be located there. Tourists who come to Queensland will be able to go to that office, and, with the increased accommodation, they will be well provided for. They will not have to go from one building to another, as in the past.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are transferring the booking office, too, and putting them all together?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, so that people will be able to get their sleeping-berths and book for all the long-distance trains at the one place. Tours to Tambourine Mountain and other beauty spots will also be arranged at that centre. People who wish to go north will be able to arrange for trains, refreshments on the way, and any motor trips that may be possible during their journey. It really means that I, as Ministerial head, will have absolute control of tourists. My department will provide railway accommodation and facilities for road transportation. I shall be able to direct the tourists to the beauty spots that they should visit, and I shall be responsible for providing them with the necessary refreshments en route. I think the proposed scheme is a good one. It is proposed to give up the rooms at present occupied by the bureau in Sydney, with a view to taking up a new position in Challis House. An agreement has been entered into enabling the different States to have accommodation in other States. Just as Queensland will have accommodation in Challis House, so will New South Wales have accommodation in our building in Queensland. The same applies to Victoria. Later on, when our land policy is properly developed, we intend to have a representative in Victoria, because we are of the opinion that our land policy, when placed before the people in that State, will encourage a number of Victorians to come to Queensland. We shall have a representative in the Melbourne Tourist Bureau as well as in the Sydney Tourist Bureau. That will be of advantage in every way, because our representatives

in Victoria and in New South Wales will be in touch with tourists from all parts of the world. Tourists who visit Sydney will be able to visit Challis House and there make all the necessary inquiries and arrangements with a view to coming to Queensland to see our scenic and beauty spots. I feel sure that the arrangement will be beneficial from all points of view.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I do not rise to make any objection to the reorganisation of the Tourist Bureau. I think it is quite a good idea to bring it within the control of the Railway Department—a department which is naturally interested in tourist traffic and trade, both interstate and intrastate. Consequently, we should give more attention to the development of this activity than has been the case in the past. There is no doubt that it will be worth while for Queensland to develop this branch of activity over a period of years to a much greater extent than has hitherto been attempted. A few days ago I asked the Minister a question relating to this matter, which no doubt he will remember. I asked that question as a result of a letter received from the Mackay Chamber of Commerce. The chambers of commerce, particularly in North Queensland, have discussed this matter, and I received a resolution which I forwarded to the Minister—perhaps to the Premier in the first place.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I received it.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I should like a full reply to that letter for the reason that the people in North Queensland have a feeling, for some reason or other—I do not know why—that it is intended to restrict the operations particularly of the Sydney Bureau. For some time past the Sydney Bureau has been more than a department attending to the requirements of tourists. In countless different ways the director in Sydney, Mr. Nally, has acted as a kind of Queensland representative in regard to trade and commerce. In connection with newspaper propaganda against the sugar industry, he has wielded a doughty pen in the defence of the Queensland sugar industry. I know as Secretary for Agriculture that, in connection with activities for advertising fruits placed on the Southern markets, he rendered a very valuable service on behalf of the Committee of Direction and fruitgrowers in this State. On several occasions I provided a sum of money to assist the various fruitgrowers with a view to extending their markets. On one particular occasion I provided a sum of money for the purpose of advertising custard apples and papaws; and I sought the assistance of the director of the bureau in Sydney with a view to getting people in the South acquainted with the value of that fruit and with a view to opening up wider sales. The director of the bureau at that time rendered a very valuable service, and it is the recognition of that and his defence of the sugar industry and other matters affecting Queensland interests that has given rise to some uneasiness in the North regarding the future activities of the bureau in Sydney.

For some reason or other, the impression has gone abroad that it was intended to curtail the activities of the Sydney office and limit it merely to the issuing of tickets for railway sleepers to Brisbane and other parts of Queensland. I do not know whether

Mr. Smith.

the explanation of the Minister will set at rest those fears, but I hope that he will continue to develop that bureau so that it will be a centre of activity and propaganda in the interests of Queensland generally. It is quite a good scheme to appoint a representative in Melbourne. I remember on one occasion recommending such an appointment to the Minister in charge of the vote. I said then that it would be of advantage to this State to have a representative in Melbourne who would protect this State's interests and be able to deal with questions which arise from time to time. If he was unable to deal personally with them, he could refer them to his ministerial head. We have had the example of propaganda in the South against Queensland bananas and chilled meat. There appeared to be some ground for complaint regarding the percentage of first-quality fruit in the banana consignments, but upon investigation it was found that, while there was some objection to a percentage of the consignment, nothing was said of the 80 per cent. of very high-quality fruit which it included, and which was a credit to those who packed and despatched it.

Then we had the foolish propaganda against Queensland chilled meat—an outrageous proposal, and, if not against the letter of the Constitution, at least against the spirit of federation. It was an outrageous proposition to demand that Queensland chilled meat should be branded as imported. The whole basis of federation is that Australia shall be a nation, and that there shall be free trade between the States. The whole proposition was absurd; and, as I pointed out, our State could retaliate in a most damaging way. For instance, Victorian shoes could be branded on the toes "Imported." How would they like that? Such a policy would give rise to all sorts of difficulties between the States. I look forward to the time—and it is bound to eventuate when closer settlement develops—within the next ten or twenty years when Queensland will probably be supplying the whole of Australia, or at least the eastern portion of Australia, with meat. Most of the meat sold in Melbourne to day, and even in Brisbane, is chilled. From a hygienic point of view it is much better than freshly killed meat. The reason for this action was political. I mention these things to indicate the desirability of having in the Southern cities representatives whose work should be of a wider character than the mere issuing of railway tickets. They should be highly intelligent men, well versed in Queensland conditions, and be capable of acting as representatives of Queensland.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*): I rise to take exception to the treatment of Central Queensland in the matter of tourists. While I was occupying the position of Mayor of Rockhampton, tourists arrived there at a-quarter to 4 o'clock in the afternoon and continued their journey next morning. While I congratulate those in authority on the pamphlet issued for the guidance of tourists, I cannot congratulate those who have to do with the arrangement of the tourist programme, because the time allotted for them in the Central district is dwarfed by the period of their stay in other districts.

At 9 p.m.,

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

[*Mr. Smith.*

Mr. DUNLOP: These tourists spend no time whatever in the Central division, in which there are many important and interesting places to which time should be allotted commensurate with that given to other places. I trust the Minister will see to it that the Commissioner for Railways, when he arranges these tourist trips, will remember the fact that Rockhampton is not a "whistling" station, but that there are many places in that part of the State of interest to tourists. The Western country at the back of Rockhampton would undoubtedly be of interest to cattlemen particularly. In arranging these tours, regard should be had to the wishes of the tourists, some of whom may desire to visit the Western country, whilst others wish to continue their journey to the North. At any rate, that seems to me to be a much better way of advertising Queensland as a whole. I commend the matter to the Commissioner, whom I congratulate on what has already been done to foster the tourist traffic.

At 9.1 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I am pleased to hear the Minister say that he is endeavouring to stimulate the tourist traffic in Queensland. Unfortunately, we in Australia do not pay sufficient attention to our own possibilities and scenic attractions. Southern visitors have been amazed at the wonderful scenic views in North Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The National Park is the best of the lot.

Mr. KIRWAN: Yes; even within easy reach of Brisbane there are many beautiful spots that would interest tourists, as, for example, Tambourine Mountain. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley may even suggest that the claims of Cribb Is. and should be considered! (Laughter.) The Minister's explanation of the new arrangement whereby the functions of the Tourist Bureau and the Central booking office will be exercised from George street, is welcome, because the new site will prove of great convenience by reason of its central situation; and all tourist arrangements can be catered for there.

I want to join with the Leader of the Opposition in paying a tribute of praise to Mr. Nally, the gentleman in charge of the Sydney office. He is what you might call a real "live-wire," and I do not think that he misses any opportunity of putting Queensland on the map. We have noticed the great attention he pays to new arrivals, particularly the young lads who come out under various church schemes. He meets these people in Sydney, has a chat with them, and gives them some idea of the new country in which they hope to make their homes. He has also taken full advantage of every opportunity to impress upon the people of New South Wales the benefit to be derived from a larger use of Queensland fruit. Altogether Mr. Nally is a splendid officer, and is doing excellent work in the publicity line. Of course, having been associated with the press for a number of years, he has a distinct advantage over other officers who are unable to use that wonderful vehicle of publicity.

I would also point out that full advantage is not taken of every opportunity for the distribution of literature. I trust, now that the Secretary for Railways has taken over

this bureau, he will see that literature advertising Queensland is distributed on all mail trains, and particularly on the Northern mail train. I do not know whether full advantage is taken of the opportunity of distributing literature on interstate boats, and particularly on those boats which cater for tourist trips to North Queensland in the winter time. These are matters to which the Minister might give attention. He should ask some officer to see that this literature is distributed in the way I have suggested, so that people travelling in Queensland will have an opportunity of learning something about this wonderful State. If these opportunities are fully availed of by an officer of a similar type to Mr. Nally, the department will have no reason to complain of the reorganisation brought about in connection with the Tourist Bureau, as no doubt he will find that a considerably increased tourist traffic has resulted. He should be able to attract to this State—particularly to the Northern portion of the State during the winter months—that large section of people who are only too pleased to leave Victoria and New South Wales and get to North Queensland, where they can spend a most pleasant vacation. I am sure that the Minister will take notice of the suggestions made, which are offered in the spirit of helpfulness, and with the idea of attracting to Queensland a larger share of the tourist traffic.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): Unlike the hon. member for Rockhampton, I do not expect some of my tourists to "go West." (Laughter.)

Mr. DUNLOP: In good seasons a cattleman could not go to a better place.

Mr. WARREN: That only makes it worse. (Laughter.) The movement to bring the Tourist Bureau up to date is a good one. We must all deplore the sleepiness of that bureau in the past. It has not done its work so far as Queensland is concerned. I am sure that the Minister, after his weekend trip over the Blackall Range, must be seized with the importance of that wonderful district, yet very few know anything about it.

The whole of that district has escaped attention. Last year I took a very strong stand on this matter. The Tourist Department arranged for a run up to Buderim, and I went with the Minister on this weekend tour. I know that part of the country very well. The exclamations of appreciation by different members of the party convinced me that tourists who visit Queensland and go round that district would be delighted with the scenery. The round trip through Maleny, Montville, and Mapleton down to Nambour, Maroochydore, and the Maroochy River is a wonderful experience. Some of the finest glimpses of the sea can be obtained on that trip. I have travelled practically to all the pleasure resorts in Australia, and I do not know where anyone can put a day in more pleasantly than in that locality. It would take days to do the Blackall Range and the watering-places along the coast in that vicinity. Maroochydore is one of the finest watering-places to be found anywhere; and you not only get the river but there is a glorious beach. There are glorious beaches in other parts of the State, including two near Rockhampton, but they are not a bit better than the beaches at Maroochydore and neighbouring places.

Mr. CLAYTON: Have you ever been to Pialba? (Laughter.)

Mr. WARREN: Yes, I have been to Pialba. The beach at Caloundra is one of the best beaches in the world. Caloundra is one of the finest seaside resorts in the world, and it is only held back by difficulty of access. When better facilities for communication are established, we hope to see a great many visitors there. It is a crime that people are not able to get to this wonderful pleasure resort without difficulty. Then take Bribie Passage. Only those who have gone through Bribie Passage can realise its beauty. I have been through the sounds in New Zealand, but I do not know one place there which compares with the scenery in Bribie Passage. People are astounded when they take that trip. It is bad business on our part to lose the millions of pounds which we should get from tourists. We have a country second to none in the world. With our glorious winter climate, we should have people coming here who want a milder climate than Victoria, South Australia, or Tasmania can give them. Not only should we advertise our State and bring enormous numbers of people here to become permanent residents, but we could have millions of pounds brought to the State by tourist money, which we are now losing. The average Queensland is quite ready to say what wonderful things there are in the South; but I do not know where you can find those wonderful things. People talk about the Blue Mountains, but they are very much exaggerated, and there is nothing very wonderful about them with the exception of the Jenolan Caves. In my opinion, our range at Toowoomba is much prettier than the Blue Mountains. We do not advertise our State sufficiently.

Queensland is the worst State in Australia for advertising its own territory. You go to Victoria and you see placards everywhere. You go into the hotels, and you find advertisements of the beautiful seaside and other resorts. There is some good stuff there—I do not mean to say it is all bogus or fake—(laughter)—but they have nothing better than we have. If they had the Blackall Range or some of our Northern ranges in Victoria, you would not be able to walk the streets for literature. We ought to be ashamed that we do not do more to advertise our State. I hope the Minister will infuse some of the energy of the Railway Department into the Tourist Bureau, and see that, instead of getting too much "dope" we have real live men there, and that they do something for our own State. On the North Coast we have beautiful up-to-date hotels with electric light and every other convenience; yet visitors to them are few in number, whereas they should be full up. At Caloundra we met a man who had been fighting against bad roads for forty years. Anyone who knows what those roads are like when travelling over them in a wagon in wet weather, will know what he went through in the early days. He said that he had given his life's work to making Caloundra a success, and he has got very little out of it. I hope the Minister will realise these things, and provide decent road communication to these watering places, not for the sake of the watering places themselves or men such as the man I have just mentioned, but for Queensland, looking at it from the wider aspect of the State. We should do everything we can to attract those who are interested in our glorious scenery. I am sure that throughout our trip the

Mr. Warren.]

Minister was seized with the importance of this wonderful district. Not only is it fertile and wonderfully productive, but it is a district in which one can see vistas of beauty right throughout.

Mr. KIRWAN: What about Buderim?

Mr. WARREN: Yes. I missed one of the most important places; but we only went up one side and down the other, so that the party did not see the very best of it. The fact is that in Queensland we have the most glorious opportunities, and all we need are energy and some commonsense to guide our tourists in the right direction.

Mr. BARBER: You have forgotten the Naraugba Railway Station garden.

Mr. WARREN: I have not forgotten that. The hon. member for Bundaberg was good enough to draw my attention to the matter, and I want to give credit to these people. People are missing one of the best treats that one could imagine in not seeing this wonderful garden. It is really wonderful, and the man deserves the greatest credit. Not only does he carry out his railway duties, but he devotes all his available time to that very fine effort. I have not seen a better railway garden anywhere, nor have I seen very many better gardens, and I hope he will get the prize for the best-kept garden, which I have no doubt he will. I hope the Minister will continue his good work. I congratulate him on his efforts, and hope that before another year has passed a tourist trip will be arranged for the North Coast so that the visitors to this State will have an opportunity of seeing this glorious country.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*): I agree with previous speakers regarding the new policy in connection with the proposal to transfer the Tourist Bureau to the Railway Department. That seems the sensible and logical thing to do. I have been struck always with the fact that one of the most valuable business sites of the city should be occupied by the unpretentious barn in which the Railway Commissioner has his office. I hope that, when it is altered and has a new frontage, full use will be made of it. Brisbane is now growing into a big city, and practically all classes of people have annual holidays; and there is plenty of room to increase the revenue of the department by encouraging the people to make full use of their annual holiday, whether it be a week or a fortnight. I suggest that the Tourist Bureau should advertise holiday resorts, and place their proposals on a money basis. For instance, instead of giving people an unlimited choice of places to visit, the bureau should be in a position to inform the prospective holiday-maker what places are available when he walks into the office and says that he has a fortnight's holiday and £20 to spend, and inquires where he can go, what accommodation is available, the cost, and so on. The holiday-maker should be in a position to walk into the Tourist Bureau and say that he has £20 to spend over a fortnight, and the bureau should be able to tell him that he can go to such and such a place, that the railway accommodation is so much, the hotel accommodation is so much, and the amount of money required will not exceed a certain amount. By enlarging on a system like that there is quite a good scope for increasing our railway traffic. I have perused quite a lot of tourist literature, and find it very indefinite. Quite a number of people

do not go on these short holidays that could be arranged, because they do not know of many places to which they could go; they do not know anything about the hotel accommodation, or the cost, and they do not know anything about the boarding-houses or private houses that are to let. They go to the same old seaside place year after year—to Sandgate, Wynnum, or Cribb Island—out of which the Railway Department gets nothing. I am quite satisfied that, by a good system of advertising on those lines, Brisbane people would be prepared to go either to the Downs, to Stanthorpe, to Tambourine Mountain, to the various mountain resorts, to the different seaside places between Maryborough and Tweed Heads. All the seaside places between those points would be popularised by city trippers. Not sufficient advantage, to my mind, has been taken of that by the Railway Department from a revenue point of view. I hope the Minister will take a note of what I have mentioned with a view to advertising the Tourist Bureau somewhat along the lines I have mentioned.

Item (Intelligence and Tourist Bureau) agreed to.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murrill*): I beg to move—

“That £5,538,700 be granted for ‘Southern Division.’”

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*): I notice in the summary contained in this vote that there is a reduction in the appropriation as compared with last year's vote of £131,240. In the vote for the Central Division and the Mackay Railway there is a reduction in this year's appropriation of about £8,000. On turning to the items enumerated in the vote, I find that under the heading of station-masters, inspectors, porters, and clerks, the amount of appropriation asked for is £96,700, as compared with £104,544 last year. For guards, porters, signalmen, extra labour, etc., the appropriation is £125,000, as compared with £132,000 last year. Further down the vote I find that under the heading of “Maintenance” the sum of £242,000 is asked for, or £16,000 less than last year's provision. Under the heading of “Locomotives” we find that the sum of £214,000 is made available for enginemakers, firemen, etc., whereas last year the vote was £245,175. There is a reduction in that vote of £29,000. In those four votes, which principally concern the employees, we find a reduction in the vote for the South-western district of £62,000. I would like a very full explanation from the Minister regarding this big reduction. Personally, I believe the Minister's statement to-night that within the next two years 1,500 men would be dismissed from the Railway Department, or, to use his own expression, 1,500 men would go within the next two years. To me it appears that provision is now being made to do without the services of those 1,500 men. A reduction of £62,000 in the vote for one district is a big amount—more so in view of the fact that it covers the employees in that district.

The Minister also stated that the policy of the Government did not apply to the maintenance section of employees. While I accept that statement, I cannot understand how the Government intend to keep in order the permanent way in the South-western district. That maintenance work cost £258,000 last

[Mr. Warren.

year, and it should certainly cost that amount this year if efficient services are to be maintained. We find that the reduction in this respect is £16,000. That also needs some explanation. If the Minister is desirous of giving proper service to the South-western district, then the same number of men will have to be employed on this work. How can the Minister keep the same number of men in employment if the vote is reduced by £16,000? The reduction in the vote for station-masters, inspectors, porters, and clerks is £2,000. Hon. members on this side of the Chamber have repeatedly made the statement that numbers of these men were being dismissed from the service. While this vote does not prove that statement, it does convey the inference that a certain number of men have been removed, and that it is the intention of the Government to remove more in the future.

[9.30 p.m.]

The same applies to guards, porters, signalmen, enginemen, firemen, and mechanics. In fairness to the South-Western district, I only ask that the present efficient railway service given to the people should be maintained. That can only be done by a continuance of the present methods, which tend towards giving good service and satisfaction. I know the Minister will dissociate himself from my statement that it is the intention of the Government to pursue a policy of retrenchment; but, no matter what the hon. gentleman may say, it is generally admitted that some such policy will be put into effect in the near future. At any rate, the figures in this vote suggest something along those lines. The Minister has stated that 1,500 men will go within the next two years, and I ask the hon. gentleman to make a broad statement so that we may know how the railway-men stand in this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*): The amounts voted for this particular year are just a little above the amounts actually expended last year, so that the hon. gentleman is entirely wrong in his contention.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I was only using your own statement that 1,500 men have to go. You said the railways were overstaffed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, and, owing to the fact that 600 or 700 go out yearly through death, retirement, etc., we are allowing two years in which to get the staff down to normal. So far as the votes are concerned, we are actually spending more money for these particular items than was spent last year.

Item (Southern Division) agreed to.

CENTRAL DIVISION AND MACKAY RAILWAY.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*): I beg to move—

“That £1,158,000 be granted for ‘Central Division and Mackay Railway.’”

Item agreed to.

NORTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*): I beg to move—

“That £1,390,500 be granted for ‘Northern Division.’”

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS. CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. A. Deacon, *Cunningham*): I beg to move—

“That £60,861 be granted for ‘Department of Public Lands—Chief Office.’”

This shows an increase of £538 on the amount voted last year, which is made up by increases in salaries representing £138, and an increase of £400 in the vote for “Contingencies.”

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I would like the Minister to be good enough to give the Committee some idea as to the intentions of the Government in regard to forestry. This is an important question, and I know there has been some expression of opinion on the part of hon. members on the Government side, who have stated that some of the land reserved for forest cultivation should be brought into agricultural use and settlers given an opportunity of taking up these lands. I would like to know if the Government have decided on any definite policy in this regard, or whether the policy that has been in operation for some time is to be continued. If not, what are the essential points of change in administration in connection with that matter? I also understand that there has been some alteration in what has been referred to on various occasions as the stumpage fees. I understand that there has been some reduction in that direction. If my memory serves me correctly, a statement appeared in the press quite recently in regard to that question. If the Minister has the information handy, I should be pleased if he would pass it on to the Committee.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*): Before this vote goes through I should like to say a few words in connection with land settlement in this State. During this debate hon. members opposite have hinted to us that in the near future it is intended to introduce a measure which is going to put everything right with our system of land settlement, and which is going to work wonders in our State. At the same time they claim that the late Government did nothing for land settlement in Western Queensland, and practically left the position worse than they found it. I take this opportunity of offering a few opinions on the question, and I bring to my aid the report issued by the Land Administration Board. The first point I want to make is that the late Government appointed the Land Administration Board, and that that board has done wonderful work since its appointment. It is not so very long since the measure to create that board was before this Chamber. We can remember very clearly the stand taken by hon. members opposite who on all occasions criticised the appointment of the board, and since its appointment they have invariably criticised its actions.

The PREMIER: Nonsense.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: During the election the Premier made much use of certain things the board has done; and he promised that, if he were returned, he would rectify all these things. He made many promises that he has not fulfilled. Now that he is in control, he has to admit to the people of this State that the appointment of the Land Administration Board was sound, because he and his party were the very first to go to

Mr. Brassington.]

that board and seek its advice and assistance in framing their policy. The action of the present Government not only endorses the wisdom of the past Government in establishing a Land Administration Board, but it shows how narrow hon. members opposite were in their criticism of the late Government when they proposed to create that Land Administration Board. Certain passages in the report show the importance of land administration, and indicate very clearly the work that the Land Administration Board has done. In the first report of the board reference was made to the importance of land administration in the sphere of national progress. As pointed out therein, out of a total area of 429,120,000 acres in the State, no less than 94 per cent. remains under the control of the Department of Public Lands and associated departments, or has been dedicated to roads, reserves, etc. The effect for good or ill of the Land Administration Board on the future progress of rural Queensland must, therefore, be apparent. That statement shows the magnitude of the task that confronted the board on its appointment. It also shows the necessity for the appointment of the board.

Later on in the report we find some of the things that the board has done since its appointment. During last year, notwithstanding the unfavourable weather conditions prevailing, substantial progress was made in land settlement. The area of land selected was 4,439,638 acres, being 2,522,566 acres in excess of the previous year's total, and the highest area recorded since 1923. Does anyone want any finer example of the wisdom of the policy of the late Government in the creation of that board, which so handled our land problem as to bring about that wonderful result during the last twelve months? It is also very interesting to note that the past Government did not stand for an extension of leases to pastoral lessees. I only hope that the present Government will follow in their footsteps, and not grant any extension of leases to pastoral lessees, because, if they do so, they will certainly retard the progress of settlement in Western Queensland.

Mr. MAXWELL: Your Government did it in the Central West.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. member who so senselessly interjects knows little about the question. This passage from the report is illuminating—

“The total area of land held under pastoral lease tenure at the end of the year, including preferential pastoral lease and pastoral development lease, was 301,397½ square miles. This area is less by 4,890½ square miles than the area held at the end of the previous year. The number of these leases decreased from 1,825 to 1,769, a reduction of 26.”

That statement bears eloquent tribute to the fact that the last Government stood definitely against an extension of pastoral leases. It shows very clearly that under the Land Board's administration during the last twelve months a considerable amount of land has been made available for closer settlement, and the late Government's policy put into effect. Before our friends opposite criticise us, they should prove that their policy will stand the test of time, the same as the policy of the late Government has stood the test. When they have proved that, I shall be prepared to admit that, after all, on

[Mr. Brassington.

some occasions they do something worth while.

The new settlement of grazing lands has also increased. We find this statement on page 15 of the report—

“The area of the new grazing selections acquired during the year was the largest since 1923. The grazing farms selected numbered 42, and comprised an area of 503,681 acres. The number of grazing homesteads selected was 326, and their area 3,535,020 acres. The average area of the new selections was 10,988 acres, and the average rent slightly over 2½d. per acre. The new grazing selections acquired in 1927 numbered 204, and had an aggregate area of 1,538,802 acres.”

That statement shows very definitely the progress of closer settlement in the West. I for one cannot understand why our friends opposite are continually finding fault with the past Government and accusing us of doing nothing to foster closer settlement in Western Queensland.

Their criticism has been most unfair and uncalled for on many occasions; but people in the West did not believe their statements, because at the last election they endorsed the late Government's policy by returning most members on this side with record majorities. (Government laughter.) The Premier laughs, but he was not game to go out into the West and tell the people his policy.

The PREMIER: If I had gone, you would not have got a seat.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I reckon that, if the Premier had gone into my electorate, my majority would have been 2,000. This interesting passage appears in the report of the department—

“The total number of grazing selections held at the end of the year was 7,256, and the total area 79,258,448 acres. At the end of the previous year the number of selections standing good was 7,216, and the area 78,240,235 acres.”

Those figures show the wonderful progress made under the late Government, and are eloquent testimony of the wonderful management of the Land Administration Board. Similar remarks apply to perpetual lease selections, to which tenure hon. members opposite referred when endeavouring to make out a case against the Government. The cry was always that perpetual leaseholds were not being selected as they should be. The figures in the report disprove that statement, and I intend to quote them for the benefit of hon. members opposite in order that they may not make mistakes when indulging in their unfair criticism in the future—

“The year's increase in the number of these selections was 477, and in the area 138,577 acres. The number of new selections acquired was 505, their total area 161,518 acres, and the annual rent £3,537, 8s. 4d.”

These figures speak for themselves, and give the reply to hon. members opposite who attempt to make out a case against the late Government and condemn them for that section of their land settlement policy. I submit that, after all, their criticism has been more or less idle talk, and, when it comes to facing the truth, they are all strangely silent.

Hon members complain that the late Government were very unfair to tenants in connection with rentals. In reply to that let me quote the following passage from the report:—

“The rents determined for the five-years period were extended by the Land Acts Amendment Act of 1927 for a further period of five years to 30th June, 1931, which represented a further benefit of £181,114 2s. 2d. to the Crown tenants whose rents had already been reviewed. . . .

“The total benefit to Crown tenants for the full period of ten years is thus £503,008 13s. 7d.”

That is an enormous sum of money, and represents concessions granted by the late Government to assist selectors on the land by giving them a fair deal and reviewing their rentals. I submit that the late Government were very fair and very just, and those figures prove my contention.

There is another important provision—perhaps the most important in the Land Acts Amendment Act of 1927—that is the provision enabling grazing selectors to surrender existing leases for the purpose of securing other leases to enable them to develop their properties.

How this system really operated can be seen from the fact that, prior to the introduction of this legislation, many selectors were unable to secure the necessary finance to develop their properties, the reason advanced being that, because the leases were about to expire, sufficient security could not be offered. The late Government altered that system to enable grazing selectors to surrender their leases, secure new leases, and thereby obtain the necessary finance. Under that section of the Act a large number of settlers in the West enjoyed great benefits, and closer settlement progressed. We find that 1,775 selectors, holding an aggregate area of 13,117,723 acres, secured an adjustment of their position. Can hon. members opposite honestly claim that the Bill they propose to introduce will provide a greater concession to grazing selectors than that provided by the 1927 Act? The Bill that they propose to introduce does not contain such generous provision, nor will any Bill they may introduce contain such generous provision.

The PREMIER: The late Government had to introduce that legislation because the settlers were nearly ruined by their earlier legislation.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: If the settlers were nearly ruined by our legislation, it is a strange fact that they should cast their votes in our favour at every election. That is a sufficient acid test as to whether or not our policy met with the approval of the Western people. It is suggested that our majorities were reduced, but at the by-election at which I was elected I received a majority of 539, and at the last general election I received a majority of 1,298. What better evidence could we have of a vote of confidence in favour of the policy of the past Labour Government? It goes to show that the opinions of hon. members opposite are very rarely based on fact, but are generally based upon innuendoes and unfair statements.

There is another matter to which I wish to refer, and that is the question of making

available wire-netting for dog and rabbit-netting purposes. For many years the question of dog-netting and rabbit-netting properties has been a very serious matter with the men in the West.

I claim that the past Government were far-sighted enough to realise that that problem would have to be overcome if land settlement in the West were to progress. With that end in view they entered into an agreement with the Federal Government for the purchase of wire netting for pastoral purposes at reduced rates. We find that 935 miles 620 yards of rabbit netting, valued at £36,115 14s. 1d., was purchased; that 1,112 miles 80 yards of dog netting was purchased at a cost of £18,248 18s. 9d.; that 21 miles 840 yards of marsupial netting, valued at £524 8s. 10d., was also purchased; and wire netting valued at £4,015 1s. 2d. was supplied to approved applicants during the year 1928.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 22nd August and 4th October last, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

Resumption of Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 10 p.m.