

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 1931

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WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER, 1931.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. C. Taylor, *Windsor*) took the chair at 10 a.m.

CESSATION OF BUSINESS FOR ARMISTICE DAY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish to inform hon. members that at 11 a.m. the bars of the House will be closed to observe the customary two minutes silence in connection with Armistice Day.

QUESTIONS.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, GINDIE AND KAIRI STATE FARMS.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“What were the total amounts of (a) revenue, (b) expenditure, at the Gindie State farm and the Kairi State farm, respectively, for the years ended 30th June, 1927, 1928, 1929, and 1930?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. A. Deacon, *Cunningham*), for the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*), replied—

Year ended—	Gindie State Farm.		Kairi State Farm.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
(a) Revenue.				
30th June, 1927 ..	631	8 6	1,312	7 10
30th June, 1928 ..	537	19 0	1,178	12 2
30th June, 1929 ..	1,115	7 0	1,034	17 0
30th June, 1930 ..	1,329	18 11	895	11 0
(b) Expenditure.				
30th June, 1927 ..	3,194	11 9	3,429	8 6
30th June, 1928 ..	4,295	5 11	2,577	11 7
30th June, 1929 ..	2,914	0 1	3,349	12 11
30th June, 1930 ..	2,834	6 8	3,212	12 9

“These two farms are not run as trading concerns with a view to profit, but for the conduct of experiments and for the breeding and distribution of stud animals at prices within the reach of the ordinary farmer.”

SUGGESTED EXTENSION TO POLICE OF RIGHT TO CONTEST PLEBISCITES.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rochampton*) asked the Premier—

“In view of his recent announcement that members of the public service are not debarred from participating in plebiscites, will he also approve of the same privilege or right being extended to members of the police force?”

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*), replied—

“I am not disposed to consider any alteration of the present police regulation, which provides—

56. (1) No member of the force shall take any public part in political affairs.

This regulation was gazetted in January, 1925.”

FEES PAID TO MEMBERS OF PHARMACY BOARD, 1918-1930.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*), for Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*), asked the Home Secretary—

“1. What was the amount paid to each member of the Pharmacy Board for each of the years 1918 to 1930, inclusive—(a) As board member fees for attendance at meetings; and (b) as examiners' fees?”

“2. Were members of the Pharmacy Board paid prior to the year 1918 for attendance at meetings?”

“3. Is there statutory authority for the payment of members of the under-mentioned boards for attendance at meetings under the following Acts:—(a) Medical Act; (b) Dental Act; (c) Opticians' Act; and (d) Nurses and Massours' Act?”

“4. What amount, if any, has been paid to the chairman and each member of these boards—(a) Per meeting; and (b) the maximum amount payable for any period of twelve months to the chairman and each member?”

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

“The information is being obtained.”

EXTENSIONS OF LEASES OF SONOMA AND BIRALEE HOLDINGS.

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

“1. On whose recommendation were the Sonoma and Biralee holdings in the Bowen electorate given extensions of lease?”

“2. What was the period of such extension, and what conditions, if any, were attached to same?”

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

“1. New leases were granted in respect of Sonoma and Biralee holdings on the recommendation of the Land Administration Board.

“2. In each case the term of the new lease is twenty years. Each holding is subject to one-fourth resumption at any time if required for closer settlement purposes, and a further one-fourth resumption in fifteen years. Each holding is also subject to a condition requiring the expenditure of £500 on water and fencing improvements within five years.”

CHARGES FOR WATER, INKERMAN IRRIGATION SCHEME.

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

“What is the system now in operation in regard to the charges made for the use of the water from the Inkerman irrigation scheme?”

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

“Charges are made—(1) A flat rate of £3 10s. per acre per annum on benefited land; (2) a charge of 2½d. per unit of electric power consumed.”

COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATIVE
POWER BILL.

INITIATION.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [10.37]: I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to refer to the Parliament of the Commonwealth, pursuant to section 51, XXXVII., of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, power to make laws with respect to the compulsory conversion of certain securities.”

Question put and passed.

DEBT CONVERSION (FURTHER
AGREEMENT) BILL.

INITIATION.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [10.38]: I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to approve an agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia of the first part and the States of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania of the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh parts respectively, having further relation to the conversion of the internal public debts of the Commonwealth and the States.”

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—TENTH AND
ELEVENTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

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

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Question stated—

“That £19,471 be granted for ‘Department of Justice—Chief Office.’”

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) [10.40]: During the previous discussion on this vote, the hon. member for Warrego raised a question in regard to itinerant auctioneers, and I should like to know from the Attorney-General whether anything has been done in that matter.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgoarty, *South Brisbane*) [10.41]: I have had communication from Northern bodies such as the Townsville Chamber of Commerce on this matter, which was also brought under my notice by Mr. Jolly, as the representative of other bodies. The matter is under consideration; and, as I said before, an amendment is being prepared, and, if approved, we will put it through this session.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) [10.42]: I want to make reference to some of the comments which have been made in connection with the late Hon. T. J. Ryan. I am not going to allow the memory of a man for whom I

[*Mr. Dash.*

had the highest esteem and respect to be besmirched in this Chamber by certain hon. members who suggest that the fees which he received during his period of office as Attorney-General were not earned. I am not going to make any comparison between the late Hon. T. J. Ryan and the present occupant of the office of Attorney-General. Personally, I regard Mr. Ryan as one of the greatest constitutional lawyers of Australia, and one who fought cases involving issues which were more important than many of the issues raised in connected with any Australian case previously decided before the Privy Council.

I want to make reference to what was known as the Mooraberrie cattle case. I was a member of this House when the Denham Government, in response to a cable from the Imperial Government, put through in one day in this House and also in the Legislative Council “The Meat Supply for Imperial Uses Act of 1914.” The object of that Act was to give to Great Britain and her Allies a supply of meat. The Imperial Government were not satisfied with the arrangements existing with regard to the export of meat; and under that Act extensive and extraordinary powers were taken—powers which are only taken in case of war, when it is highly imperative that there should be no hitch in military arrangements. It is just as true to-day as it was when the great Napoleon stated that an army travels on its stomach, therefore it was highly essential that the British army should be supplied with foodstuffs. That Act provided that all meat exported from Queensland should be practically under the control of the Government. It also meant that practically all the cattle in Queensland were at the disposal of the Imperial Government for the supply of meat for the Imperial and Allied troops. Representatives of the cattle industry in this Chamber and also in the Upper House gave the measure their blessing, and, speaking on behalf of the cattle owners, said distinctly that they were prepared to supply the necessary requirements in the way of cattle.

Later on it was found that there was a better market in Adelaide and Melbourne for cattle than there was at the Queensland meatworks; that is to say, these people who talked about their loyalty and devotion to the Empire were prepared to sell cattle in the saleyards of Melbourne and Adelaide at £5 per head more than they could get in Brisbane for the meat to be treated for export for Imperial uses. Cattle began to travel across the border. While cattle owners generally were actuated by loyal principles and were sending their cattle to Queensland meatworks to provide meat for the Imperial troops, others were sending cattle over the border to be disposed of in the South.

The result was that under “The Sugar Acquisition Act of 1915” Mr. Ryan decided to seize such cattle so that they could be used for Imperial purposes only, and not be allowed to cross the border.

Mr. BUTLER: He did not require them for Imperial uses.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member can say what he likes, but I am stating the facts of the case, and Mr. Ryan was ultimately upheld by the Privy Council, which I regard as the apex of the British judicial system,

and a much higher authority than the hon. member for Port Curtis.

The squatters—those gentlemen who talked about their loyalty and patriotism—formed a conspiracy, and used an unfortunate widow named Mrs. Duncan, who happened to own a station, and an arrangement was made to send some of her cattle across the border. The squatters were not game to do it themselves, but got behind the skirts of this unfortunate widow—just the same as happened when it was proposed to adopt early closing in this city, when a lot of talk was indulged in about the poor, unfortunate widow who kept a shop being victimised. When Mr. Ryan took action with regard to securing the meat for the Imperial Government, it was asked why the Queensland Government should interfere with this unfortunate widow, when she could get £5 per head more in Adelaide than by adhering to the agreement to supply meat for Imperial purposes. Mrs. Duncan's cattle were seized. The case went before the Full Court of Queensland, and the Government of the day lost. It went to the High Court in Sydney, and Mr. Ryan won by a decision of five judges to two. It eventually went to the Privy Council, where it was won by Mr. Ryan. The Imperial Government on that occasion did what was never done before in the history of the British Empire. They invited the Queensland Attorney-General (the late Hon. T. J. Ryan) to visit London and plead their case. The Queensland Government acted for the Imperial Government in that case; and the late T. J. Ryan appeared before the Privy Council on behalf of the Imperial Government. His brief was marked, his fees arranged, and his necessary expenses paid by the Imperial Government, and the Queensland taxpayers were not called upon to contribute 1s. Mr. Ryan won that case.

We can all recall the celebrated McCawley case, when only one member of the Supreme Court bench in Queensland was prepared to administer the necessary oath when the late Mr. Justice McCawley was sworn as a member of the judiciary; but, when he died suddenly at the zenith of his career, we witnessed the fulsome adulation of the people who had not a single good word to say for him when he was elevated to the Supreme Court bench.

Mr. MAXWELL: Do you object to those tributes?

Mr. KIRWAN: No; but I do object to the insincerity and hypocrisy of those people. The same people paid tribute to Mr. Ryan following his decease.

Mr. MAXWELL: You put Ryan out.

Mr. KIRWAN: The only reply to the hon. member is a good old English word of four letters, but I would be called to order if I were to use it. The late Mr. T. J. Ryan won the McCawley case, the "Eastern" case, the case in connection with the regulation of sugar cane prices legislation, and was able to preserve workers' compensation as a State monopoly. When legislation dealing with the last matter was under consideration in the Legislative Council, a well-known Brisbane barrister representing the insurance companies of this State drafted an amendment which he hoped would kill workers' compensation as a State monopoly; but he evidently did not do his work effectively,

seeing that the late Mr. T. J. Ryan was successful before the Privy Council. The following is an extract from an article dealing with the legal triumphs of the late Mr. T. J. Ryan which appeared in the "Daily Mail" of 2nd August, 1921:—

"Following his return to Queensland after his appearance before the Privy Council on the 'Great Eastern' case, which he won, he found action had been taken to overthrow the legislation under which meat was secured for the British troops and her allies. The Imperial Armies Meat Act was challenged as invalid, on the ground that it infringed the rights of interstate trade. After the case was argued for eighteen days before the full bench of seven judges at the High Court at Melbourne, Mr. Ryan secured a judgment in his favour by a majority of five to two. By this judgment the High Court, for the first time in its history, reversed a prior decision given by it on a similar case arising in New South Wales. Mr. Justice Isaacs, described the Queensland case as one of the most important that ever came before the High Court.

"An effort was next made to upset the Sugar Acquisition Act in which a commodity such as sugar, meat, etc., could be secured. This effort is best known as the Mooraberrie cattle case. An action was brought against the Government for £5,000 damages for acquiring certain cattle under the Sugar Act. The Supreme Court of Queensland said the Government had wrongfully taken the cattle. The High Court agreed and gave judgment for £2,000 against the Queensland Government. The case was a test.

"In 1919 Mr. Ryan appeared on the appeal to the Privy Council and won. Other notable triumphs in which he figured brilliantly were secured in the McCawley case, which greatly enhanced his reputation as a constitutional lawyer. The proceedings before the Coal Board, when he successfully challenged the increased price of coal imposed by the board; the Privy Council action which resulted in the Queensland cane-growing millowners paying their share (amounting to several thousand pounds a year, plus a fair sum in arrears) of administering the Sugar Cane Prices Act, under which 2d. a ton was paid by the small cane farmers into a fund for working the Act; the Privy Council appeal, which decided that the Queensland Government had a monopoly of workers' compensation insurance; and the further Privy Council appeal relating to the prohibition against Hindoo labour in the cane-fields of Queensland, and these and other cases in which Mr. Ryan scored in the Supreme and High Courts."

The interests of the people of Queensland were amply safeguarded by the payments made to the late T. J. Ryan, whether by the Imperial Government, the Government of the State of Queensland, or by both. There is no doubt that, had the Mooraberrie case and the "Eastern" case gone against the Queensland Government, they would have cost the Imperial and State Governments many millions of pounds. Both those cases were won by Mr. Ryan.

It is rather remarkable that in the Mooraberrie cattle case the attack did not come

Mr. Kirwan.]

from the alleged disloyalists and traitors to the Empire during the war, but it was engineered, supported, and financed by people who held the view that it was right and proper to conscript the manhood of Australia for services abroad, if necessary, but that it was not right that a few head of cattle should be commandeered to feed the troops so sent abroad.

In the course of his reply the Attorney-General stated that there was no real necessity at the present time for the issue of quarterly electoral rolls. Before quarterly rolls were decided upon by the Labour Government, a system prevailed under which a quarterly electoral list was published in the newspapers circulating in the various electorates. This showed the names of those electors who had left the electorate, or who were disqualified, or who were dead. Those electors who were wrongfully removed from the roll under these headings were given by this published information an opportunity of making representation to the electoral authorities for the reinstatement of their names. There was the well-known case of a doctor in Charters Towers some years ago who woke up one morning to find that, so far as the electoral office was concerned, he was officially dead. The hon. member for Mount Morgan reminds me that he was marked dead on one occasion, and that he had considerable difficulty in proving he was alive.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: On one occasion he was on two rolls at the same time.

MR. KIRWAN: If the intention to abolish the issue of quarterly electoral rolls is founded on economy, then the Government should resort to the old practice of publishing the names of those electors who are from time to time removed from the rolls in order to give them an opportunity of making application to be placed on the rolls again.

I intended to refer to the question of legislative action being taken to permit of a review of rents of business houses, but, as the Attorney-General has agreed to receive a deputation on that matter, I have no desire to pursue the matter further at the present time. Provision is now made to permit householders to have their rents reviewed; but while some city landlords who rent or lease shops met their tenants in the unfortunate position in which they found themselves owing to the depression, there are other landlords who, like Shylock, are insisting on their pound of flesh and refuse any relief to their tenants. Legislative enactment might be necessary to compel these landlords to ease the burden on their tenants in a similar manner to what many other landlords have done.

MR. BUTLER (*Port Curtis*) [10.57]: The hon. member for Brisbane made some rather extraordinary statements concerning the late Mr. T. J. Ryan's fees in connection with the Mooraberrie cattle case. The facts concerning that case are not at all as stated by the hon. member. The hon. member has attempted to stir up feeling against the graziers by stating that they endeavoured to send their cattle out of the State in order to avoid their being slaughtered and sent overseas to feed the troops.

MR. KIRWAN: I repeat that statement again, and say it deliberately.

[*Mr. Kirwan.*]

MR. BUTLER: That is absurd. The hon. member was perfectly right in stating that Mr. Denham, the then Premier, piloted a Bill through Parliament on 11th August, 1914, authorising the Government, on behalf of the Imperial Government, to take possession of all the cattle in Queensland. That Bill passed through this Parliament with the concurrence of every grazier in Australia. They were only too pleased to hand over their cattle for the use of the Imperial Government. A contract was eventually entered into between the Imperial Government and the various meatworks of the State to take the output of all meatworks in Queensland at the contract price of 4½d. per lb. f.o.b. How could any cattle owner, by driving cattle across the western border of this State to serve the Adelaide market, defeat the objects of that Act? Any such contention is absurd. All the meat shipped from Australia was shipped to the Imperial Government, and was paid for at the contract price I have mentioned. It did not matter twopence whether that meat was exported from Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, or Western Australia. The hon. member is simply talking through his neck.

MR. KIRWAN: I am telling the truth, and you don't like it.

MR. BUTLER: The real fact of the matter is that the late T. J. Ryan introduced a Bill which had for its purpose the seizure of about 100,000 tons of beef belonging to the graziers at a price of 3½d. per lb. in order to supply the State butcher shops. The hon. member cannot get away from that fact.

CESSATION OF BUSINESS FOR ARMISTICE DAY.

At 11 a.m.,

In accordance with Mr. SPEAKER'S announcement at the opening of the sitting, business was suspended for two minutes, during which time hon. members stood in silence.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

MR. BUTLER (*Port Curtis*) [11.2]: The hon. member for Brisbane is quite incorrect when he says that action was taken by the Labour Government to seize the meat in order that it might be available for the Imperial Government. The fact of the matter is that the Labour Government had promised at the elections in 1915 to supply cheap meat to the people of Queensland. They found it impossible to do so, and thereupon proceeded to commandeer large quantities of meat from the graziers at 3½d. per lb., although the Imperial contract price was 4½d. per lb., in order that the commandeered meat might find its way in to the State butcher shops. It is idle also for the hon. member for Brisbane to say that advantage was taken of the fact that Mrs. Duncan was the owner of Mooraberrie Station in order to fight a test case. The fact of the matter is that Mooraberrie, the property of Mrs. Duncan, was more convenient to the Adelaide market than to the Brisbane market at the time when the cattle were being moved across the border.

MR. POLLOCK: What nonsense!

Mr. BUTLER: It is not nonsense, it is a fact; and it was considerably cheaper to get those cattle into the Adelaide market than to send them to Brisbane.

Mr. POLLOCK: Absolute rot!

Mr. BUTLER: What I say is perfectly correct.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that this has nothing to do with the vote now under discussion. The hon. member for Brisbane got very much farther away from the point than I should have allowed him to go. I desire to be fair, and I have allowed the hon. member for Port Curtis to reply, but I would ask him not to pursue the subject any further.

Mr. BUTLER: I have been led into innumerable by-paths in endeavouring to reply to the hon. member for Brisbane. I think, however, that I have answered him most effectively.

Item (Department of Justice—Chief Office) agreed to.

COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [11.5]: I beg to move—

“That £75,540 be granted for ‘Courts of Petty Sessions.’”

The amount voted last year was £81,729; the amount actually expended was £80,358. If any hon. member desires any information, I shall be only too happy to supply it.

Item agreed to.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [11.6]: I beg to move—

“That £23,874 be granted for ‘Electoral Registration.’”

The principal difference in this vote compared with the vote for the previous year is that there is provision this year for £20,000 in connection with the forthcoming election. This matter already has been fully discussed on the vote for “Chief Office”; but there is one piece of information that I desire to give to the Committee. The hon. member for Townsville stated that 700 of his electors had been struck off the roll within the last six months. I have had the figures verified at the electoral office, and the correct figures are—

Transferred to other districts and enrolled	...	...	...	604
Objections (some of whom have since claimed enrolment elsewhere)	...	...	...	94
Dead	...	...	...	37
Disqualified	...	...	...	4
Total	...	...	...	739

It will be seen, therefore, that the statement made by the hon. member for Townsville is not correct.

Mr. MULLAN: On the vote for the “Chief Office” I mentioned that to-day 30,000 people were off the rolls as a result of the amending Elections Act passed last session. You did not explain that matter.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not know where the hon. member got his figures. I do not remember him raising the question.

Mr. MULLAN: The hon. gentleman probably overlooked it. I shall refer to it later.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member for Gregory also referred to disqualifications in his electorate. I would point out that there has been no election in the Gregory since 1923, and the figures are—

Transfers to other districts	...	...	242
Objections	...	...	985
Dead	...	...	26
Disqualified	...	...	10
Total	...	...	1,263

Mr. MULLAN (*Flinders*) [11.10]: The amount expended last year in connection with the electoral office was £10,207, although the amount appropriated last year was £11,169. As the Attorney-General is only asking for £28,874 this year, it means that he has only allowed £18,000 for the elections. I think the hon. gentleman will be a very lucky man if he can conduct an election for £18,000.

I want to refer again to the figures which I submitted on the vote for “Chief Office.” Apparently, in the excitement of last week, the Attorney-General overlooked that point. That was no doubt excusable, as the matter is small in comparison with the major question under discussion at the time. Nevertheless, the figures are of great importance. I am open to argument; but I think I demonstrated on Friday that 30,000 people in this State had been disfranchised as the result of the amending Act passed last year. I submitted that as the first-fruits of the Act, so to speak, and I anticipated that there would be a larger number before the elections in May next. It will only take a couple of minutes to demonstrate my argument. The population of Queensland on 30th June last was 959,572. On the census basis of 1921, according to the census authorities, 56.29 per cent. of the population were over twenty-one years of age, and we must presume that the same percentage exists to-day. That equals 540,143 people twenty-one years of age and over. I am not going to say that all that number should be on the roll, because we must consider tourists, travellers, and persons who have just reached the age of twenty-one and have not bothered to get on the roll. The usual estimate to make for that class of people is about 12,000. Take 12,000 from 540,143, and we have 528,143. What is the number on the State roll? If we take the same date—30th June last—the number on the State roll was 497,806, therefore, 30,337 people were off the roll on 30th June last.

Mr. TOZER: You surely don't say that because they are not on the roll the Act of last year disfranchised them?

Mr. MULLAN: I say that I must come to that conclusion. I told the Attorney-General when we were discussing the Bill last year what would be the inevitable result of the Bill, no matter how sympathetic his officers might be. I know the electoral officers just as well as the Attorney-General does; and I have no hesitation in saying that he has a very efficient and capable staff of men, who will administer the Act reasonably and sympathetically; but, however sympathetic the administration may be, they must take into consideration the law and the regulations. Even if the Attorney-General acts liberally, he, too, must act within the law; and,

Mr. Mullan.]

apparently he so acted during the last twelve months, since the amendment of the Act has led to this result. I shall be glad to have any other explanation which the Attorney-General may offer; but, unless he is prepared to prove that black is white, I cannot see how he can prove otherwise than that there are 30,337 off the roll to-day as a result of the amending Act of last session.

The Attorney-General, when speaking the other day, said, "What does it matter whether a man is on the roll or not?" Of course, to be fair, he meant at the present time. I am not going to give his words the meaning one might easily deduce therefrom—that the Attorney-General wanted to disfranchise people. I am going to accept his own construction, which meant, I think, "What does it matter? This is not the time of the elections; it will be all right so long as we get them on by the time of the elections." If he meant that, why bother about a roll until there is an election? That is the logical conclusion, unless I took the other meaning, which would probably be unfair to the Attorney-General. If he meant that it does not matter whether you are on the roll or not so long as you are there at election time, then, following that reasoning, there ought to be no rolls except just at election time. That would be a bad thing. It is a good thing to have rolls as a basis for enrolment for elections later on. I rose particularly to obtain an explanation as to why 30,337 people were off the rolls as at 30th June last.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [11.19]: The electoral office must have some system upon which to work, and it is desirable that there should be electoral rolls. I consider that an annual roll and a roll every quarter are too many; a half-yearly roll would be quite sufficient. It does not matter a great deal whether a person is on the roll or not to-day so long as he is on the roll in time for the elections. There will be a new annual roll at the end of the year, a quarterly roll in March, and a supplementary roll prior to the elections, and there will be every opportunity for all persons to become enrolled.

Mr. HYNES: What is the date of the election?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That has not yet been fixed, but probably April, May, or June.

Mr. MULLAN: What year?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I say definitely, 1932. There has never been any doubt about that.

The hon. member for Flinders contends that the amendment of the electoral law passed by this Government has been responsible for the removal of the names of 30,000 people from the rolls; but I would remind him that since the amended law came into force 2,000 additional names have been added to the rolls. I do not accept the figures quoted by the hon. member. He has ridiculously argued that 30,000 names have been removed. If there are 30,000 more people entitled to be enrolled, then it is because they have not bothered to carry out their duty, or else the system inaugurated at the electoral office has not yet reached them.

Mr. MULLAN: You know that there is another reason.

[*Mr. Mullan.*]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not know any such thing; and I will not allow the hon. member to charge this Government with having removed those names. Probably the hon. member has been supplied with figures by some figure expert; but figure experts sometimes make mistakes that are revealed merely by checking. If there are 30,000 people entitled to be enrolled who are not enrolled, then those who are interested in the elections should see that they are enrolled. There is not the slightest objection to their being enrolled.

Mr. HYNES: The residential qualification debars them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Government have not attempted wrongfully to remove people from the roll; in fact, the number on the roll has been increased by 2,000 since the amending Act of 1930 came into force.

Mr. MULLAN (*Flinders*) [11.22]: I have obtained my figures from the officials of the various Government departments. The Attorney-General himself supplied the number of people on the roll at 30th June last. When speaking on the Electoral Districts Act he stated that the number on the roll as at 30th June last was 497,806, and I obtained the figures showing the population of Queensland as at 30th June last from the Registrar-General. As to the percentages—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They are your own.

Mr. MULLAN: They are not. Let the Attorney-General refer to the "Official Year Book," or go to the library and look up the Commonwealth census for 1921, or ring up his own statistical officers. They will tell him that at the census of 1921 it was found that 56.29 per cent. of the population at that date were twenty-one years of age or over. I have shown where I have obtained my figures. There is no question of calculation. They are mathematically correct; therefore, I have demonstrated that there are 30,337 electors off the roll. There may be a difference of opinion as to why they are off the roll; but surely the hon. gentleman must admit the figures! If he does not, I would ask him to refer to his own officers in the lobby. Surely they will not question the population figures of Queensland as at the 30th June last, or deny that the particulars given in connection with the redistribution scheme are correct!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Both those figures are accurate, but the percentages are different.

Mr. MULLAN: Does the hon. gentleman suggest that the percentage of 56.29 is not correct; or does he mean that that percentage of the population is not twenty-one years or over? He wants to be fair. If we come together and reason, he must admit that on these figures, which are his own official figures, there are 30,000 electors off the roll. As I said, there might be a difference of opinion why they are off the roll. The Attorney-General states that his officials have done everything they could in the matter. I am not blaming his officials; they are not responsible. He knows very well who is responsible. His Government are responsible, because they passed the Elections Acts Amendment Act last year, making three months the residential qualification.

That is the real and only reason for the absence of these 30,000 electors from the roll.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Didn't I give you the answer in connection with the Townsville electorate?

Mr. MULLAN: The hon. gentleman did not give an answer; he merely sidetracked. He cannot give an answer. My statement that his Government are entirely responsible for disfranchising these people is unanswerable. I have made due allowance for those who are not on the roll through their own neglect; and the fact remains that 30,000 people to-day are disfranchised as the result of last year's Act; and the number will probably be 50,000 at the time of the elections next year.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [11.23]: I did not make any complaint to the Attorney-General last Friday as to names being removed from the Gregory roll. The Attorney-General's statement about the state of the Gregory roll is purely an Aunt Sally that he has put up to fire at. No one made any suggestion to him about the Gregory electorate. I have read my speech in "Hansard," and there is no reference in it to complaints about names having been removed from the Gregory roll. My complaint last Friday was that nomadic workers in the Western towns—men who have no permanent home and are on the roll as residing, say, at the Royal Mail Hotel, Winton—when away from their registered address either following droving, shearing, or looking for work, will have their names removed from the roll after they have been absent for three months. Their contract may last for six or twelve months. Many drovers are on the track for that time. Many of them are single men without homes, and with no permanent place of address other than that given on the electoral roll. Although they may have left the electorate for twelve months, they may still be, and probably are, within the State. Under the Elections Acts Amendment Act they cannot enrol for a particular electorate until after they have resided for three months in the electorate for which they desire to enrol. Many of these people, particularly men who are droving, shearing, or looking for work, are away from their usual headquarters for lengthy periods. It is very rarely that they are three months in an electorate, and the Elections Acts Amendment Act was designed to keep those people off the roll. I do not expect that any great drive to remove names from the roll will be made until just prior to the elections, when objections will be lodged by the 'Country-Nationalist organisations against names of men appearing on the rolls when those men have not been in the district for three months, although they are still somewhere in the State, travelling or working, and are just as good citizens as anybody else. They may be unable to fulfil the three months' residential qualification which would enable them to get upon another roll. I argue in all good faith that, whether they be out of work, or whether they be drovers, shearers, or general nomadic workers, these people are entitled, as citizens of the State, to have their names retained on one roll until they can qualify to be enrolled on another roll, provided, of course, that they are in the State of Queensland.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There is nothing wrong with that, and it will be done.

Mr. POLLOCK: If that is not permitted, then a large number of the best citizens of the State will be disfranchised. These arguments were used by us when the Elections Acts Amendment Bill was being considered last year. It is obvious to me that, as the law now stands, the drive to remove names from the roll will be made by the organisations referred to prior to the elections, when it will be too late to raise any complaint in this Chamber. If they are not careful, these people will find that their names are not on the old rolls, and that they are unable to vote because they have not the residential qualification to be enrolled elsewhere. That is the most serious feature of the amending Act of last year. Despite what the Attorney-General may say as to retaining names on the roll, if objections are lodged, then the officials concerned must act in accordance with the law.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*) [11.34]: I understood the Attorney-General to state, by interjection, that a nomadic worker who found it impossible to qualify for enrolment on another roll by reason of the fact that he had to travel in the course of his occupation, would have his name retained on the original roll under which he was qualified to vote. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman intends to take that power by regulation; but my reading of the Elections Acts Amendment Act leads me to think that the electoral officials may not interpret the Act in that way. It was provided last year that, before a name could be struck off the roll, the person concerned must be absent from the electorate for three months.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: More than that; because notice of objection is given at the end of three months, and it may take two or three weeks to finalise the matter, so that four months or more may elapse.

Mr. STOPFORD: I understood the hon. member for Gregory to argue that, if a man found it impossible for him to qualify for enrolment on another roll, he might communicate the fact to the electoral authorities, and that they would retain his name on the roll of his original electorate.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You should have been here when I read a certain communication on Friday. Evidently I shall have to read it again.

Mr. STOPFORD: I do not want the hon. gentleman to read it again, if I have his assurance on the matter. I know that an Act somewhat similar to this had to be administered in 1912; and although repeated assurances were given as to a person's domicile, it was ruled, in respect of certain men who were engaged on relaying work at Petrie, that a tent was not a residence, therefore they were not domiciled there for the purposes of electoral registration.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We have ruled that it is a domicile, and we will see that it is carried out.

Mr. STOPFORD: But these are matters which will be determined by the registrar. I know that just prior to the 1912 election I found that an electoral registrar had ruled that seventy men working at Petrie were not eligible under the residential qualification because they resided in tents. I had to secure seventy sworn statements on the matter. It should be the aim of everyone

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to give every citizen of the State an opportunity to qualify for enrolment. I quite realise that we want the rolls as pure as possible; but we should see that the men whom we are so fond of praising—the men who carry on our seasonal industries—should be given every facility to enable them to remain on the rolls. Men engaged in picking cotton in my own district are compelled to travel about; and, as three electorates converge at that point, they may not be in the one electorate for three months at a time. They may not travel 50 miles during the whole of the season, but they would not have a three months' qualification; consequently they would be struck off the roll, and would find it impossible to get back on the roll. From what the Attorney-General has told us, a man with a family can claim a resident qualification for the place where his family resides; but the nomadic worker will be affected by the Act as it stands; and I am pleased to have the assurance of the Attorney-General that he has given certain instructions, and I sincerely hope that those instructions will be properly interpreted by those who receive them.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*) [11.38]: I wish to refer to the Attorney-General's reply to my statement that a number of names had been excised from the roll for the Townsville electoral district. That was just an ex-parte statement by the Attorney-General, and, although the rules of Parliament compel me to accept his statement as being correct, like the Scotchman, "I hae ma doots about it."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I got the figures from the electoral registrar.

Mr. HYNES: My people have told me distinctly that very many old residents who have lived in the electorate all their lives have had their names removed from the roll.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They will tell you anything.

Mr. HYNES: The hon. gentleman has been telling the public a lot of things that are not true. That is why he is called "Mr. Necessity Macgregory."

Mr. A. JONES: Why "Necessity"?

Mr. HYNES: Because they say "Necessity knows no law." (Laughter.) There is a distinct difficulty in regard to migratory workers remaining on the roll; and that particularly applies to places like Townsville and other northern constituencies, where men are obliged to leave the district and engage in seasonal industries in order to earn a livelihood. When the principal Act, was going through Parliament, the Attorney-General made the statement that there were twelve names on the roll for a boarding-house in South Brisbane, although those people were not living at the place.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said over 100.

Mr. HYNES: The hon. gentleman said that he was not going to permit a continuation of that state of affairs. Take the case of a man staying at a hotel in Townsville. He may go out shearing and get a run with a shearing contractor, and is probably away two or three months before he returns to Townsville. The previous Administration recognised the difficulty that that man would have in keeping his name upon the

roll; therefore, they made it a condition that no name was to be taken off the roll unless the individual made application to get on another roll, or unless there was absolute proof that the person was dead or had left the State. I am satisfied that the three months' residential qualification is going to be used by the agents of Labour's opponents at the next election in order to prevent migratory workers from exercising a vote at the next election.

A few years ago, when Labour was in power, audacious attempts were made by Nationalist members to get names off the roll. The hon. member for Mundingburra quoted a letter that had been sent to certain electors in the Northern constituencies purporting to have come from the electoral registrar. It was proved to be a bogus letter sent out by the Nationalists in order to frighten electors about keeping their names on the rolls. It transpired that in some cases there were persons whose names were on other rolls in the State, and it is quite possible for that to be done in a legitimate way. These letters which were sent to these people purported to have come from the electoral registrar, and to be Government documents. The intention was to intimidate these people and get them to take their names off certain rolls. We shall find that these organisers will be particularly active just before the next elections. Hundreds of names will be excised from the roll in every district where there is such an organisation, which will do nothing but work in connection with the rolls. There are several people paid high wages in the Townsville office of the Nationalist Association whose main work is to peruse the rolls with the object of taking names off the roll of electors, who it is expected will vote against Nationalists at the elections. I saw a letter signed by the Nationalist Association in Townsville, which was sent before the last election to a man who had left Townsville and was permanently residing and voting in New South Wales. That man was told to communicate with the Nationalist office, which would direct him how to exercise his vote at the Queensland elections. "Smith's Weekly" got hold of the letter, but for some reason did not publish it. The Nationalist Association at Townsville devised means for getting people who had left Townsville for some years and taken up residence in New South Wales to exercise a vote in Queensland because their names happened to be on the roll. A great hardship is imposed on a big section of the community. The hon. member for Flinders stated that there are 30,000 people who have been disfranchised, and that is a conservative estimate. If it were possible to get the correct figures, I believe the number would be much greater than that.

Mr. MAXWELL: How do you know that that may not be due to duplication?

Mr. HYNES: There will be duplications under any system; but there will not be duplication so far as exercising the vote is concerned. I do not think that at election time there is one in 10,000 people who will take the risk of voting twice. The average citizen is not going to break the law for the purpose of exercising another vote; he only wants one vote. The rights of the man who is doing useful work in our big primary industries should be preserved; and

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he should know that his name is on the roll for a certain electoral district. Surely a man on the roll in Townsville who is away for a few months in the year going round the country following his occupation should have his name kept on the Townsville roll! Under the existing Act such a man will not be permitted to get his name upon another roll, as he will not be sufficiently long in any one electoral district to qualify for enrolment. For that reason I say that the Administration has been dishonest in connection with this legislation by disfranchising those workers.

The Attorney-General gave a very feeble excuse for discontinuing the practice of printing the quarterly rolls. The discontinuance of that practice causes confusion in the minds of people, and it is almost impossible in some districts for a man to ascertain whether his name is on the roll or not. There are certain names taken off the Townsville roll every six months, for instance. It is said that the electoral registrar notifies people in writing that he is taking their names off the roll; but, when such a person has left his registered address and has gone cane cutting or shearing, the notification never reaches him. He never knows until election day that his name is taken off the roll. If there were a quarterly roll, or, in the absence of a quarterly roll, lists were printed showing the names which have been taken off or added to the roll, a person would be able to ascertain by calling at a police station or consulting the union organisers whether his name was still on the roll or not.

The printing of quarterly sheets would not entail very great expense, and it would ensure that a person who is entitled to vote would be able to exercise the franchise on election day. Apparently the Attorney-General has no intention of publishing quarterly sheets; and I can only conclude that there is something sinister behind the action of the Government in discontinuing the printing of quarterly rolls.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [11.49]: On Friday the hon. member for Townsville stated that 600 or 700 names had been removed from the Townsville roll, and he blamed the Government or the new electoral system for that state of affairs. There is no satisfying some people. I have had some information prepared by the Electoral Registrar's Office relating to the Townsville electoral roll. The hon. member was not in the Chamber a while ago, when I quoted the figures on this subject. I will therefore quote them again. This information shows that 739 names have been removed from the Townsville electoral roll since the amendment of the Elections Act by this Government, made up as follows:—

604 names were removed from the roll because the people had transferred to other districts and had become enrolled in the new districts.
 94 names were removed because they were objected to—7 of these have since claimed enrolment elsewhere.
 37 of the electors have died.
 4 were disqualified; making a total of

739

Mr. HYNES: Who objected to the ninety-four names?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The electors' registrar. The hon. member for Townsville complains that the Government are trying to injure these persons and thereby to injure him, but that is all nonsense.

Mr. HYNES: Were the whole of the objections made by the electoral registrar?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Ninety-four names were objected to by the electoral registrar.

Mr. HYNES: At whose instance?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I advise the hon. member to consult the department. In many cases the objections were lodged because no reply had been received.

The hon. member for Mount Morgan also complained that by the administration of the new law the Government propose to remove the poor worker from the roll and thereby injure him.

Mr. HYNES: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member would say, "Hear, hear!" to anything. He is in a blue funk. Last year I stated that we would do everything possible to see that all persons entitled to a vote would have an opportunity of exercising the franchise. I had an interview with Mr. Cole, the principal electoral registrar, and he proceeded to administer the law in an equitable and just manner. What more could be done for the hon. member for Mount Morgan than has been done by the issue of this circular dated 26th March, 1931, forwarded to all the State electoral registrars throughout Queensland. I do not propose to read it all, but one paragraph states:—

"Regarding electors who may have left the district or division, particular inquiry should be made as to whether such electors have left the division for a period of three months or more and have definitely ceased to reside therein, and do not possess a home in the division. In connection with persons who may be noted as 'left,' a notice is subsequently sent to the address of such elector on the roll to ensure that the name will not be wrongly removed."

What better could the hon. member have than that? I repeat that there should be some responsibility on the electors. If a man goes out in search of work or engages in a seasonal occupation outside his district, he should take the precaution of notifying the electoral registrar that he wishes to retain the old electorate as his home and to vote therein. The electoral registrar will then receive instructions to retain his name on that roll, whether he be away for three months or for six months. What could be fairer than that?

Mr. POLLOCK: But what if he has no home?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will go further, and say that, if an elector informs the electoral registrar that he has a place of residence, whether it is a hotel or boarding-house, which he desires to be recognised as his permanent address, because it is his wish to remain on the roll on which he is enrolled at the present time, I will give instructions to the principal electoral registrar that such elector be retained on the electoral roll.

Mr. HYNES: Those instructions have not been issued.

Hon. N. F. Macgroarty.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not intend to repeat myself, because the hon. member will not listen to official figures; he is evidently suffering from blue funk about his retention of his seat.

I have official figures in answer to the hon. member for Flinders, whose argument was that because of the three months' residential qualification in "The Elections Acts Amendment Act of 1930," 30,000 people have been removed from the rolls. It follows as a natural consequence that had we retained the residential qualification in the old Act of one month these 30,000 people would still be on the roll and everything would be all right.

Mr. MULLAN: You prove your own case.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Let me give accurate figures. The residential qualification under the Commonwealth Electoral Act is one month as compared with three months in the State Act. The total enrolment under the Commonwealth Act for the Federal electorates in Queensland as at the 30th June, 1931, was 436,073. Those figures are just as accurate and authentic as those given by the hon. member for Flinders. The total number enrolled on the State electoral rolls at the same date was 497,806. In spite of this awful three months' residential qualification we have to-day 11,733 more people enrolled on the State electoral rolls than on the Commonwealth rolls? Is that not a complete answer to the argument of the hon. member that, because of the alteration in the residential qualification, the present Government have disfranchised 30,000 people? In view of those figures, his argument will not stand.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [11.58]: I am going to ask the Attorney-General a plain question, which can be answered just as plainly. If a man makes his headquarters at a hotel and is absent from the electorate for three months, has the Attorney-General issued instructions to the local electoral authorities that the name of that man shall be retained on the roll if he desires that address to be kept as his headquarters?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [11.59]: I gave those instructions to the principal electoral registrar last year when the Elections Acts Amendment Act was passed.

Mr. POLLOCK: Has he acted on them?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I cannot say definitely; but I told him to make himself as plain as possible in that regard to every electoral registrar. The extract from the circular which I read means that.

Mr. POLLOCK: Oh, no!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I gave a similar answer last year. We are taking every precaution on behalf of the elector; but there is also some responsibility on him. If an elector moves out of an electorate and remains away for more than three months, it is only natural to assume that he will enrol in another district; and it is only natural to assume further that he should be automatically removed from the roll in which his name appears originally; but, if he declares his place of residence to the electoral officer, his name will be preserved on the roll. If a definite instruction has not

been given to such effect, I will see that it is given.

Mr. POLLOCK: Hear, hear! If you do that, it will be all right.

Item (Electoral Registration) agreed to.

At 12 noon,

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

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [12.1]: I beg to move—

"That £1,659 be granted for 'Friendly Societies.'"

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) [12.2]: At the outset of my remarks in connection with this matter, in which I am vitally interested, I desire, on behalf of the friendly societies of Queensland, to pay a compliment to the Attorney-General for having made available the services of Mr. George Porter, the registrar of friendly societies, at the various conferences which have been held from time to time. I desire also to compliment Mr. Porter and his deputy, Mr. Daley, on the courtesy which they have shown when they have met the officials of the various friendly societies in Queensland and discussed official matters with them.

It is recognised that the great depression of which we have heard so much in almost every debate in this Chamber has had its effect on friendly societies throughout the Commonwealth. Our figures show that we have not received sufficient by way of contributions to pay our expenses. Members' contributions totalled £234,527 in 1929 and £242,211 in 1930, whilst interest from investments was £88,831 in 1929 and £89,914 in 1930. Last year, by way of members' contributions and interest on investments, £332,125 was received, which was an increase of £8,767 compared with the previous year; but, as I have said, the amount received was not sufficient to meet our commitments. It is generally recognised that at the present time there is a tremendous drag so far as sick pay is concerned compared with the position in past years. When the friendly society movement was inaugurated in Australia men had perhaps higher ideals so far as linking up with the movement was concerned. To-day the friendly society spirit has somewhat slackened; and, as a result, the movement is more commercialised, which probably accounts for our increased expenditure. Whereas in 1929 we paid £77,007 in sick pay, in 1930 we had to pay £33,086, whilst funeral and maternity benefits increased from £30,369 in 1929 to £31,997 in 1930. Payments made for medical attendance and medicines in 1929 totalled £98,781; in 1930 they had increased to £105,466, or an increase of £6,685. If time permits, I hope to elaborate on that aspect of the matter.

We are sometimes criticised for our management expenditure; but it is noteworthy that the management fund is the only fund which shows a surplus. Under that heading the expenditure for 1929 and 1930 was £55,306 and £55,183 respectively. The surplus of all funds in 1929 was £61,875, compared with £56,393 in 1930, the decrease being accounted for by a debit on last year's working of £5,482.

During the year fifteen new branches were opened, but for various reasons five

[*Hon. N. F. Macgroarty.*]

old branches were closed, so that the net increase in branches was ten. We commenced the year with 589 and concluded with 599. The membership at present is 63,814, consisting of 55,705 males and 8,109 females, being an increase for the year of 497. The friendly societies in Queensland have nothing to complain of. We certainly are closely watched by the Government officials, but that is only right. We expect that, and appreciate it.

We certainly have our difficulties, and I think all the States to some extent have had difficulties from the medical side. I do not want to say anything further to-day, because a Medical Bill has been forecast by the Government, and I am anxiously waiting to see what it includes. Last year we paid in medical benefits over £60,000; but, notwithstanding that, we have our difficulties, inasmuch as under the agreement with the British Medical Association they set up the plea that the agreement with the societies includes what they term the "open panel." That means that every medical man who goes into a country district has the right to become a lodge doctor. That causes considerable difficulty.

We also have our difficulties in connection with attendance at hospitals. I do not want to abuse my privilege, as it is just possible that I am getting on to the fringe of another department, and for that reason I shall reserve my remarks in that connection; but I do say in connection with hospital matters that our medical men should have the right to follow their patients into the hospitals. In some towns in Queensland that right is given in connection with Government controlled hospitals. All hospitals should be open to all qualified registered medical men in Queensland, particularly in connection with friendly society work.

Mr. MULLAN (*Flinders*) [12.9]: I regard this vote as of great importance to the people of Queensland and of Australia. The number of members of friendly societies in Australia is over 604,000; and, if you realise that four persons are benefited by each member, it means that 2,416,000 people in Australia directly or indirectly benefit from friendly societies. In our own State there are 67,345 members; and, applying the same rule, 269,380 people benefit from these societies, indirectly and directly. The funds in the Commonwealth are very large, amounting to £12,957,679, while in Queensland the funds amount to £1,661,000. The revenue for last year was £332,025, and the expenditure £275,732, leaving a surplus of £56,293, which is very satisfactory in these times of depression; but it is only fair to say that we had no surplus on the revenue and expenditure proper if we eliminate the amount received by the friendly societies from investments. As a matter of fact, there would have been a deficit of over £33,000 this year but for the fact that they have their money wisely invested in Government stocks, banks, and other securities. The money derived from investments amounted to over £89,000, which shows how largely the societies depend to-day and must depend in the future on the return received from money accumulated in the past. The capital increased in the last five years by £330,593—a very large sum. This accumulation of capital during that period was entirely due to interest. As a matter of fact during the last quinquennial period, the

contributions have not been equal to the expenditure.

The interest on investments is very important to friendly societies, and we see, therefore, the importance of the Premiers' plan on friendly societies. The registrar of friendly societies tells us that the average interest last year was 5.5 per cent. as against 5.6 per cent. in the previous year. As a result of the Premiers' plan, the societies, which, of course, have large investments in Government stocks, will have their interest reduced by 22½ per cent. or 4s. 6d. in the £1; and even those who have money invested in banks and in buildings and so on will also suffer very considerable reductions. Friendly societies have, therefore, had to make a very considerable sacrifice as the result of the legislation passed this year as the outcome of the Premiers' conference, and it must have a very serious effect on their future operations. Of course, friendly societies, as advised by the registrar, will have to conserve their funds in accordance with the altered circumstances, otherwise there will be trouble in the future.

Fortunately, the friendly societies have their money well invested, and the accumulated funds in Queensland amount to £1,661,000. If we take away from that amount the money invested in property, such as halls, there is a net amount of over £1,000,000 invested. Taking the amount of interest received last year at 5.5 per cent., according to the registrar's figures, I deduct therefrom that £83,000 was received in interest. Of course, there will not be a deduction of 22½ per cent. interest on investments all round—that will come off investments in Government stocks—still, presuming the societies have money at fixed deposit with the banks, there will also be reductions of interest there. Speaking generally, the return from investments will probably have depreciated to the extent of £18,000 through reductions in interest, which is a very considerable sum.

Fortunately, the friendly societies are very strong. The registrars of friendly societies in the past—notably Mr. Rendle—were very conservative in their estimates regarding payments and contributions to sick funds and funeral funds. Mr. Rendle laid down very rigidly the lines which he insisted upon the societies adhering to, and big funds have been accumulated as the result of his conservative policy. I am glad that his successor is following his example. As a result of Mr. Rendle's policy over a number of years, the last quinquennial valuation showed that every society but one in Queensland had a surplus, if the sick and funeral funds are taken together. This shows careful management. Perhaps, as the hon. member for East Toowoomba says, the spirit of friendly societies is not so keen as it used to be in the days of old. In this commercial age, probably to some little extent it has been more commercialised than ever before. Nevertheless, there has been careful management and a tremendous amount of free service in connection with friendly societies, and I must congratulate the registrar, Mr. Porter, and his able deputy, Mr. Daley, upon the results which have so far been achieved. I entirely approve of the policy of the registrar attending conventions of friendly societies, thus meeting members of the societies and discussing their problems

Mr. Mullan.]

with them, as a result of which he is better able to understand the position when representations are made to him. That policy was commenced during my regime as Attorney-General, and it has been continued. It is a very good plan. The Attorney-General might consider the question of allowing him to attend conventions that are held in different parts of the State outside of Brisbane.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He has already attended conventions outside of Brisbane.

Mr. ROBERTS: He went to Townsville.

Mr. MULLAN: That is a step in the right direction. The registrar should be permitted to meet these people, so that he may be able to cope with their problems and to deal with situations as they arise from time to time. The friendly societies are doing tremendously important work for Queensland and Australia; and it is only during a time of stress and trouble, when people take full advantage of the benefits to be derived, that the worth of the societies and their benefit to the community is fully appreciated.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [12.20]: I appreciate the great good done by the friendly societies for the State of Queensland. I also appreciate the great work performed by the members of the societies in their managerial capacity. I appreciate the good work that has been done by members like the hon. member for East Toowoomba and others interested in this important work. I sympathise with the societies in the very severe drain on their finance during the present depressing period; but I have no doubt they will be able to weather the storm, that their membership will be increased, and that they will be able to do further good for the community.

Item (Friendly Societies) agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY DRAFTSMAN.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*): I beg to move—

“That £820 be granted for ‘Parliamentary Draftsman.’”

Item agreed to.

SHERIFF AND SUPREME COURTS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*): I beg to move—

“That £25,221 be granted for ‘Sheriff and Supreme Courts.’”

Mr. MULLAN (*Flinders*) [12.21]: I should like the Attorney-General to state what action the Government propose to take to fill the vacancies of Crown prosecutor in the southern division and in the northern division.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [12.22]: Mr. Ross resigned his position as Crown prosecutor, northern division, as from the 1st instant, and Mr. J. P. A. Quinn was appointed as acting Crown prosecutor.

Mr. MULLAN: No permanent appointment has yet been made?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No; Mr. Quinn has not been permanently appointed.

[*Mr. Mullan.*

He is the oldest established barrister in practice in North Queensland; and I am of the opinion that a position such as this should be given to a Northern man. Mr. Quinn is a very capable man, and has successfully conducted sittings in the various circuits in the North. If the Crown prosecutor in the southern division, Mr. Sheehy, is unable to cope with the work, then it is handled by the officers of my department. The matter is still under consideration, and a permanent appointment may be made at a later date.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) [12.23]: An article recently appeared in a newspaper to the effect that there was considerable congestion of work in connection with workers' compensation cases. Has the Attorney-General made any inquiries to ascertain whether this congestion warrants the appointment of an additional industrial magistrate?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [12.24]: The matter referred to by the hon. member for Mundingburra was reported in one paper only, and I do not take any notice of matters appearing in that newspaper. The industrial magistrate is under the control of the Secretary for Labour and Industry. If the hon. member for Mundingburra is referring to the article which I read, then there is nothing calling for a reply.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [12.25]: The Attorney-General might explain why £1,125 was appropriated under “Contingencies” last year for “Allowances for work performed in connection with the administration of ‘The Bankruptcy Acts, 1924-1929,’” and there is no appropriation for the current year. Last year a Bill was passed authorising the Government to pay this allowance to the judges in the form of additional salary. The money was received from the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of dealing with State applications under “The Bankruptcy Acts, 1924-1929.” At that time we held that, if it was fair to give that money to the judges because they performed this bankruptcy work, it would be equally fair to give the money received from the Commonwealth for taxation collection purposes to the taxation officials. Have the Commonwealth Government decided not to ask for the services of the State judges in these bankruptcy matters, or just how are bankruptcy matters being attended to?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [12.27]: The matter raised by the hon. member for Gregory was thoroughly discussed last year. I then explained that the Commonwealth inspector of bankruptcy waited on me and asked that the money be paid over to the judges. I did so.

Mr. POLLOCK: They dispute that. They said they paid you the money, and you were to deal with it as you pleased.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Oh no. Mr. Daly, the Acting Commonwealth Attorney-General, said that he did not care what we did with it; but the inspector of bankruptcy had waited on me previously, and asked that the money be paid over to the judges, adding that, if the money was not paid over his Government would consider the question of withdrawing the payments. At the request of the judges I then had a Bill

drafted and passed through this Chamber validating those payments. The Opposition brought up the matter on the Estimates last year, and contended that we were only endeavouring to increase the salaries of the judges. I then said on behalf of the Government that I would not receive any further amount, and that the Commonwealth Government could pay the allowance direct to the judges. I amended the Act authorising the Commonwealth Government to make the payments to the judges direct, and giving the judges power to accept the allowance. I said that the Government of Queensland would not take any more money from the Commonwealth Government in that respect in view of the unwarranted attack made by the Opposition.

Mr. POLLOCK: It was not unwarranted.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was. The position now is that we have not received one penny from the Commonwealth since; neither have the Commonwealth Government remitted any money to the judges, although they have been doing the bankruptcy work up to the present time. I do not say that the Commonwealth Government do not intend to pay for this service; but the fact remains that from June, 1930, up to the present time the Supreme Court judges in this State have been doing the bankruptcy work and have not received any payment for it.

Mr. POLLOCK: So have the officers of the Commissioner of Taxes, and the officers of the Department of Agriculture.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is the reason why the appropriation does not appear on the Estimates for this year. I said that we would not receive any further money from the Commonwealth Government on behalf of the judges, and that the Commonwealth Government could send the money direct to the judges; and they have received no communication from the Commonwealth since. The State Government will not have any dealings with the money because of the unwarranted attack made upon them by the Opposition in carrying out the wishes of the Commonwealth authorities.

Mr. POLLOCK: It was not unwarranted.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was very much unwarranted.

Item (Sheriff and Supreme Courts) agreed to.

TITLES OFFICES.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [12.30]: I beg to move—

“That £15,331 be granted for ‘Titles Offices.’”

Hon. members will be sorry to hear that there has been a considerable falling off in the work of this office, as the following comparative figures will show:—

—	Revenue Received.	Number of Documents Handled.
	£	
1928-29	67,664	115,671
1929-30	63,560	109,224
1930-31	48,570	81,543

The depressing times through which we are passing have had their reflex on the business of this office.

Mr. MAHER (*Rosewood*) [12.32]: I should like to ascertain from the Attorney-General whether the positions of deputy registrars of titles at Rockhampton and Townsville are justified. The Attorney-General has pointed out a considerable falling off in the amount of work passing through the Titles Offices, and there is a heavy expenditure involved in maintaining separate offices in Rockhampton and Townsville. It would be interesting to know whether a survey of the amount of work which passes through those offices justifies the cost involved.

Mr. KENNY (*Cool*) [12.33]: I regret to hear such a statement from the hon. member for Rosewood. The policy of any Government should be in the direction of overcoming the centralisation which exists to-day. The Titles Office at Townsville has been fully justified, and I stress the necessity for establishing an office at Cairns, in order that the people connected with the sugar, dairy, and pastoral industries in the districts north of Townsville may be saved considerable expense and delay in the matter of registration of documents. Where documents have to be sent to Brisbane it means that legal expenses are increased, in addition to which considerable delay takes place. I urge the Attorney-General to consider the question of providing a Titles Office in Cairns for the convenience of the Northern people.

At 12.35 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) [12.35]: I do not intend to waste too much political breath on the hon. member for Rosewood (laughter); but, if the Attorney-General is likely to consider the closing of the Titles Offices at Rockhampton and Townsville, he will bring down on his head a bigger hornet's nest than he has ever had to face.

Mr. MAHER: How much business is done at Rockhampton?

Mr. DUNLOP: We know that there are men of outstanding ability doing the work at Rockhampton; and we know further that, in order to avoid circumlocution, it is necessary to have decentralisation in this matter. Indeed, it would be in the interests of economy if decentralisation were extended to other activities. I fully endorse what the hon. member for Cook has stated about the North. We want further decentralisation, and the sooner we get away from the octopus of Brisbane the better it will be for all concerned; and then we shall show Rosewood and such electorates that in the North we have men of ability, and, when the occasion arises to fight for our rights, we shall make no bones about it.

Mr. MULLAN (*Flinnders*) [12.33]: The figures given by the Attorney-General as to the business transactions of the Titles Office during the last few years are very interesting, and they are merely a reflex of the depression outside. The cost of administering the Titles Office last year was £19,233, and this year the Government say they require only £15,331. In other words, the Government expect the registrar of titles to run his office this year for £3,907 less than the office cost last year.

Mr. BLACKLEY: It ought to be less.

Mr. MULLAN: Of course it ought to be less, and every office is less; but this is an

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extraordinary reduction. Surely for the year ended 30th June next it is not expected that there is going to be a reduction of 25 per cent. in the business of that office, because, unless there is a reduction of 25 per cent., it will be utterly impossible to run the office on £15,331 unless there is some reason for it that the Attorney-General has not disclosed. He cannot possibly run it on that amount unless he is going to dispense with a large number of the staff. The expenses are mostly made up of salaries, and he must have the staff there to do the work. Even if he reduced the staff by half a dozen, I cannot understand how they can do the work on £3,967 less than last year's expenditure, and I should like some information on the matter.

Mr. MAHER (*Rosewood*) [12.41]: I think I am entitled to seek information without wrongful inferences being taken by the hon. members for Cook and Rockhampton. I did not condemn the Titles Offices in Rockhampton and Townsville, I merely asked whether we were getting value for the money. I was prompted to ask that question because I realise that in Central and Northern Queensland there are vast areas of leasehold country in connection with which the transfers do not pass through the Real Property Office, and the amount of freehold transactions would not be very great. I would like the Attorney-General, if he has any information on the point, to give some indication to the Committee.

Mr. BOW (*Mitchell*) [12.43]: The natural inference drawn from the remarks of the hon. member for Rosewood was that he considered that the Rockhampton and Townsville offices were not worth keeping open, and that all the work could be done through Brisbane.

Mr. MAHER: I did not say that at all.

Mr. BOW: Well, he allowed hon. members to infer that from his remarks.

Mr. MAHER: Mr. Roberts, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Mitchell in order in imputing something to me which I neither said nor suggested?

Mr. BOW: I said that was the inference.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Mitchell is not in order, and his remarks are distinctly unjustified.

Mr. BOW: I accept the assurance of the hon. member for Rosewood. The hon. member said that there is a lot of leasehold land and not much freehold land in Central and Northern Queensland. That shows that he knows very little about Queensland.

Mr. MAHER: I was asking for information from the Attorney-General.

Mr. BOW: The hon. member ought to have that information at his disposal instead of tantalising the Minister. The hon. member should know that the whole of the work in the Central and Northern parts of the State is done through the Rockhampton and Townsville offices. If those offices were closed, the consequence would be that people up there would be two months in getting a reply from Brisbane, whereas they can now get a reply in a couple of days in most cases. I was surprised to hear an hon. member with the supposed ability of the hon. member for Rosewood running away with the idea that the Northern and Central work should be done through the Brisbane office.

[*Mr. Mullan.*

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [12.45]: So far as I am concerned, there is no danger of any interference; nor do I want to infer that the offices at Rockhampton and Townsville will be abolished.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What about having one in Cairns?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They are both very necessary, but I would say that there is no necessity for one in Cairns at present. South, Central, and Northern Queensland each comprise big areas rendering it necessary to have an office in each centre. I shall be guided in this matter by Mr. Bradfield, the registrar of titles, who has had great experience, and has done good service in the department for many years. He makes periodical inspections of the offices, and he is best qualified to judge as to whether or not any additional office is necessary. I think that, if I asked him, he would say that there was no necessity at the moment for an office in Cairns; but I suppose Cairns will get consideration in due course.

The hon. member for Rosewood desired to ascertain whether we are getting value for the Rockhampton and Townsville offices, and whether it is necessary that those offices should remain open. If either of those offices were abolished, it would mean tremendous expense and much inconvenience to people dealing with property in the Central and Northern districts. There is no likelihood of either office being abolished. There are twelve officers less in the department this year than last year, and other officers have been seconded to other departments, following the falling-off in the volume of work. If the position improves, no doubt these men will be returned to this department.

There is a saving of £4,290 in "Salaries" and an anticipated saving of £635 in "Contingencies." The offices are being worked economically; and savings have been made, and will continue to be made as circumstances warrant. There has been a reduction in the item "Temporary Assistance," which last year amounted to £439, whereas only £192 is required this year. A saving has been effected in such items as "Sustenance and Relieving Allowance," "Overtime," etc.

The savings in "Salaries" and "Contingencies" justify the decrease in the vote. It may be difficult for this department—in fact for all Government departments—to keep within their respective votes; but the votes have been placed at a minimum, following instructions to that effect. There has been a decrease in the Townsville staff of three officers, who have been placed in other departments, and there has been a reduction of one in the Rockhampton office.

Mr. MAHER: That lends colour to my remarks.

Item (Titles Offices) agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*) [12.51]: I beg to move—

"That £13,471 be granted for 'Department of Mines—Chief Office.'" The amount appropriated this year is £1,170 less than the amount appropriated last year.

There is a further reduction in salaries of £420. Under "Contingencies" the amount required for "Postage, Telegrams, Travelling Expenses, and Incidentals," is £500 less than the amount appropriated last year, and £814 less than the amount actually expended last year. The amount required for "Railway Fares and Freights, Printing, Stationery, etc.," is £200 less this year, or £141 less than the amount actually expended last year. The annual allowance of £50 appropriated and paid to Mrs. Nash, the widow of the discoverer of the Gympie goldfield, is now discontinued because of her decease. Mrs. Nash had received this allowance ever since the death of her husband. I am sure that everyone regrets the death of Mrs. Nash a few months back. The discovery of the Gympie goldfield by her husband materially assisted Queensland in a time of great financial stress.

No alteration has been made in the number on the staff.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [12.54]: Without any desire to say "I told you so," I have to allude to the debates last year on the Commonwealth Mines Preliminary Syndicate Ltd. Agreement Ratification Act and the Alexander Macdonald Mining Agreement Ratification Act. While thoroughly satisfied that the Government believed they were doing their best to alleviate in some way the depression we are going through, one also has to remember that, as in the case of the Renown Rubber Company, they were actuated by the best possible intentions. I have no doubt that, just as carelessness in not controlling the incidence of these concessions, when used, gave Queensland and the Queensland Government a bad name for carelessness in the case of the Renown Rubber Company, the same thing has happened in the cases under notice. In speaking on the Commonwealth Mines Preliminary Syndicate Ltd. Agreement Ratification Bill in this Chamber last session, as reported in "Hansard," 1930, page 2834, I said—

"There is not a great deal of objection to these duffer fields being given to somebody who will put something into them and employ labour; but, considering the fact that under the mining laws of this State 10 acres will provide at least £400 worth of employment per year, under the arrangement in this measure the spending of £10,000 per annum in respect of 45,000 acres will provide an amount to be spent of only 4s. 6d. per acre per annum."

On page 2836 of "Hansard," 1930, I alluded to the Alexander Macdonald Mining Agreement Ratification Bill in these terms—

"A quarter of a million pounds was spent there, largely by some people in Glasgow associated with shipping. Now I understand that there has been an increased interest in the matter, and he has been able to draw into the scheme some people associated with whisky—and, if they put a great deal of money into this proposition, it will prove that they have had much too much of their own commodity. (Laughter.) The position regarding Cardross is that nobody objects to its being mined or represented here or anywhere else as a base metal proposition—it is not a big field, and the shoots are not too long; there is a

fair amount of water, and the country is fairly hard country in which to mine—but certainly the statement made by Mr. Macdonald in the newspapers, which were foolish enough to publish it without having any proof, that the ore from the field would yield 1½ to 2 ounces of gold to the ton is utterly untrue. Outside of these carping remarks, Cardross has my best wishes for production as a copper mine, and I hope that the price of copper will go up for it.

"The introduction of capital into Queensland in connection with this matter will be much more easy by reason, in the first place, of the statement that the ore will return 1½ to 2 ounces of gold to the ton—which is untrue—and, in the second place, by the proposal of the Commonwealth Government to pay a gold bonus of £1 per ounce."

Later on in the same session, in speaking of the Commonwealth Mines Preliminary Syndicate Ltd. Agreement Ratification Bill, I said—

"Although I like the men, I know their methods, and I know that, if they are not already selling shares, and if the company is not already floated even before this Bill is through, they will sell shares afterwards, and Australia will get very little benefit."

Apparently that is what is happening. For instance, the earlier arrangement of the concession to the Mining Trust, Ltd., turned out quite correctly. These people did spend something on the Lawn Hill field and proved, what we knew before, that there were not any specific lodes of silver-lead ore, but earthy nodules of galena, but not in sufficiently big bodies to encourage them to go on. They certainly did proper prospecting, and in that matter the arrangement made by the Government was perfectly justified; but the arrangement made by the Government in this particular case cannot be, and has not been, justified.

The ex-Agent-General was guilty of a distinct dereliction of duty when statements were published in London while he was there, and he either did not see or did not trouble to correct them, more especially as they are most certainly against the advantage of Queensland. For instance, in the "Sunday Pictorial" of London, of 4th January, 1931, this statement is made by that excellent master of slipshod fiction, Mr. Alexander Macdonald—

"TEN SQUARE MILES OF GOLD LANDS
FOUND.

"SCOTTISH ENGINEER SECURES RECORD
CONCESSION."

He may be Scottish, but he is not an engineer—

"World Search Romance.

"Man who Wrote of 'El Dorado'
discovers it at last.

"Thirty years ago Mr. Macdonald wrote a book on the romance of his quest for gold on the Yukon, and in the 'Never-Never' lands of Australia—all over the world. He called it 'In Search of El Dorado.'

"From the Queensland Government Mr. Macdonald has received a concession of 10 square miles of territory enclosing

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discoveries which rank high in the mining industry. He is the first man in the annals of Commonwealth mining to be awarded, as an individual, such a concession.

“Urge to Prospect.

“To a reporter yesterday Mr. Macdonald declared his old mining instinct stirred within him again some six months ago, when statesmen, bankers, and economists began to broadcast their convictions that only more gold could restore Britain's prosperity.”

They now believe that not more gold is needed—but more paper.

“There is enough gold in the concession I have obtained,” he said, “to float the American war debt.”

The American war debt is £2,277,000,000—

“There are 8 miles of gold-bearing reef, and thousands of acres of rich alluvial gold country. The assays, confirmed by the Government, are among the highest in the world.”

That is a lie. This advertisement continues—

“Mr. Macdonald added that he pegged his claims in the old pioneering way, negotiated with nine wardens, and had been in conference with Cabinet Ministers in the matter.

“He has undertaken with the Queensland Government to return as soon as arrangements can be made to supervise personally the big developments which will shortly follow.

“The Cairns ‘Post.’—The journal in the far north of Queensland states that miners are migrating to the concession in large numbers in expectation of work.

“Some of the gold and rare metal ore specimens which Mr. Macdonald has brought back from his reefs are amazingly rich. Gold gleams in the quartz.

“If gold can be seen with the naked eye,” remarked Mr. Macdonald, “it means at least 1 oz. to the ton—a high working figure.”

A similar statement was published in the London “Financial News” of 8th June, 1931. It reads—

“QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT GOLD AND MINERAL CONCESSION IN FAVOUR OF THE COMMONWEALTH MINES PRELIMINARY SYNDICATE, LIMITED, LEASES, APPROXIMATELY 109 SQUARE MILES.

“PARTICULARS OF THE CONCESSIONS.

“The Queensland Government, alive to the fact that insufficient areas of ground, exacting labour conditions, restrictive mining regulations, and the consequent withholding of capital, had prematurely stopped mining enterprise in Queensland, and further recognising the vital necessity for increased gold production, made what may be aptly termed a British Empire gesture in granting to an English syndicate—on generous terms—definite protective and prospecting rights over an area of 70,000 acres in the goldfield districts indicated, for ten years; with exemption from labour and rental covenants of the Mining Act.”

The advertisement continues—

“As an instance, the Government land rental of 10s. per acre (70,000 acres) called for a payment of £35,000 a year;

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and this has been waived together with a remission of labour covenant . . .

“Gold valued at over £8,000,000 sterling has already been taken under adverse conditions of production from the ceded six districts.”

And they do that under the heading of “Previous operations,” as if these “dud” fields had produced £8,000,000 worth of gold. It goes on—

“The question naturally arises why, with such yields, should the industry have waned? The answer briefly is: Mining in the early days was heavily handicapped by the prohibitive costs of carriage, imperfect gold-saving machinery, lack of capital.”

And they have been saying that ever since the days of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba—

“And further retarded by restricted mining regulations.”

It goes on to say—

“With a conceded territory embracing six goldfields, each averaging 18 square miles, it is expedient at first to concentrate initial operations on known sources of gold! Fortunately, these are many.

“The Under Secretary for Mines had reported”——

No date. They used the figures of forty years ago—

“The Under Secretary for Mines had reported—At the Percy River the finding of 2,100 ounces of gold in a dozen pieces of stone—600 ounces of specimens having yielded 330 ounces of gold—within a claim 150 feet by 400 feet was, no doubt, the event of the year.”

No year is mentioned, and people who do not know Queensland's position are led to believe it is this year or last year. They go on to say that 2,100 ounces of gold have been extracted from a claim 150 feet by 400 feet; so that the guileless investor can divide 150 by 400 out of 109 square miles, and naturally get the proportionate value of gold between the 2,100 ounces in the claim and the millions of ounces sufficient to pay the war debts of the world. The advertisement goes on to say—

“A fully equipped expedition by the concessionaires has now arrived at Percyville (Percy River) to locate the parent reef from which came the fugitive pieces of golden quartz discovered in the ‘Sensation’ claim. The expedition is under the leadership of Mr. Berry, who was recently attached to the Queensland Government service as chief diamond-drill borer.

“The early history of these comparatively untried goldfields indicates the likelihood of many more discoveries of rich deposits; but, although the search for these will be pursued, it is the vast bodies of low-grade ores from 3 to 8 dwt. of gold to the ton of stone and 12 gr. to 2 dwt. from alluvial washdirt that demand chief attention, as affording sure and profitable returns.”

Then it goes on to say—

“Up to the end of 1928 the official returns were—

	£
Gold, valued at	85,452,218
Minerals, other than gold 63,130,925	63,130,925
	£148,583,143

I do not suggest that, even if the conditions of the concession are not being adhered to, the concession should be revoked. I understand that some little work has been done; and, as nobody else wants the concession, they might well stay in possession of it; but if, by the remotest chance, any money is spent in Queensland on any mining operations, I think, even supposing these people have not acted right up to the letter of the conditions of the concession, the Secretary for Mines should have some authority and be able to give some approval to the statements made to collect capital, otherwise in the long run this will do Australia immeasurably more harm than has ever been done before.

In a report made by a royal commission on the mining industry certain very cogent arguments were adduced in favour of lower costs of stampage; but the general tendency in that as in most other matters has been to attack the quality of the labour. During the depression which has not yet ended the "Boulder Perseverance" and the "Youanme mines," in Western Australia, published statements to the effect that their refloatations of the old propositions had failed because of the demands of labour; and, although both these mines were in Western Australia, it was quaintly observed that the existence of Lang was preventing them from getting capital. The real reason, of course, was that they were worked out, because they had picked out the rich ore and left the low-grade stuff which was unprofitable to work without rich ore to sweeten it.

Statements animadverting on mining labour—and there is no better quality mining labour in the world than the Australian mining labour—have been made in connection with the strike at Mount Oxide. One statement was to the effect that, when copper receded from £84 to £35 per ton, the contributors found it impossible to employ miners at the rate prescribed in the award. Now copper had not been £84 per ton for years prior to the work on tribute at Mount Oxide. The fact does remain that a new tribute was let immediately the mining awards were lifted.

The miners, on their part, had this to say:—

"When the industry was excepted from the operations of the Arbitration Act they had no option than to take the relief offered and reduced wages, as has already been done in the mining industry in other parts of the State. To this reduction the miners objected, contending that the price of commodities at the stores at the mines also should be reduced."

I believe these stores are owned by the mining companies or by the tributors; and if, as is alleged here, they are charged well over 3s. per lb. for butter and other commodities at a commensurately high rate, naturally the miners get it both ways—firstly, in the cut in wages, and secondly, in the highest possible cost of commodities.

The facts are that labour is not in any way to blame for the decadence of mining. The story that there are in old mines rich ore left by people who threw them up cannot bear examination. As a general rule, on any old field, when you ask "If stone of a payable value is still showing in the face or the bottom of the shafts, why were they abandoned?" they first of all give as a reason

that there was too much water. And then when you ask if pumps were invented in those days, they tell you, if there was not too much water, there was not enough. Then, when you ask why they did not sink until they got enough, they will tell you when gravelled for any other excuse, that there was a woman in the case and that they quarrelled amongst themselves. So they get you anyhow. Everyone knows that, if there were any payable values left in old shows, the great probability is that they would not have been abandoned; and in any case mining men all over Australia are hungry for new properties. For instance, a large quantity of new money is going into "The Oaks," which it is estimated will only produce 10s. per ton. They expect to put through a great milling tonnage a day and to make a profit of 2s. per ton, and on the basis of their capital that should be a very payable business. So that the story that the rapacity of labour makes people abandon otherwise payable mines is ridiculously untrue.

Let us take the case of a London flotation of about two and a-half years ago—the Whitworth Mining Company. The excuse for its non-productiveness for many years was the rapacity, inefficiency, and costliness of Australian labour. Two Australian companies had this before the recent London company, and labour didn't put them into liquidation. They went into liquidation because they used too little labour. The management spent almost all the capital on machinery which was never erected, and so proved itself unnecessary. There was scarcely 500 feet of development done by either.

The first company got itself floated because its promoters believed that the wrong methods were used by John Moffat—the only man who ever made the mines pay, and who was so decent to his labour that he was said to run a benevolent home for miners. It was said of John Moffat that he would not have ore developed sufficiently ahead of his mill; but the companies that succeeded him never sank at the rate of 10 feet a week while spending the whole of their assets on machinery, the most of which was never erected.

The general objections to mining concessions to foreigners are that they give Australia a bad name through not having proper management, and in this connection the report of the warden at Herberston, as printed in the report of the department for 1931, is worth quoting—

"Apropos of a quotation from a leading periodical, 'London market is already a little shy of North Queensland ventures owing to the recent failure of a tin-bearing proposition.' It seems unfair that the failure should be attributed to the tin-bearing proposition. From the writer's disinterested observations of the operations of English and foreign companies, extending over thirty-three years, the most salient feature of such management appears to be the feverish haste with which the companies' capital is spent on the part of the imported management. The money is there to spend, and as the expenditure of the same in prospecting and developing the mine does not absorb the capital quickly it is spent on non-productive improvements at the surface. In some cases the capital is practically

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exhausted by the erection of a most extensive treatment plant before any attempt is made to prove sufficient ore bodies to require or justify a plant of such dimensions. The selection of competent managers is almost as necessary to success as the existence of the ore bodies, and there is no dearth of well-trained Australians with all the necessary experience of local conditions who could be relied upon to conscientiously manage the mines."

I suggest to the Minister that in the case of these concessions, if they are not revocable—and there is no reason why they should be revoked—at least the statements made abroad which do Australia a great deal of harm should be approved or at least supervised.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*) [2.12]: This is my first appearance for a long time, and I wish to make a few remarks on this vote. I wish first of all to thank Ministers, hon. members of the Legislative Assembly, and the parliamentary staff in general for their kindness towards me during my long illness.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: Coming to the question of mining, I feel that I have a duty to perform to my electors so far as it is humanly possible to discharge it. First of all I would like to know what crimes I have committed, or what wrongs my electorate has done, that three Ministers of the Crown should set out to destroy to some extent the good work which has been accomplished in the past in my electorate. I refer to the fact that the State farm at Home Hill has been sold by the Secretary for Agriculture, the Secretary for Public Lands increased the irrigation rate to the sugarcrowers, and the Secretary for Mines has, I regret to say, to some extent destroyed the export of coal from Bowen.

We have in the past heard a great deal about the Labour Government having sold coal for less than the cost of production. I want to point out to the Secretary for Mines that he has been guilty of that in regard to the Railway Department; and I will prove my case, first of all, by quoting the questions which I asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What was the amount of coal purchased for use in the Railway Department for the financial year 1930-31, from the Bowen State coal mine?"

"2. What was the price per ton paid?"

The answers were—

"1. 56,796 tons 2 cwt.

"2. Average price, 13s. 4.88d. per ton."

Then I turn to the Auditor-General's report, page 120, and I find that the average cost of production for the last financial year was 13s. 5.3d. per ton, so that we can easily see that the Bowen State mine supplied the Railway Department for the financial year at less than the cost of production.

Then I come to the question of the Sleigh agreement. When I again turn to the Auditor-General's report, I find that that agreement has expired. Practically the Auditor-General said the agreement was never signed. At any rate, we all know that coal which was sent from Bowen to New Caledonia has ceased to be sent there. I would like to know from the Minister if he made any effort at all to retain the coal trade after the expiration of the Sleigh con-

tract. That contract meant a great deal to my electorate.

I shall summarise what the contract meant to the Bowen district—

1. For the financial year there was exported the amount of 35,010 tons of coal. This means that, with a coal production at the mine of 800 tons per day, forty-three days' work was found for the miners, which also means that, with constant employment, they would not have to come under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act, which makes special provision for sustenance for miners and waterside workers, and also enables them to contribute more to the local hospital.

2. The export of coal meant more employment on the railways, which have to convey the coal to the port of Bowen, thus enabling the railway workers to get more constant employment, thereby increasing their purchasing power, with consequent benefit to the business people of Bowen.

3. The export of the quantity of coal mentioned meant more constant work for the men employed on the waterfront.

4. The more coal exported from Bowen meant that the harbour board received a greater revenue, and so was able to pay larger amounts to the Government in interest and redemption.

5. The increased employment at the coalfields, on the railways, the waterfront, and on ships coming to Bowen, meant more prosperity to the business people at that centre.

6. Royalty is paid also on every ton of coal to the Mines Department, therefore the greater the production the greater revenue to that department.

I thought I would have been lacking in my duty if I did not make these few remarks on this vote. As I said before, my health is not too good, and I do not propose to speak at any further length.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MULLAN (*Flinders*) [2.18]: I wish to make a few remarks in connection with this vote. I want again to protest against the action of the Government in regard to the discriminatory policy in rebates against Townsville and the gougers of Cloncurry in favour of Chillagoe. Chillagoe now is the only buyer, competition has been eliminated, and the miners are confronted with a policy of "Take it or leave it!" Of the 17,000 tons of copper ore treated at Chillagoe for the year ended June last, 10,000 tons came from the Cloncurry district, the bulk of which came from the Dobbyn, Orphan, and Mount Oxide mines. The small gouger has been squeezed out. The gouger is the best type of prospector and miner. It seems to be unfair for the Government to convey ore from Cloncurry to Chillagoe for £1 a ton, at the same time charging approximately £2 a ton to convey ore to Townsville. The Government claim that this policy provides work for Queensland workers instead of work for the workers in New South Wales. That sounds all right.

Mr. GRIMSTONE: Don't you think it is a sound argument?

Mr. MULLAN: Then why have the Government entered into a contract to send their bullion to a German firm to be refined instead of to an English firm? If it is logical to claim that we should provide work for Queensland workers, then it is just as logical to argue that our bullion should be sold within

[Mr. Bedford.]

the Empire and to Britishers rather than to Germans. The Cloncurry gouger has to pay the piper so that Chillagoe may be kept going. I have no objection to the continuance of the Chillagoe undertaking, but I do object to the miner of Cloncurry having to pay for it. The Minister should consider the advisableness of granting a rebate on ore to Townsville so that the gougers may obtain the benefit of the best market, which is not available to them to-day. The small man on the Cloncurry field is compelled to work only the very richest ore. The Dobbyn and Orphan mines may be able to handle relatively low-grade ore, but the small man has no chance unless he handles only the very rich ore. This doubles the amount of labour, because he must cast aside the low-grade ore so as to obtain the very rich ore. The hon. member for Gregory rightly said the other night that this is having a serious effect in that it is impoverishing the field. The removal of every ton of rich ore will make it correspondingly difficult to work the field on a profitable basis in the future, seeing that the removal of the rich ore reduces the average grade. The policy of the Government has resulted in the miners being driven from the mining areas, where they will probably be needed in time to come. There would probably be a scarcity of real practical miners if we had a real mining boom.

The Secretary for Railways and the Secretary for Mines furnished some very illuminating information in this Chamber yesterday. In 1929, under the policy adopted by a former Government, 15,000 tons of ore were despatched from Cloncurry to Townsville and Chillagoe. I believe it all went to Townsville, because the miners found it more profitable to send it there.

The total quantity of copper ore forwarded from Cloncurry last year to both Townsville and Chillagoe was 11,421 tons. That ore did not come from the gougers, although a large number of gougers were then on the field. The ore came principally from three mines, which were being worked co-operatively—Dobbyn, Mount Oxide, and Orphan mines situated in the Burke electorate. The Minister will see from these figures that the policy of his department has had a detrimental effect on the field. In 1930 the Minister paid a visit to the Cloncurry field. I was very glad to see him come along; and the oftener he comes to such places, in which he should be interested, the more we shall like it. We appreciated his visit very much. He promised to spend a week in the Cloncurry district this year; but he spent only a day in the Cloncurry area, and most of that time was occupied in connection with his visit to the Vulcan mine. Whilst I am very glad that the Minister made a visit to the field this year, I think he should have fulfilled his promise of last year, and stayed a week in the Cloncurry district. I would like to know from the hon. gentleman what is the position in connection with the Vulcan; what money has he advanced to that mine; and what is the promise of success of the proposition? I am very glad that the Minister has advanced money to the assistance of the Vulcan, as it is a very deserving venture, which I hope will succeed.

I want to refer to a matter which, although immediately concerning the Mount Isa district, also concerns the Cloncurry mineral field generally. The report of the Under Secretary for Mines reveals the fact

that the number of accidents in and about metalliferous mines and ore reduction works in the Cloncurry district during the past year was five killed and seventy-three injured. In the previous fifty years fifty men were killed and 345 injured. Last year's figures show a phenomenal increase. The number of injured miners last year comprised those who were incapacitated for more than fourteen days. Of the seventy-three injured forty-three were surface men, many of whom were engaged in the erection of the Mount Isa plant, but there were thirty accidents underground. There would be more men employed in the Cloncurry district in the heyday of its mining prosperity than are employed at Mount Isa at the present time. Inspector Young gives an alarming view of the matter in his report. He states that last year 209 surface workers and 206 underground workers were injured on the Cloncurry field, so that, although seventy-three men only were incapacitated for more than fourteen days, the actual number injured was 415. A comparison of the position in the Central and Northern divisions shows the need for more supervision in the Cloncurry district. During last year statistics in connection with metalliferous mining in the Central district disclose the fact that one man was killed and thirty-five injured, while in the Northern district two only were injured.

The number of accidents in the Cloncurry district reveals an urgent necessity for the appointment of a resident mines inspector at Mount Isa. I hope that the Minister will take note of my request, and give it earnest consideration. There is a resident inspector at Cloncurry, but he has a very big district, which takes him a long time to get over. Many mines are remotely situated, admitting only of a periodical visit to Mount Isa. The Minister was in error last year in removing check inspectors in mines—a principle that he never should have abandoned. Now that the Mining Act has been amended and check inspectors are a thing of the past, while the present Government remain in office, I ask the Minister to appoint a resident inspector at Mount Isa. I do not want to interfere with the present inspector, who, no doubt, has plenty of work to do; but I ask that a resident inspector be appointed to the Mount Isa district, because one is urgently required there, if we can take cognisance of the number of accidents which have occurred there in the last twelve months.

I raised the question of lead poisoning this year, and read a very interesting report which has been received from Mr. Brophy, the organiser of the Australian Workers' Union at Mount Isa, who submitted that the slogan for the district should be "Fumes and dust must go whatever the cost!" The fact that thirty-eight men had gone into hospital suffering from lead poisoning or plumbism five weeks after the commencement of work at Mount Isa showed that Mr. Brophy's remarks were amply justified. On 28th October, I asked the Secretary for Mines this question—

"Has any report or information of any kind reached his department in reference to lead poisoning or plumbism at Mount Isa? If so, will he state how many men have been affected by this disease since the commencement of operations there?"

Mr. Mullan.]

The Minister replied—

"The department has been kept fully informed regarding leading or plumbism occurring at Mount Isa. Conditions resulting in men being affected by lead have had to be met and dealt with in all new works dealing with lead ore or lead products, and the likelihood of such conditions arising at Mount Isa has been fully recognised. Regulations now in force provide that a detailed record of any cases of plumbism occurring must be furnished to the department each month, with full information as to the particular occupation of the man or men affected, and other necessary particulars as to the nature of each case. The chief cause of the cases of plumbism has been the escape of dust in sintering and smelting while getting these processes into normal operation in the new plant. The number of cases of plumbism treated at Mount Isa from 1st July to 17th October was sixty-eight, of which seventeen were recurrent. Fifty-one men, therefore, were affected in the period stated. None were serious cases."

It is in the interests of the company, as well as in the interests of the miners, that everything possible should be done to allay this trouble. I realise that there must be co-operation between the company and the miners. It would be a great misfortune if such a great industry as this were to be marred in the initial stages by the prevalence of this terrible disease. I hope that the Government will do everything they can in the matter. I see no reason why the Minister should not appoint a resident inspector at Mount Isa to further the interests of the miners engaged there.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is the value of sites purchased by the residents of Mount Isa. Very large sums were paid for business sites, ranging from £300 to £600, and for special business sites up to £2,000, whilst for residential sites the figures ranged from £75 to £350, and in special cases to £615. These figures work out at a rental of from £36 to £240 per acre per annum, and, when it is realised that the company is only paying 10s. per acre per annum for its area, it will be seen that the business people of Mount Isa are not facing fair competition. When Mount Isa was established, nobody expected that there would be a second township; but, now that the town has been established, the Government must accept a share of the responsibility for its establishment. I consider the Minister should give some consideration to the high rentals that are now being charged for the sites on the Mount Isa side of the town.

Early in the session I raised a question as to the price paid to the gougers of Cloncurry for gold at Chillagoe. I found that the Minister was paying £4 4s. per ounce. When I asked the question, the Minister very cleverly side-stepped it by telling me how well off the gougers were compared with what they were formerly. I totally deny that they are any better off. On the price of gold to-day, if you add exchange, £7 2s. 8d. should be realised for an ounce of gold. I want to know from the Minister if he thinks it fair only to pay the Cloncurry gouger £4 4s. for his gold. It is only a matter of subtraction for the Minister to see how much he is really robbing the gouger of Cloncurry of for his gold.

[*Mr. Mullan.*

Of course the hon. gentleman may get up and say that he is giving them a quid pro quo in some other way; but that is not satisfactory to the man who has the ore. He should be paid for its metal contents; and, if the Minister is giving something in lieu—which he alleged in a previous reply—the proper thing would be to let them have it in black and white that they are getting £7 2s. 8d., or whatever the price of gold is at the time. There is no doubt that he is diddling the miners out of about £3 per ounce to-day, which is grossly unfair.

The policy of the Government in connection with prospecting might be improved. The amount granted to-day is £1 per week for single men and £2 for married men; and, while that might be sufficient to tide some prospectors over a difficult period where the cost of living is very low, it is totally inadequate in the Cloncurry district, where men have to travel long distances, and must have some sort of conveyance and other paraphernalia incidental to prospecting. I ask the Minister to be a little more generous in regard to prospectors in the Cloncurry district. If one good mine is found, it will more than repay the Government for all the expenditure. I think Mount Isa was found as the result of the policy of the previous Minister, Mr. A. J. Jones, in granting aid to prospectors. I do not think the Minister should find it necessary to require wardens to remit to the head office all applications for the renewal of prospecting grants. If a man goes out, he gets six weeks' allowance, and the Minister ought to give the warden power to give an extension if advisable. A man might be on the eve of getting something good, and it takes a long time to come into Cloncurry and make arrangements for renewals and that sort of thing, whereas, if satisfactory arrangements were made to give the warden discretionary power two or three weeks before the termination of the allowance, the prospector would write into the warden and have his grant renewed before the period expired.

There is another matter I would like to say a few words on, if time permits; that is, in connection with the recent episode at Mount Oxide. The Government are entirely responsible for the whole of that trouble through the cancellation of the metalliferous award. The Minister was most unfair in his reply to the question asked by the hon. member for Burke on the fourth of this month. I object to the Minister not telling all he knew. Some people would say that he was telling a half-truth, but he said that arrangements were made with the warden at Cloncurry to meet the parties concerned with a view to arriving at a settlement, and that the efforts of the warden were of no avail. He did not tell us they were of no avail simply because the other side to the dispute would not meet the warden. That is why they were of no avail.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They did meet him.

Mr. MULLAN: I am informed they did not.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*) [242]: It is recognised that the Mines Department is the Cinderella of all the departments. On this occasion the Estimates show that it is not going to receive much consideration, in spite of all the promises which were

made by hon. members opposite, particularly the Premier, who assured the world at large that, if the restrictions which hampered the mining industry were removed, we were going to have a flood of capital poured into Queensland to resuscitate the industry.

The hon. member for Gregory has clearly exposed the hollowness of the concessions which have been referred to. They have been nothing more than huge tracts of mineral land given to Mr. Hunter, who used to be selling pretty flowers on the Barron Falls, enabling him to take a trip to England. They have not produced one ton of copper nor in any way, with the exception of the Lawn Hill proposition, assisted in bringing about the great rehabilitation of the mining industry which was foreshadowed. When we see the amount provided on the Estimates to carry on the mining industry, we find that it is less than was voted last year; and last year we voted a lesser sum than we did the previous year. It is time that the Premier awoke to the danger of removing the protection given to the miners—protection which they had enjoyed right from the dawn of the mining industry in this State, many of the privileges having been won after severe battles. The hon. gentleman is not going to get anywhere by doing this kind of thing. The Mount Oxide trouble shows clearly that, if we take away from the Industrial Court men who were working under award rates and at the same time provide subsidies on various primary products which they, as consumers, have to pay, we are going to hit the ground somewhere, and we have hit it with a hard thud at Mount Oxide. Just consider the position of the miners at Mount Oxide, living 80 miles from nowhere and under conditions which would tax the strength of every hon. member, working and gouging under adverse conditions; and then, with a stroke of the pen, they are denied adequate remuneration for their work, and no effort is being made by the Government to fix prices of commodities to enable them to exist. I view with much concern the stripping from the miners of the industrial conditions granted under the awards.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Are you suggesting that we should fix the price of copper?

Mr. STOPFORD: I say the Government have fixed the price of flour, so that the miner has to pay a higher price than the economic price of production. I am not growling about that; but at the same time they have deprived the metalliferous miner of the protection which he was previously enjoying, and there is no justice in that. I know that, as soon as mining once more becomes a profitable industry, the miners will get back their old conditions. They have previously obtained their good conditions by their own industrial strength, and they will get them back again. That is the pity of the whole position.

The hon. member for Flinders dealt with a very important matter. On one occasion I charged hon. members opposite with being murderers when they deprived the miners of the protection of their award. I say that one of the worst actions of the Government was when they removed from the miners the protection necessary for the safety of life and limb. The figures quoted by the hon. member for Flinders are a mere bagatelle to what will occur in a year or two

when Mount Isa really gets going. The position at Mount Isa to-day is that the men who are working there are being deprived of the rights which were won by them after years of struggle, one of which was the right to have their own check inspector. The Secretary for Mines, as a sugar-grower, has the protection of a check chemist and a check weigher.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have not.

Mr. STOPFORD: The sugar-growers have. The check weigher operated when payments were made on weights, and check chemists were appointed when analyses of the sugar content were made. The miner has always had the protection of a check inspector. He has always been allowed to elect a check inspector and to pay him. I am not casting any reflection upon Mr. Young, the Government inspector at Mount Isa, who is an excellent man, and I join with the hon. member for Flinders in advocating that he be permanently appointed at Mount Isa. I do not care who the Government inspector may be. He cannot win the confidence of the men in the same way as an inspector appointed by themselves. The check inspector becomes an official of the men, he attends their union meetings, and understands their requirements.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You want him to be an organiser for the union.

Mr. STOPFORD: No. If the Minister is so narrow minded, then he should not be in charge of the department. Read the history of check inspectors! The Government were not game to allow this Chamber to debate the question of whether check inspectors should be removed. They did not remove the check inspector.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There was no necessity.

Mr. STOPFORD: The Government did something worse. It was one of the most miserable acts ever performed by a Minister of the Crown in the history of Queensland. All that the check inspector could do was to log in a book that which he considered necessary for the protection of the health and the limbs of the workers, and the matter would be finally decided by the Government inspector. The check inspector moved round amongst the men, going from stope to stope and from place to place watching the interests of the men throughout the job. If the men submitted a matter that did not justify attention, then the check inspector, who was a miner himself, could candidly tell them that they were wrong. The system of a check inspector is not a new one. Previously the check inspector worked in the mine, and was paid by the men concerned. He did not approach the scene of an accident until the accident had occurred. He was either afraid of the men or afraid of the employer. After years of advocacy the Legislative Council made provision for a check inspector to be elected by the men and paid by the Government. The object was to place the check inspector above the control of the union so far as it related to his pay, and to give the men the right to select the person they considered best fitted for the position. The union was not then able to say that the check inspector was dependent upon the members for his livelihood, and he could not be victimised by the company concerned. He was placed in an absolutely independent position between the two contending parties. He had to be

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a qualified miner, and as a qualified miner could easily earn 30s. a day contracting in the Mount Morgan mine; the salary was fixed at £6 per week. His duties were combined with the duties of an industrial inspector, and he had to attend to certain matters on the mine surface. The present Secretary for Mines got rid of the check inspector by reducing his salary to 15s. per week.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: More than the job was worth.

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. gentleman will have the blood of dozens of men on his head before he is done.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will accept that responsibility.

Mr. STOPFORD: A man who does not understand mining can easily wave his hand and make such a remark. The system of mining carried on at Mount Isa is new to Australia. I had known of the system, but I had never seen it operated. It is known as the "glory-hole" system, under which the miners drive in, and then work to the surface. Lead mining is the most unhealthy branch of mining, and even under the best ventilated conditions we can expect a certain amount of plumbism, or lead poisoning, and attendant complaints. Miners working in metalliferous mines not subject to lead conditions drive in to a dead-end without ventilation, and the heat and atmosphere can be imagined. Coupled with this fact is the dust which causes miner's phthisis and all the other diseases miners suffer from. Under the "glory-hole" system, the miners drive straight through to the roof. The men at Mount Isa are working the jack hammer. That has caused industrial trouble everywhere it has been used. It weighs about 90 lb. The ordinary hopper, which is used by most miners in Queensland, weighs about 40 lb., and it is generally used off the shoulder. The result of juggling a 90-lb. jack hammer under the "glory-hole" system until the miners break through at the roof and get the natural ventilation can easily be imagined.

The expansion of developments at Mount Isa will bring in its train a crop of casualties which will startle Queensland. I am not making any accusation against the mine management. I know that the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company took every reasonable safeguard to protect the life and limb of their employees; but, no matter what precaution is taken, the element of risk in mining is so great that accidents will occur. In Mount Morgan in one year, when 1,100 men were employed in the mine, there were 1,400 ambulance cases. I do not say they were all major cases; but the men employed had on 1,400 occasions to claim attendance from the ambulance. For the sake of saving about £900 a year the Government have deprived all the miners of this State of the protection they are entitled to receive. Mining is at a dead-end to-day. If a revival in mining takes place to-morrow, shows which are lying dormant will be opened up everywhere. Men will risk their lives to obtain employment. Companies with limited capital will rush in to produce metals from abandoned mines. What protection are these miners going to have? Miners will not protect themselves.

Mr. TOZER: What are the captains or shift bosses doing?

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Mr. STOPFORD: They are doing their job, which is to get as much ore out of the mine as they can. If the hon. member went to Mount Isa, he would know what the captains are doing. They are introducing an industrial system into Queensland which has brought the gatling gun into play in the United States of America. I am not a prophet, but I prophesy that immediately Mount Isa becomes a profit-making concern everything it has taken from the workers will be taken back from the company. Mount Isa is located in a place where the company will find it difficult to fight. It has no huge army of unemployed to step in and take the place of men who are now working. It has a highly dangerous mine—dangerous from the point of view of health. The number of accidents quoted by the hon. member for Flinders, considering the shallow nature of the workings, should be some indication to hon. members of what is going to happen in that mine as it gets deeper and as the developmental work becomes greater. I quite realise that the system of "glory hole" mining is not dangerous.

Mr. TOZER: Is that not the same as over-hand stoping?

Mr. STOPFORD: It is. I have heard from men who have come back from Mount Isa that the company provides sprays for the use of the miners; but, as everyone accustomed to mining knows, miners do not use sprays unless compelled to do so. A mining inspector stationed at Cloncurry is compelled to cover a large area of country, and what possible hope has he of enforcing the ordinary mines regulations? I have seen men working at Mount Morgan taking unnecessary risks. I have also seen men with imaginary grievances coming along, and we have had industrial trouble before the Government inspector could get there. The check inspector—the man who had worked at every stope and on every level in the mine—was merely delegated to investigate the matter; and, when he reported to the executive of the union that there was no case, the man who made the complaint was told to work or to get out—that he would get no union support. Under the present conditions I fear that many little hold-ups may occur that could easily be overcome if there was a man present who enjoyed the confidence of the men. It would only cost £300 a year. I realise the Government are hard put to for money; but surely the Minister will admit that it is a shame that a more frequent inspection is not made of the valuable State asset at Mount Morgan. After all, it is a valuable State asset. We only give it to the company to work. The company has to keep a certain number of men employed there to keep the asset safe—

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: When did the mine close?

Mr. STOPFORD: I am not arguing that the inspector does not go to Mount Morgan occasionally; but I hold that, when we had the check inspector, there was a daily inspection, which prevented many fatal accidents. I give the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, Limited, credit for the fact that, when the check inspector discovered something which was caused through the fault of the men or of the management, in nine cases out of ten the company was ready to

give effect to the check inspector's recommendation. On the other hand, if we have to wait until the arrival of the Rockhampton inspector, who may be at Many Peaks or some of the other places in the vast district which he has to supervise, it may be impossible to prevent a disaster occurring. I trust the Minister will reopen the matter.

At all times the Government have claimed that they believe in round-table conferences. I have a letter in my possession in relation to the Styx coal mine. I had intended to address a question to the Minister on the matter; but perhaps the hon. gentleman may be able to give me the information at this stage. The hon. gentleman knows that under the coal mining industrial laws of the State a board, presided over by an independent chairman, adjusts the rates of pay for all classes of work in the industry. In the letter which I have received from the Styx No. 3 Branch of the Queensland Colliery Employees' Union, these statements appear—

"Matters industrially are in a state of unrest here at Styx, owing to the Mines Department not honouring award rates, so far as machine-cut coal is concerned. The rate for that class of coal was fixed by the Board of Trade and Arbitration per medium of the late Mr. W. J. Dunstan at 5s. per ton. Of course, since then this rate has been subjected to a 10 per cent. reduction. The Mines Department, on the introduction of the Arc-Wall machine, has notified this branch that they will only pay 3s. 7d. per ton, despite the present rate of 4s. 6d. as set down in the award. This branch has made overtures to them, with a view to the award being observed, but without avail. A hold-up over the business appears inevitable. Branch committee would deem it a favour should you ask the Minister for Mines, Mr. Atherton, on the floor of the House, the following questions in connection with the foregoing:—

'Is it a fact that the Minister for Mines, or his advisers, are attempting to flout the Arbitration Court award at Styx No. 3 Mine *re* machine-cut coal, insofar as a rate of 3s. 7d. per ton is demanded while they at the same time are fully cognisant of the fact that the award rate governing that class of coal is 4s. 6d. per ton (Dunstan award); and, further, what is the department's reason for not having any alteration in the rate for said coal a matter for argument by both parties concerned, at Coal Board, with the finding by the independent chairman to be binding and honoured by the parties concerned?'"

It is idle for hon. members opposite to say on the hustings that they believe in industrial disputes being settled at a round-table conference presided over by an independent chairman when the Government decline to meet their employees in this instance. Here is an opportunity to avert a strike or hold-up in one of the Government coal mines. The question appears to be a reasonable one, and I hope the Secretary for Mines will have an opportunity, before the vote goes through, of conferring with whoever is responsible in his department for this position, and that he will be able to announce that the policy of the Govern-

ment is to meet their employees in conference, and that the decision will be adhered to, and also that the request of the six miners will be agreed to.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*) [3.7]: I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Mount Morgan particularly in regard to the attitude adopted by the Mines Department respecting the imposition of what the department considers a fair remuneration for coal won by means of machines. No doubt the position at the Styx is bordering on a position similar to that which occurred at the Bowen coalmines a little while ago. In that case, if a proper round-table conference had been arranged with the union officials, guided by the advice of their representatives at the mine who knew the conditions, much of the trouble at Bowen could have been obviated. Similar tactics are being adopted in this case. Apparently the Minister, on the advice of his officers, is endeavouring to reduce the running costs of the mine. Acting on the advice that this coal can be won at a certain rate per ton, without reference to any tribunal, the department issued an ultimatum to the miners that such and such a rate would prevail when the machines were put into operation, and left it at that. The result was that a dispute arose immediately, which means a good deal of trouble for the men before they get a fair deal. If the Minister has been used to these methods in the North, he will find, after a little experience, that they will not work in the position he is now holding as Secretary for Mines, particularly in regard to that class of work.

Like other hon. members who have spoken, I regret the lack of facilities offered by the present Administration for the rehabilitation of the mining industry in this State. During previous sessions we had a gesture from the Minister by way of concessions to certain individuals—really a gesture to the public that something was going to be done to open up certain mines that had been closed, when, really, all that was done was to grant a franchise to certain individuals in the hope that they would be able to exploit the moneyed interests overseas for their own benefit, and not for the benefit of the mining industry. To date, nothing has come of any of these propositions. No effort has been made by the Minister to have a comprehensive survey of the possibilities of putting the mining industry on a better footing.

I want particularly to refer to the coal-mining industry and the possibilities that exist for building up that industry. The high cost of producing coal as a result of the use of obsolete methods in the industry was referred to last night by speakers at the dinner given by the Chamber of Commerce. It was stated that the price was increasing in Queensland, whereas in other countries the price of coal has been decreasing, not so much as the result of a reduction of wages, but because of the application to the industry of systematic and scientific methods. I refer particularly to South Africa, and other countries which have been forced, as the result of competition, to adopt those methods. These is a possibility in Queensland of building up our coal export trade to a greater extent that exists to-day.

The Labour Government attempted to assist the development in the Central district of the huge coal deposit at Blair Athol. The Labour Government gave the companies a

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flat rate concession of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton per mile on the haulage of the coal to the coast. It was estimated by the owners of those collieries that with that concession, they had a fair chance of building up an export trade. As time went on, we had to assist the companies by the erection of cranes at the various ports, and in one instance the then Government took steps to dredge a harbour in the Rockhampton district, which is now obsolete. A little coal eventually went to the port of Gladstone; but the trade died off, and there the matter stands. No attempt has been made to follow the matter up—I do not know whether the Minister has received any suggestions from his officers in this respect.

We have enormous supplies of coal of good quality and of various grades in Queensland, but nothing is being done to assist the industry. If the industry was encouraged and assisted, many thousands of miners could be employed. It is stated that for every miner employed three men are found employment in allied industries.

Many people believe that the reason for the success of the South African coal industry is because they mainly employ Indian coolie and Kaffir labour at a low rate of remuneration. Figures which I have taken from the South African "Year Book" show that, while we in Queensland formerly produced at the same rate as South Africa, we have gradually slipped back in this regard. In 1910, for instance, according to the South African "Year Book," the price per 100 lb. of coal in South Africa was 1s. 5.90d., as against 1s. 4.52d. in Australia. In 1930 the price per 100 lb. in South Africa was 1s. 7.22d., as compared with 2s. 11.7d. in Australia.

Another point I want to emphasise is what is being done by the South African Government to put the industry on a firm basis so as to tap the natural coal resources of the country and meet the competition of the rest of the world. A coal commission was appointed in South Africa in 1929 to report on the various measures required for the development of the industry—namely, the question of grading coal for export and for bunkering purposes, the equitable distribution of the coal amongst the participating collieries, and the discouragement of the export of low-grade coal. Following on the report of that commission, an Act was passed in 1922, which provided that all coal exported from South Africa should be graded, that certificates should be given with regard to the grade supplied to exporters, and also dealing with other conditions outlined in the report of the commission.

A wonderful trade has been built up over a period of years. The following figures give one phase of the development of the coal industry in South Africa:—

—		1920.	1929.
		Tons.	Tons.
Coal exported from	South Africa	1,093,842	1,535,949
Coal bunkered	..	1,423,000	1,753,554

The mining interests there have systematically pooled the whole of the coal resources of the country, and they have been brought under the supervision of the Coal Mining Act

passed in 1922. That legislation provides for a definite system of planned economy in its application to coal production, for the grading of coal, and for the issue of certificates relating to export coal. It means that, when a certificate of quality is issued, purchasing nations in the other parts of the world can rely upon the quality of the coal consigned.

The South African Government have also endeavoured to encourage the development of the coal industry by allowing a rebate more generous than can be found in any other part of the world. A short while ago the rebate amounted to 8s. per ton on coal exported from South Africa—a considerable concession to the coalmining interests of that country. They have developed and maintained this trade in face of the prevailing depression throughout the world.

I have been carefully considering the contents of a book entitled "The Coal Industry of the World," compiled by the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce. That book deals with the coal resources of the world, and the development and decline in the production and export of coal in the various countries of the world over a number of years. The development of scientific methods and the utilisation of other fuel resources has resulted in a diminution in the consumption of coal. Countries which in the past imported large quantities of coal have now developed their resources by the establishment of huge hydro-electric schemes, and are providing electric energy for the exploitation and development of their own industries. In the face of these new and important developments, which must have a serious influence upon the coal markets of the world, there are still huge markets to be exploited, some in close proximity to Australia. I refer to the markets of Java, Singapore, Japan, and China. They are very important and very attractive markets. I admit that Japan produces coal within her own country, and even exports coal; but she also imports considerable quantities of a type of coal which cannot be produced within her own borders.

A little more could be done by the Government to give the coalmining industry an opportunity to exploit these markets. In discussing this question with the Blair Athol interests a little while ago, I discovered that, notwithstanding the enormous seam of coal there which can be mined at a considerable reduction in cost as compared with other mines, and notwithstanding its distance from the port of Gladstone, which is the best port for the company to ship coal from, they are still about 2s. per ton shy of the price which would enable them to become established on the Java market. If it is possible for a country like South Africa to make it profitable to give a rebate of 8s. per ton on every ton of coal exported, and also a rebate on coal used for bunkering purposes, we could increase our concessions to the industry a little in order to place it on a competitive basis with the South African industry. If that were done, it would no doubt appear to be a direct burden on the taxpayers; but for every miner employed there are indirectly three other men employed in allied industries which are necessary to keep the industry going. The combined activities of the coalmining industry and its allied industries would more than make up any deficiency resulting from rail concessions granted by

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the Government. The matter is worth considering. The Government should not arrive at a haphazard decision, but should demand from the industry a systematic reorganisation, under which a planned system could be adopted. We cannot continue to hew coal under uneconomic conditions and expect to compete in the export trade. If concessions are given to the industry, some more highly scientific system of coal production should be expected from the collieries.

Mr. COSTELLO: Your Government did nothing in that direction.

Mr. FOLEY: We attempted to meet the conditions of our time. The rate on coal railed from Blair Athol was reduced to 4d. per ton per mile to the nearest port; but still the company could not compete in the export trade. Even mines situated nearer to the ports could not compete in the export trade because of their high production costs. I would recommend the Minister to pay a visit to Blair Athol before he retires from office in order to study the conditions there. He will then see the enormous seam coal that is there to be worked. Under scientific methods of mining this coal can be placed on the trucks at 2s. per ton; but that result cannot be achieved under existing methods. It is only possible under the strip-mining methods pursued in the United States. At Blair Athol there is a seam of 65 feet of clean coal with an average depth of 60 feet, whereas in the United States 30 feet of overburden must be stripped before a seam of coal 23 and 33 inches in thickness can be worked. We have at Blair Athol a deposit of good clean coal unequalled for steaming purposes lying dormant without any effort being made to exploit it. The same remarks apply to other collieries nearer the coast than Blair Athol. I am not pushing a barrow for that particular mine; but my remarks apply to all Queensland. Much good could be done if an investigation were made into the position by competent men.

As a result of the world-wide depression, we find that certain countries are resorting to the old-time methods of bartering commodities of which they possess a surplus. For instance, just recently Canada made a big bartering deal with one of the South American countries, as a result of which she is supplying wheat in return for the equivalent in coffee beans. Much could be done by investigating the possibilities of working along similar lines so far as the Eastern countries are concerned, where there is a demand for coal. Coal could be sent, and we could receive in return commodities which are not produced in Australia.

I commend my suggestion with regard to the reorganisation of the coal-mining industry in connection with building up the export trade, together with my suggestion as to the possibilities of bartering; and I trust that the Minister will do something along these lines before he relinquishes office.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [3.31]: I consider mining is one of the most important activities of the Government, and one which will ultimately be the means of helping not only Queensland but also Australia out of the present financial difficulties. If by any chance large quantities of payable gold were discovered, it would provide the quickest possible return.

Mr. FOLEY: You have to find the gold first.

Mr. TOZER: It is not necessary to wait until it grows; the return is available when it is discovered. Further, the discovery of large fields would draw to them a large number of the population and thus help to solve the unemployment problem.

The hon. member for Leichhardt dealt chiefly with the question of coal. I have had a little experience with coal, and it has shown me that we have been unable to sell all the coal which we mine. When gold-mining operations were being conducted at Gympie, billet wood was used to get up steam to work the drills and compressors. It was found that wood fuel was unsuitable, and we, therefore, turned our attention to developing the coal-mining industry, not only to satisfy our requirements for gold-mining, but also to provide a market. We found there was not sufficient demand for coal. The idea of the hon. member for Leichhardt is that the coal industry will be the means of solving the unemployment question; but, if I judge the hon. member aright, it will be necessary to pay some sort of subsidy to foster that industry. That is one reason why I object to it. Gold-mining would be more beneficial, although I admit that the discovery of oil would have equally beneficial results to this country. Oil fuel has displaced coal fuel in many directions, and it has been found much cheaper to use oil than coal, which is another reason why the demand for coal has fallen off considerably. The whole of the Queensland coast contains coal-producing land. Ultimately it will be a wonderful benefit to Queensland if we do get oil.

At 3.36 p.m.,

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

Mr. TOZER: I congratulate the Minister on his prospecting grant. Certainly the vote is very small. He has only £10,000 on the estimates for prospecting in the whole of Queensland. That amount is absolutely absurd; and, if I had the power, I would not hesitate to put £100,000 on the estimates for prospecting purposes, because it would give employment of a kind that would encourage men to go on the land and use their own energy. That would be quite a different thing to putting a man on intermittent relief work, where he does something mechanically, gets paid for it, and that is the end of it. There is a chance of developing the State and getting some considerable return as a result of prospecting. Quite a few of these prospectors are getting a little gold. I do not say they are getting anything wonderful; but hon. members know that they can show small specimens carrying gold or specks of gold. Lots of them dolly these specimens, and they have little bottles containing gold dust. I do not think this gold is shown in the returns, because they can sell the gold to any of the banks, or to assayers, jewellers, or even to dentists. I really think we are getting more gold from prospecting than is shown in the return.

I want to congratulate the Minister on his grant of £1 per week to single men and £2 per week to married men. I do not say that is a fair wage; but it is a help to men who are out prospecting. These prospectors are quite willing to go out with that assistance, knowing that if they do find anything it will belong to themselves.

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The Victorian Government only pay prospectors 5s. per week, while the New South Wales Government pay 8s. a week. I admit that the grant in this State is small; and, if we could afford to pay more to these prospectors, I would be quite willing to increase the amount; but, if you only have a limited vote of £10,000, you cannot be too generous. If you are too generous, the money will go to a few, and the big majority will get nothing. The hon. member for Leichhardt interjected that you have to find the gold. Most certainly you have to find it. You have to work, and you have to find these things; and look at the number of fields that have been found in Australia!

Mr. FOLEY: There are not many left.

Mr. TOZER: What an absurd thing for any man to say! The hon. member cannot be a mining man, because he is not sanguine. I am sure the late Secretary for Mines would not say that there is no more gold to be found in the Commonwealth. We have only scratched the surface, and gold will be found when we are dead and gone. Fields that we are not working to-day will be worked because of better methods of mining. Does any hon. member mean to say that Gympie is worked out? Not at all! We have only gone down a certain depth. At present water stops the main part of the field from being worked; but there are any number of places round the field where men are prospecting and obtaining a certain amount of gold. There is no doubt that it is an expensive proposition to put down the machinery when you get gold, and a certain amount of capital is required for that purpose.

Some people who are prospecting round Gympie are getting rather nice returns. There are two places on the field where deep shafts have been sunk in the past. One was put down 1,000 feet, and another 3,000 feet; yet they are getting gold close to those places at a depth of 100 feet, where it was never thought worth while to prospect in the old days. There is one shaft which has been sunk 1,000 feet close to the Louisa mine, and in the Louisa mine they are getting good gold at 50 feet. Look at all the other places on that field which may have been missed in the past! Take the Gympie Scottish mine, which three times was abandoned as valueless. Eventually, with Scottish capital, they were able to sink a shaft which proved that that was an exceptionally rich piece of ground, and it has paid something over £1,000,000 in dividends.

The total value of gold won in Australia up to the present time is £530,000,000, and, according to the hon. member for Leichhardt, that is the lot; but he is wrong. It is only a beginning. Victoria holds the pride of place with regard to the total gold production, the amount being £305,000,000; Western Australia holds the second place, the total production being £161,000,000; and Queensland holds third place, the total production being about £37,000,000. Queensland is in its infancy so far as goldmining is concerned; and it will be proved later that there are several places in Queensland which will return a great quantity of gold, and Queensland will ultimately be the chief gold-producing State of Australia. Mount Morgan, for instance, was passed over repeatedly for years and years, as nobody thought anything of it, and then it suddenly developed.

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That is one single mountain practically of gold. Close to Mount Morgan there is Sugarloaf Mountain, subsequently known as the Mount Morgan Extension mine, and about a stone's throw from the original mine. That shaft was sunk and supported by nearly all the officials of Mount Morgan; yet it did not prove anything, and they never paid a dividend from start to finish. Look at all the other mountains we have throughout Queensland! Nobody knows what gold there is in them. North Arm, near Gympie, was practically unknown ten years ago. Then miners got some stone there, but did not know there was gold in it; and it was only at the beginning of this year that two men proved there was silver and gold there. These men only put through about 200 tons, but they got in four months about £4,000 worth of gold.

Mr. FOLEY: Were they experienced men?

Mr. TOZER: Yes. They are there now, and are putting up machinery at a cost of £5,000. They are putting a tunnel into the mountain to prove it, and are also sinking a working shaft to prove how far the reefs go down. In that locality there is a range of mountains extending down to the Bluff. Why should a mountain at one end be the only one in the range that carries gold, and not the others which have not yet been tested?

There are three ways of prospecting. One is by the department sending out a geologist with experienced miners to prospect for gold, but that has not yet been done in Queensland. Unfortunately, insufficient funds are available. Next we have the miner infected with the gold fever, who goes out and endeavours to locate gold-bearing dirt. This type has chiefly been responsible for the discovery of gold in Queensland. Then we have prospectors working certain shows of their own, who apply for assistance to develop their mines.

The hon. member for Mount Morgan contended that the Government were to blame for the accidents in the mines because, he alleged, check inspectors had been removed. There were three check inspectors appointed for Queensland, one stationed at Mount Morgan, one at Townsville—hundreds of miles from any mine—and the other stationed in Brisbane.

Mr. BRUCE: The man stationed in Townsville visited the Clenbury and other mining fields.

Mr. TOZER: No check inspectors were ever stationed at Gympie. I do not argue that check inspectors are not of some use. I know the work of a check inspector; but it is the duty of every experienced miner to see that the ground is safe and that no accident will occur. Then we have the shift boss, or captain, who goes round with the men; and it is the duty of the men to point out unsafe ground to the shift boss or captain, and it is his duty to inspect for himself. In the case of big mines, we have underground managers in addition to the general manager; but, with small mines, we have only a shift boss or captain in addition to the manager. The manager goes round every day—generally twice a day—and the miners can point out everything to him. He inspects as he goes round. The Government cannot be blamed for the accidents that occur. Accidents will occur anywhere.

Mining is a risky undertaking, and experienced miners endeavour to protect themselves. Miners do become careless, in the same way as all classes of people gradually come to treat their work with contempt. They become careless in the handling of dynamite, and accidents are likely to occur through explosions and falls of earth. Care must be taken to cope with industrial diseases, but the Workers' Compensation Act deals with all those matters. I am with the miner every time. It was my habit to go below every Thursday afternoon to inspect every mine in which I was interested. I have a fair idea of the workings below, and I know the risks that the miners run. We should make every provision against the occurrence of accidents, and that is exactly what the Government are doing. That policy has been followed by every Government.

Mr. BRUCE: The present Government have done it by taking away the check inspector.

Mr. TOZER: Some of the check inspectors did not reside in mining areas. A better system has now been adopted. If the miners see anything wrong down below, or if they wish an inspection to be made, they have only to ask that a check inspector be appointed for it to be attended to at once.

Gold was first discovered in Queensland near Warwick in the early fifties, but the discovery was not of much importance. A certain amount of gold is still being won in that district. The first gold rush in Queensland took place in 1853 at Canoona, near Rockhampton. That is one of the places that is coming again now, and where some nuggets have been obtained. Thousands of gold diggers came from Victoria and New South Wales, but, as they did not find gold, they had to be returned at the expense of those colonies. Gold was next discovered at Calliope in 1852. We are now endeavouring to unwater a shaft at Calliope because we think there is a show there which is worthy of a trial. It will be given a trial. The next gold rush took place at Crocodile Creek in 1855, and that was followed by another rush in 1867 at Morinish. Both these places are in the Rockhampton district. The hon. member for Rockhampton will admit that there is still a great possibility of gold being discovered in the Rockhampton district, because prospecting work is now proceeding at Mount Hector. Gold was discovered at Gympie in 1867. The Palmer River gold rush took place in the early seventies. A little gold was found near Enoggera as far back as 1868. Shafts were sunk, but these were subsequently abandoned. I saw a little bottle of gold the other day which had been obtained in the Enoggera district.

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

Mr. A. J. JONES (*Paddington*) [3.56]: I hold that the Department of Mines and the mining industry are equal in importance to any other department or industry. The three things pertaining to mining which go to make a nation great are iron, coal, and oil. That is apart altogether from the value of metalliferous mining.

I do not hold altogether with the opinion that every old mine which has been previously worked is of no value, or is not possible of again being worked and made gold-producing. In Queensland it is not so much a question of making new discoveries—which

would be very welcome—as it is of treating ore bodies in mines which have already been discovered. The reason why some goldmines in the past have been abandoned was not because of any harsh industrial conditions, because the gold deteriorated, or gold values decreased, but rather because the companies working them had not provided sufficient funds for developmental work to enable the mines to be worked to a greater depth and for a longer period. As a matter of fact, the declaration of dividends in many cases precluded developmental work.

I am pleased to note that there is a revival in mining in this State. Possibly it is not very marked; nevertheless it is pleasing to notice that our production has increased, and is still increasing. It is also pleasing to note that two large companies are operating in this State—the Mount Isa Company in a silver-lead proposition, and the company which has taken over certain gold-bearing mines in the Mount Coolon district. In the future we must look forward for prosperity to large scale mining; that is, to the treatment of our low-grade ore in vast tonnages rather than in an endeavour to find small rich El Dorados, although they would be very welcome. No doubt the Mount Isa Company is doing wonderful work in mine development. Likewise, Gold Mines Limited, which has recently taken over several mines at Mount Coolon, is setting a similar example. This company purchased a couple of mines at Mount Coolon at a price in the vicinity of £100,000, and spent thousands of pounds in development before attempting to extract any gold. All this required capital. They have proved their mine by a system of shaft sinking, driving, and proper mine development without putting up plant. Now they are ready to put up the plant and take out the profits spread over a period of years.

In the very restricted time which one is given in this debate—for twenty-five minutes is not sufficient to deal with all the questions which arise on the Mines Estimates—I do not wish to miss an opportunity of making reference to one matter. The question of the coal industry was very ably mentioned by the hon. member for Bowen, whom we are all pleased to see back again in this Parliament. The hon. member made some reference to the Sleigh coal contract. The Auditor-General also makes reference to that contract, and I should like the Minister to note his remarks. The Government of which I was Secretary for Mines entered into a contract with Mr. Sleigh, and under that contract the prices payable were—

Best screened coal, 14s. per ton on trucks at mine.

Unscreened coal, 12s. per ton on trucks at mine.

Screened small coal, 11s. per ton on trucks at mine.

The present Minister continued that agreement, and increased the prices on the following scale:—

	Per ton.
	s. d.
Best screened coal ...	16 6
Run of mine coal (unscreened) ...	13 6
Screened coal (small) ...	12 6
Unscreened coal (slack) ...	10 6

According to the Auditor-General's report for the year ended 30th June last, the total

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concession in respect of coal supplied to Mr. Sleigh during 1930-31—that is, during the present Minister's term of office—was £5,634 5s. 2d. The Auditor-General, at page 122 of his report, says—

“The total value of the concession since the commencement of the contract is £23,650 6s. 5d.”

That conveys to the public of Queensland that under both agreements Mr. Sleigh actually received a concession valued at £23,650 6s. 5d. That is not a fair way of stating the case, because the Minister knows that for the last year Mr. Sleigh did not make a profit of £5,634 5s. 2d.; nor did he make a profit of £23,650 6s. 5d. during the term of his contract. The so-called concession is the difference in the price at which coal was sold to Mr. Sleigh and the price charged to Australian industry, railways, and consumers generally. It should not be considered either as a concession or as a profit. Everyone knows that it is not possible for any Queensland Government to get an Australian price for coal outside Australia. The hon. member for Leichhardt dealt with the question this afternoon. We have to suffer competition from South Africa, where coal mines are worked under entirely different conditions. For example, cheap labour conditions obtain in South Africa, and there is also a bonus of 6s. 7d. per ton paid by the railways for coal shipped to the wharves. It is not possible for Australia to compete with South Africa in the Eastern market. Newcastle has lost her trade, not because of industrial disputes or undue harsh labour conditions, but because South African coal can be sent to the East at a much cheaper price than we can supply it. We made an attempt to do something by selling coal at a low price to Mr. Sleigh in order that he might secure a trade with the East.

Mr. MAHER: Through a middleman.

Mr. A. J. JONES: We sold the coal outright to him, and Mr. Sleigh did not make one penny commission out of it.

Mr. MAHER: He made a profit.

Mr. A. J. JONES: The hon. member knows nothing about it.

Mr. MAHER: I know that much about it.

Mr. A. J. JONES: I may tell the hon. member that Mr. Sleigh's total profit under the agreement made by myself as Secretary for Mines was £568 16s. 9d. According to the Auditor-General's report, the public may be led to believe that a concession valued at £23,000 was given to him. I may point out that Mr. Sleigh offered to produce his books to the Premier of this State so that the Premier could investigate the charges that he made in this Chamber and prior to the elections. Prior to the elections the Premier said that 1s. per ton was paid by the Mines Department for every ton of coal that was sold from the Bowen State colliery. I take it that he referred to Mr. Sleigh. That Mr. Sleigh received a commission is not correct. I contend that the Auditor-General's report should be more explicit. I do not say it is incorrect, because that is the difference between the price of coal we sold to Mr. Sleigh and the Australian price.

Mr. MAHER: Mr. Sleigh sold the whole of that coal for export.

Mr. A. J. JONES: He sold some for bunkering, but he had no right to sell coal

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in Queensland. The hon. member knows that, when he sells butter overseas, he does not get the Australian price for butter; and, if we want to sell our coal in the East, we cannot get the Australian price for it.

On another vote the Premier said that the Mount Isa Company, the big company operating in Queensland, had urged the re-establishment of the Legislative Council because of its fear of another Government getting into power. I want to point out that the present Mount Isa Company started operations in Queensland after the Upper House had been abolished, and we were working under a unicameral system. That proves that they had no fear of the Government then in power.

Mr. BRAND: Did they express that view to you?

Mr. A. J. JONES: It was expressed in the “London Times.” Mr. Leslie Urquhart, in his report to the shareholders, said—

“In making this necessarily brief review, I must refer to the all-important question of Australian labour and the attitude of the trade unions to capital and enterprise. Prior to our departure for Australia we heard a great deal, from sources competent or incompetent to express an opinion, that was not encouraging on this subject.

“It was suggested that in embarking on our new venture we were not discounting the negative attitude of labour, the fact that no contract or piece work was allowed, and the many difficulties we should meet with generally, due mainly to the interference of the trade unions.”

Later on he said—

“We sought and took advantage of every opportunity to meet political and labour leaders, we mixed and conversed with the men and with trade union officials, and, finally, we attended public meetings called by the representatives of the principal trade unions concerned, the proceedings being fully reported in the press. At these meetings we held free and frank discussion; we were shown every consideration, and the greatest good feeling prevailed.

“I hope that these few remarks have shown that not only is the attitude of the Queensland Government most helpful, but that we have the good will of the trade unions and of the men; and I can frankly say that any vestige of doubt which may have been in my mind as to the attitude of labour has been fully and finally removed. (Applause.) That we may have misunderstandings and difficulties cropping up from time to time, as in every other country, is fairly probable, for men are only human, but granted the continuation of the existing good will and mutual confidence I have no manner of doubt as to the result.”

That statement was made by Mr. Leslie Urquhart, the London chairman of the company, which proves that he did not fear the Government in power at the time. The Government of that day were always desirous of encouraging not only the mining industry generally but the development of the Mount Isa mine. We are all pleased to know that the field will be highly successful and will be of material advantage to the State.

Mr. MAHER (*Rosewood*) [4.14]: I would like to make a few observations on the subject of the search for oil. It is evident that the activities in regard to the search for oil in Queensland have considerably slowed down in recent times. This is due to the fact that a great number of companies which were formed for the purpose of searching for oil have shown more or less negative results. Evidence has accumulated that there is oil in Queensland in certain districts, but we have reached an impasse in regard to the successful prosecution of the search for oil in the State.

I want particularly to refer at this juncture to the very valuable series of articles which were contributed to the metropolitan press by Dr. Woolnough on this highly important subject last month. Dr. Woolnough, the Commonwealth Geologist, has just returned from a visit to the United States of America, and has formed very important conclusions, which he has set down for all to read. I have no doubt that the Minister and the geologists attached to the Department of Mines have absorbed the points made by Dr. Woolnough. In order to bring the matter under public notice, I would like to mention certain points, one of which is the emphasis which Dr. Woolnough attaches to geological survey, or what he terms "contour outcrop geological surveys."

Mr. A. J. JONES: Aerial surveys also.

Mr. MAHER: Yes, aerial surveys also. I was inclined to think that the suggestion with regard to aerial surveys was rather fanciful until I read the report of Dr. Woolnough. I have no doubt that a survey of the ground from a high elevation is very similar to observing indications of water from the air. From a great height we are able to see things which are not evident to the eye as we walk along the surface of the earth. There is no doubt that aerial surveys have a very important bearing on the particular point which Dr. Woolnough emphasises. He says that, when he went over the country in California from which they are obtaining valuable oil to-day, he found these conditions—

"In the Californian occurrences the general dreary monotony of the arid hills, devoid of visible outcrops, suggested the absolute hopelessness of the geological problem. My guide pointed out to me tiny fragments of white cherty shale scattered through the soil, and explained that, as the result of long and discouraging work in the field, it had become apparent at last that these fragments were derived from thin, continuous beds of rock, nowhere visible as such at the surface. By following out these lines of fragments, sometimes literally on the hands and knees, the geological features of two great oilfields were laboriously deciphered."

That illustrates that, under Australian conditions, we have not paid the intensive and detailed attention to the question of geological survey that obviously has been paid in the United States of America, and which apparently is essential to the successful search for oil. It is evident that a great amount of the shareholders' money has been wasted in Australia and Queensland by companies proceeding with deep drilling on chance. Certainly, they have been aided on rough geological lines by the available geologists

in this State; but I do not think anything on the intensive lines adopted in the United States has been attempted in Queensland. The general observations of Dr. Woolnough more or less point to the necessity in the future of exercising a greater measure of control over companies engaged in drilling for oil. It seems evident that we should not permit a company to put down a deep well involving a terrific amount of expenditure unless the geological structures have been carefully checked up and approved not only by the geologist attached to the staff of the company but also by the responsible officers of the geological staff attached to the Mines Department. If we are ever going to secure confidence in the continued search for oil in Queensland, then the Mines Department must give such a lead and such encouragement to people to invest their money in the future by exercising a greater measure of control over deep drilling. I have been told that it costs in the vicinity of £12,000 to put down a deep well, and it is an absolute waste of money unless we feel we are putting it down, not as a blind stab, but where the geological structure offers some possibility of success.

I very foolishly supported the old policy with my hard cash and not by windy words. I was one who was prepared to take a chance under conditions as we saw them in Queensland, and I lost. There is a big investing public in Queensland and Australia who are still prepared to take a chance, and are still prepared to gamble and to take a risk in a search for oil for the rich reward that oil will give. But we have to take stock of the position as we see it to-day. There is no good continuing operations on the unsuccessful conditions of the past. Dr. Woolnough points out that within a radius of 20 miles of Roma we might as well abandon the search for oil because the geological conditions within that radius are entirely unsuitable for oil accumulation. Still, wells are being proceeded with in that district, and within that radial area. The shareholders of these companies should be protected, and we should try to protect our future activities in the search for oil. Mr. J. H. Reid, of the Queensland Geological Department, Dr. Woolnough, and Dr. Jensen agree that the big basin which exists to the north-east of Roma, moving in the direction of Springsure, offers the most suitable locality for the conduct of a successful search for oil. In the opinions of those highly capable geological experts, the sediments, the rock formations, and the geological periods in that part of the country offer the best field for our activities to-day. I conclude by quoting a recent statement made by Wallace Pratt, Chief Geologist to the Humble Oil and Refining Company, of Texas—

"Eighty per cent. of the discoveries that enabled us to set up 10,000,000,000 barrels of underground reserve to-day resulted directly from geologic or geophysics recommendations as to location and depth of tests."

It is really the drill which determines the real oilfield, but the accumulated evidence of the United States indicates that 80 per cent. of the oil discoveries in America which have resulted in the production of commercial oil have come about by the utilisation of scientific surveys, which have not been attempted on a large scale in Queensland.

Mr. Maher.]

In summarising the position of oil exploration in Queensland, Dr. Woolnough makes the following statement of fact:—

“Queensland possesses oilfields. Of this there is no shadow of doubt.”

Mr. KIRWAN: Where are they?

Mr. MAHER: All the indications seem to point to that great tract of country lying north-east of Roma and running out towards Springsure. The geological structures which make for the accumulation of oil are there. It is there that we must direct our efforts. I desire to emphasise those views to the Minister. We need not be downhearted about our past efforts for, in the considered opinion of Dr. Woolnough, we have the oilfields. The only question is the setting up of conditions which will once again induce investors to come in with confidence, and financial strength, to intensify the search for oil, and bring it to a successful conclusion.

Mr. WELLINGTON (*Charters Towers*) [4.23]: In the course of my speech on the Address in Reply on 18th August, I expressed the opinion that it was preferable to pay married men £1 10s. and single men £1 per week to enable them to go out prospecting rather than encourage them to stand at street corners. Since rain has fallen in the Charters Towers district lately, a lot of old prospectors, in addition to quite a number of unemployed men, are prospecting in the hope of earning a livelihood. There is more prospecting now going on in the Charters Towers district than I can previously remember. Some time ago J. Soden and P. Sabadina, who were receiving assistance from the unemployment relief fund to enable them to engage in prospecting, applied to the Mines Department for assistance to sink on the underlie. The inspector of mines visited the No. 2 West Imperial mine which they were developing, inspected it, and made his report to the Minister; and the Minister was good enough to set aside a certain amount for the sinking of the shaft. After these two men had sunk the shaft for a distance of 25 feet, a strong body of water was encountered, which prevented them from proceeding any further. They then asked the Minister to extend the assistance to drive from the underlie. The developmental work of these two prospectors disclosed very encouraging prospects; so much so that the mine has since been sold by them for £1,800. That mine was worked thirty-five years ago. At that particular time there was no cyaniding process to extract the gold. No. 2 West Imperial mine is about 120 feet from the old Imperial shaft. The reef is of fair size and the latest assays are good. It is too early yet to indulge in any speculation as to the future. In mining it is better to sink the underlie shaft and prove what the reef is, both by sinking and driving from the levels. An estimate can then be made of the ore-body in sight. There is plenty of water available, and, if more is required, it can be obtained by sinking. This will be invaluable for crushing operations.

During the month of October more gold was produced on the Charters Towers field than in any other month during the last seven or eight years. It is estimated that 191 tons 12 cwt. of stone were treated for a yield of 259 oz. 11 dwt. smelted gold,

[Mr. Maher.

valued at £756. That is the assay value only. The standard value of the gold in Melbourne on 10th November was £5 18s. 9d. per ounce, while the mint value was £6 9s. 6d. per fine ounce. Hon. members will see that the value of gold now won has increased compared with some years ago, when the value was about £3 10s. per ounce. The prospects for the industry are much brighter because of the cyaniding process that is now employed. Twelve years ago no stone that averaged under 1 oz. of gold per ton would pay to treat, but now stone assaying 15 dwt. of gold per ton can be treated profitably.

Another field that is now engaging attention from prospectors is situated at Lolworth Creek, about 80 miles from Charters Towers. There Torkington and McBow, who are working the Lucky Hit mine at Mount Hope, crushed 10 tons of ore at the Welcome mill, at Sala Siding, for a return of 7 oz. 6 dwt. of gold, of a total value of £25 3s. 8d. The Sunrise Syndicate, at Mount Hope, took out a trial crushing of 1 ton 10 cwt. for a return of 2 oz. 13 dwt. of gold, valued at £8 11s. 2d. Those crushings were taken out with a view to testing the quality of the ore to see if it was worth while continuing to work these shows. There are a number of small mines operating at Lolworth, but at the present time it costs £3 10s. per ton to cart the stone to the battery in Charters Towers for treatment. There is great need for the erection of a battery on the spot, which would give an impetus to the mining operations. The State battery at Charters Towers has received stone for crushing from T. B. Edwards and party's claim at Ward's Creek, about 20 miles from Bowen, whilst stone has also been received at Charters Towers from Collinsville, Lolworth, Reid River, and Pentland. Hon. members will see that the operation of that battery has been responsible for stone being received from many districts, whilst great encouragement is being given to prospectors when they know that a battery is available to treat their stone. The arrangements made for treating the sands are very satisfactory. One pound per ton is charged for treatment of the sand, and 20 per cent. is deducted from the return due to the person whose sands have been treated.

I said on a previous occasion that mining was not receiving the encouragement to which it was entitled; but I am gratified to know that the battery which was established at Charters Towers is bringing about a certain amount of development in mining. I think that approximately £5,000 has been spent in Charters Towers under the unemployment relief scheme. The recipients of that relief would have to be fed even if they were not working; and I claim that it is better for men to be out doing something from which some return may come, especially when I know that some of the men have been getting from £1 10s. to £2 per week in addition to the allowance paid to them by the Government.

The “Queensland Government Mining Journal” for October states—

“The Venus State battery received an overhaul. New lineolium tops and ruffles were placed on three Wilfley concentrating tables. The timber cushion between the concrete foundations and two stamper battery-boxes were renewed.

The mill water supply pump received new liners, rods, and valves. All the tailings fluming from the Raff wheel to the middle group of sandpits was renewed. One sand cyanide treatment vat was rebuilt."

In July last the Secretary for Mines visited Charters Towers, and a deputation waited on him with regard to the battery at Charters Towers. The battery is now completed, and information which I have received indicates that it is in first-class order. Of course, there will always be differences of opinion amongst miners and prospectors. As I told one person who came to me, "You want something that will produce gold that is not in the stone." (Laughter.)

I am pleased to see that the department has given some consideration to the work at the Lord Cardigan mine, which is 25 miles east of Charters Towers. The "Mining Journal" says—

"A very compact and efficient pumping plant of unusual design in mining work has been installed on the Lord Cardigan mine, 25 miles east of Charters Towers. A 5 b.h.p. Petter kerosene oil engine drives, by means of belting and a geared pump head, a 3-in. deep well pump. The shaft is now 35 feet deep. When a further 35 feet is sunk a cross-cut will be put into the lode and levels driven along it."

The shaft has since been deepened; and I hope the small syndicate there will strike something, because they are real good battlers.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [4.35]: I desire to express my appreciation to the Minister and to the officers of his department for the assistance they have given to miners and prospectors in the Cook electorate. That action has been very beneficial to a great number of prospectors in that area; and, if the department continues to render assistance in that direction, it will be of considerable benefit to the mining industry of Queensland.

I would be lacking in my duty if I did not refer to the Minister's action in assisting the Mount Mulligan coalminers. As is known, a body of men took over the State coalmine at Mount Mulligan. That enterprise had been showing a loss to the State of £400 per week, but the men have turned a loss into a profit for themselves, and there is no loss to the State under the present working. After these men took on that proposition, they met with very bad luck. They had water to start with, and then their engine broke down and they could not carry on. If it had not been for the action of the Minister in supplying them with a new engine, the Mount Mulligan coalmine would have closed down. I can assure the Minister that the Mount Mulligan coalminers appreciate not only his action in handing over the mine to be worked on a co-operative basis, but also his action in enabling them to get another engine to carry on. To-day these men are very satisfied, and, while their earnings may not be all that could be desired, they are above the average. A tribute should be paid to the miners themselves. Were it not for their hardihood and determination to make a success of the mine, there would be a different tale to tell to-day. The action of the miners stands out as a definite success of co-operation in coal-mining. The Secretary for Railways also

has done a lot to assist in that regard. That hon. gentleman has seen to it that Mount Mulligan coal is used on the railway engines from Cairns north. That has enabled these men to have an assured market for their coal, so that they can go ahead without any worry as regards the disposal of their output. They have increased the output with a fewer number of men, and to-day we have a very satisfied community there. The Minister has nothing to fear, as progress will take place in the Mount Mulligan coalmine now that the miners have completed all the dead work.

The reopening of the Chillagoe smelters has had a beneficial effect on the back portions of the Cook electorate, as it has enabled a number of mines that previously were closed to become operative again. A lot of miners who were out of work are to-day working these old shows that people had given up as being no good.

Although the Minister may be criticised for the loss on the Chillagoe smelters, he has nothing to fear in that regard. A big cutlay had to be undertaken in the first instance; but I am quite satisfied that, as a result of the efficient management which we have at Chillagoe to-day, within twelve months, instead of the smelters showing a loss, they will show a profit.

Mr. BRUCE: When they are handled by a Labour Government.

Mr. KENNY: The Labour Government had an opportunity of handling Chillagoe, and we know what a mess they made of it. If the Chillagoe smelters are ever again controlled by a Labour Government, I would advise the people there not to continue erecting homes and not to spend any money in opening new mines to supply the smelters, because the Labour Government would soon close the smelters.

I wish to refer to the assistance given to prospectors throughout the State. Right through York Peninsula to-day prospectors are working in every direction, and a number of them are making a good living owing to the action of the Secretary for Mines and the Mines Department.

Mr. FOLEY: Owing to the workers who subscribed to the fund.

Mr. KENNY: I am referring to the vote for prospecting, and not to the unemployment relief vote. The prospectors in my electorate have been very fairly treated by the Secretary for Mines under the vote for prospecting, and I wish to express my appreciation of his action.

I have also had a certain amount of assistance from the Department of Labour and Industry in regard to prospecting; and that is having a big effect on a number of men who previously were looking for work. They realise that it is better if they can get assistance to prospect to go into places where there is an opportunity for them to make a living; and quite a number of them have got on to a nice proposition and are making good money.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Can you give us any specific cases?

Mr. KENNY: It would not be fair for me to detail the number of men who are making a decent living through the assistance of the Department of Mines to-day, and I do not intend to deal with that aspect of the matter.

Mr. Kenny.]

While a number of men are assisted to go out prospecting, the department should consider the carrying of the matter a little further. A number of reefs are discovered which are really not proved; and these reefs could be proved if there was a battery plant in the vicinity. I would suggest that the Minister should act on the lines followed in Western Australia, and place a few portable batteries in different parts of the North. He could place one at Croydon, one at Etheridge, and one on the Hodgkinson field. The prospectors could then get small parcels of ore from the reefs and have them crushed in the battery available, and thus prove the reefs. I have in mind a small portable plant which could be shifted from one place to another. The adoption of this method would be very beneficial to Queensland. The system has been in operation in Western Australia, where it has been very successful, having been the means of proving a number of reefs that otherwise would not have been proved. The Minister would be well advised in adopting a similar system in far North Queensland.

The Minister has also had an eye to the development of the mining industry throughout the State by granting concessions to different companies to enable them to develop areas which are not developed to-day. Each of these concessions was no doubt considered on its merits by the Minister. I know the Opposition will criticise some of the Minister's actions in this regard; but it is desirable that fresh capital should be brought into Queensland to develop our mining industry. No action which the Minister may take, however, will enable the industry to be developed unless money is brought here. The Minister has tried to make conditions as attractive as possible, and to encourage overseas capital to come in by granting concessions which would warrant the expenditure of capital thereon. That is a very wise action on the part of the Minister, and one that cannot be condemned by our opponents. I congratulate the hon. gentleman on his attitude in giving concessions to these companies.

Mr. BRUCE: Giving the country away.

Mr. KENNY: It is better to give the country away than to let it decay. If by giving these concessions we can cause a couple of hundred men to be employed in an area, it will be a good thing for Queensland. I trust the Minister's action in giving these concessions will have the effect of putting thousands of men back into the mining industry, where there is room for them.

The Minister has made a visit to Mount Mulligan in my electorate during his term of office, and, as I previously stated, his visit was beneficial to the miners there. The hon. gentleman would be well advised to consider taking a further trip. He has made a trip to a portion of the Etheridge field; but I would like him to take a trip right through the Etheridge and Croydon fields. He could then go from Croydon to the Palmer, where the dredging proposition is in operation to-day. He should be able to obtain first-hand information.

Mr. A. J. JONES: Then someone would criticise his ministerial expenses.

Mr. KENNY: It is the duty of the Minister to assist in the development of the mining industry; and any criticism of the expenditure incurred in this direction is not

worthy of attention. The mining industry to-day is dead; and I would not care if the Minister's expenses were doubled in an endeavour to obtain first-hand information in the interests of the various mining fields. I invite him to make the suggested visit, and to view the dredging plant in operation on the Palmer area. The installation of this plant has resulted in the production of gold and in proving the scope for similar undertakings.

Reference has been made to the visit of Mr. Ernest Hunter to England. I only regret that he did not return with the £100,000 which he sought for the purpose of developing certain areas in the North. The Cooktown district and the Palmer area would have benefited considerably if he had been successful. The Palmer field and other areas of the North offer a wonderful scope for investment, with the possibility of quick profitable returns. I could make many suggestions on this vote, but I realise that funds are not available. The prosperity of Queensland in the future will depend to a very large extent on the revival of the mining industry, and the Minister is to be congratulated upon his efforts to date. I am daily in receipt of mining and other proposals which are submitted to the Minister for his consideration; and I am sure that many that are not favourably received would not be so treated if funds were available. I realise that other parts of Queensland have a claim upon the attention of the Minister; and I have been rather generous in withholding my invitation to him for the past two and a-half years. I now feel that he should visit my electorate to see the various proposals submitted to me to-day. The people of the North realise that a sympathetic Government is now in power; and little parties have been formed to work mines on tribute or on a co-operative basis with a view to obtaining a subsidy from the Government so that their proposals might be extensively developed. These proposals are proving a success. Syndicates are developing old fields that have not been worked for years. They hold that, if the Minister were to consult the records of old workings, he would be justified in granting a subsidy with a view to reopening mines that would otherwise not be reopened. I realise the difficult position in which the Minister is placed.

At 4.54 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. KENNY: There is abundant evidence that these men have faith in the proposition, and it would not only be a benefit to Queensland but to these men who are prepared to put their money into it, if some assistance were given in this direction. I feel quite sure that after the return of the Minister to Brisbane quite a number of propositions will be working, and that a number of others will only be awaiting the foresight of others who were game enough to put a little cash into them. There are many such opportunities offering in the Etheridge and Croydon districts.

I take this opportunity of thanking the Minister and his officials for their sympathetic treatment of myself and the various miners and prospectors who have had to do with the department during the past year.

I would also like to thank the Minister for his sympathetic treatment of the miners

[Mr. Kenny.]

operating on the Batavia goldfield. Very little was known of that goldfield; but the Minister sent a geologist there to report upon it. He also sent a man up to see if road access could be provided to the field. The action of the department has resulted in the number of miners on the field increasing from eighteen to ninety, while the provision for road access has enabled a battery to be placed on the road over which previously it could not be transported.

MR. BUTLER (*Port Curtis*) [4.56]: I also would like to congratulate the Minister on the sympathetic administration of his department, especially with regard to prospecting. I thoroughly agree with the hon. member for Gympie, who expressed a desire to have the vote for prospecting considerably increased. That is one way in which the Government could invest money very profitably indeed, as the result would be of very great profit to Queensland.

I would recommend to the Minister that consideration be given to installing small State batteries, or subsidising small crushing plants on some of the old goldfields in the Gladstone district. I thoroughly agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Cook that the erection of small battery plants would give employment to quite a number of miners. I have in mind two goldfields situated in my electorate. The first is at Boolboonda, near Mount Perry, where several small shows are being worked. A great deal of prospecting work is going on, but there is not much encouragement for the miners to continue, because there is no possibility of getting the ore treated on the spot. I am in touch with the Minister to get assistance for a man who has a small 5-head stamper battery, who desires to install an oil engine costing about £120. I urge the Minister to give this request sympathetic consideration, as it would be a very excellent investment. The second field I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to is the Tableland, situated at the back of Gladstone. This field was opened in the early 'seventies, when gold was found by two Germans. Eventually a small battery was erected, and a number of small prospecting parties worked the field for years with success. The field was abandoned about the 'nineties, but about 1894 or 1895 some experienced miners from Victoria and Western Australia, accustomed to working that class of country, worked the field for some time. At that time, owing to the excessive cost of carting and crushing, stone containing one ounce or over was worked, although many reefs were known to exist which under present-day conditions with cheaper crushing and gold at a premium would pay co-operative parties handsomely. As the surface stone was worked out and the water level reached, the free crushing, oxidised stone cut out, very heavily mineralised stone taking its place, which the local battery was unable to treat, as, owing to the absence of efficient concentrating plant at the battery and the want of knowledge of the miners, the bulk of the gold content was lost in crushing. About this time—namely, 1890—most of the mines were abandoned, and for a time the field stagnated as no one would tackle the problem of dealing with the refractory ore which existed below water-level. As I said before, over 200 men found employment on the field, the returns from which showed that it was the chief gold-

producer in the Port Curtis district. As depth was reached, most of the miners left the field for more attractive propositions in North Queensland, the field becoming abandoned about 1912. The opinion of an experienced miner, who has had thirty years of Victorian and Western Australian mining experience, and has had experience of the Tableland field, is that the field has only been scratched on the surface, and under modern conditions, using efficient machinery, thousands of tons of low-grade surface dirt, which in earlier periods could not be profitably worked owing to the treatment costs, could now be handled profitably by co-operative parties, finding employment for at least 100 miners with every prospect for permanency for a large number of years.

I trust the Minister will consider the advisability of making inspections of fields like this to see if something can be done to subsidise any person who is prepared to work it. These mines were abandoned because of lack of capital to instal winding machinery, or because of the excessive cost of driving. What is required to reopen the field is the erection of a small five-head battery of 1,500-lb. stampers, equipped with an up-to-date concentrating plant, preferably a Wifley table and cyaniding vats for the treatment of tailings. Later on, if the field justified itself, roasters to deal with the concentrates could be added. In the meantime concentrates would have to be sent either to Chillagoe or Cockle Creek. By the installation of this plant, the cost of which to the Government would be more than recompensed by indirect returns, employment would be found for at least 100 miners; and it might possibly be the means of opening up larger reefs, as the whole district is highly auriferous. I trust that the Minister will give earnest consideration to this matter.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Minister on the highly successful way in which he has administered his department.

MR. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) [5.5]: It is amusing to hear the hon. member for Port Curtis advocating the establishment of a new State enterprise, seeing that he and his party condemned the late Labour Government because it ventured to assist the mining industry by providing up-to-date machinery. Now the hon. member, under the guise of working the parish pump, is advocating that the Secretary for Mines should place a State battery in some portion of the Port Curtis electorate. It is also interesting to note that the hon. member for Cook agrees that State enterprises are a necessity.

It was refreshing to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Gympie. That hon. member made several suggestions in regard to the industry that might be well worth accepting. However, I do not agree with the remarks of the hon. member in regard to check inspectors. The hon. member stated that because a certain check inspector had been sent to Townsville he could not carry out his duties as an inspector in the mining industry. I would point out that that man was very seldom at his home in Townsville. He had to attend to his old district—Chillagoe, Croydon, and out as far as Cloncurry; and there is not the slightest doubt that such an officer is necessary not only for the protection of the men working in the mines, but also for the protection of the mines themselves. The hon. member suggested that a check inspector was not

Mr. O'Keefe.]

necessary, because, if the working miners, when going down a shaft, saw a danger in any portion of the mine, they could report to the captain of the mine or the shift boss, and that individual would see that the miners were protected. I know from experience that, when these conditions prevailed years ago, if a miner made more than one complaint he would be dismissed. We had unscrupulous managers in the mining industry who would stoop to dismiss a man if he complained of any danger in the mine. That is what led the late Labour Government to have check inspectors appointed. In one breath the hon. member for Gympie stated that men engaged in the mining industry should be given greater protection when working in dangerous places, and in the next breath he said the protection at present given to these men was sufficient. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to have inspectors appointed in connection with the different mines, and especially at a place like Mount Isa.

There is a great difference between a miner and a prospector. I agree that it is necessary that monetary assistance should be granted by the Department of Mines for the purpose of assisting in prospecting; but I say that the Minister should see that only prospectors are granted assistance from the vote for that purpose. Just because a man has worked almost a lifetime in a mine it does not say that he can be classed as a prospector. Prospectors very seldom go in for deep mining, and they can hardly be classed as miners. Prospecting on the surface is a job on its own; and it is only a waste of money to grant aid from the prospecting vote to men who have had no experience in prospecting. I hope, therefore, that the Minister will only grant aid from this vote to experienced prospectors. No other person should be granted assistance from the vote for prospecting. The money allocated for prospecting should be given to bona fide and qualified prospectors only. It takes years for a man to become a bona fide prospector and be able to discover minerals; and it would be wise for the Minister to refuse this assistance to applicants who have not had any experience in prospecting. My experience in connection with the mining industry in the past has been that there has been too much money expended in erecting machinery on mining properties before they have been actually developed. We have had hon. members this afternoon advocating the expenditure of public money for the erection of batteries. We have various State batteries in different portions of the State already, and very few of them are doing any good.

Mr. KENNY: We have not got portable batteries—that is what I advocated.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The battery at Irvinebank is lying idle more than half the year, and men are out of work there. I am not blaming the Minister. There is no market to-day for our minerals—that is the great trouble. I think it is wrong for an hon. member to advocate that fresh batteries should be established when those already in existence are not sufficiently employed.

Some two years ago the Secretary for Mines refused assistance to certain gold-miners in my electorate because he had for many years resided close to the field in

[Mr. O'Keefe.

question, and the information he had gathered during his residence there was such that he could not see his way clear to assist that field by subsidising a fund to fix up an old battery which was then in existence. After some months several of the mines were worked, and the Minister saw fit to give assistance by paying the railage of parcels of ore from this mining field at Mount Peter to Charters Towers to see whether the reef which was being worked was worth while and would justify the expenditure of the repairs to the old battery there.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That was quite sound.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Quite sound. Since then the field has improved so much that the sum of £300 offered by the Minister has been refused by the owners, and they have paid that amount of money from their own pockets. The mill is working there to-day. That goes to show that one never knows what may become a good field if assistance is given to it; but that assistance must be given in the right direction. The Minister should be very careful, because we have had past experience of enormous sums of money from overseas being wasted in the mining industry by putting machinery on properties before the mines are actually developed. I have in mind a place at Stannary Hills, where no less than £100,000 of English money was spent in purchasing old buildings and machinery to place on one particular mine, and, after the expenditure of that money, only 4 tons of tin were recovered. We have only to go through the various fields in North Queensland to see the same position. The Minister should be satisfied that the mine has been really developed before he assists in putting machinery on the field. That is wise counsel.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That ought to have happened before we built a railway there.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Railways are quite different propositions. When we are building a railway, we know what sort of country we are going into; but, when starting a mine, we never know what is going to happen. A wise policy would be for the Minister to place the money in the ground first, to develop the mine; and, if the ore can be produced, the machinery can be erected afterwards. A small man can get the assistance of the Mines Department to develop a mine. That is what the vote is for; and large companies can help themselves by getting subscriptions from the public purse. Then they come to the Government, and want the money subsidised. It would be quite all right if the Mines Department could afford to make these amounts available; but too much money is made available by the department to these companies and at the expense of smaller prospectors. The money should be available to the genuine prospector without whose assistance there is little hope for the mining industry in Queensland. The Government are fortunate in having the hon. member for Gympie to advise them from time to time upon mining matters.

I regret that the anticipated development following the grant of large mining concessions to overseas interests has not eventuated. Last year the Secretary for Mines stated that Mr. Ernest Hunter had actually secured £100,000 for the development of the Palmer field, but it is to be regretted that Mr.

Hunter was compelled to return empty-handed in face of the fact that large concessions had been granted. It merely indicates that overseas people are not prepared to invest in mining undertakings in North Queensland. We cannot expect capital to be invested in mining industries in Queensland if we perpetuate the fatal policy of the past of allowing bogus managers to spend capital foolishly, particularly in the purchase of machinery when the field has not been developed.

The Minister may claim that he has no power to deal with this matter, but the Government should take the necessary power. If the Government are prepared to grant concessions involving public property, then they should see that the money raised is expended for the purposes for which it was raised. We do not want in the North a repetition of the past—batteries springing up like mushrooms in times of prosperity, machinery placed on any old hole without any prospect of recovering the cost because the wealth is not there to be won. These practices have settled the mining industry in North Queensland, and these are matters that the Minister should take into consideration. He should have power to see that money raised for the purpose of developing a concession from the Crown is spent for that purpose. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of good money has been wasted in the mining fields in North Queensland, and they have such a bad name in investing circles in other parts of the world that they cannot now attract a sufficient amount of capital. All this has occurred simply because the expenditure has been entrusted to incapable people who expended the money in a manner contrary to the purpose for which it was raised. The Government have had no power to deal with these bogus companies.

Mr. BUTLER (*Port Curtis*) [5.23]: The hon. member for Cairns took me to task for advocating the establishment of small batteries on abandoned fields.

Mr. POLLOCK: As State enterprises.

Mr. BUTLER: They should be established either by private enterprise or, if an experienced man has not sufficient capital, then he should be subsidised by the Mines Department by way of a loan. The hon. member for Cairns made the extraordinary statement that it was rather foolish to advocate the establishment of small batteries on abandoned fields because there was little or no market at the present time for minerals.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I did not say that.

Mr. BUTLER: The hon. member said there was no market for minerals at the present time. There is certainly a market for gold. This report appeared in the "Telegraph" of to-day—

"Owing to the high price of gold, the New South Wales Rugby League has decided to discontinue giving medals to players. Gold is £6 14s. 9d. an ounce, and the cost would be prohibitive. Last year £714 was spent on medals, and at the present price the amount would total nearly £1,000."

The hon. member for Cairns said that it would not pay to mine gold at £6 14s. 9d. an ounce. He suggested that it would not be a sound undertaking on the part of the Government to subsidise small portable batteries on proved goldfields to deal with the old

workings. That was an extraordinary statement.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Mr. Roberts, I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Port Curtis has accused me of saying that the Minister should not subsidise small batteries to enable miners to crush their ore supplies. I did not make that statement. What I did say was that, instead of installing State batteries on these goldfields, it would be better if the Government spent this money in the way of advances to these people to enable them to develop their mines. The ore which they would win would then pay for the machinery.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope that the hon. member for Port Curtis will accept the explanation given by the hon. member for Cairns.

Mr. BUTLER: I think the hon. member for Cairns misunderstood me. I advocated installing small batteries on goldfields, and I am quite prepared to accept his explanation. I know he has had a great deal more experience in mining matters than I have. He certainly did say that there were no markets for minerals at the present time.

Mr. O'KEEFE: For base metals. I said that I did not blame the Minister for the stagnation in the mining industry.

Mr. BUTLER: Many goldfields have been abandoned because it was too costly to win the gold; but, with gold fetching as high as £6 14s. 9d. per ounce at the present time, goldmining is an entirely different proposition.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*) [5.26]: The hon. member for Warrego referred to the concessions which were given to the Commonwealth Mines Preliminary Syndicate, Limited, and Mr. Alexander Macdonald in the hope of encouraging people to invest capital in the mining industry of Queensland, and also in the hope that the resultant prospecting work would lead to the discovery of something worth while. I make no apologies whatever for having granted those concessions. Most hon. members were quite in favour of granting the concession to Mr. Alexander Macdonald, although I cannot remember whether the Opposition were in favour of granting the concession to the Commonwealth Mines Preliminary Syndicate, Limited. The fact which prompted me to give the concession to Mr. Alexander Macdonald was that he was the last man in charge of a company that had worked a proposition in the concession area. That area has not worked for a considerable number of years.

Mr. BEDFORD: That is quite so. I only complained about something which happened subsequent to the granting of the concession.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The last mining lease in the concession area granted to Mr. Macdonald was forfeited quite a number of years ago. Mr. Macdonald was previously responsible for no less a sum than £500,000 having been spent in that area. I know that he brought nearly £100,000 to that field, and during the time he was there he produced metals valued at £186,000, which amount was put back into the ground again. Mr. Macdonald no doubt anticipated that, if this concession was granted to him, he would be successful in raising the necessary

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capital; and I am sure that every hon. member hoped that he would be. He went overseas to raise the capital, but, unfortunately, was not able to raise the capital required. He must have raised some capital, because at the present time he is employing twenty-seven men on a mining leasehold within 10 miles of the concession area. That is the work done by Mr. Macdonald up to the present.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Fred Reid is his overseer.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is quite correct.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Up to the present Alexander Macdonald has abided by the conditions which were imposed upon him, requiring him to do a certain amount of work within a certain period. I can go so far as to say that he is really in earnest in prospecting this area.

Mr. BEDFORD: No one objects to that. We only object to the misrepresentation.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Mr. Macdonald applied to the Department of Mines for the use of a diamond drilling plant for that area. We had a plant lying idle at Chillagoe and another at Hartley. The one at Chillagoe had already been applied for, as the hon. member for Charters Towers knows, for his district, and a promise had been given that the plant would be available for Charters Towers. Although it had not been removed from Chillagoe, I did not feel disposed to go back on my promise to the Charters Towers people and allow Mr. Macdonald to take that plant. I told him, however, of the plant at Hartley, which we were prepared to send to him provided he paid the freight from Hartley, so much rental per week, and the return freight to Hartley when he was finished with the plant. Mr. Macdonald immediately wired for the plant to be sent to Chillagoe. The day before it landed there we received advice from him not to send it there, but, if it had been sent, he would pay the expenses that had been incurred so far in doing so. He had made up his mind to put down shafts instead of doing diamond drilling. That will give some idea of the earnestness of this gentleman. It may be argued that it is better that shafts should be sunk; but, in my opinion, it would have been wiser to drill the area first. Still, it was a matter for the man in charge to decide.

With regard to the Commonwealth Mines Preliminary Syndicate, Limited, I admit that they have not done as much as I should have liked. The Queensland Government have done their job, but the concessionaires, whilst keeping within the condition, have not done all that was expected of them.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you mean they have not carried out the spirit of the concession?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Exactly. I am hoping that they will do more in the near future. They are boring at Percy at the present time, where Mr. Berry is at present located. He, by the way, has been in charge of the diamond drilling in almost every instance in Queensland.

Mr. A. J. JONES: Is that the company which did "The Oaks"?

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The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The company which did "The Oaks" was practically a local syndicate, to whom I gave a certain area of land for six months, stipulating that they must deposit £1,000 in the Department of Mines, Brisbane, in order to show their bona fides. I knew they were only going to test out, principally with assays. They sent about 1,000 samples for assay to Cloncurry and Charters Towers, and I agreed to return a portion of that £1,000 for the payment of wages and expenses as they went along. Seeing these people did not act up to the spirit of the agreement, we are not granting any more concessions unless the persons concerned are prepared to put down a certain sum of money to show their bona fides. To-day I am negotiating with a certain gentleman for a concession up in the very far North, and one of the stipulations is that he must put down £10,000. He wants an area of 2,000 acres. There are many people who seem to be in earnest in these matters, and hundreds of propositions have been put up to me.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: People want concessions in order to hawk them.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I can assure hon. members opposite that I am doing everything possible to try to stop that practice. I know as well as the hon. member for Warrego that it is a bad principle; and now we are imposing more stringent conditions to force these people to put up a deposit that will compel them to do something or else lose their money. If they put up a deposit and do not do something within a certain period, they forfeit their deposit. I hope by that means to block the go-getters to whom the hon. member for Warrego referred.

Mr. PEASE: What about the man who went up to Cairns in June last?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There were some wonderful leaders in some of the daily papers saying that these concessions should be granted. I say quite frankly that I was not prepared to grant concessions to that gentleman on the representations that he made. I told him I was quite prepared to meet him and give him all the assistance possible. He said that he not only represented certain people but that he had the money in the bank; and, if I went to a certain bank, I could find £8,000,000 there. Whether the £8,000,000 was there or not, I am not prepared to say. I told him he could not get exactly what he required, but I could meet him, but, of course, he must pay a deposit. The minute I mentioned the deposit, he said, "Well, how much?" I said, "I just can't tell you on the spur of the moment, but with the area you want it would not be less than, say, £2,000; and by the time you showed your bona fides and proved yourself by starting work we could refund the £2,000." His reply was that he thought the Queensland Government ought to give him these concessions without paying anything whatever down, and he would not pay—with a few adjectives—one halfpenny.

Mr. BEDFORD: Didn't the person you gave concessions to want the Government to give him £1,000 to pay his expenses to London?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am dealing with this individual just now. I naturally said I was sorry, but I was not prepared to do business on those conditions;

that he would have to put up £2,000. He immediately told me what they did in Canada. He said, "In Canada, if they knew a man of my standing was coming along, they would immediately send a return ticket to England; and, when I landed, they would send an escort with me and pay all my expenses to whatever place I wanted to go." I said, "Unfortunately, we are not in that position." In certain quarters I got hauled over the coals for not granting this concession; but, possibly—although I say it myself—I might have had a little more knowledge of the gentleman than the people who criticised me. While not attempting to disparage him, I do not think that in his whole lifetime he ever had any experience in mining. The first time I remember him he was selling pianos for Beale and Company up in Mareeba, and the second time I knew him he was playing the violin in the orchestra at the Babinda pictures. Possibly he may have had £8,000,000 standing behind him. I tried to meet him as much as possible; but, when he said that he was not prepared to pay a penny piece down as a deposit, I was not prepared to give him any concessions. I can assure hon. members we are tightening up on these concessions.

The hon. member for Warrego also referred to the unfortunate crisis at Mount Oxide. No matter whose fault it is, it is very unfortunate that such a crisis is in progress at Mount Oxide; but it is difficult to decide whether it is better to do as the hon. member for Gregory suggested—that is, to close the mines every time a dispute arises. When copper is bringing £30 per ton it is impossible to pay these people the wages they were paid when, irrespective of what the hon. member for Warrego may say, copper was £83 per ton.

Mr. BEDFORD: How long is it since copper was £83 a ton?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In 1929, Chillagoe was not then operating, and they were able to send the ore to Port Kembla—that is the point I wish to make. When copper was £83 a ton they were sending their ore to Port Kembla. Naturally when copper fell to £30 a ton they could not pay those wages. I do not know whether it is correct, but I have it from the management at Mount Oxide that they offered the miners 17s. a day, but they did not see fit to take it. If these people could not possibly make the mines pay, there was only one alternative for them, and that was to see if the men were prepared to take a lower rate.

Mr. HYNES: Because you suspended the metalliferous mining award.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is not a fact.

Mr. HYNES: You instructed your manager at Chillagoe not to grant them any further concessions unless they accepted a lower rate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is not true; but I say that these mines, including Mount Oxide, have worked for considerably longer than they would have worked had the men not been removed from the Industrial Court. The Trekelano mine was working at piecework when it ceased operations in April, 1930. They were still under the Industrial Court award, and they ceased work because they could not carry on, although the ruling price for copper was then £68 7s. 6d. per ton. From that date

to the end of October not one ton of ore had been received at Chillagoe from the Trekelano mine. All the ore went to Port Kembla for reasons best known to themselves, although I tried my very best to get it sent to Chillagoe, because I realised that, if the ore was sent to New South Wales, it would give to men in that State work which should have been given to men in Queensland. We are all human, and it is up to each and every one of us to look after our own State and help our own people to earn their bread and butter. I sent the manager of the Chillagoe smelters to interview these people, and they pointed out that some expenditure would be involved. However, they decided to try it out for a month, but copper fell to £44 10s. per ton. Certainly Chillagoe has been giving them a fair deal. They ceased to send ore to Port Kembla when copper was £68 7s. 6d. per ton, but they commenced to send it to Chillagoe when copper was £44 10s. per ton.

Mr. POLLOCK: You must take the freight rate into consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The difference between the two prices entirely counteracts the freight rate.

Mr. POLLOCK: They had to send high-grade ore to Chillagoe, whereas they were sending low-grade ore to Port Kembla.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Port Kembla refused to take the higher-grade ore.

Mr. A. J. JONES: They did not want it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is so. We persuaded them to open again, and operations were commenced in November, 1930. The hon. member for Gregory was not correct when he stated that the bulk of the ore came from the Trekelano mine. For a period of twelve months ended September, 1931, the Trekelano mine had supplied 4,000 tons out of a total of 12,209 tons. That mine employed a considerable number of men at the lower rate and that was the only chance of carrying on. However, copper fell to £30 15s. 7½d. per ton, and the owners decided that it would be unprofitable to continue operations any longer. The men were prepared to continue at the lower rate, but the owners decided that it would be unprofitable with copper at the new low rate. These were the rates—

	Price per ton		
	£	s.	d.
May	39	15	7
June	35	5	0
July	34	0	0
August	32	0	0
September	30	15	7½

Mr. BEDFORD: Plus exchange.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Of course.

Mr. MULLAN: Are you aware that the price of copper has increased by £7 15s. per ton since the reduction in wages?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Possibly so. It has been suggested that the Cloncurry field had been damaged by the Government, but the reopening of Chillagoe has not been to the detriment of Cloncurry. In fact, it has been a big advantage not

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only to the Cloncurry district but to Queensland as a whole. The reopening of Chillagoe resulted in the employment of a considerable number of men.

Mr. HYNES: According to figures submitted this morning, more ore was previously produced in the Cloncurry district and sent to Port Kembla than now.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, when copper was more than twice the present price.

Mr. HYNES: You say that more men are employed now.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No. Naturally less copper would be produced when the price was less than half. If we take an average over a number of years, it will be found that the present amount supplied is not very much below the amounts previously supplied. If Chillagoe had not been buying when the price fell, then Port Kembla would not have been buying either. Port Kembla would not have purchased even if the freight rate had been maintained at 12s. 6d. per ton.

Mr. HYNES: There is no evidence of that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Don't forget that many a man has been hanged on circumstantial evidence. Port Kembla is unable to buy once copper falls below a certain price.

I take exception to the attitude of hon. members opposite, because, when they sat on the Government benches, they never advocated the carriage of ore by rail to Chillagoe smelters at a greater rate of freight than that charged on ore railed to a proprietary smelter. The Government found it was impossible to carry ore from Cloncurry to Chillagoe for 14s. 7d. per ton. The Secretary for Railways, who watches over the interests of his department very closely, raised the question that 14s. 7d. was not a reasonable freight rate. I agreed with him, and said, "We will make it £1." Yet the hon. members for Townsville and Kennedy have accused me of doing something which was not in the best interests of the railways; and even suggested that the Mines Department should pay a subsidy of £20,000 per annum to the Railway Department to make up the loss incurred by that department in carrying ore from Cloncurry to Chillagoe. They evidently overlooked the fact that the freight rate on ore from Cloncurry has been increased by 20 per cent. since I took over my department. We should be all true Queenslanders and endeavour to keep both trade and money in our own district and in our own State. Evidently the motto of the hon. members for Townsville and Kennedy is to send money which should circulate in this State into New South Wales, where their friend Mr. Lang is in power. Some hon. members opposite went over the border to assist to return Mr. Lang to power, so they are right behind him.

Mr. HYNES: You are not actuated by patriotic motives in having the Cloncurry ore treated at Chillagoe. You are only actuated by a desire to hold your seat.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I shall be quite honest with the Committee. The loss on operating the Chillagoe smelters for the past two years has been £45,000. That loss, unfortunately, is solely accounted for by the low price of base metals. The

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hon. member for Paddington referred to the smelting charges at Chillagoe; but the actual loss on the operations of the Chillagoe smelters for last year was only £1,600, the balance of the loss being attributable to the metal market falling after ore had been purchased at Cloncurry and smelted at Chillagoe. During the last nineteen months that the late Government operated the Chillagoe smelters—and it might be said that for years the smelters were operated merely to make the Chillagoe seat safe for Mr. Theodore and the present hon. member for Cairns—the total loss for nineteen months was £508,000. There is a vast difference between £45,000 and £508,000.

Mr. POLLOCK: There is also a big difference in the extent of the operations.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I admit that there was a big difference in the volume of business, and also in the manner in which the business operations were carried out; but, unless I am forced to do so, I will not touch upon that point.

The hon. member for Bowen referred to several matters affecting the coal industry in his district. We were all very pleased to see him in the Chamber, and to be well enough to make a speech.

Mr. HYNES: Good old Charlie!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is "Good old Charlie!" He has the sympathy of every hon. member, no matter what political views he may hold, in the severe illness through which he has just passed. He is a white man. (Hear, hear!) I sincerely trust that his health will improve, and that in future he will not feel the strain to the extent that he did this afternoon. The hon. member for Bowen referred to the drop in the export trade of Bowen coal. I quite admit that, but the export of coal is a burning question in Australia.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is a big problem in most coal-producing countries.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is a world-wide problem, but we are concerned with the problem as it affects Australia. So far as the export of coal from Queensland is concerned, we are handicapped to the extent of at least 1s. per ton compared with New South Wales, because the Commonwealth Government subsidises the export of coal from that State to that extent. That is a very big handicap on Queensland. What is sauce for the goose should also be sauce for the gander, and Queensland, as one of the States of the Commonwealth, is just as much entitled to that concession as New South Wales.

Mr. DASH: Have you made application for it?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, and up to the present we have been unsuccessful. Indeed, there is very little indication of our being successful, although I claim that Queensland is entitled to the same concession.

It is better to have a limited number of people at work than not to keep pace with modern developments, and in that way lose the whole of one's trade and throw all the men out of work. In order, therefore, to meet the situation and effect reduced costs of production, we have introduced coal-cutting machines at the Styx and Bowen mines. At Bowen particularly we hope that the introduction of that machinery will lower

the costs, and enable us to obtain part of the export trade. I think it was the hon. member for Paddington who said that at the present moment we cannot have an export trade with the East—

Mr. A. J. JONES: As against South Africa, I said.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is quite so. Under present conditions we cannot expect to gain any of that trade. South Africa is giving a rebate up to 8s. per ton on export coal; and we have not the slightest chance of competing with her unless either the Queensland or the Federal Government is prepared to grant a rebate to the same extent.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Why do the Cairns people buy Newcastle coal?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Because the shipping companies which take away the bulk of the sugar—one shipping company takes away 90 per cent. of the sugar—can afford to carry coal to Cairns on the return voyage at a particularly cheap freight. These shipping companies are interested in collieries, and are able to sell coal to the Cairns Harbour Board at a cheaper rate than the board could buy that coal from Bowen, although at the present moment no colliery in Australia is selling coal cheaper at the pit's mouth than we are doing at Bowen.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The railway freight is greater than the freight on the boats at Newcastle.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: At that time I think the freight on the railway from Bowen was 22s. 6d. per ton, and in order to try to hold the business, I approached the Secretary for Railways and asked for a concession in freights to assist the coalmining industry in Queensland. He was very sympathetic, and gave me a special rate of 25s. 3d. per ton on behalf of the Cairns Harbour Board. At that rate we could have carried on; but, unfortunately, at that time the price of coal in the Southern States was reduced by about 5s. per ton, and that reduction cut out the Bowen coalmine so far as the Cairns Harbour Board was concerned.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What about the council?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The council was getting a considerable quantity of its coal from Mount Mulligan. At the present time Mount Mulligan, unfortunately, is very short of water, and is only capable of working a certain number of hours per day on a certain number of days per week, and is not able to produce as much coal as it could sell, which is very unfortunate for Mount Mulligan.

The hon. member for Bowen said that, if we could get the export business, we would save the Government a considerable sum of money, and would thereby be able to keep the miners in the Bowen coal mine fully employed. Unfortunately, at the present time the men employed in the Bowen coal mine are not getting anything like full time. I think the average for last year was four and a-half days a week; and during the last financial year the average earnings of the coalminers were £295 9s. per man. Under present conditions, when everyone is suffering, I do not think the miners working in the Bowen coal mines

have any sane ground for complaint—not that I have heard that they have complained. I say quite frankly that I have never heard a complaint from the miners there.

Mr. BRUCE: What caused the strike at the Bowen coal mines?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: When we installed cutters, naturally we did not feel inclined to pay the same price for machine-cut coal as for coal hewn by hand; and we simply offered them a price for the coal. We worked it out on a basis that would allow the miners to make a very fair wage, and, to show how serious the strike was, I need only say that they were out—

Mr. BRUCE: For a couple of weeks.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not think it was a couple of weeks. First of all, we put them on wages, and told them that we expected them to do a fair day's work to see how much they could honestly put out. We had an estimate of what they were getting out, and they exceeded what I might term a favourable day's work. I am not taking the men on the best bords. The first fortnight they worked at the rate we offered they made an average of £1 18s. 9d. per shift. If men in these days are capable of earning £1 18s. 9d. per shift, they have no reason for complaint. Some of the men put out as high as 23 tons per shift, and they went down to as low as 18 tons—that is, 9 tons per man.

Mr. FOLEY: The cost of the explosives comes out of that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The explosives are not a very heavy item in the Bowen mine.

Mr. O'KEEFE: If the Railway Department is justified in reducing the rate on Cloncurry ore to keep the Chillagoe smelters going, why does it not reduce the freight on coal to Cairns? Why allow the money to go to New South Wales?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I was just going to deal with that in my reply to the question of the hon. member for Bowen regarding the price of coal to the Railway Department. The hon. member stated that, according to the Auditor-General's report, we were supplying coal to the railways under cost of production; but there is some misunderstanding about the matter. We claim, and the Railway Department recognises it, that the department has not paid the full price that it is entitled to pay for that coal. I have no hesitation in saying that there would be no trouble in making an adjustment with the Railway Department; it is just a matter of adjusting accounts. We shall render an account to the Railway Department for the difference between what the department has paid and what it ought to have paid. That will mean that the department will pay 6d. per ton over the cost of production. That is the understanding with the Railway Department. Whether that is a good proposition or not is questionable. Some people think it is not, but the Secretary for Railways thinks that it is. I say quite candidly that I do not see why the Mines Department should be called upon to supply the railways with coal at the rate of 6d. per ton over the cost of production, because, if

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the Bowen coal mine was not there the Railway Department would be paying a great deal more for coal than it is to-day.

Mr. KIRWAN: In 1917 the Railway Department used to pay from 33s. to £2 per ton.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think that for the last twelve months the average price has been between 13s. and 13s. 6d. per ton.

The hon. member for Kennedy and the hon. member for Townsville both claim that I should subsidise the railways; but I claim that the Railway Department should subsidise the Mines Department, because we are saving the Railway Department a sum considerably greater than £20,000 a year by the operation of the State coal mine at Bowen.

Mr. KIRWAN: You could save £50,000 a year.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Could not the State coal mine get the Cairns Harbour Board business?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am still striving to get that business. I realise as well the hon. member does that it is very bad business for our people to be compelled to obtain their coal from New South Wales; but I admit that in order to get coal at a reasonable figure, they are compelled to do that.

Mr. O'KEEFE: We are paying doles to men here whilst the New South Wales miners are reaping the benefit.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am leaving no stone unturned to try to get the business which is offering in North Queensland, and which at the present time is going to the other States. I am not endeavouring very strenuously to take away local trade that other coal mines have got, because we all have to live; but I am using every endeavour to meet the situation in connection with coal which comes to Queensland from the other States. The only coal which the Cairns Harbour Board uses is for the dredging operations in the channel.

Mr. O'KEEFE: It uses 50 tons a day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: However, we have hopes at the present time of getting back a little of the export trade. We are negotiating, and have a good chance of being able to capture an export trade possibly running into 10,000 tons per month. If we could get business to the extent of 10,000 tons a month, it would reduce our costs.

Mr. O'KEEFE: About 300 tons a week goes to the Cairns Harbour Board.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We should then be able to supply coal at a cheaper rate than we are doing to-day. Unfortunately, Bowen and other parts of North Queensland are placed at a disadvantage geographically, because the boats which come across from New Caledonia first of all go to Sydney. They have no cargo to load at Bowen; and, if they go to Bowen to take on coal instead of taking it on at Newcastle, they have to go to Bowen for that express purpose. These boats have to proceed to Newcastle and Sydney for coal; and it would be too expensive to run from Sydney to Bowen for coal when they have no loading to discharge at Bowen.

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The hon. member for Flinders adopted the wrong attitude in endeavouring to put up the best possible case for the Cloncurry district. I am not blaming him for his attitude, because I know that hon. members on both sides are prone to give most of their attention to their respective districts, instead of regarding Queensland as a whole. It is all very nice to be loyal to your own district, but we should study Queensland as a whole.

Mr. STOPFORD: It costs the State £45,000 per annum to be loyal to you.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: And it cost the State over £500,000 per annum to be loyal to Mr. Theodore. The hon. member for Flinders complained that we had handicapped the copper gougers in the Cloncurry district; but we have not only assisted the companies, but have purchased ore from the gougers as well. The gougers are now unable to operate on account of the low price of metals. They had every confidence in the Government when a reasonable price prevailed for copper; and that confidence was maintained. I am sure that 95 per cent. of the gougers in the Cloncurry district would say that they had received fair treatment from the Chillagoe smelters, and that is saying a lot. There are always people to be found with a grievance of some description. These gougers would not have continued so long if the Chillagoe smelters had not been operating.

The hon. member referred to the grant of £3,400 made by the Government to the Vulcan mine. If the undertaking is as successful as we anticipate, then it will be worth £500,000 to the State of Queensland. There is no district in the whole of the Commonwealth that stands to gain so much by that as the Cloncurry district.

Mr. BRUCE: Another State enterprise!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No. An amount of £3,400 was loaned by the Government to assist to erect works that cost about £10,000.

Mr. BRUCE: Is it a case of "Heads I win, tails you lose?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No. The amount will be repaid by way of royalty on every ton of ore treated.

Mr. MULLAN: It was well worth trying.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Unfortunately, shortage of water has not enabled operations to be carried on as the company anticipated; but, should the process for treating this ore be a success, it will be of distinct advantage to the Cloncurry district. At the present time all coal and coke used for smelting operations in the Cloncurry district must be carried 500 miles by rail; but under this new process of treatment all copper ore will be treated on the spot, and the only commodity required will be salt. One ton of salt will be used where 100 tons of coal and coke are required to-day. This treatment plant is only a small one, and is built on the principle that the hon. members for Cook and Port Curtis referred to. It is portable and is easily transferable from one place to another; therefore, after all the ore at one mine has been treated, it can be removed quite easily to some other part of the district, and the expense will not be more than £3,000. That is a very sound business proposition. I am sure all hon.

members hope that it will turn out to be the success that is hoped for.

Mr. MULLAN: There is a large amount of the special class of ore in the Cloncurry district which this plant treats.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member for Flinders referred to the number of accidents in the Cloncurry mining district; but he should have quoted the percentage of accidents to the number of men working. The number of fatal accidents per thousand men employed in the Cloncurry district last year was 1.92. That is lower than the rates in 1908, 1909, 1912, and 1918. In the years before 1908 there was a larger proportion of fatal accidents.

Mr. BRUCE: There were twice as many men working in the district then.

Mr. MULLAN: I merely followed the practice of the mine inspector in giving the total number of accidents. He never gave the percentages.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Unfortunately the number of accidents at Mount Isa was greater than one would like to see; but we must remember that accidents are liable to happen in the initial stages of a gigantic venture like Mount Isa. Only those who have seen Mount Isa can realise the huge amount of machinery installed there and the magnitude of the operations. Mr. Speaker, who accompanied me to Mount Isa last May, was astounded at the immensity of the operations. The inspector of mines puts in the major portion of his time at Mount Isa, and is watching operations most carefully. In fact, that official has paid very close attention to the Mount Isa mine, and it is hoped that for the future the number of accidents will be lessened. Everyone will admit that human lives are more valuable than money.

Mr. MULLAN: What about appointing a resident inspector at Mount Isa?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is something in the argument that a resident inspector of mines should be appointed at Mount Isa. I was impressed with that fact so much that a month ago I asked the Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr. Jackson, to report on it. I did so because I considered that the operations at Mount Isa warranted the appointment of a permanent inspector there. Mr. Jackson will shortly furnish me with a report on the subject. It is not fair to compare the number of accidents in the Cloncurry district last year with the number of accidents in the past fifty years. The ex-Secretary for Mines will bear out my statement that until the last few years no mine owner was compelled to report an accident happening in a mine, whereas to-day every accident must be reported to the department—and rightly so. That is merely keeping pace with the times. Naturally the provision would have been made whatever Government was in power. To-day every accident must be reported.

Mr. BRUCE: There were fewer fatal accidents in ten years at Mount Elliott than there have been in two years at Mount Isa.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Mount Elliott was not worked on the same gigantic scale as Mount Isa.

Mr. BRUCE: There were 900 men working at Mount Elliott at one time.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have heard a lot this afternoon about the "glory-hole" system, and of how men have to work through a dead-end. Until they get that hole through to the surface they have to work under unpleasant conditions, but, whether he did so intentionally or not, the hon. member for Mount Morgan misled the public into thinking that that is the way the men are still working.

Mr. STOPFORD: I didn't say that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Once they get through the "glory-hole" they are working on the surface. Tens of thousands of tons of material comes through one "glory-hole," so that they are not made every day. I think one every two months would be a very high average.

The hon. member for Mount Morgan was very much concerned about the withdrawal of the check inspectors. I make no apology for reducing the salary paid to those inspectors—

Mr. HYNES: It was a subterfuge to get rid of them.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not deny that. It was the most ridiculous position that anyone could possibly get into. Hon. members opposite say that there must be inspectors on the spot, so that, if an accident happens, an inspector may be available immediately. I ask hon. members opposite what the position was when Mr. Pascoe was in Brisbane, Mr. O'Brien in Mount Morgan, and Mr. Wilson in Townsville. In the latter case, if an accident happened at Mount Isa and Mr. Wilson was in Townsville at the time, it would take him some days to get to Mount Isa. Is it not far better for the men to appoint one of their own men as an inspector?

Mr. STOPFORD: They always had that in addition to a check inspector.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The system might have been all right if an inspector could have been appointed at every mine. I venture to say that the men are in a far better position to-day. To-day the Government are prepared to pay the inspector, and do not ask the union to do so. It was a false step when the Labour Government appointed those three inspectors, because they were not serving any useful purpose at all. The position was unnecessary. (Opposition dissent.) The lives of the men are just as well protected to-day as they were when the Labour Government were in office. There is just as much inspection and supervision as previously.

The hon. member for Mount Morgan adopts a queer attitude; one might almost call it a Communistic attitude. (Opposition laughter.) It was in a threatening attitude that the hon. member said, in effect, "It is all right so far, but the minute Mount Isa shows a profit, then look out!"

Mr. STOPFORD: History will show you that that has happened in the past.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Immediately the company is likely to get a small return from the £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 which has been expended at Mount Isa, the hon. member for Mount Morgan says there is going to be a strike. That is a wrong policy for the hon. member to preach here, or even outside, and I am surprised at him preaching it here this afternoon.

Mr. STOPFORD: Human life is more valuable than dividends.

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The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That has nothing to do with it. The hon. member is trying to sidestep the issue.

The hon. member for Rockhampton referred to the rates offered at Styx No. 3. The rates paid at Styx No. 3 are sufficient to enable those miners to earn as much money as is earned by the miners at the Bowen coal mine.

Mr. STOPFORD: If you say that, you know nothing about mining.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am not making these statements from my own experience. I am making the statements on the information supplied by the officers of the department. They say quite candidly that the men can earn as much at the Styx mine as can be earned at the Bowen mine. We have offered them just a fraction more at the Styx mine; and I am quite satisfied that the miners there can make as much money as is made at Bowen.

Mr. FOLEY: Why should you be the judge of what these men can earn?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am not the judge. I am running the department in my way. I can quite understand hon. members opposite believe that their methods are right; but as I am in opposition to them, it is only natural that I am not going to run the department their way.

Mr. STOPFORD: Why not give the men a chance of being heard?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to draw attention to the fact that two or three hon. members on the Opposition side are continually interjecting. I cannot allow this continual dialogue. Hon. members opposite will have an opportunity of replying after the Minister has completed his speech.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member for Leichhardt referred to the export of coal, and I have dealt very fully with that already. I would point out, however, that, in regard to any seam 3 feet or under, we have reduced the royalty by one-half within the last month or two to try to meet the situation.

Mr. FOLEY: That is not sufficient. You should have an investigation.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is all very well to give what is sufficient with your left hand and ruin your right hand. That is the whole trouble. We are trying to reduce the cost of production; and the trouble is that in some of the mines the men do not want a reduction of costs. The only way of getting an export trade is first to reduce the cost of production. Unfortunately, quite a number of our collieries are not on the seashore. In New South Wales most of the collieries are situated in a better position than the collieries in Queensland, as they are right on the seaboard. Wollongong, for instance, is on the seacoast, jutting right out into the sea. In Queensland our mines are 50 miles, 80 miles, and 300 miles from the seaboard. If our coal mines in Queensland were on the seaboard, we would be quite capable of coping with the export business; but, when we have to forward coal by railway for 50, 80, or 300 miles, it adds to the cost of production. That is the whole difficulty with the coal position in Queensland at the present time.

[*Hor. E. A. Agherton.*]

The hon. member for Gympie, in reply to an Opposition member, mentioned what we were doing in regard to assistance to prospectors in this State. I think the hon. member for Bowen said he would like to see more liberal treatment meted out to prospectors. The hon. member for Gympie showed that, whereas we are giving £1 a week to single men and £2 a week to married men, the New South Wales Government are only allowing 8s. a week; and in Victoria prospectors can only get 5s. worth of provisions a week, and are not given the 5s. in cash. I do not think anyone can find fault with a Tory Government, such as hon. members opposite charge us with being, when we compare the assistance we give with that given in other States which are controlled by Labour Governments. Victoria is giving just one-eighth, and New South Wales is giving one-fifth of what we are giving.

I quite realise the complaints of the hon. member for Bowen. It would be very nice if we could give more than we are doing; and I would be willing to do so if it were not that, owing to the present financial position, we cannot give any more. No one can throw stones at us for not giving more when our two adjoining Labour-governed States are only giving 5s. and 8s. per week respectively. They do not seem to worry about the workers.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Labour, when in power in Queensland, gave 50 per cent. more than you are giving to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Although the Labour Government gave 50 per cent. more to single men than we are giving now and have been giving for the last eighteen months, nevertheless for the whole of the period they were in power they only distributed £8,000 in this direction.

Mr. O'KEEFE: We had not so many unemployed.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have given £12,500 out of the prospecting vote. We give £1 a week to single men and £2 a week to married men; and not 2 per cent. of the single men have any complaints to make about it, because they realise that they can live better on their £1 a week than their comrades and friends who have wives and families can live on £2 a week, and they are prepared to make some sacrifice. I still think that the British spirit exists among the miners and the single men of Queensland. They have the bulldog spirit, and are prepared to bear their share of sacrifice to try to help the more unfortunate men with wives and families to keep. Apparently that does not appeal to the hon. member for Cairns, who only thinks about himself, and lets the other fellow go hang.

The hon. member for Rosewood referred to the oil question. I think we are all very disappointed with the oil position in Queensland to-day. We were in hopes that we would have struck oil in some part of Queensland before this. I can assure the hon. member that we have at the present time in the Chief Government Geologist of this State a man who is just as capable as the Commonwealth Geologist. The opinion of Mr. Ball is just as valuable as the opinion of Dr. Woolnough; but the opinion of Mr. Ball has not always been adopted because

the company promoters were more concerned with making "oil" for themselves than extracting oil from the bowels of the earth. The company promoters were concerned about the profits to be made by the fluctuations in the price of shares. The hon. member for Rosewood was one who walked right into the business. I do not want the people to assume that the geologists of Queensland are not doing their part merely because lengthy reports, written by other geologists, appear in our local newspapers.

Mr. MAHER: I did not suggest that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am sure the people of Queensland and of Australia have every confidence in the geologists of Queensland. Mr. Ball is just as capable as Dr. Woolnough, although the Queensland Government are quite prepared to co-operate with Dr. Woolnough as much as possible. I am not an expert in the discovery of oil, and I cannot say whether the methods adopted are wise or not. A method of aerial survey does not appeal to me very much. The hon. member for Flinders stated that an aerial survey had been made of Mount Isa; but it must be borne in mind that in the case of minerals there are some surface indications in the nature of outcrops visible by air; but I am told that there are no surface indications with respect to oil. There would be surface indications with respect to minerals in 99 per cent. of cases. However, if the experts say that an aerial survey may be effective in the discovery of oil, then I am prepared to encourage such a project.

The hon. member for Cook has referred to the Mount Mulligan coalmine. I appreciate the sacrifice and the whole-hearted manner in which the Mount Mulligan miners have carried on their work. There are no other miners who were prepared to put their shoulder to the wheel in such a willing manner as the sixty odd men who have endeavoured to win coal at Mount Mulligan for the past two years. They are a credit not only to Mount Mulligan but to any country in the world. They were prepared to battle against all odds, and to combat all difficulties in a cheerful, smiling manner. Operations had not been long in progress when a break occurred in the machinery. They had adhered so loyally to their contract that I was prepared to assist them in every possible way. Only one plant was procurable in Australia—a second-hand plant, although in use for only one week—and that was situated on the border of New South Wales and Victoria. We were successful in purchasing that plant for £1,700. The Mount Mulligan miners did not have 1,700 farthings. They were three months out of work while the Government were inquiring and negotiating for the purchase of the plant referred to. That brought them very close to Christmas.

Mr. KENNY: They did not squeal either.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No; they kept on smiling. They said they were prepared to repay the amount, provided the Government were willing to purchase the plant. They offered to repay by way of a royalty of 6d. per ton on the coal produced. Christmas came, and I was prepared to help them by advancing a sum of money to carry them over that period. I am sure that the men appreciated what I did; and

I did it because I appreciated their action in being so loyal to Mount Mulligan and putting their shoulder to the wheel and doing their part. I regret that at the present time the miners at Mount Mulligan are working on part time owing to the scarcity of water. I have assisted them in every possible manner because their attitude has been deserving of it, and I think that every miner there appreciates it.

I also desire to pay the same compliment to the copper gougers all over Queensland who have assisted to keep the Chillagoe smelters operating. I know that some hon. members opposite would prefer this copper ore to be transported to Port Kembla. These miners have been prepared to continue working, even although 90 per cent. of them have not earned half wages. These men, who are working for themselves, have continued on in the hope that they would either strike it rich or that the price of metal would increase. They realise what Chillagoe has meant to them, and I appreciate the efforts they have made to keep the smelters going.

I appreciate, too, the service which the workmen at the Chillagoe smelters have given. I was told that three men formerly did certain work which is now done by one man, and that, if I persisted in that policy, there might be trouble. I replied that we could not afford to have that work done by more than one man. I am glad to say that the work has gone on without interruption. Every man has been quite prepared to carry out his job, and, whether three men formerly filled the position or otherwise, they did their work with good grace. The men are still working at the smelters.

Mr. BRUCE: They had no choice.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I visited Chillagoe last May, and there was a very contented and happy crowd of workmen there. They are to be congratulated, not only on the work they are doing in their own interests, but on the work they have been doing in the interests of this wonderful State. We must remember that the £147,000 worth of copper shipped overseas from Chillagoe was £147,000 of new money coming into this State, and that amount would probably mean as much as £1,000,000 which was merely turned over in the State. I am quite prepared to allow the public to judge what has been done by the present Government at Chillagoe and Mount Mulligan.

The hon. member for Cook referred to the possibility of establishing portable batteries on some of the small goldfields. I have never seen one of these portable batteries, although some are in operation in Western Australia. The suggestion might be perfectly sound, but finance is the stumbling block. We must realise that, before a battery is installed on a goldfield, there must be ore at grass or in sight for it to treat. I shall have inquiries made in Western Australia as to how these batteries are working there. If they are successful, due consideration will be given to testing one in Queensland.

The hon. member for Cook gave me a very pressing invitation to visit Croydon with him. I am only too anxious to visit Croydon, which at one time ranked fourth or fifth on the list of gold producers in this State. I hope there will shortly be a revival of mining there. I had hoped to visit Croydon

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before Christmas, but the opposition of hon. members on the other side to Government legislation has been such that I shall not be able to do so. I can assure the hon. member for Cook that, if it is at all possible to visit Croydon early in the new year, I shall be only too pleased to go with him.

The hon. member for Cook also referred to the assistance given by the Government to the miners on the Batavia River goldfield. I make no apologies for that assistance, or for what we intend to do there. I claim that these far-distant mining centres are worthy of the most liberal consideration. They are certainly more deserving of consideration than propositions within 20 miles of the metropolis. Every person who goes hundreds of miles out into the bush to try to increase the wealth production of the State will be assisted. Batavia River is a very great distance away, and is a very awkward place to get at. We realise that the most feasible way to get there is from the west coast. At the request of the hon. member for Cook, I sent a geologist there, and later I sent a man to report on the road. Unfortunately, the report has not yet been furnished. As a matter of fact, when the man who was sent to report on the road returned to Brisbane, he called at my office and said that he could not then furnish a report as he had to get information from the Marine Department as to the depth of water at different places which he had visited on the east and west coasts of the peninsula. Unfortunately, on the second day after his return to Brisbane that man took seriously ill, and he is at present an inmate of the Brisbane General Hospital. If his report had been furnished and was favourable, then something would have been done to make a passable road to the Batavia River field.

A fortnight ago I approved of assistance being given for the erection of a battery there, as mining operations have been considerably handicapped because of the primitive methods employed. The method being adopted is one with old log boxes, through which water is sluiced, whilst at the same time a man with an iron hammer breaks up the material that passes through this sluice. The gold that was not saved was missed; and more was missed than was saved. Hon. members will get some idea of the waste that has occurred when I tell them that on 6th October last one man got 106 oz. of gold from his tail waste. Perhaps 60 per cent. of the wash or rubble—it is more of a wash than anything else—is being laid aside. The primitive and obsolete method adopted is for the miner, with knife in hand, to scratch off any gold that may appear on the surface of the ore as it passes through, and then cast the ore aside. There is nearly 3,000 tons of that material available. Shortage of finance was the handicap to development taking place; so I have approved of an advance in order that a battery may be erected. When that work is completed, it will be possible to treat the stone which has been thrown on one side—stone that is worth 3 oz. to the ton.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What was the report of the geologist on that field?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The geologist reported that he would like to see more work done and some of the shafts put down to a greater depth before he

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would express an opinion. He recommended that we should not give any prospectors assistance to go to that locality, as we would have to finance these people to get down at least 80 feet before they could do any good. He said it was no good giving these prospectors £2 per week for four or eight weeks; it would have to be given for six months, if given at all.

Some hon. members have asked me to build batteries or to assist in the building of batteries. As Secretary for Mines, I shall never recommend the Government to build batteries. I am quite prepared to assist people to build batteries; but on this matter I am of the same opinion as the hon. member for Cairns. The trouble in the past has been that too much money altogether has been spent on machinery before proving the mine. People should spend their money in developing a mine, and, if they have developed the mine and it proves to be worth anything, we are always quite prepared to help them to build a battery.

We have received numerous requests for assistance to pay railage on a given quantity of ore to the nearest battery; but, before we offer to assist these people, we ask them to send us down a sample for assay; and, if it does not assay up to a value that would make it worth treating, we have refused to pay the freight to the nearest battery. That is a very sound principle. The hon. member for Cairns quite agrees with that, and I would not give any assistance to the Mount Peter people when they sent stone to the battery. I said, "I will be fair, and, if the gold is there, I am prepared to assist you." Later on we sent a geologist to the field, and, after the geologist returned, I changed my mind. I changed my mind more as a result of the fact that 30 tons of ore sent to Charters Towers averaged 2½ ounces to the ton. That is what influenced me in advancing £300 to renovate the battery.

The hon. member for Cairns suggested that we should only grant assistance to bona fide prospectors, but he went so far as to say that, if two men went out, they must both be bona fide prospectors. I do not agree in that regard, because, if two men go out prospecting, especially if they are going to sink a shaft and one man is experienced, he will soon teach the other man. You cannot turn a man down if he has an experienced man with him.

At 8.10 p.m.,

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

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The principle we follow is that if one is a practical miner, then we are prepared to give assistance. But I do agree with the hon. member for Cairns when he says there is a vast difference between a miner and a prospector. A miner is not a prospector, and a prospector is not a miner. Numbers of men write down for prospecting assistance; and they say they have worked in the deepest mines in Charters Towers and at Ballarat; and I immediately say that these men know nothing about prospecting.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Men in the mining industry to-day cannot get assistance; yet you grant aid to men who have never been in the industry.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We cannot give assistance to everybody. We take the advice of our mining inspectors in the different centres; and, if there is no mining inspector in the district, we take the advice of the warden as to a man's capabilities and character and whether he is a good worker or not. I quite admit that there may be honest prospectors who have not had assistance, while others who are not genuine prospectors have received assistance; but we endeavour to assist genuine prospectors.

I desire at this stage to thank the hon. member for Cairns for the complimentary remarks he passed this afternoon in regard to Irvinebank. He said that he did not blame me in the slightest for the closing of Irvinebank, as it was due to the stagnation in the metal market. I will state what the hon. member for Cairns said on 23rd October in regard to Irvinebank. He said, "They reopened Chillagoe and closed down the treatment works at Herberton." I say that statement is not true.

Mr. O'KEEFE: It is true.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The battery at Irvinebank is no more closed down now than ever it was. When there is any ore offering, it is open. If the hon. member for Cairns had a 25-ton parcel of ore for treatment at the battery, it would be working inside twenty-four hours; but, unfortunately, owing to the low price of metals, it is not in constant work. The hon. member was quite honest about it this afternoon—there have not been 25 tons of ore offering. I hardly like to say what I am doing for Irvinebank, as some hon. members opposite might say, "Why don't you do that for Cloncurry?" We have given Irvinebank prospecting assistance during the last twelve months to the extent of £1,121 11s. 9d. That has been done to try to revive the position at Irvinebank, which is in a critical condition to-day. We have also expended the sum of £253 on the renovation of the battery, and we are spending a sum of about £200 in renovating the dam there. We are doing all that is possible for Irvinebank; but I cannot wave a fairy wand and put tin into the ground in such quantities that we can work the battery at the price that is offering. I never closed Irvinebank.

I would like to say a few words to refute the criticism hurled at me on 13th October by the hon. member for Cairns, as reported in "Hansard" of that date, to the following effect:—

"We have a complaint from Chillagoe to the effect that the brother of the present Secretary for Mines has certain land under occupation license, while certain men are refused areas of same for tobacco growing. What is the reason for this? Influence has been brought to bear by the Secretary for Mines."

I told the hon. member for Cairns that I was surprised at him, and said "Whatever you do, play fair!" When I read that statement in "Hansard" at Redcliffe, where I had gone on account of not being in the best of health, I said, "If the Home Secretary has brought in the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Bill, the hon. member for Cairns will never be arrested for hitting a man in the face, as he would always stab him in the back."

Mr. O'KEEFE: I did not stab you anywhere. Can't you be clean? Will that black streak never come out of you?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: On 1st October—twelve days before the hon. member for Cairns made that speech in this Chamber—he asked the following questions:—

"1. Will he please state the reason why several applications for Miners' Homestead Leases situated on Chillagoe Creek, about 8 miles from Chillagoe, have been held up?

"2. Will he expedite the granting of same?"

"3. Will he state the names of persons now holding the land for which applications are made?"

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

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You have got the truth.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The court was adjourned before there was any application from your brother in protest. Next day he made his protest to the warden.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This is the answer I gave—

"1 to 3. Two applications for miners' homestead leases for land on Chillagoe Creek, about 8 miles from Chillagoe, were lodged with the warden at Chillagoe on 19th August, and, in conformity with the Miners' Homestead Leases Acts, were set down for hearing on 23rd September, being not less than thirty days after receipt of such applications. An objection to the approval of the application was lodged by the licensee of occupation license No. 146, William Atherton, on the ground that the land applied for included Sugar Bag Springs, the only permanent water on that part of the occupation license, and, on 23rd September, the warden adjourned the hearing to 6th October to allow of an inspection of the land. It will thus be seen that there is nothing whatever in the suggestion that there has been any delay in the matter."

What is wrong with that? That is the ordinary procedure. The hon. member for Cairns tried to make out that I used my influence, but I say quite definitely that I never heard of those applications. If the hon. member cannot be clean himself, he should not accuse other people of being clean. (Laughter.) I certainly put the cart before the horse, but the hon. member knew what I meant. He knew that everything was clean and aboveboard, but he made that statement because he knew that I was absent from the Chamber. In the same speech the hon. member also said—

"A certain area was set aside in the Dimbulah district for tobacco-growing under the agricultural farm tenure system, and working miners were allowed to take up areas in that district under the Miners' Homestead Leases Act."

Mr. O'KEEFE continuing to interject.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Mr. Fry, I call for order.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I resent the Minister drawing my attention to the state of the Committee. The hon. gentleman is inviting a lot of the criticism

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himself. I ask him to refrain from making so many quotations and indulging in invective, thereby drawing the fire of the Opposition. I ask the hon. member for Cairns to be very careful. He will have the right to speak again, and I cannot permit him to indulge in a continuous stream of interjections.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am quoting a speech made by the hon. member for Cairns in this Chamber, and I believed that I had a perfect right to reply to the matter during the discussion on these Estimates. Miners' homestead leases are controlled by the Mines Department, and surely I can prove that a statement made in this Chamber is untrue? I would be lacking in my duty to my electors if I did not reply. The hon. member also said—

"A certain number of men resident on the Atherton Tableland who are well known to me applied for the land under that tenure, and were granted; then the Secretary for Lands refused the application."

Mark that! The application was granted! He further said—

"Then the matter was referred to the Mines Department, and the Lands Minister then gave the permission for the land to be held as a miners' homestead lease. What happened after a month or two? Certain influence was used by the Secretary for Mines with the Secretary for Public Lands, with the result that the Secretary for Public Lands allowed the area set aside for tobacco-growing at Dimbulah to be settled under the miners' homestead lease system, notwithstanding that sixty-eight applications for a similar tenure had previously been refused by the department."

Later he said—

"During the time I was in the North in July last, I received complaints every day from men who stated that the Secretary for Mines and the hon. members for Cook and Eacham were interested in the particular tenure under which the Jurd party were allowed to take up the Dimbulah lands."

The hon. member answered the question and then contradicted himself. He merely indulged in silly misstatements during my temporary absence from the Chamber. He was out on a misstatement jazz, having the time of his life. He said, "Atherton is sick down at Redcliffe, and I am at him."

The hon. member's statement that sixty-eight applications had previously been refused was untrue. He said that Jurd and party applied for their leases after the sixty-eight applications had been refused. Jurd and party applied for the sixteen leases in September, 1930; but applications in respect of the sixty-eight referred to by the hon. member for Cairns were not made until June, 1931—nine months later—although the hon. member said they had been previously applied for. What notice can we take of an hon. member who makes such statements? He must have known that his statements were not correct. I do not object to all the criticism under the sun if a man will fight fairly. I am prepared to stand up to all the criticism imaginable so long as it is fair. I do not believe in making a statement behind a person's back. I am sorry that the hon. member for

Cairns has left the Chamber. He must know that he was guilty of misstating the position, or why should he leave the Chamber? (Opposition dissent.) The Department of Mines decided in January, 1931, to grant the sixteen miners' homestead leases applied for by Jurd and party. They were approved of in January. The sixty-eight applications which the hon. member for Cairns stated were refused were not applied for until June. Jurd and party applied for their leases in good faith. I knew that they desired to go in for the cultivation of tobacco, but I was not concerned in it.

The hon. member for Cairns also stated that an applicant for a miner's homestead lease must be a working miner. That shows how little he knows of the matter. Any lady who has lived for three months on a mineral field can make application for, and be granted, a miner's homestead lease. I claim that, as Jurd and party applied in good faith for these miners' homestead leases, their applications should have been granted.

Mr. BULCOCK: Did you make any conditions?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I made the condition that the applicants should not be allowed to transfer. That was done in order to prevent trafficking. Hon. members opposite will agree with that condition.

Mr. BULCOCK: We do.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: As the experiment in tobacco culture in the Mareeba district was much greater than was anticipated, the Secretary for Public Lands decided to open certain land for selection as tobacco blocks. That decision was made long before the sixty-eight applications were made, as mentioned by the hon. member for Cairns. I had approved of twenty-six miners' homestead leases being granted for the purpose of tobacco-growing. I then told the Secretary for Public Lands that, if this land was required solely for the purpose of agriculture, it should be under the control of the Department of Public Lands. I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition agrees with that principle. It was agreed at a Cabinet meeting that no further miners' homestead leases should be granted in that district for tobacco culture.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: That should be done as a matter of general policy. It is rather difficult to lay it down as a principle in connection with applications made under the Miners' Homestead Leases Act.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: An announcement was made that no further applications under that Act would be granted. The surveyors of the Department of Public Lands were then despatched to survey the land formerly under the control of the Department of Mines for tobacco farms. The statement of the hon. member for Cairns concerning the sixty-eight applications is a misstatement of fact. I did not have the faintest interest in the miners' homestead leases. I only knew three of the successful applications, and they were red hot Labour men; but a man's politics does not matter to me. I am prepared to give a political opponent the same treatment as I give a political supporter. In these matters they are entitled to that treatment.

Mr. BRUCE: How did your brother finish up in connection with this block of land?

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The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I did not know that my brother was after a block of land.

Mr. BRUCE: I thought you said he was.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I did not say so. The hon. member is like the little boy who fell out of the balloon—he was never in this argument.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member for Cairns also stated in his speech—

“The Secretary for Mines made a special trip to the Atherton Tableland to supervise the cutting-up of his own land into 40-acre blocks at £10 per acre, and the Government helped him by offering land at auction.”

I can assure the Committee that that statement is not correct. It is most unfair for any hon. member to make such an insinuation under cover of privilege, especially when I was not present to contradict it. It is all very well for the hon. member for Cairns to come here and pose as a lily-white puritan. We all know how he got white—by the application of the white-wash brush, although the lime used in the white-wash was not too clean. The last time that I was at Mareeba was on 31st March last. I then left for Herberton, and was in Mount Isa on 9th May. On 31st May I inspected the tobacco farms that I was accused of having recommended should be cut up into 200-acre blocks in order that I might sell my own land. I say that statement is not correct. The Monday on which I saw these blocks I wired to the Premier and said, in effect, “Will you see the Secretary for Public Lands and tell him that I recommend that we immediately cut down the areas to about 60 acres? The areas are far too big, and men cannot possibly handle them.” At the commencement I did say they should be 200 acres. None of us knew anything about tobacco-growing; but, once I saw the land, I knew that 60 acres was sufficient. The fact of the matter was that the men had not the money to fence and work 200 acres.

Mr. O'KEEFE: You recommended to the Premier that the blocks should be 200 acres. He told me that himself.

The PREMIER: I did not.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: At the initial stage, before I knew anything about tobacco-growing, I recommended 200 acres.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What is the good of telling lies about it?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: When I saw the tobacco land, I wired to the Premier to cut down the area to 60 acres. I never cut up any land around Mareeba into 40-acre blocks. I own 240 acres there. I do not care who knows it. I cut the land up into 10-acre blocks. I never offered them to anyone. If my friends came along, I was prepared to consider the question, but up to that stage I had sold only three 10-acre blocks—two to relatives, and one to a personal friend. The hon. member for Cairns makes a most unfair statement.

The hon. member for Townsville approached me for a favour at Mareeba. The position was that the Commonwealth

Government had experts all round Australia for about five years previous to that date.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The committee was established in my time, and the Mareeba experiment station was established by me.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Why was it started there?

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Because it was the most suitable area known at that time. There were twenty-nine other blocks put down.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is quite correct. We simply acted on the advice of those experts. After surveying practically the whole of Australia, these experts decided that Mareeba was the most suitable place for tobacco-growing, and that is why we threw open the blocks there. Just because it happens to be in my electorate does not make the slightest difference to me, although naturally I am pleased that it is in my electorate.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The best tobacco grown so far in Queensland has been at Sarina.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We were accused of not throwing land open. In twelve months we threw open more land for selection than had been the case for years in Queensland. Three hundred and seventy-nine blocks were thrown open in twelve months. In addition to that, twenty-six leases were granted in the Dimbulah area. In Mount Garnet, Mount Molloy, etc., over one hundred leases were granted. I do not see anything in it, because it all assists the progress of Queensland. Apparently some hon. members opposite do not want to see Queensland progress.

Mr. HYNES: There are other districts in Queensland besides Mareeba.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is our duty to get in as quickly as possible, once we have established the fact that tobacco-growing is a success in suitable districts.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What has this to do with mining?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Miners' homestead leases come under the vote for mining. The hon. member for Cairns also said—

“That is definite information that the hon. member for Eacham was concerned. In fact, I spoke to him here, and he said, ‘I know that rumours are about. Even the Secretary for Public Lands is supposed to hold a block in some lady's name.’ I am informed that all the Ministers except the Premier migrated to Mareeba one week-end.”

The week-end that I was there in connection with miners' homestead leases I was the only Minister in Mareeba, and I left on the Monday morning. I passed the Secretary for Public Lands at Tully. I say there was not another Minister on the ground.

We are still granting concessions in the hope of inducing capital to come to Queensland.

I agree with the hon. member for Paddington that the success of mining in Queensland to-day depends chiefly on the treatment of the lower-grade ores from the old mines. The greater part of the wealth to be won will come out of mines that were abandoned in the past because of obsolete methods, lack of railway communication, and

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other disadvantages. I sincerely trust that capital will come into Queensland, which will enable modern machinery to be erected so that these mines can be worked as a success.

I am very pleased that the Gold Mines of Australia, Limited, have acquired Mount Coolon and have started to open it up in a large way as compared with the past. I sincerely trust the people behind that venture will reap the benefit they so richly deserve. If they benefit, it will be of advantage to the State of Queensland. I am not particular as to what profit an individual makes so long as it is of benefit to Queensland. Some people think that capitalists should speculate their money in their hundreds of thousands but should not look for any profit. I am not of that opinion. I say they are entitled to a profit; and the more profit they make the better it will be for the State of Queensland. I hope some of the companies which have been granted these concessions will reap the reward they so richly deserve.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. A. JONES (*Burke*) [8.39]: I listened very attentively to the remarks of the Minister in regard to the unfortunate position at the Mount Oxide, Orphan, and Dobbryn mines. The Minister did not give us very much information in connection with this matter. For the last few weeks the newspapers have given considerable prominence to the position at Mount Oxide, but in no instance has the true position been outlined. A few weeks ago I addressed certain questions to the Secretary for Labour and Industry in connection with the cost of commodities at Mount Oxide, and the prices I quoted on that occasion speak for themselves, especially so when a comparison is made between the prices charged at the company's store and those operating in Cloncurry. On 14th October I asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“Is he aware that the following prices are at present being charged at the company's store:—Butter, 3s. 1d. per lb.; tea, 3s. per lb.; sugar, 7d. per lb.; Nestle's milk, 1s. 3d. a tin; tinned fruits, 1s 8d. a tin; bacon, 2s. per lb.; potatoes, 4d. per lb.; onions, 4d. per lb.; 50-lb. bag of flour, 14s. 6d.; kerosene soap, 1s. 8d. a bar?”

I picked out a few of the main items from the list sent to me by the men at Mount Oxide in order to give some indication as to the exorbitant prices charged at the company's store at Mount Oxide. These men have suffered two reductions in wages since the suspension of the mining award in September last year. It is interesting to note that the present rate offered by Peterson and Powell, tributors, is £4 2s. 6d. per week. The basic wage in Townsville, which is on the coast, is £4 4s. per week, and the basic wage in the Cloncurry district is £4 11s. The wage that is offered the men at Mount Oxide, 80 miles from the railhead, is 8s. 6d. per week lower than the basic wage in Cloncurry. In addition to that, we have to take into consideration the fact that the cost of transport is only £3 per ton, or roughly ½d. per lb., and consequently does not justify the exorbitant prices charged by the company. I have worked out the prices as nearly as possible, and the list has gone in to the Commissioner of Prices.

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I find the prices average something like 50 per cent. above Townsville prices and 25 per cent. above Cloncurry prices. The Secretary for Labour and Industry informed me that investigations were being made in connection with the matter nearly a month ago; but so far I have heard nothing further, and I do not know whether they have bothered to make any inquiries on the subject.

The Minister said in reply to a question asked by me last week that the industrial magistrate at Cloncurry had called a conference, as the outcome of which nothing satisfactory had taken place so far as ending the dispute was concerned. I am advised that the magistrate visited Dobbryn and met the tributors and the representatives of the strikers and arranged a conference. I understand that conference was to take place at Cloncurry. The strikers' leaders turned up at Cloncurry to attend the conference, but the tributors did not turn up.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: You have been misinformed. The warden went to Mount Oxide.

Mr. A. JONES: No; he went to Dobbryn and arranged a conference. I will quote from the “Cloncurry Advocate,” which is not a Labour paper, and which, in its issue of 31st October last, stated—

“At one stage of this dispute Warden Wilson visited Dobbryn and conferred with the strikers and the tributors and the men were only too pleased to have a conference. A date and place was arranged for this conference to take place, and Warden Wilson returned to Cloncurry. The delegates from the strikers, it is said, turned up at the place of meeting, but the tributors' representative was absent.”

That is very definite. That statement in the Cloncurry paper bears out the statement I have received from the men on strike, indicating that the tributors were not prepared to meet the men and do the fair thing. In addition to this, the branch secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, Mr. W. J. Riordan, wrote a letter on 2nd instant to the Premier, in which he set out the position at Mount Oxide, and suggested that in order to bring this dispute to a satisfactory conclusion the Order in Council which was gazetted in November last year, suspending all mining awards other than in connection with lead and coal mining, should be repealed so as to give the Industrial Court a chance to arbitrate on this dispute. The Premier replied to the letter pointing out that he considered it was not advisable at present to do that. So far as the strike in that area is concerned, the strikers have the sympathy of the Cloncurry people. I can only quote again on that point from the “Cloncurry Advocate”—

“The strikers appear to have the sympathy of the public, as when the drastic cut in wages occurred no reduction was made in the price of commodities by the tributors who run the store that supplies the men. It is said the men were not compelled to buy from these stores, but the miners say if they did not patronise the tributors' stores their jobs did not last long. When the strike first started the Oxide men went along to the store at that place to buy rations, but were

turned down, and none would be sold them. It seemed as if they were to be starved into submission."

They attempted apparently to starve these men into submission—the methods of the bad old days. It is interesting to listen to this—

"But Mr. Val. Elliott, of Dobbyn, was communicated with and he came out with a lorry load of rations. The mines store then immediately reopened, but the men are not patronising it."

This really indicates that Peterson and Powell, at Mount Oxide, attempted to starve these men into submission—they had nothing else but that in view. Directly they knew that Mr. Elliott was prepared to bring out a load of rations to the men at Mount Oxide, they opened the doors of their store again to these men. In view of the cost of commodities at Mount Oxide, it is only reasonable that the Government should have done something definite to get the magistrate out there immediately to inquire into the prices on the spot. That is the only thing holding the men up to-day. They suffered a reduction in wages of nearly £1 a week, and they ask that the cost of commodities at the company's store should be reduced. There are very ugly rumours in the Cloncurry district concerning the tribute contract made by Messrs. Peterson and Powell. The "Cloncurry Advocate" has some very uncomplimentary things to say in connection with the matter, and suggests that an inquiry should be held into the whole business. The paper gives the impression that there is something altogether fishy in connection with this tribute. The paper says—

"The whole history of this tribute, the letting of it, working of it, and names of those interested in it would make interesting reading, it is said, and the spotlight of publicity thrown on to these mines by this strike may bring forth some details that will perhaps interest those men who were anxious to tender for the tribute, but who allege they had no chance to do so. If an investigation is to be held into the cause of the trouble, which is almost a certainty, it would be as well to investigate the whole matter and have a thorough cleaning up. It deserves an inquiry, and the people of the district should demand one."

The "Cloncurry Advocate" is not a Labour paper, and always gets in behind the Government in the furtherance of their policy. It is very definite, according to this article, that there is something fishy in connection with the tribute, and that the Government should hold an inquiry into the whole matter. The dispute is causing a lot of dissatisfaction in the district, and I can assure the Premier that, if an inquiry is held, much satisfaction will be experienced in the area. If the Government are not prepared to allow these people to go to the Industrial Court, then there is only one alternative—the strike method. The Australian Workers' Union has always stood for a policy of arbitration, but the suspension of the award means that the Australian Workers' Union must get in behind these men in their direct action fight. The Government are definitely responsible for what is taking place at Mount Oxide. Several men have been gaoled, and other unfortunate happenings have taken place. One unfortunate indi-

vidual proceeding from Dobbyn to Cloncurry met with a fatal accident, his head being smashed. I do not say that the Government are directly responsible for that, but it is possible that, if the award had not been suspended, this man would have been alive to-day, and to that extent the Government are responsible. I say that very definitely. There is nobody in a better position to sift the evidence and to consider the cost of commodities in an unbiased way than the Industrial Court. That tribunal is in a far better position to deal with that matter than the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They were not compelled to buy their groceries at Mount Oxide.

Mr. A. JONES: That is true, but several men employed at Mount Oxide refused to buy their stores from the company's store, and were dismissed.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What are their names?

Mr. A. JONES: I will give the Minister the complete extract from the paper, which makes a very definite statement.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Did McCormack write that before he went to gaol?

Mr. A. JONES: I do not know who is responsible for it. I only know it appears in the "Cloncurry Advocate," and it is apparently the opinion of that paper.

The Secretary for Mines appears to be very perturbed over my statement that the men were compelled to purchase their stores from the company's store, and has interjected that they could purchase their requirements elsewhere. I received letters from the men before the dispute arose informing me that, if they did not deal from the company's store, they would not be employed. It is a remarkable thing that these miners were forced to pay exorbitant prices for necessaries of life whose prices are protected by pools which have the support of the Government; yet the Government should withdraw whatever protection these men had of securing a living rate of wage. They were compelled to pay artificial prices for some of the necessaries of life. The general conditions at the Mount Oxide mine were very bad. There were no bathing facilities, and the men were compelled to carry water in two kerosene tins with a yoke over a mile to their camp. They had also to cart their own wood over a mile. The company would not allow them to cut any wood on the mining lease. There was no first-aid stretcher at the mine, and, generally speaking, the working conditions were deplorable.

Some hon. members on this side referred to certain statements made by Messrs. Peterson and Powell when they met the strikers at Mount Oxide. Mr. Peterson told the men that he had made application to the Chillagoe smelters for certain concessions; but Mr. Rutledge had informed him that, unless he was prepared to bring about a substantial reduction in wages at Mount Oxide, he was not prepared to consider any application for a concession. I have at least four letters setting out that statement. If that is correct, it points to the fact that the Government have been directly responsible for the chop in the miners' wages at Mount Oxide. A few minutes previously I mentioned that Mr. W. J. Riordan, the branch

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secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, had written several letters to the Premier in connection with this matter; and, as they contain some interesting statements, it is just as well that they should appear on record. Mr. Riordan, writing to the Premier on 2nd November, said—

“Hon. A. E. Moore, Esq.,
“Premier of Queensland,
“Brisbane.

“Sir,—My executive wish to bring under the notice of your Government a matter which it regards as one of paramount importance to the people of this State. I refer to the dispute at the Mount Oxide, Dobbyn, and Orphan copper mines.

“This dispute has already, as you will have gleaned from the newspapers, been responsible for a nasty conflict, with the result that a dozen good, useful citizens are now in jail. These men, who are doing the rough pioneering work on the mining industry in this distant and remotely situated part of the State, where they have to endure many hardships that have not to be faced in more accessible localities, have had inflicted on them a grave injustice by your Government setting aside the award and denying them the right of access to the Arbitration Court—a right which they have had for the past fifteen years. Surely these men, whose spirit of independence has taken them so far away from the cities and the dole, are worthy of consideration equal, at least, to any other section of our citizens.

“The workers in the mining industry in every other State have access to Arbitration, and we ask that your Government take the necessary steps to make provision for these men to have their wages fixed by Arbitration in the same way as their fellow workers in other States.

“I might state that these men are not fighting for increased pay, but against a reduction which would place them on a rate below that paid in other parts of the Cloncurry field. The fact is, they have been reduced to a minimum rate less than that obtaining for labouring work on the North Coast, where the cost of living is 50 per cent. lower. You will readily understand that this, coupled with the many disadvantages which are unavoidable in these distant bush camps, make their burden great. It will probably be said that metal prices are very low, but an investigation would probably show that the effective wage in this case is the lowest in the State.

“We therefore suggest for your consideration an immediate repeal of the Order in Council gazetted on the 11th September, 1930, and renewed again on 11th September, 1931, which deprived these workers of their award and the right of access to the Arbitration Court, leaving them the barbarous strike weapon as the only means of redressing their grievances.”

The Premier replied to that letter under date 3rd instant, as follows:—

“Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 2nd instant, I desire to inform you

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that I regret exceedingly the recent occurrences in connection with the dispute at the Mount Oxide, Dobbyn, and Orphan copper mines in the Cloncurry district. I fully recognise that hardships are being suffered. The cancellation of the Order in Council in question, however, would not improve the position, as at present metal prices it would result in the closure of these mines, and probably other mines in Queensland. I do not consider it advisable, therefore to comply with your request at present.”

With reference to the Premier's statement as to the cost of ore, it is interesting to note that in September, when this dispute first took place, the average price of copper, with exchange added, was £46 18s. per ton, whereas for the month of November the average price, with exchange added, is £57 17s.—an increase of over £10 per ton. That indicates that the increased price of copper ever since this trouble commenced would have more than paid the extra few shillings asked for by these men.

In reply to the Premier's letter, Mr. Riordan wrote on 6th instant—

“Hon. A. E. Moore, Esq.,
“Premier of Queensland, Brisbane.

“Sir,—I have your letter and regret that you cannot agree to open the way to the Arbitration Court, which has been closed against the workers in the mining industry.

“The statement in your letter that the cancellation of the Order in Council would not improve the position and would result in the closing of these mines and probably other mines in Queensland appears to me to be the reverse to what has occurred. These mines are now closed because there is no award and no means of getting one.

“Up to the time of the dispute the minimum wage paid at Mount Oxide was 18s. 10d. per day. When R. Ahern was working the Oxide on tribute, he paid 20s. per day. This was in 1923 and 1929, so you will see the wage had already been reduced by 1s. 2d. per day before the dispute took place. The cost of living at Mount Oxide, on account of its isolation from the railway, is considerably higher than at Mount Isa. This has always been recognised by the employers at Mount Oxide, as they have up to the time of this dispute paid at least 2s. per day over the rates prescribed by the award covering the calling in the district. Now they ask the men to accept a decrease of 3s. 10d. per day, which would bring them down to 1s. 8d. per day below the Mount Isa rate. The minimum award rate at Mount Isa at present is 16s. 8d. per day.

“I would ask that you give this matter further consideration, having in mind that the basic wage for Townsville is £4 4s. per week, and for the Cloncurry district £4 11s. The wage now offering at Mount Oxide is £4 2s. 6d. The cost of living at Oxide, according to invoices in my possession, is at least 50 per cent. higher than Townsville, and approximately 25 per cent. higher than Cloncurry. You will readily realise the injustice under which the men in this dispute are suffering. Might I suggest, if you are still opposed to the above,

that you arrange for the intervention by the Arbitration Court to bring about a settlement of this dispute.

"Yours faithfully,
" (Sgd.) W. J. RIORDAN,
" Branch Secretary.

"6th November, 1931."

If the Premier was sincere in his effort to get these men back to work, he would at least have used his influence to have the matter settled either by the Industrial Court or by the industrial magistrate.

The PREMIER: The industrial magistrate has no power.

Mr. A. JONES: No. The Government took that power away from the industrial magistrate when they suspended the award. Mr. Riordan's point is that the Government should repeal the Order in Council which was gazetted on 11th November, 1930, in order to give these men an opportunity to have their case satisfactorily settled by the Industrial Court. That is a fair attitude to adopt. As an industrial organisation, the Australian Workers' Union has always stood for arbitration, which is the policy also of the Australian Labour Party; therefore, when we ask the Premier to give these men access to the Industrial Court, we are only asking the hon. gentleman to do something which is right and proper, and in accordance with the policy upon which the present Government were elected.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) [9.5]: I desire to take another five minutes to reply to certain statements made by the Secretary for Mines in regard to Chillagoe. I will read an extract from a letter which I received from these people—

"Of course, the Minister must wriggle out of it by telling lies."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The term is unparliamentary.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I am only quoting from this letter.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw it.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I withdraw. The letter continues—

"The Minister was right re our application date and our case being set down for hearing on 23rd September. But our case was not heard on the 23rd. It was postponed until the return of the warden, which was on 6th October. Another thing you could have told the Minister is that the objection lodged was not lodged until 24th September, which was the day after the case was postponed."

That was the day the court adjourned. The warden was going out of Chillagoe when the brother of the Secretary for Mines lodged an objection. He did not lodge any objection until the day after the court adjourned, and the court case was heard on 6th October. At that court one of the principals invited the warden to proceed to the land in question. The objection was that he was taking the only permanent water on the land. The warden agreed to visit the land, and the whole party, including those involved in the application, the Minister's brother, and the warden, motored out to the spot, and found that there was not sufficient water in what was the permanent waterhole, as the Minister's brother

stated, to put in their whisky. One can imagine, therefore, that there was very little argument in regard to permanent water. The warden recognised this, because he stated at the time that he must recommend the application, and he said, "I would advise you, Mr. Atherton, to withdraw." After getting in a very bad temper, Mr. Atherton said, "If you are going to recommend it, I don't want to bring my brother into the dispute, so I will withdraw." The Minister advised me to keep on the straight path, and I now advise him to keep on the straight path. I say that preference was given to Jurd and party to take up as mining homesteads a certain area that was not allowed to other applicants. The portion of land that was recommended by the warden, on the advice of the Secretary for Mines, was objected to by the Secretary for Public Lands, as he wanted the area set aside for agricultural purposes; and the Secretary for Mines used his influence with the Secretary for Public Lands to get the land granted to Jurd and party. I say the Government did not play the game with these applications. I want to advise the Minister also that at no time did I ever steal a beast, and at no time did I ever burn my property down.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Mr. Fry, I rise to a point of order. The remarks of the hon. member insinuate that the Secretary for Mines is guilty of a crime, and I ask that the hon. member be made to withdraw.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I did not say that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You did not say it, but you insinuated it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: As it appears to me to be an accusation by suggestion, I ask the hon. member to withdraw it.

Mr. O'KEEFE: If members of the Government Party want me to say that the Minister did steal a beast, I shall do so and then withdraw.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What is the inference?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I want to be fair.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw. That is my ruling.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I shall have to say it before withdrawing it. Do you want me to say that the Minister stole a bullock and did burn down his property? I do say that, and now I withdraw it.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*) [9.11]: The hon. member for Gympie in speaking on this question had a lot to say in respect to prospecting. In the early days it was largely the finding of alluvial gold on the surface or in reefs that came to the surface that enabled people to secure gold in the large quantities in which it was secured in the boom days. Nobody doubts that there is still any amount of gold in Queensland: but, if the reefs do not come within 20 feet of the surface, it is going to be much more difficult to discover gold to-day than it was in the early days of prospecting in Australia. There is no doubt that gold still

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exists in larger quantities than has ever been taken out, but no system has yet been discovered whereby we can find a lode if it is several feet under the earth. Geologists can give a general idea of the geological conditions which would lead one to believe that gold is likely to be found in a particular locality. Geologists, even after they see a mine opened up, always go on the safe side, and wait until there is a pretty fair return from the field before they declare in favour of the field.

Reference was also made by the hon. member for Gympie to Mount Morgan, which paid £9,000,000 in dividends to the shareholders; but the conditions of the miners were not improved in any degree. They then received a very low wage and worked under rotten conditions. The bulk of the money went to the shareholders; and, after the richest ore was worked out and a low-grade ore left, the miners were asked to accept a reduction in their wages and conditions. The Labour Government came to their assistance by giving the company great reductions on the railways in return for the retention of the men at their usual rates of pay. It will be most difficult to treat low-grade ores until a new process has been discovered for the treatment at a profit of the low-grade ores at Mount Morgan.

Statements have been made with regard to the check inspector who was stationed at Townsville. Prior to the closing down of the mines at Cloncurry that check inspector lived in Charters Towers, and was continually going round the mining district of Cloncurry. Later on, when mining slumped in the far North and West of Queensland, he was stationed at Townsville, whence he visited the Northern mines, returned to Townsville and stopped three or four days, and then went to Cloncurry. He made a continuous round of the mines. I was working at Mount Cuthbert when the check inspector was visiting the district. The company welcomed and appreciated the appointment of a check inspector. I have definite cases in which the check inspector prevented industrial trouble on the job. I do not think the same spirit has departed from the West yet. If we negotiated with the company in regard to a reasonable request, and the company did not meet us, we went on strike, and generally got what we wanted. The check inspector used to attend the union meetings. Perhaps the matter of a defective rope in the main shaft would be brought up. The check inspector would see the mine manager, and say, "We will have an inspection of this rope, and it may be condemned." The manager might say that they could not get a rope within a certain time. The men might want to go on strike, but the inspector would say, "You can't get a new rope for a couple of weeks and the present rope will probably carry on in safety until a new rope is obtained." There was instance after instance where the check inspector kept the balance between the men and the manager. The check inspector would go into a hot end, and, when there was a dispute as to the degree of humidity—we had a six-hour shift—over a certain degree of humidity, the check inspector would take a careful check of the humidity on a number of occasions and decide one way or the other. He did wonderful work. We employ inspectors to see that producers get a proper return for their produce, and we provide for

inspection in regard to wool, timber, and other commodities. If the Government can afford that expense, surely they can afford the expense necessary for the purpose of protecting the lives of men engaged in mining, which is a dangerous occupation? When the present Government came into power they could not dismiss those check inspectors, but they reduced their wages to 15s. per week, and automatically the men had to retire. That was the most ignominious thing that could have been done.

The Minister mentioned something in reference to bucket dredging and the putting up of a certain amount of cash by a company going in for a concession. Recently I visited the North and met a dredging master whom I had known in Victoria, where dredging was a successful form of mining. One man, P. W. Tewkesbury, got control of a number of dredges and paid £1,000,000 into the bank as a result of bucket dredging in the north-eastern districts of Victoria. He told me that during the old tin-scratching days at Mount Garnet the tin had been taken from the surface, but there was an excellent run of tin at the 50-ft. level, and that, if a suitable dredge could be obtained for work at that level, a big return would be obtained. Unfortunately, a second-hand dredge was obtained from the South, and it proved unsuitable for the work. Properly conducted, the dredging system offers a greater return than the reefing system in Queensland to-day. The Batavia River field is easily the best field operating in Queensland to-day, and is entitled to all the assistance possible from the Government.

The Minister referred to certain accidents at Mount Isa. Twelve months ago we specially asked the Minister to take certain precautions in the mining industry, particularly to see that certificated engine-drivers were placed in charge of winding machinery operating over the heads of the men, but we were told that it was not necessary. The Queensland "Government Mining Journal" reports deaths from accident of a number of men who were killed in the main shaft. Some have met their death by coming in contact with electric wires carrying up to 400 volts and unprotected. The inspector's report for December last states—

"A blasting accident occurred at Mount Isa Mines, Limited, Davidson's shaft No. 4 north level, on 12th December. A round of twenty holes was being fired out by L. Kerr and L. Coffey, accompanied by the shift boss, Dave Paulett, and the platman, C. Crammond. From the evidence to hand, it seems that the holes were lit in the usual way and the men started off towards the shaft, and had only gone half a dozen yards when a charge exploded. The concussion knocked the men down, and flying rocks inflicted injuries which necessitated the removal of all four men to the hospital. The injuries were not very serious, fortunately, and the injured men should soon be at work again.

"On the 2nd December two miners named W. Hocking and J. Byers suffered temporary asphyxiation through inhaling the fumes of burnt explosive, in the level being driven from the bottom of No. 46 shaft. More than an hour elapsed between the time of firing and returning to work, but it seems that the fumes were imprisoned in the mullock, and

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while the men were shovelling the fumes were liberated, with the above result.

"Two other accidents were reported from the construction works, but were of a minor nature only."

The report for February states—

"On the 17th January J. Tennant, pumpman at Lawlor's shaft, Mount Isa Mines, Limited, had his leg broken in two places through being dragged off a stage in the shaft while pulling a suction hose, and fell 20 feet.

"Eight smaller accidents were also reported from Mount Isa, but were of a minor nature only."

The report for March states—

"Fourteen accidents were reported during February. Thirteen were of a minor nature, but one proved fatal. This occurred to a pipefitter named James Walter Neil at the main haulage shaft, Mount Isa Mines, Limited, on the 19th February. At the time of the accident Neil and his son and a miner named Berry were preparing to couple up a 4-inch pipe in the pump chamber, at a point 372 feet from the surface. Neil was unloosening the yoke on a 2-inch pipe, standing on the stage, when, without warning, the bearers collapsed and Neil was precipitated down the shaft a distance of approximately a hundred feet. Death was practically instantaneous. His son and his working mate could offer no explanation as to what caused the collapse. An inquiry will be held in due course."

If the regulations had been carried out and the proper scaffolding had been erected, that life would not have been lost. The April report states—

"Thirty minor accidents were reported from Mount Isa Mines, Limited, mostly from the construction department.

"An inquiry was held at the court house, Mount Isa, on the 26th March, before the warden and four experienced miners, into the cause and circumstances concerning a fatal accident which befel James Walter Neil while fitting pipes in the main haulage shaft, Mount Isa Mines, Limited, on 19th February last. Four witnesses were examined, but the evidence tendered was of too indefinite a nature to enable the court to return a satisfactory verdict. The 'finding' was practically to that effect."

The June report states—

"An accident accompanied with fatal results occurred at Mount Isa construction works, Mount Isa Mines, Limited, on the 5th ultimo, to a rigger named Balzer Arnesen, but better known locally as Johann Olsen. The deceased was employed at the new power-house, in course of erection, on the date referred to, and at about 9 a.m. was in the act of passing a manila rope round a girder to his mate above when his arm touched a live wire carrying current to a travelling crane at a pressure of 440 volts. The shock, in all probability, caused him to fall from the place where he was standing to the floor beneath, a distance of approximately 33 feet, fracturing the base of his skull, from which he died a few minutes afterwards. An inquiry is to be held. A number of minor accidents were also reported."

Here we find that men are compelled to work amongst live wires carrying up to 400 volts. These men were killed because the Government permitted the suspension of the regulations relating to mining operations.

The "Queensland Government Mining Journal" of the 15th August, 1930, reported—

"A serious accident occurred at the main haulage shaft, Mount Isa Mines Limited, on the 8th instant, whereby three miners named respectively Robert Williams, William Henry La Frenz, and Henry Schramm were seriously injured, the last named succumbing to his injuries about seven hours later. Four other men were working in the shaft at the time but were lucky enough to escape injury. The shaft is vertical and, at the time of the accident, was 483 feet deep, and was in process of sinking. Operations had been resumed a day or two prior to the occurrence of the accident and, on the date referred to, at about 5 p.m., a bucket of mullock was sent to the surface, in the usual manner, to be tipped into a hopper adjoining the brace. The engine-driver hauled the bucket above the movable door and the bracceman attached the tailrope but forgot to close the door over the shaft before giving the signal to the driver to lower; and the driver, not noticing the position of the door, tipped the bucket of mullock into the shaft, seriously injuring the three men referred to. At the inquiry which was held at the Court House, Mount Isa, on the 30th instant, the court found that the accident was caused through the bracceman unconsciously omitting to close the door of the brace before giving the sign to the engine-driver to tip the bucket. They also noted that 'had the engine-driver been more observant at the time the accident could have been averted.'"

It is necessary that certificated men should be engaged in hauling material over the heads of men working in a shaft. Seven or eight men have been killed while working in the Mount Isa main shafts. At the time when the Government were introducing an amendment of the Mining Act last year, I said that the Government were potential murderers if they allowed uncertificated men to take charge of winding gear, and a number of deaths have occurred from this cause. I have quoted to-night where three or four men have been killed through coming into contact with unprotected live wires. It is the duty of the Government to protect the lives of miners and those working about mines by insisting that certificated men shall operate the plant.

The Secretary for Mines made some comparison in connection with the percentage of accidents on the Cloncurry field last year and previous years; but he overlooked the fact that, during the time the Mount Elliott mine was working, over 900 men were engaged, and the company had only a small percentage of deaths. It was a more difficult mine to work than the Mount Isa mine. One hon. member referred to the "glory hole" system of mining carried out at Mount Isa. The "glory hole," or rilling system, was introduced into the Mount Elliott mine by Mr. Strecht, and, if the shareholders in that company knew how many thousand tons of high-grade ore was lost thereby, they

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would be very much incensed. The system was inaugurated at No. 3 level, and it eventually cut through into No. 1 level. The Mount Elliott mine had a very good record as regards accidents up to the introduction of this system; but many miners were afterwards killed through inadequate timbering. Any hon. member can realise that men working in a big open space as large as this Chamber would not know how the country at the back was hanging. No matter how careful a miner was when working on a temporary framework, he would not know whether the country at the back of the "glory hole" was loose or otherwise.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The men at Mount Isa work from the surface down.

Mr. BRUCE: I would call that an open-cut. The open-cut system was a different system of mining altogether. The early gold-fields of Australia really established the population of Australia, and brought here an adventurous crowd of people of whom we are all proud. They are the forefathers of our present race.

The initial difficulty of the Government was that no member in their ranks possessed practical experience in mining. I will not say there were not members who had practical experience in exploiting miners, or putting in their money to make money out of mining.

The Government selected the present occupant of the position as Secretary for Mines. That was rather unfortunate for both Queensland as a State and the Government as a Government, because, while the hon. gentleman had excellent credentials for many other positions—perhaps for the abattoirs or something of that sort—he had no credentials whatever as Secretary for Mines, although I will give him this credit, that he has improved since the first session of this Parliament, but a lot of trouble has been caused by the fact that he has received advice, perhaps in good faith, from people who want to exploit the mining industry. He has admitted that the granting of concessions to certain mining companies and concessionaires has been a failure because they did not carry out their promises, and that in future no further concessions will be granted until the applicants prove their bona fides. Like the prodigal son, the Minister expects us to fall on his neck because he has altered his opinion and that in future concessionaires will have to produce proof as to their bona fides. He admits frankly that the concessions have been a failure.

We have another prophet in Sir Edward Macartney, who said, "It is not concessions you want in order to foster the mining industry, you want a Legislative Council." He differs entirely from the Secretary for Mines. Last night the Government Party held a meeting and decided on the appointment of a Legislative Council. I warn them to be careful of the "go-getters." If a Legislative Council will improve the mining industry to such an extent, then it is only logical to argue that we should go on appointing Legislative Councils one after the other.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! This is not a discussion on the Legislative Council.

Mr. BRUCE: But it is stated that the appointment of a Legislative Council will bring capital into this State for mining

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purposes. I submit that we want to assist the Minister to get this capital as quickly as we can. I merely warn the Minister and his colleagues to be careful of these "go-getters" in the Legislative Council, because, once a Legislative Council is appointed, it will not be possible to get square with them, as the Government did with the other "go-getters" by withdrawing their concession. The Government will be well in the pool. I am afraid that is what is going to happen. The question is: Who is right? The Minister says the concessions will bring money to foster the mining industry. On the other hand, the Premier asserts, after a private conversation with Sir Edward Macartney, that it is necessary to appoint a Legislative Council in order to attract capital for mining purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is quite right.

Mr. BRUCE: It is difficult to reconcile these statements. The Minister has been honest—strangely so for him—in admitting that the concession system has failed.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I did not say that.

Mr. BRUCE: The hon. gentleman said that these concessions had got into the hands of "go-getters."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I said they had not come up to expectations.

Mr. BRUCE: Quite a lot has been said about prospecting, but the granting of these concessions restricted the operations of prospecting.

The question so ably dealt with by the hon. member for Burke in regard to the trouble at Mount Oxide is one on which I hope the Minister has some knowledge. I hope the hon. gentleman knows the locality so that he will appreciate what the conditions are like. The Government removed these men from the Industrial Court, and gave them no option but to take direct action. Immediately the hon. member for Burke brought up the matter of cost of living on these mines per medium of a question, the Government should have sent the Commissioner of Prices to Mount Oxide. They should not have allowed the tributors, who are really only agents for the Chillagoe Smelters, to reduce the wages of these men and to charge them 50 per cent. more than the correct amount for their foodstuffs. As soon as the men refused these conditions, the Government tried to get men to "scab" at these mines, and sent a team of police to Mount Oxide. The men resisted at the time; but when more police were sent, the miners were eventually arrested and charged—not with one offence, but with two or three offences, just as though they were desperate criminals. One miner was charged with taking a gun away from a mine protector, whose name showed that, while he might have originally hailed from the Continent, he had recently come from Chicago. He was a gangster employed by the owners of the mine as a mine protector. They did have men looking after the mines when they were closed up—quite decent, genial people, who lived on the place. I will guarantee that the Minister cannot pronounce the name of the person who produced a gun from his pocket and then found one of the miners taking it from him. Every possible charge was laid against these men.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*) [9.36]: Anyone who has any knowledge or association with the mining industry knows full well that check inspectors performed a very useful service in the way of protecting the lives and limbs of the workers in the mining industry. There is no doubt that this work was carried out conscientiously by the mining inspectors. The Minister admits that, in order to dispense with the services of the check inspectors, he resorted to the subterfuge of reducing their wages. That was not a manly thing for any person in such a high position to do to men who had given good service to the State for many years past.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There was no necessity for the job.

Mr. HYNES: If there was no necessity for the job, the Minister should have had the courage to say so, and have dispensed with their services in the ordinary way. There was work for these men, and it has been amply demonstrated this evening that, as a result of the withdrawal of these men, there have been more fatal accidents and more miners injured in the performance of their work than was the case previously. I know Mr. Wilson very well. He is a man who had considerable experience as a practical miner. He also had considerable experience as an industrial organiser in the mining industry; and there was no one better qualified to act in the capacity of check inspector than he. It has been said that this man was stationed at Townsville. That is not correct, because most of his time was spent in travelling about North Queensland. He would go to the Cairns hinterland, and then out as far as Mount Isa and Cloncurry. I know this man personally, and had almost weekly communications from him; and I know that he was away most of the time. He was what might be called an itinerant inspector. Although his home was established in Townsville, that was not really his place of residence, because he spent nearly the whole of his time traveling round the North, performing his duties in a conscientious way.

The Minister stated that the system of being able to appoint a man on the job to do the check inspecting was a much better one. There is nothing new in that, as the system was in operation under the Labour regime, and the Minister cannot take any kudos for that state of affairs. It was also necessary to have an inspector who was not dependent on the employer for his livelihood, and who could conscientiously and fearlessly carry out the inspection. In most cases decent employers welcomed a visit from Mr. Wilson or any other check inspector. The presence of the inspector in many cases was instrumental in preserving industrial peace, because he was a man with a fair amount of discretion, and a vast knowledge of industrial affairs, particularly in regard to mining. He was often able to arbitrate on small disputes, and give advice both to the men and the managers of the mines, which invariably resulted in industrial peace being preserved; therefore, it was unwise for the Government to dispense with the services of these check inspectors.

The Minister stated that the fact of doing away with the concessions on the railways in connection with the consignment of ore from Cloncurry to Townsville was instrumental in more men being employed in the State by

reason of the fact that that ore was diverted to Chillagoe. According to the figures given by the Secretary for Railways this morning, the quantity of ore trucked from Cloncurry to Townsville in the undermentioned years was—

					Tons.
1928	...	...	...	...	10,630
1929	...	...	...	...	15,628
1930	...	...	...	...	11,108
1931	...	...	...	...	430

It is only 430 tons in 1931, because in the meantime a large amount of that ore has been diverted to the Chillagoe smelters in order to keep the Secretary for Mines in his job—and make his seat comfortable for him. If the Minister's statement that this altered policy was instrumental in giving work to more men in the industry is correct, that would be reflected in having an increased amount of ore trucked from Cloncurry to Chillagoe; but the total quantity of ore trucked from Cloncurry to Chillagoe in 1931 is 10,982 tons, or 5,000 tons less than was trucked to Townsville in 1929, showing that there have been fewer men employed. Is it not logical to assume that, if there was less ore produced in the year mentioned by me, there were fewer men employed in the industry? Still the Minister has the temerity to try to mislead the Committee by saying that the policy of the Government in giving concessions to these people who are trucking their ore from Cloncurry to Chillagoe has been instrumental in finding more work for those engaged in the industry.

In addition to the men who were working at the Chillagoe smelters under the Labour regime, there were 550 men also employed in other directions. It should have been the job of the Government to encourage the production of ore in the Chillagoe district, but they have done nothing in that connection. Is it a sound and economical proposition to take ore from Cloncurry to Chillagoe to keep the men going who are working on the smelters, when there is an abundance of ore in that particular district if only encouragement is given to its development and opening up? Under the administration of this Government there have been fewer men employed in the production of ore in North Queensland than was the case under the Labour regime; and under the conditions that we have referred to men who were consigning ore from Cloncurry to Townsville had a concession in regard to the rate of carriage. That is the logic of the figures which were presented by the Secretary for Railways to Parliament to-day. They prove conclusively that the Secretary for Mines was incorrect when he made the statement that there are more men employed under the new policy of the Government than was the case under the Labour regime.

I want to make some reference to the issuing of the Order in Council which was instrumental in bringing about such dislocation in the Cloncurry district in connection with ore production. At the time the Government indicated that they intended to suspend all awards in the metalliferous mining industry with the exception of silver-lead, I forecast that there would be trouble. When you take away from men the right of any redress other than direct action, they are forced to resort to direct action as a means of preserving their standard of living and fighting for what they have won in the past.

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That is exactly the position at Mount Oxide. I am an executive officer of the Australian Workers' Union, and I am conversant with the facts relating to the dislocation of industry in those districts. The Government are wholly responsible for the position that obtains to-day. They claimed that, if the awards were suspended, low-grade propositions would be developed; but I am prepared to say that there are no more men working to-day in the mining industry than was the case when the awards were in operation. Is it a fair thing to ask men to go down into the bowels of the earth to engage in one of the most obnoxious and one of the most dangerous occupations at less than the wage paid surface workers covered by awards, particularly in view of the fact that the cost of living in these areas is from 25 per cent. to 50 per cent. higher than in coastal districts? These men had some justification for endeavouring to preserve what they considered, and what I consider, is their right—a decent wage to enable them to maintain themselves, their wives, and families in decency and comfort. That is all these men have been guilty of. They were not overpaid, because in some other instances higher wages were paid. The hon. member for Burke has quoted the cost of commodities in this area, showing that the cost of living is 25 per cent. higher than at Cloncurry and 50 per cent. higher than at Townsville. These men were asked to work in the bowels of the earth at a lower rate than was awarded by the Industrial Court to workers in Townsville. That is an injustice; and is it any wonder that men in such a position take the only course open to them in order to preserve their living standards and their rights? Direct action is the only thing left open to them. When the Government suggested that the metalliferous mining award and other awards should be suspended, I pointed out that trouble would arise. The union of which I have the honour to be an executive officer has, in season and out of season, advocated constitutional action. We have pinned our faith to arbitration; and the decent employers of Queensland will admit that the Australian Workers' Union has at all times stood four-square for the policy of arbitration.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Are you behind the strikers?

Mr. HYNES: These men have been removed from the protection of the Industrial Court. If they had struck against a reduction in wages awarded by the Industrial Court, then the Australian Workers' Union could not consistently get behind them. The policy of the Australian Workers' Union would be to enforce the decision of the court. The union was prepared to administer the award even if it was unpopular, as they did in the case of the pastoral award. There they went out into the pastoral districts and enforced the award because it was an award of an industrial tribunal. This is a case where the men had no voice in connection with the reduction of their wages, which was arbitrarily brought about by their employer taking advantage of the action of the Government in gazetting the metalliferous miners out of the Industrial Court. He said to them, "I am going to reduce your wages 10 per cent., or there will be no work for you." That is getting back to the law of the jungle. Such a position has been brought about in this State by the policy of the Government in taking workers

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away from the protection of the Industrial Court. That spirit of revolt is being fostered by the action of the Government. These men had no other way of combating the nefarious designs of their employer on their living standards but by adopting direct action. It is the policy of the Government that has brought about the unfortunate position existing at Mount Oxide. I hope that this position will act as a warning to the Government. The Australian Workers' Union wrote to the Premier in a conciliatory manner pointing out that it was his bounden duty to do something to bring about a rapprochement between the two factions; but the Premier replied that, if he did cancel the Order in Council which had been issued suspending the awards, it would have the effect of throwing more men out of work.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is quite true.

Mr. HYNES: Can the hon. gentleman give me a specific instance where more men are being employed as a result of the cancellation of the metalliferous mining award?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I gave you some information on that point this afternoon.

Mr. HYNES: Even at the eleventh hour I appeal to the Premier to cancel the Order in Council.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of Sessional Orders passed by the House on 22nd July and 7th October, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported progress.

Resumption of Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 9.57 p.m.