

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 1941

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SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—
THIRTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

(Mr. Gair, South Brisbane, in the chair.)

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1941-1942.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The **SECRETARY FOR MINES** (Hon. D. A. Gledson, Ipswich) (10.33 a.m.): I move—

“That £21,228 be granted for ‘Department of Mines—Chief Office.’”

There is a slight increase of £770 in salaries and an increase of £415 for contingencies over the appropriations for last year. The increase in salaries is due to the recent increase in the basic wage and the extra amount provided for in contingencies is to meet the pay-roll tax. Otherwise, there have been no increases in the vote.

The mining industry of Queensland has shown its importance in the scheme of things during past years and there is considerable activity in mining throughout the State. There has been a forward move in the production of metals, particularly those that are necessary to the national work of the Commonwealth. Efforts have been made by the Commonwealth and the British Governments to step-up the output of certain metals and, as representative of this Government, I have attended several conferences in connection with increased production of our metals, particularly copper and gold and some of the other metals that are necessary for war work. The Commonwealth Government set up a committee known as the Committee for Production of Copper and Bauxite.

Queensland has representatives on that committee in Mr. J. M. Newman, a director of the Mount Morgan Company, and Mr. James Horsburgh, who has been associated with the metalliferous mining industry of Queensland for the past half-century. These gentlemen have gone to a good deal of trouble in helping to step-up the production, especially of copper, and in encouraging the production of bauxite in Queensland. They have travelled with other members of the committee throughout the various States of Australia, and so have gleaned a good deal of information concerning the production of these metals, and they also have obtained valuable information from other sources about their production in other countries. All this information has been carefully recorded for future use. After going thoroughly into the matter they have come to the conclusion that the greatest opportunity for increased production of copper is in Queensland. Consequently, recommendations were made to the Commonwealth Government that that Government should help to reopen the Mount Chalmers mine, which was worked many years ago, particularly for gold, and, to some extent, for copper. In the olden days the mine employed at least 100 men, it had its own smelters on the site, and an appreciable quantity of gold was produced. It is now proposed to reopen the mine with the help

TUESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER, 1941.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. E. J. Hanson, Buranda) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES, 1940-41.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return, in the usual form, of the expenses of Ministers for 1940-41.”

Motion agreed to.

of the organisation at Mount Morgan, which has been placed at the disposal of the Mount Chalmers Company for the purpose of dewatering it. When the mine has been dewatered, the shaft will have to be repaired, and the Commonwealth Government have agreed to help to the extent of £10,000 in dewatering the mine and in producing a parcel of ore to be treated at the Mount Morgan works to determine whether the mine will produce copper on a commercial basis. It was thought that it would be far better to obtain a parcel of, say, 500 tons, or more than a smaller parcel, so that it could be treated in bulk, and thus would give more convincing proof whether the mine would be a payable one. The reports of the engineers are to the effect that the mine will be successful. If it is, it will give employment to 200 to 300 men in the production of copper, which is urgently required by the Commonwealth for national purposes. It will give employment also for men engaged in the transport of the metal from Mount Chalmers to Mount Morgan, it will help production in Mount Morgan, and generally, it will give a fillip to copper production in Central Queensland.

The Queensland Department of Mines has been interested in the reopening of the Mount Chalmers mine for some time. I visited the mine with some of my technical officers about six months ago. Negotiations have been continued since then, the water is well down, and it is expected that the mine will be completely dewatered in the next few weeks. After the test has been made, we shall be able to begin the mining and treatment of copper ore.

In addition, negotiations have been proceeding with the Mount Isa Company to enable it to establish a copper industry in its district. Mount Isa has been a silver-lead mine, producing also zinc concentrates. The Black Star lease, one of the many leases worked by the company, contains payable copper ore, if it can be smelted at Mount Isa. The Commonwealth Government have agreed to guarantee the necessary finance to enable the company to convert silver-lead roasting furnaces to copper-smelting and produce ore from the Black Star lease.

It is expected that with these two mines in full working order Australia, during 1942, will obtain an additional 4,000 to 5,000 tons of copper. That is a considerable quantity. This will mean that Queensland will be able from these two mines alone to increase the war-time production of copper considerably, and supply Australia's requirements. At present, Australia has to import copper, and as days go by it is becoming more difficult, not only to obtain it overseas, but also to have it shipped to Australia.

The department, in addition, has during the last few months been assisting to develop other copper mines. Before Parliament met, I took the opportunity of visiting the far northern mineral fields. Among other places I visited was Mungana, a place that has been heard of before in this Chamber, going there via Chillagoe. There is an area outside

Mungana known as Mitchell River, and when I was there I completed arrangements to prospect it in order to ascertain the probabilities of getting additional copper from it. A report had already been made to the department on the matter, and the ore is supposed to be of very good quality. Arrangements were made to visit the field by packhorse. Two men are particularly interested in the prospecting work there. One, Mr. W. H. Prior, with his son, has been working what is known as the O.K. property on the road to Maytown in the Mitchell River district, and producing an appreciable quantity of gold. The ore also contains an amount of copper. Another man, Mr. Alfred Shaw, who has been mining in different parts of the district for many years, undertook to do the prospecting work for us. He found that there was certainly copper there, and a company has now taken an option over the area and erected machinery, and expects to produce an appreciable quantity of copper.

The Department of Mines was able to help in the making of roads, and the Main Roads Commission has constructed good roads. Recently a road was gazetted over the Mitchell River to Maytown that will enable us to bring ore to Mungana and rail it to Chillagoe.

In many other parts of the State, negotiations are proceeding for the opening-up of some of the mines that have been closed down for some time, and other old mines in the Cloncurry district are giving us an appreciable quantity of copper ore. Some mines belonging to the Mount Elliott Company and the Hampden Company are showing promise. The only difficulty we are experiencing is one that is being experienced by most industries throughout the State—the scarcity of trained artisans. It is necessary to have a number of experienced men to direct operations. An inexperienced man would be a danger not only to himself but to others working in the mine also. It is very difficult to get sufficient skilled miners to carry out the prospecting or developmental work necessary in opening up old mines, dewatering, getting into the stopes and along the drives. There is not much danger near the surface, but when it comes to opening up the lower levels it is a different matter.

The production of minerals in Queensland has been good and has helped this State to weather many difficulties. I have a table showing the production that I think the Committee would like to hear.

Mr. Nimmo: Where is the report of your department? It is the only departmental report we have not got.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think I explained before that the mineral production cannot be published. That is an instruction from the British Government to the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Nimmo: We are not going to get the report?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The departmental report is ready, but it cannot be published because we have instructions

that the mining statistics are not to be published.

Mr. Yeates: Are hon. members not to have access to it?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have instructions it is not to be made public at all.

Mr. Brand: What cannot be made public, the wealth produced from minerals?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Our annual total production cannot be made public. I can give hon. members figures of past production, but I cannot give them the statistics of present production. The report of the department is purely a statistical publication, and it was sent all over the world. We have been told we cannot give this information. Although the report for last year and this year is set up and ready, we cannot publish it. As soon as we are permitted to publish it, it will be published.

Mr. Yeates: Surely hon. members can be trusted as well as Government officers?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not think there is any question of trust in the matter, but we are told what we may do and cannot get away from that. We cannot give out the figures. I am telling hon. members the position and they must take my word that it is correct.

Mr. Brand: If you have been told not to publish it, that should be quite sufficient for every hon. member.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is the position. Those are our instructions. Hon. members have certain rights and I should like to meet their wishes if it were possible. For instance, if an hon. member asks questions he has a right to a reply. Of course, past production has been published. I can give the Committee the past production up to last year, but I am not permitted to give hon. members the current statistics.

Mr. Brand: Do you mean to the commencement of the war?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Up to last year.

Mr. Brand: Up to 1940?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The total production up to 1940. The figures are—

	Production.	Value.
		£
Gold	21,155,293 fine oz.	89,861,917
Copper	410,297 tons	28,645,030
Coal	43,845,709 tons	28,197,059
Tin	165,630 tons	12,638,550
Lead	484,869 tons	7,440,090
Silver	44,728,403 oz.	4,288,571
Zinc	145,361 tons	2,441,567
Limestone	3,169,714 tons	1,531,875
Wolfram	11,323 tons	1,170,938
Gems		645,648
Molybdenite	3,419 tons	618,177
Ironstone	608,454 tons	516,669
Opals		187,875
Cobalt	766½ tons	157,894
Bismuth	799 tons	143,740
Arsenic	4,250½ tons	124,195
Manganese	22,274 tons	85,734

Mr. Nimmo: Are you going to give us the cost of production of these things as well?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the Committee does not want this information I shall not bother to give it.

Mr. Brand: We do want it.

Mr. Nimmo: I thought that perhaps you were going to give us the cost of production.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member for Oxley ought to know that these things are not produced if it is not profitable to do so.

Mr. Nimmo: So long as they are economic.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We do not produce things unless they are economic. Anything that is produced for the good of the country and to increase the country's work is economic. Further production figures are—

	Yield.	Value.
	Tons.	£
Fireclay	108,895	30,842
Marble	3,948	18,434
Scheelite	71½	10,936
Dolomite	4,069	9,816
	Lb.	
Mercury sulphide	13,970	6,859

This is being produced in one or two places in the Kilkivan and Kingaroy districts. Others are—

	Tons.	£
Phosphate rock	434	1,849
Magnesite	837	1,526
Diatomite	552	1,519
Chrome iron	1,146	1,182
Graphite	269	1,183

There is a very fine graphite show outside the Collinsville district, producing some of the richest graphite that has ever been found in the world.

Other production figures are—

	Tons.	£
Silica	1,606	977
Mica	1½	805
Scheelite-Wolfram	2	350
Quartz	976	276
Kaolin	382	883
Whiting	10	80

The total value of minerals produced up to last year was £179,920,406. We have been told by some people that our mineral resources as yet have been only scratched, that we have vast quantities of rich ores all through Central and Northern Queensland, simply waiting for a miner to come along to discover them, and that we shall then have the beginning of great industries throughout the land.

I have not dealt with activities in connection with certain other minerals because they are being discussed under a Bill that is passing through the Assembly at the present time.

Before resuming my seat I desire to express, on behalf of myself, the department, and the public of Queensland, our deep regret at the

sad accident that happened on Saturday last in the Ipswich district. A fall of roof, unfortunately, killed two of the men working in a mine. These accidents, of course, bring home to us the dangers of a miner's life. They go away from their homes in the morning with plans laid for the Saturday afternoon and the week-end, but before long their lives are ended. The accident of which I speak happened in a mine not far from my home. The two men had been engaged in the industry all their lives; they were machine man and shift man, and were very popular in the district because of their fine qualities as citizens. I take this opportunity of expressing the sympathy of myself, coupled with that of the department and the Government, with their relatives. They were mates of mine, men with whom I had worked and been associated in other ways.

Mr. Nimmo: It was very nice of you to go down.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: These things go to show that we should do our best for miners and see that the safest possible conditions are provided for them. In this instance there was no indication that anything was wrong with the roof. Usually, a warning is given in the cracking and breaking of the mine timber, but the roof fell without warning, and they had no chance of saving themselves. I am sure everyone sympathises with the relatives of these men.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (11.3 a.m.): On behalf of myself and hon. members of the Opposition I associate myself with the Minister in expressing sympathy with the relatives of the miners who met their death in the tragic accident at the week-end. Such a disaster is, unfortunately, one of the things associated with mining activities and one of the risks workers in this dangerous calling take every day. We very much regret the circumstances that brought about their untimely death.

It was pleasing to hear the Minister give a comprehensive survey of the working of his department, in view of the fact that the exigencies of war deny us the assistance of the valuable information usually contained in the annual report of the Department of Mines. I am sure hon. members appreciate the information and the interesting figures the Minister has given. We look forward to the publication of this report when circumstances warrant.

The Department of Mines is a particularly important department of State, one dealing with a considerable amount of the wealth production of Queensland. As the Minister pointed out, mining in Queensland has been responsible for the production of about £180,000,000 of wealth, a very considerable sum. I think that our mining can be extended with advantage, especially at the present time when the world is crying out for metals of which Queensland has ample supplies.

The State Department of Mines has given considerable help to the prospector and in the encouragement of mining, and the Common-

wealth Government, in conjunction with the State department, has also helped in the production of metal in Queensland in various ways. The committee that was appointed by the Commonwealth Government to investigate the possibilities of increasing the production of copper, and bauxite in particular, is doing good work, and when the recommendations it has already made have been implemented, I feel the production of these two very important metals which are urgently required for war purposes will be immeasurably increased.

The Commonwealth Government are to be congratulated on the steps they have taken to bring about the reopening of the Mount Chalmers mine, with a view to bringing it into full production again. I venture to say that the method of testing the mine is a very businesslike one and one that will lead to an adequate return on the money invested. The authorities have taken full advantage of the experts on the staff of the Mount Morgan mine in dewatering the Mount Chalmers mine, and taking out a sample for testing purposes. Judging by past records, and taking into account present-day conditions, it is safe to say that the reopening of the mine will be worth while.

The main criticism that may be offered against the department is in connection with the reduction in the quantity of ore now being smelted at the Chillagoe State Smelters. The Minister said it was imperative to increase the supply of essential metals, but in looking over the figures it is regrettable to find that the metal treated at the Chillagoe State Smelters has fallen very considerably over the past 12 months. There must be a reason for it, especially under existing circumstances, and I trust that the Minister will give us the explanation later on.

The Secretary for Mines: The floods at the beginning of the year blocked everything and we could not get any ore supplies. The whole place was closed down.

Mr. Jesson: It was a five months' flood.

Mr. NICKLIN: It is rather interesting to note that the Auditor-General in his report gives details of ores mined and their values, yet the Department of Mines is not permitted to publish these details in its annual report. I do not know whether there is likely to be a leakage of valuable information to the enemy as a result of figures published in the Auditor-General's report concerning the Chillagoe State Smelters and the State coalmines in various parts of the State.

In looking over the figures concerning the quantity of gold, copper, and silver-lead ores treated in recent years, it will be found that the following quantities were treated by the Chillagoe State Smelters:—

	Tons.
1931-32	21,319
1938-39	22,882
1939-40	24,805
1940-41	19,692

There was a reduction of about 5,000 tons in the last 12 months. The explanation may be

the floods, as the Minister said, but the falling away in production of essential metals during the past 12 months is particularly serious. I understand the Chillagoe State Smelters are not now treating any lead ores. Ten years ago they treated 482 tons. In 1938-39 that quantity had fallen to 74 tons, in 1939-40 to 13 tons, and in the last financial year it treated no lead ores at all. The point I wish to make is: Why has there been such a reduction in the quantity of ores smelted in the 1940-41 financial year?

There is one other criticism I have to offer,—that is, that the aid the Government give from the State development tax to mining is infinitesimal. As its name implies, the proceeds from this tax should be utilised for work of a developmental nature. Mining undoubtedly offers great scope for development, especially when one considers the vast amount of wealth it has been responsible for producing. Notwithstanding this fact, we find that the Government have made very meagre assistance available from this tax for the development of mining. When we consider the war requirements, particularly the shortage in copper, the reduction in the amount of assistance given from this tax last financial year requires some explanation.

Copper prices have risen considerably in recent years. In 1931-32 copper was worth £39 a ton, whereas it is quoted now at £90. There is, therefore, ample room for helping in the production of copper. We find that the assistance to mining from consolidated revenue was £7,472 in 1940-41, while the amount of assistance from the State development tax was £21,689, a total of £29,161. When we consider that the State development tax collections amounted to £2,370,000 and the uses to which a large part of it was allotted, we naturally come to the conclusion that the Government might make available a greater sum than £21,689 for aid to mining. The expenditure on this very important activity is out of all proportion to the expenditure on other activities from the State development tax.

Mr. JESSON: You have not given the figures properly. Last year £36,000 was granted in mining assistance in my electorate alone.

Mr. NICKLIN: The hon. member must have got all the mining assistance that was available for the State.

Mr. JESSON: Not at all.

Mr. NICKLIN: I had no idea the hon. member's electorate was such an important one from a mining point of view.

I desire to make a comparison between these figures and the amount made available by the Government in 1931-32, the period hon. members opposite are so fond of quoting. This period was the depth of the depression. We find, nevertheless, that although a large number of our population were unemployed, the Government of the day made available £32,700 from consolidated revenue for aid to mining. Yet in 1940-41, the peak prosperous year in this State, the Government made

available only £29,161 from the State development tax and £7,472 from consolidated revenue. When one takes into consideration the need for the development of the mining industry at this time, one naturally thinks that the Government should have made a very much larger sum available from the State development tax for this purpose.

A review of the activities of the State coalmines shows that some of them have taken full advantage of the shipping shortage and have raised the price of coal. Although the cost of production per ton has dropped in each of the main mines, which was due to increased sales, the price to the consumer has been increased considerably. The Bowen mine increased its output to 46,879 tons, and the decrease in the cost of production was .42d. a ton, but there has been an increase of 1s. 7d. a ton in the price to the consumers. At Styx No. 3 mine there was an increase in output to 6,606 tons, a decrease in the cost of production of 1s. 15d. a ton, and an increase to the consumers of 1s. 11d. a ton. One would have thought, in view of the circumstances, that instead of increasing the cost of coal the Government would have taken the opportunity to reduce it, when the supplies from these mines are being largely utilised for the development of our metalliferous mining industries. In view of the figures I have quoted, the Government could have reduced the price of this important basic mineral to the metalliferous mines of the State to enable them to decrease the cost of production of the most essential metals required at the moment.

Briefly, those are the two criticisms I have to make of the activities of this department. I trust the Government will reconsider their attitude, particularly towards prospectors. In his opening remarks the Minister said that it was important—in fact, necessary—that every encouragement should be given to prospectors to find the hidden mineral wealth of this State. Judging by the amount of money the Government are making available to assist this important activity they do not seem to take much heed of this urgent need. I hope, too, that during the current financial year the Government will see fit to make available a greater share of the State development tax to help in the development of mining in this State.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (11.19 a.m.): The mining industry is of prime importance to Queensland. The Minister has quoted the total production of mineral wealth in Queensland, and his figures show that to the end of 1940, of a total mineral wealth production of £180,000,000, approximately half came from gold, and some £57,000,000 from copper and coal. At one time goldmining was one of the principal industries in Queensland, and I agree with the Minister that the mining industry of this State has assisted it during some of its worst years. I believe it can do so again. We are passing through a period of war when something can be done with the great wealth of minerals that are known to exist in this State, but frankly, as a State, we are doing very little with the

opportunities we have of making these industries of very great value.

I was pleased to hear from the Minister that in the past year he made representations to the Commonwealth Government for certain things, and received certain help towards assisting our mining industry. An industry that can have such a great bearing on the success of our people should have all the help that can be given to it by way of legislation to encourage the establishment of companies to exploit our latent wealth. After all, our production of coal is approximately only 1,000,000 tons annually, but hundreds of millions of tons are known to exist in the State. For a number of years we have not tackled the problem of exporting coal as we should have. Many factors are militating against success in finding an export market for this necessary commodity. A sister State, South Australia, depends on the eastern seaboard of Australia for her coal supplies, and when this State cannot claim its share of that market it is evident that we are not doing all we can in the development of markets for coal, even in Australia.

The other day we were told by Mr. Orr, representing the coalminers' union—

The Secretary for Mines: He is not representing the coalminers' union.

Mr. BRAND: We were told by Mr. Orr that coal was being brought 500 miles from New South Wales to South Brisbane to service our mail trains. It is remarkable that our Ipswich coals cannot be used on that service. Something is wrong with a system that permits such a happening in a period of war when our transport system must be run as economically as possible and to the best advantage.

I was very disappointed to find in the figures of production quoted this morning no record of any production of iron in this State.

The Secretary for Mines: I gave you the iron production.

Mr. BRAND: We produce very little of it.

The Secretary for Mines: We produce some.

Mr. BRAND: This is a period in which our iron and steel industry would be a great help to the nation. When we think of 1917 and the following years we remember that the then Labour Government were endeavouring to establish an iron and steel industry in this country, and from the records available we know that in the State of Queensland there are some of the best iron-ore lodes to be found in any part of the world. It is believed that, with the exception of the Barton Hill Group, U.S.A., some of the best iron ores in the world are in Sweden, but in Queensland there are ores that have been tested and found to compare favourably with the best Swedish iron ores. In addition, our lodes contain all the necessary minerals to enable them to be smelted without the use of flux.

The Biggenden iron ore lode offers greater possibilities than any other lode in Australia, or in the world, so far as smelting qualities are concerned. The Department of Mines should at this very moment be considering the development of this deposit. Some time ago a man named Brophy was brought here by the then Government, to investigate the possibilities of iron-ore production, and he recommended the establishment of a State works at Bowen. Evidently, it was his view that Bowen was the point at which such a works might give best service. Whether the works are erected at Bowen, Gladstone, Urangan, or anywhere else, surely if there was any wisdom at all in the recommendations that were made at that time, this is the time for putting them into effect and developing that industry? I said during my first speech this session that I agreed with the establishment of such a works, and that our iron, steel, and copper industries must be developed. The Minister has indicated that because of certain activities he is hoping we shall be able to produce 5,000 tons of copper next year. I hope so. In fact, I hope that that production is quadrupled. We should all be willing to help the Minister to do so, for I do not believe that we can look for any great advance in manufacturing industries until we establish and develop our iron, steel, and copper.

In support of my contention that we have in Queensland some of the best iron and steel ores to be found in the world I should like to give the Committee some of the opinions that were expressed about the development of iron and steel in 1917. A sample of Biggenden ore was smelted in Brisbane and manufactured into an iron bar, which was tested for quality. That test disclosed that the ore contained 61.8 per cent. of iron, 3.3 per cent. of lime, 5.6 per cent. of silica, .4 per cent. of magnesia, .06 per cent. of phosphorus, .04 per cent. sulphur, and .17 per cent. bismuth. We can appreciate the value of this iron ore when we realise that the best iron ore in the British Isles, the Cornwall ore, contains 61.40 per cent. of iron.

A bar of iron made from the Biggenden ore, an inch square, was tested in 1917 at the works of Monteath Brothers, at South Brisbane, and the result was very satisfactory. As a matter of fact, at that time the Government believed that the standard breaking strain of an inch bar of iron should be 1,090 lb., but the iron smelted from this area gave a breaking strain of from 3,000 lb. to 3,500 lb.

Mr. Riordan: It was one of the deposits the Government intended to work.

Mr. BRAND: The deflection of the ore was $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in one case and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in three other cases, and the tests proved conclusively that the iron we could produce from this area was equal to anything in the world. From what we already know, one can understand the difficulties of obtaining in this country steel and other materials for our industries. All are hard to get to-day for

use in private industry, because of war needs, but when we have these mineral ores abounding in our State, we should not be content to let some private individual alone explore and exploit them. We have a department of experts, and surely that department should be able to give to this Parliament a report upon the possibilities of the development of these two industries!

It has been said that we could do much to increase production of copper by reopening old mines, but one of the difficulties in the way is that after you have got 50 feet below the earth the ore still belongs to the original owners. The New Moonta copper mine in my electorate is an illustration. After the closure of Mount Perry this mine from which a great deal of copper was taken has a great deal of ore still untouched. The surface rights to a depth of 50 feet were sold to a settler, but beyond that depth the ore was owned by the Queensland Mining Company, which had developed the mine 50 years ago, when Mount Perry was at its height. I believe we should open these fields to those who will develop them, and an Act of Parliament should be passed similar to that in operation in regard to the goldmining industry, whereby our people might explore and exploit old workings, particularly when the persons who now own the wealth do nothing whatever with it. An Act of Parliament passed this session would be the means, I believe, of opening up much development in the copper industry. I believe that there is an obligation on us to make more copper available for our war effort. As the Minister rightly said, we are badly in need of these minerals, and Parliament should not go into recess until we have attended to these matters that are holding up our industries. We have no right to allow monopolies to get a grip of the mineral areas of this State. I recognise that private enterprise is developing the copper and iron deposits in other parts of Australia, and is doing a fairly good job in the prosecution of the war effort, but we have no right to allow it to become the sole controller of these minerals in this continent.

Queensland is a big State, it has iron ore in abundance everywhere, and it should be exploited. All the relevant information should be collated by the officers of the department, so as to induce Parliament to move for the establishment of these works. We want them, industry wants them to-day. We are held up in the matter of railway extensions, for example, because it is impossible to get steel rails. Of course, we realise that the war needs must come first, but we have an abundance of raw material and it should be our job to make it available for our industries.

I have been associated with the manufacturing side in the sugar industry for some time, and I can say that there is a difficulty in obtaining much-needed materials. First of all, we must get a priority certificate before we can get even the things that are necessary to maintain our sugar factories. There is a market, and a very big market, too, in Queensland for iron, steel, and copper, and I say to the Minister, "Go to it; take

whatever steps are necessary and develop these metals." If they cannot be developed through private enterprise, then let the State do it, as it was going to do it in 1920. If we do that, we shall begin an industry that will be of great value to the people of this State.

We have a great variety of ores in Queensland, and before the Estimates for this department are passed, I hope we shall have an intimation from the Minister about the progress that has been made in the development of bauxite ores for the production of aluminium. Here, again, Queensland is supreme in the possession of an important ore, and we should reap a benefit thereby. That we need it there is no doubt, and the Queensland Government should urge the Federal Labour Government to allow the Australian company, with a capital of £1,500,000, to begin operations in this State to develop our bauxite ores. We should not be content, as a people, to succumb to the monopolies that threaten to overwhelm us. We should do the job ourselves. I believe the matters controlled by this department offer more opportunities for development than those of any other. We can find a ready market for all the minerals we can win from the earth—iron, steel, copper, silver, lead, bauxite, and so forth. We have not exhausted the mineral possibilities of the State by any means; indeed, I agree with the Minister that we have all the valuable minerals so far known to man. They should all be exploited, and again I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that funds should be made available to the Minister for this purpose. During the past year he has spent quite an amount of money in the development of the mineral resources in my electorate, but he should be given more money so that he may be able to encourage the prospecting and development of all the mineral resources that are urgently needed by the people. The mining industry is one of the most important that we can develop now. We should therefore give all assistance possible to the Government, through the Minister, for the development of our minerals.

Mr. PIE (Hamilton) (11.40 a.m.): I did not realise until I heard the Minister speak how valuable mining was to this State. Nor did I realise the vast amount of different metals in this State waiting to be exploited. I agree entirely with the hon. member for Isis that if private enterprise is not prepared to exploit these latent mineral resources the Government should do something to work many of our idle mining areas and thus make available the metals that are urgently required at present.

When speaking in this House on a motion moved by a private member I brought before hon. members very clearly the position respecting bauxite and the world monopoly controlling it. I again desire to bring before hon. members the seriousness of the position in Australia in regard to this metal and the need to develop our bauxite deposits. It is interesting to note that after the speeches made in this Chamber on that occasion that Mr. J. M. Newman, whom we all know is

very deeply interested in mining throughout Australia, made the following important statement:—

“We have been plugging for an aluminium industry in Australia for the past 12 months but we have made no head-way.”

Then he proceeded—

“The combine did not want to see the aluminium industry started in Australia. With the change of Government we are renewing our request for permission to start the industry here.”

This, to my mind, is very important. I ask the Minister what steps have been taken to see that Queensland gets her fair share of development of our bauxite deposits. Since the deposits of bauxite at Mount Tamborine were mentioned, and since companies were formed to develop them, bauxite has been found all over Australia. It has not yet been proved that bauxite in New South Wales and other States is equal to that at Tamborine, but I am afraid that if the Government do not take some action to see that these deposits are developed we shall be left out in the cold in the same way as we always are, and our bauxite deposits will remain undeveloped, to our detriment. I hope the Minister will view the position very seriously, because, from a Queensland point of view, which we are entitled to take, we must demand that we get a fair share of the development of industry. I should like the hon. gentleman to tell us whether the Government have taken any steps to see that we get it.

It is interesting to note that aluminium is an important commodity throughout the world to-day. Just prior to the war Germany had control practically of the aluminium industry throughout the world. Production figures, based on 1938, disclosed that the Axis powers controlled 55.1 per cent. of the total world production of aluminium as against 44.9 per cent. by allied and friendly countries, such as India and British Guiana. Therefore, it is obvious that to-day Germany has greater resources of aluminium than we and all our allies combined. Surely we Australians should do our part to see that the bauxite resources in our midst, the development of which has been retarded by a world-wide monopoly, are developed. It would add to our war effort enormously.

I mentioned in a previous debate that an American monopoly—Aleo Aluminium Company—was acting in the same way as the monopoly here. President Roosevelt has given 250,000,000 dollars to fight it. That fight is going on in the courts of America to-day. The first case has gone against the Government. It has been proved that the company was not retarding the aluminium industry, but the Government have gone further and the matter is being taken to a higher court. If that is the position in America, how much more important is it for Australia to see we do our share in forcing out the monopolies that are retarding the industry?

It is also interesting to note that there has been formed in Australia the Australian

Aluminium Advancement Association. After the discussion in this House of this matter I received a note from this association saying how pleased it was that the matter had been brought up. We also see reports in papers published throughout Australia to the effect that these minerals should be developed. I quote the following article from “Smith’s Weekly”—it is a paper I do not quote very often, but one thing is outstanding in the article—

“Notwithstanding the evidence which has been forthcoming in recent months that there would be a grave shortage of aluminium in the democracies and that the Australian aircraft industry was in danger of being strangled just as it was entering into the effective production stage, the Commonwealth authorities have taken no steps to assist or even assent to the establishment of this important metal industry in Australia.”

Surely that is a disgrace to this country! Something must be done, and it is “up to” us as members of this Parliament, when we have the bauxite here, to see that something is done; therefore, I again ask every hon. member to use his influence with the new Government in power in the Federal sphere, to see that something is done. We know that the other Government would have nothing to do with it. In September last the whole matter was put before Senator McLeay and nothing has been done up to date; therefore, it is our duty to see that something is done.

I wish to touch briefly on the position in the coal industry, particularly in relation to secondary industries in other States. On 27 September last the “Sydney Morning Herald” came out with a great headline—“The Miracle of Whyalla,” and it went on to say what was being done in South Australia, and talked about the wonderful furnaces and the marvellous industries that were to be developed. But it left out one fundamental factor, and that is that Whyalla did not have the raw materials for the establishment of such a big concern. To-day the coal is brought from New South Wales to Whyalla, and Whyalla cannot operate satisfactorily because it cannot get sufficient coal.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. PIE: There is something wrong. The hon. member can read the newspaper reports, which clearly show that there is something wrong. There was a big report in the “Adelaide Advertiser” pointing out that there was a coal shortage. They cannot get coal and, therefore, they cannot get this important industry—which has cost the Commonwealth Government many millions of pounds—running as it should run.

I was very much impressed with the fight put up by the hon. member for Bowen for the establishment of the iron and steel industry in Bowen. I think the hon. member said it would cost approximately £2,000,000 to establish that industry there. South Australia gets £1,500,000 every year from

the Commonwealth Government, but this Government get nothing. Surely we are entitled to demand at least what South Australia gets for the establishment of an important industry such as that in Bowen. I understand, too, that up there all the resources are available, coal, iron ore, a natural harbour—everything required for the establishment of the industry—and yet, because influences the nature of which I do not know operate against this State, we get nothing whatsoever. I am trying to bring these things before hon. members to make them realise that as a State we are not getting the recognition our natural resources entitle us to.

I know what we are up against and until we all take our position seriously we shall never get anywhere. It is "up to" us to get together, irrespective of party, to see these industries established in this State. There is an acute coal shortage in Adelaide. That is confirmed by a cutting from one of their own papers that I have, and, therefore, I ask: Why should an industry be established in a place without the basic materials whose existence entitle a State to that industry? Let us have it established in our own State, in which we have all these materials as yet unscratched.

I wish now to deal briefly with shale oil. This was the subject matter of a motion by the hon. member for Oxley, and discussed on private members' days, and I am sorry that it did not go further. It was mentioned in that debate that Peters-Arctic Delicacy Company was developing the shale-oil industry in New South Wales. Being friendly with the manager in Brisbane I interviewed him on the subject; I asked myself: If that company could do it in New South Wales, why should we in Queensland not do it here? He was very interested, and promised to give the Government all the information he could of the company's experiences in New South Wales. I understand he has done this also in connection with freezing or anything having to do with freezing. The company has made experiments in the Southern States, and the manager informed me that there are shale deposits in the vicinity of Brisbane. The company has a very successful plant at Mittagong, but will now have to look for further deposits. Its deposits at present are being worked by the retort system, which is giving entire satisfaction.

Mr. Sparkes: Would not taxation have something to do with all that?

Mr. PIE: Irrespective of taxation, the Peters company is interested in the development of this State just as much as in taxation, and is willing to co-operate with the Government in developing this industry. The manager informed me that he had already placed his order in the South so that this fuel oil could be brought to Brisbane to run the company's works round this city.

Mr. Maher: What is stopping the Government from moving?

Mr. PIE: That is what I want to ask the Minister—if he can give the Committee

any reason why we should not take advantage of that offer. The manager has informed me that he is willing to allow any Government official to visit its works in the South, and inspect them thoroughly in order to see if something on similar lines cannot be started in Queensland. There could be no fairer offer than that, and I ask the Minister if he will give favourable consideration to it.

Summing up, the points I wish to make are: The seriousness of the aluminium and bauxite position; the desire of the other States to eliminate Queensland in this respect; the position that has been brought about at Whyalla, where an industry has been started without the fundamentals it needs; and the reason why we should not have these things in Queensland. These are the things that should stir the Minister's mind. The hon. gentleman can rest assured that he will have the support of every hon. member in this Committee in his efforts to obtain these developments for this State.

Mr. RIORDAN (Bowen) (11.54 a.m.): It was very pleasing for me to hear this morning that members of the Opposition realise the necessity for the development of the iron and steel industry in Queensland. It is also pleasing to see that, at last, they are displaying some interest in the State in which they live. Previously, they have always referred to other States, and now, at last, they have taken up the attitude that there is something in Queensland that can be exploited with advantage to the State and the people.

There is no question that it was proved in 1919-20 by the royal commission referred to by the hon. member for Isis that the establishment of iron and steel works would be in the interest of the State, and funds should be made available by the State for the purpose forthwith. Mr. Brophy was brought here from overseas to investigate the whole position. After staying in Queensland for something like two years he returned to America, but as a result of the action taken by certain vested interests at that time, Queensland had to go on the open loan market for the finance necessary for the development of the project, and because Queensland was not in a position to get the money, and because of a threat that if she went on with an iron and steel works the money would not be available, nothing has been done. We all remember what took place.

It is high time that something was done to develop, not only an iron and steel works, but also our copper resources. We have had it brought forcibly under our notice by the outbreak of war that this State abounds in every mineral that is needed for armaments. Right along our coast, and only a few miles in, we have almost all the things essential for modern armament production. In Northern and Western Queensland there are millions of tons of copper waiting to be exploited. We have coal in abundance. We have iron in abundance. We have bauxite in abundance. The hon. member for Hamilton is correct in saying that immediately bauxite was discovered at Mount Tamborine other deposits were discovered throughout the length and breadth of Australia. Recently,

a large deposit was discovered near Bowen, but it was a low-grade ore compared with the Mount Tamborine ore.

I suggest that there is no more favourable place for the erection of an iron and steel works than Bowen. Mention was made of Whyalla. In my speech on the Address in Reply I said that Whyalla was founded by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, which had to do something in that part of the world to expand its enterprise and to hold what it already had a tight grip upon—a monopoly of the iron and steel works of this country. It cannot be repeated too often that no State or Commonwealth can be great without an iron and steel industry, and I say emphatically that in Queensland we are not taking advantage of the opportunities that offer for the development of our iron and steel as a result of the heavy demand created by the war.

Mr. Maher: Hear, hear! That was in my programme.

Mr. RIORDAN: It does not matter to me who had it in his programme or who did not. As a citizen of this State, and as a native of North Queensland, I know that North Queensland has been neglected in the past because of interference by vested interests on every occasion upon which it looked as if development were going to take place. When I was a lad going to school in North Queensland the population there was 25 times greater than it is to-day. During the last war the population of North Queensland, from Cairns north, was 25 times more than it is to-day, and the demand for iron and steel is 100 times greater to-day than it was during the last war, but because of the activities of vested interests and monopolies throughout the world, Australia—Queensland, in particular—has been neglected.

Mr. Edwards: Perhaps the Government have had something to do with it.

Mr. RIORDAN: Past Governments could have done something, but I say, irrespective of what Government are in power, there is great need for something to be done.

Mr. Maher: That's the stuff.

Mr. RIORDAN: The debates on these Estimates offer the only opportunity we have of discussing the things that are needed in our respective areas. No doubt I may be accused of working the parish pump, but it would be a good thing if every hon. member worked the parish pump a little in order that we might know what is in his electorate, and in order that the Minister in charge of the department concerned might investigate the possibilities of the various suggestions of hon. members for the good of Queensland.

Mr. Maher: I say iron and steel are an important national matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member for West Moreton interjects much more he will have nothing to say when he rises to speak.

Mr. RIORDAN: I am pleased to see that hon. members of the Opposition are agreeing

with me, and I hope that the Government will make strenuous representations to the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of having the natural resources of Queensland exploited, particularly by the establishment of an iron and steel works in this State. I know the Premier has on occasions placed all these things before the various Governments in control in the Federal sphere, but up to date we have failed to achieve our objective. Quite recently the Commonwealth Government made £10,000 available for the reopening of the Mount Chalmers mine for the purpose of copper production, but, in my opinion, the making available of such a sum is only "mucking about." There is a big demand for copper, and I think that the whole of the copper resources of the Commonwealth should be investigated. Investigations might well be made of some of the old copper mines, even those that are not of a high grade. It does not matter to me what workings are opened up; let there be established an electrolytic works for the purpose of producing copper for the benefit of the whole of Australia. This works should be established where it is possible to produce copper economically. If it is found that it can be produced more economically at Townsville or Cairns than anywhere else, let us get to work. I am pointing out, however, that past investigations indicate that Bowen is the most likely site. As the hon. member for Hamilton pointed out, some 50 or 60 miles at the back of Bowen is an unlimited supply of coal—enough for an iron and steel works for 250 years, at any rate. I say that we have been tinkering with these things and letting monopoly interests get a stranglehold on us. I refer particularly to the Broken Hill Proprietary Limited. I admit that many fine things have been done by private interests, and much development work has come about by allowing these private companies to go on their merry way. But huge profits have been made and we have to look to the interests of Queensland when discussing things in this Committee, and we have to see whether it would be possible to build an iron and steel works in this State and interest some company to which a concession might be given for the purpose. I do not care what attitude is adopted; but I am anxious to see that no monopoly is created in the iron and steel industry. I do not care who develops it, so long as we get on with the job of doing the work in Queensland.

There has been a very great improvement in the production of coal at Collinsville since the war started, although we have heard much criticism and condemnation of the men working in that mine.

An Opposition Member: The mine has been mechanised.

Mr. RIORDAN: It has not; there is no mechanisation in the mine. If there is to be mechanisation in any industry, it should be for the benefit of the people in the industry and not for the purpose of making

profits for the person or company installing it. In the past, many of the ailments from which this country has suffered have been brought about by the introduction of mechanisation into industry, and the total disregard of the people thereby thrown out of employment. Surely science was never intended to bring about poverty, malnutrition, and misery, but to be employed to improve working conditions and give greater and greater benefits to the people who live on this earth.

I mention these things because there has been so much condemnation of our workers in the coalmines in the past. They are making a practical contribution to the war effort. Although a number of these men may have been Communists before the ban was imposed upon them and they may have been Communist sympathisers since the outbreak of war, they have thrown themselves into the task of bringing about greater production. I suggest to the people who speak of the need for giving all possible aid to Russia that they should follow the practical example of the miners at Collinsville. I suppose it is because these miners have something in common with the Russian ideal that they have increased the production of the mine and so helped the war effort in a practical way. If some of our Latter Day Saints and those interested in giving aid to Russia would do likewise, we should have a greater war effort than we have to-day. I suggest that they should follow the practical example of the Collinsville miners.

There is a new goldmine, the Dittmer mine, a few miles from Proserpine, that has exploded the theories of many professional men in the mining industry, and of the hardest old prospectors, that it was no use looking for gold on the coast. Here is a mine 20 miles, perhaps less, from the coast that is one of the best producers in Australia to-day. It is giving employment to about 125 men. There is another mine close by it which is being worked by 25 men. Both are giving a rich return to the State and the district bids fair to become one of the biggest gold-producing areas in the Commonwealth. It has been proved beyond doubt that there is a very rich deposit of gold, although it is not in big quantities.

Mr. Maher: Is it a reef?

Mr. RIORDAN: Yes, reef gold. It is very rich, indeed, and I think one of the richest areas in the whole of Australia at the present time. I think it is about the third producer in Queensland. I suggest to the Minister that he should give at least the same kindly consideration to these mines as has been given to other mines in the past, because it has been proved beyond doubt that it is country that is very rich in gold.

Mr. Barnes: How many ounces to the ton?

Mr. RIORDAN: The average is 5 to 6 ounces to the ton at present, and in some parts it has gone as high as 18 to 20 ounces to the ton. It is a very rich mine, and there

are some other very promising prospects in the area.

Mr. Nimmo: That is all due to the energy of a medical man.

Mr. RIORDAN: It is all due to the energy of two good old prospectors, Thoroughgood and Sinclair, who discovered the deposit with the help of the Government. They now have other mining interests in the area. They found it, and Dr. Dittmer was the man who formed the company and is now exploiting the show. He is getting a good return for his investment.

Mr. Nimmo: Still, he took the risk.

Mr. RIORDAN: Others would have taken the risk, but he was the man who was given the opportunity of doing so.

Mr. Nimmo: All credit to him.

Mr. RIORDAN: Yes, all credit to him; I am not taking any credit from him. I want to point out that the last 5 or 6 miles of the road to the mine is a kind of no man's land. It is a mining access road, and for that reason the local authority says it is not interested in the repair of the road. The Main Roads Commission says the same thing, and the result is that in wet weather these 5 or 6 miles are almost impassable.

Advantage should be taken of any Act it is in our power to use to compel mining companies to accept fair responsibility for meeting part of the cost of construction and upkeep of access roads. Here is a stretch of 5 or 6 miles for which no-one admits any responsibility. I propose to the Secretary for Public Works that he open negotiations with the owners of this mine, who year by year have taken big profits from it, with a view to their making a contribution towards the construction of this piece of road. I am led to believe that the hon. gentleman has already made a proposal to the company, but my point is there should be some provision in our Mining Act or some other Act, such as the one passed in recent years, empowering the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works to do certain works, or making it mandatory on such companies to undertake them if it was in their interests to do so. Here is a company that will accept no responsibility at all for a work that vitally affects it, notwithstanding the profits it is making and its duty to the population its operations have attracted. The sum of £1,000 would cover its share of the necessary work. It now takes two or three hours' travel in wet weather in a big lumbering bus for the miners' wives and others who want to go the 16 miles into town to shop or spend the week-end there. We hear a great deal about the conditions under which some of our people live; here is an instance of the difficulty some of our people engaged in developmental work live under. I put my suggestion before the Minister in the hope that if effect cannot be given to it by voluntary action, some mandatory powers will be taken; £1,000 would be only a fleabite in comparison with the company's profits.

I have risen again to work the parish pump. It is desirable to do so to advance local interests; in fact, I believe it is the only possible method of doing so.

Mr. Maher: If you have got the goods.

Mr. RIORDAN: I have got the goods and I am willing to sell them and I shall use every possible opportunity to do so. I hope the Minister at the first available opportunity will endeavour to interest the Commonwealth Government in my request for the establishment of iron and steel works at Bowen.

Mr. BARNES (Bundaberg) (12.13 p.m.): At the outset I should like to congratulate the hon. members for Carpentaria and Bowen on their speeches this morning. I realise, of course, that we are repeating what has already been said before during this session and probably in other sessions. I wrote a letter to Mr. Forde, now the Deputy Prime Minister, asking him on my own behalf to bring certain matters before the Federal Government. On account of our immediate shortage of copper I demanded—demanded, mind you—the erection of a copper refining plant at Mount Morgan or other suitable site, the erection of a copper concentration plant at Cloncurry to handle the enormous quantities of low-grade and medium-grade ores in that district, and the modernising of the State smelting works at Chillagoe. I added—

“This would supply Australia with all the copper required for present and future war production. Then we would not have to depend on the irregular shipments from South Africa.”

I then said—I quoted this paragraph during a previous debate—

“At present our boats cannot be completed because we are short of steel. I, therefore, demand the opening up of Bowen iron-ore deposits, also of the coal and limestone deposits in that area. I am not interested in what opposition you may get from B.H. I am only interested in a complete war effort. I would like to draw your attention to the present shortage of steel in America, also they expect to be 6,000,000 tons short in 1942.”

His reply to that letter was, as I have told hon. members before, that they had carried out my demands as far as practicable. I also wrote this in the letter—

“I now demand in the name of the people I represent, that you take over the Government on or immediately after July 1st for the purpose of financing the nation's war effort with national money.”

Despite the fact that he wrote back and said they would not do that until they had a majority in both Houses—and Mr. Curtin wrote a similar letter—they did take over the Government. How that was brought about I shall not attempt to explain because I should be out of order. The point is that

1941—2 x

if one person can demand this from a Government and get a result—and I got it—this Government should demand from the Federal Government, especially as the Federal Government are of the same political colour as themselves—not ask, but demand—finance for the opening-up of these mining industries in Queensland, especially for copper, steel, and bauxite. If this Government demanded that I am sure they would get a result. After all, how did South Australia progress considering she never had the raw materials this State has? Somebody there must have demanded things—and got them, too. We have been ignored in this regard for a long time, Mr. Gair, and I maintain that it is the duty of this Government to be done with lip-service and pretty speeches and demand the things that we need, especially as their own party is in power in the Federal sphere.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! “Chairman” is the correct term to use when addressing the Chair.

Mr. BARNES: If we adopt that attitude, we shall find that we will get somewhere. There is proof that I demanded something and despite the fact that they said they would not they did. I got results, and if one individual can get results the Government should be able to get results.

A previous speaker referred to the Swedish iron-ore fields as being the wealthiest in the world. What is the good of that to the British Empire? It is absolutely no use whatever because it is out of our reach. Here in Kilkivan we have the only quicksilver mine in the British Empire and what are we doing about it? That is ours to develop; yet we let it “go phut.” The Kilkivan company asked for support and I maintain that we should give them the support it asks for irrespective of its extent; even though the company may ask for something that appears to be beyond our capacity to give, we should endeavour to give it. By supporting the company we should be helping to establish the only quicksilver mine in the British Empire. It is our duty to do so. Supposing Spain, from which country the British Empire gets its supply of quicksilver, sides with Germany, where will the product of its mines go?

In May or June we were held up for steel for three of our boats in Queensland. That is a sorry state of affairs. Believe me, that could not happen in Germany. Many people say I am pro-German because I support German methods, but I believe in giving credit where credit is due. If we showed initiative the mineral position would have improved in Queensland long ago. It is a disgrace to the people of Queensland and to their representatives that many mines are lying idle and vast resources are undeveloped, and that recently we had three boats held up for shafting because we had no steel.

I think the hon. member for Bowen has asked the Government to subsidise the establishment of an iron and steel works there to

the extent of about £2,000,000. I maintain that every potential field should be investigated, and the Government should subsidise any venture where there is a possibility of development.

There are no mining areas in my electorate, but the copper mines in the Mount Perry district should be subsidised. Certainly, this field cannot produce nearly as much as the one in the electorate of the hon. member for Bowen. The great copper fields round about Cloncurry should also be subsidised. At present, our war effort is held up by the shortage of copper and anybody who tries to buy a copper article has to wait a considerable time for it in consequence. Our most important work at present, the prosecution of the war, is considerably hampered by this shortage. It worried me so much that I wrote to the Federal Government asking them to reduce pennies and half-pennies to a third of their size, thus releasing for war work 66 per cent. of the copper now used in the making of these coins, and at the same time giving the people a utility coin.

A good deal has been said by hon. members about bauxite. Why was this not found before? For the simple reason that our research departments are nil or infinitesimal, speaking technically. Those we have are few in number, and out of date, and all lack money. The other day the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock admitted that if he had more money he could undertake much more research in agriculture. The position is the same in the mining industry. Bauxite was found overnight in Australia. Why was it not discovered before? Because we cannot think on sound lines. We waited until we were forced to do research into these things, and only then we found them. Flying over the hills in the Cloncurry district, one waves one's hand and says, "There is gold in them thar hills." There may be not gold "in them thar hills," Mr. Chairman, but there may be an abundance of copper and the expression makes one think of the result that would be ours if the Department of Mines had the necessary finance to prospect in the hills, not only of that area, but of the rest of the State. Iron might be discovered that would excel the Swedish ore. We are short of money. That is a crying shame, and the more so because some day the people will realise that the provision of the money we lack is as nothing in comparison with getting the necessary production. When they do we shall do something about it.

Near to Bundaberg is the iron-ore field of Biggenden. That should be developed, but again there is the shortage of money. Also close to Bundaberg, in the Dawson Valley, near Mount Rainbow, is a colossal oil-shale deposit. A company is investigating it now. I do not know how far it will get, but when there is such a shortage of petrol in Australia, why should not millions of pounds be spent in Queensland to develop oil-shale mines? Necessity is the mother of invention, fortunately for the human race, for if it were not so we should be living as the cavemen did. To-day we need these ores, and although they are better than those found elsewhere our

resources are undeveloped because of the colossal amount of money required for their development. These industries could not be started with £1,000 or £500.

The hon. member for Bowen has stated that £2,000,000 will be needed to develop the iron and steel works there, but I venture the opinion that by the time it is established, with coal supplies properly organised, all necessary wharfage and such other matters fully attended to, it will take a good deal more than £2,000,000. However, whether the hon. member's estimate is too low or too high, the point is that this Government should demand that the Federal Government do something to help this important project.

I happen to be interested in a mine on the Burnett River about 18 to 20 miles outside Bundaberg. Between £700 and £800 worth of gold had been taken out of this area, and I applied to the Government for a subsidy to develop our mine, but without success. I brought a mine manager up from Gympie—my own father—who is considered to be one of the best mining experts in Gympie, and despite the fact that he said that if this show were at Gympie 1,000 people would take it up, the Government refused to help us to develop our undertaking. We had spent £200 on it at that time.

The hon. member for Kennedy said that £36,000 was spent in his electorate. If I had known that I might have been able to get him to get £200 for our mine.

One hon. member spoke about science this morning, suggesting, for instance, that scientists did not invent the steam shovel for the purpose of throwing men out of work. The mining industry is one avenue in which scientific research has increased tremendously. I suggest that science is only in its infancy to-day, because research is really limited. We must be careful, however, not to invent things to be our masters, but to devote more and more finance to research, and then no scientific inventions can be our masters. If we allow one steam shovel to throw 99 men out of employment, and do nothing about re-employing those men, we shall revert to the position we occupied 20 years ago, in that there will be no markets for the products of our inventions, except in times of war. Hundreds of people have said to me of recent months that they hate to contemplate the war's ending. We have to contemplate it, and the only way to think and plan properly is to use the people's money to establish industries.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) (12.28 p.m.): The speech by the hon. member for Bowen this morning, about the mine on Kelsey Creek, shows what a little sympathy will do to develop a district. The doctor who was practising in that area wanted some exercise, and took it by doing a little prospecting. He came into contact with the men who had discovered the show, and but for his sympathy we might not have heard of this show at all, because the geological formation of the country was quite different from that associated with any previous gold workings. This

doctor took an interest in the undertaking, invested a good deal of capital in it, and to-day is interested in a paying mine. If the Department of Mines would show similar sympathy and get a hustle on, I believe greater development would take place.

Copper has been mentioned this morning, and complaints have been made, but there is a reason for many of the things hon. members complain of. We speak about price-fixing and its benefits, but sometimes price-fixing does harm. For instance, before the outbreak of war the value of copper soared merrily to £90 a ton, but when war broke out the price was fixed—I think by Great Britain—and Australia was allowed a price of about £50 a ton.

At 12.30 p.m.,

Mr. BRASSINGTON (Fortitude Valley), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. NIMMO: The figures I have quoted are from memory, but the result was that Mount Lyell and Mount Morgan were virtually the only producers in Australia. After a while, when copper became short, the price was increased a little, and I think the Australian price went to £76, but £4 of that was to be used in development and accordingly a little bit of development has been done in those two areas. If, however, the price had been allowed to take its ordinary course, we might have seen copper reaching £150 a ton and then what stimulation would have been given to gougers and men in the North to get about and find copper shows and develop them! Capital would have come into the development of these shows.

The Secretary for Public Works: Why would not the capital come in first?

Mr. NIMMO: The gouger has first to find the copper.

The Secretary for Public Works: Shows were worked and closed down because the price was not sufficient.

Mr. NIMMO: To-day's price will not encourage private enterprise to develop these shows.

Mr. Collins: To-day's price would, if there were stability.

Mr. NIMMO: Would it pay a company to put money into a show when there is a prospect that at the conclusion of the war—and these drops in prices have become a habit—the price of copper will fall to a low level?

Mr. Pie: Anything pays during a war.

Mr. NIMMO: Would a company find the capital if there was a danger of loss? Therefore, I say that it would have been very much better to have not interfered with the price of copper; the pegging of the price has not operated to the advantage of the industry.

Reference was made this morning to the establishment of an iron and steel works in

Queensland, and I honestly believe that Queensland should have such a works. I think the hon. member for Bowen made a very strong indictment of the present Government for not having encouraged private enterprise to establish an iron and steel works in Queensland. Our taxation is too high in Queensland to permit of the establishment of such a works here. We have to encourage people to come here, but I am satisfied that no hon. member of this Committee would agree to allowing an iron and steel works at Bowen to be conducted as a State enterprise. I, at any rate, would not have anything to do with it as a State enterprise; it would certainly be a failure. Much has been said about the Commonwealth Government's taking over the Broken Hill Proprietary Limited, but I venture to say that if it was taken over by the Commonwealth Government, its production would fall at least one-third in 12 months.

A Government Member: That is only your opinion.

Mr. NIMMO: But I think every hon. member has that at the back of his mind. We must endeavour to see that Governments take an interest in such undertakings, however. I believe that Governments should have a fairly considerable interest in an iron and steel works if one was established at Bowen by private enterprise, and I would vote for their taking one-third of the capital in a company to give Queensland an iron and steel works. But do not make it a Government concern; if you do, it must fail. We should not be able to produce in opposition to a privately-owned works and that would be tragic.

Mr. Power: Your Government failed in everything.

Mr. NIMMO: We are not discussing that at the moment; we are discussing the Department of Mines. I say frankly that this is a matter that should be taken into consideration, and the present Government have had opportunities. If they wanted to invest money in a big way, do you not think it would have been better, Mr. Chairman, to invest in an iron and steel works at Bowen, rather than build the Story Bridge? We could have done that but the Government have been spending money in directions not for the benefit of the State.

I hope the Minister will explore all the possibilities of having an iron and steel works established at Bowen and that he will get busy so that we can make a drive to get the new capital. Let private enterprise provide the money on the understanding that the Government contribute a certain amount, and let us establish the industry right away. I believe that such a works would have great possibilities. The Bowen harbour is equal to any in the world and, as the hon. member for Bowen pointed out, there is an abundance of coal. Whether there is a handy deposit of iron ore remains to be investigated. I understand that on the last occasion when it was proposed to build the iron and steel works at Bowen the idea was to bring the iron ore

from an island off the coast of Western Australia. However, at Bowen we have a splendid harbour and the coal deposits, and so we could go ahead with the industry.

I am very disappointed with the extent of mineral development in Queensland; I do not think it is a credit to the department. For instance, an amount of £2,370,000 was raised by way of State development tax, of which all but £806,000 was allocated for purposes other than development, but of that £806,000 only £21,000 was devoted to mining. The Government were able to use the money to pay interest on loans—£75,000 went into the Story Bridge—and they could use £95,000 to pay off a bad investment of the Government in the Chillagoe State Smelters; yet only the small sum of £21,000 of a huge amount collected could be made available for mining. We have wonderful mining possibilities in Queensland. When we were discussing the subject of developing shale oil on a motion I moved in this Chamber I suggested that the Government should spend £100 or £200 to explore the possibilities of the reef or seam at Strathpine, even if it meant that all the money eventually would be lost. So far the Government have done nothing in that direction. We should set aside a greater sum than £21,000 from these moneys for mining.

I should like to mention how the Government have taken advantage of every increase in wages to increase the price of coal from their own mines. During the year the output from the Bowen coalmine increased by 46,000 tons, but no credit for that can be given to the department, which had nothing whatever to do with it. It arose because of shipping difficulties and the inability in present circumstances to transport coal to Queensland from New South Wales. The increase, therefore, is the direct result of the war.

Hon. members opposite have repeatedly said that legislation should be passed to prevent private enterprise from exploiting its employees by taking advantage of an increase in wages to increase the cost of its commodities, thereby destroying the effective value of the increase in wages. I want to point out how the Government have done exactly the same thing in their activities. I ask hon. members to note the following comment by the Auditor-General in his report concerning the Bowen coalmine:—

“Owing to increases in wages under awards, selling prices were advanced by 5d. per ton in October, 1940, by 8d. in March, 1941, and 6d. in May, 1941, a total increase of 1s. 7d. per ton for the year.”

That extract clearly shows that the Government have not hesitated to take advantage of every rise in wages to increase the cost of coal to the public. Yet we have had hon. members opposite saying that private enterprise should be prevented from passing on these costs. The Auditor-General, continuing his remarks, says, in reference to Styx No. 3 mine—

“Due to award increases in wages during the year, selling prices were increased by 5d. per ton in October, 1940, by 11d. in

March, 1941, and by 7d. in May, 1941, the total increase being 1s. 11d. per ton.”

Notwithstanding those increases—prices that were passed on to the general consumer—we find at the Bowen coalmine there has been an increased output of 46,878 tons, and from Styx No. 3 mine an increased output of 16,605 tons. It is well known that if an industry is working to full capacity it produces at a lesser cost for each unit of production. These coalmines were working at full capacity. Notwithstanding this fact, when wages costs were increased, and production costs were lower per ton, the whole of the increased wages costs were passed on to the people. In this connection we find that production costs at the Bowen State coalmine were .42d. lower, while at Styx No. 3 mine the decrease was 1s. 0.15d. Although production costs were decreased the total increased costs were passed on to the consumers. The Bowen State coalmine showed an improved profit last year of £8,013.

Mr. Power: That is just what worries you—it shows a profit; had it shown a loss, you would still find fault.

Mr. NIMMO: The whole of the profits were taken out of the pockets of the people of the State.

Mr. Collins: Does not every business man do that?

Mr. NIMMO: Of course he does.

Mr. Collins: One year you criticise because the mine shows a loss and now you criticise because it shows a profit.

Mr. NIMMO: What I am endeavouring to point out is that although production costs are lower, and the total profit of the Bowen mine was £10,665, sufficient money was not earned to pay interest on capital.

Mr. Pie: Who is the biggest consumer of Bowen coal?

Mr. Nimmo: The railways.

Mr. Riordan: One moment you complain that the mine has made a greater profit on the year's operations and now you complain that it has not made enough profit to pay interest on the money expended.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. NIMMO: The points I am making are: that increased costs due to increased wages and freights have been passed on to the public, notwithstanding that hon. members opposite complain of private enterprise's doing so, and that notwithstanding a greater profit was made for the year because of lower production costs the mine still does not earn sufficient money to meet interest on capital.

The hon. member for Bowen referred to the wonderful seam of coal at this mine—it is really a wonderful one and sufficient reserves exist for 250 years working—but notwithstanding this fact the net loss on this coalmine to 30 June, 1941, was £324,000. That proves again that the Government cannot run any enterprise. We know that full well.

Mr. Riordan: You first complain about the mine's making too much profit, and yet you quote those figures.

Mr. NIMMO: I think the Minister should liven up his department. This is a small department, and in view of the amount of money it expends it is hardly reasonable that it should take up the whole of the time of a Minister, yet we find virtually nothing done to liven up mining in this State. So far as oil shale is concerned, for instance, the department should be "going its hardest" in an endeavour to make good the shortage of petrol that exists.

Mr. Power: Do you suggest it take up some of the wild-cat schemes about the place?

Mr. NIMMO: No, I do not think any wild-cat schemes should be taken up. The department employs skilled officers and it should take up only proposals favourably reported on by them.

Mr. Power: Do you not know the Government are doing that?

Mr. NIMMO: I know the Government have done virtually nothing. If the hon. member is satisfied, I certainly am not. I think there should be greater hustle by the department. Would it not be a wonderful thing if the Strathpine area was found to be a shale-producing area? Nothing has been done in regard to that area.

A Government Member: You are working the parish pump.

Mr. NIMMO: I am not; I am only suggesting that greater efforts should be made to increase our fuel supplies. My criticism is directed to gingering up the department. The department has been more active since the previous debate took place in this House. Officers of the department went to the Drummond Ranges almost immediately after that debate, but we have not heard the results of their investigations. The public are looking to the department for action, and something should be done. Take coal, for instance.

Mr. Power: Is the fellow who gave you the brief for shale oil gingering you up a bit?

Mr. NIMMO: No-one gave me a brief for shale oil. I was actuated by the desire to do something for the people who are short of fuel. I should like to see a great deal more done. It has been said that a doctor has discovered a very successful process for extracting petrol from coal. I think the Commonwealth Government were greatly to blame for not making fuller investigations of the process, but surely the Department of Mines could get first-hand information on the matter, and develop something along those lines.

The Treasurer: Prior to the war, the British Government told us they spent £16,000,000 in investigations and had not found a satisfactory solution up to that time.

Mr. NIMMO: I heard the Treasurer say that before.

The Treasurer: Then you heard the truth before.

Mr. NIMMO: As a matter of fact, he was talking about something entirely different.

The Treasurer: I am talking about that.

Mr. NIMMO: In Scotland for years shale oil has been produced, even before the war.

In 1927 I inspected a low-temperature carbonisation process that was being used in Germany for the extraction of petrol from coal, and I asked the man in charge if it was a payable undertaking, and he said, "Yes, we were getting from 20 to 35 gallons a ton, according to the grade of coal we were using, and if we could get rid of the whole of the coke, it would be a wonderful paying proposition." The great difficulty was in selling the coke. I understand since that date great strides have been made.

The Treasurer: What was the price of the coal? Somewhere about 5s. a ton?

Mr. NIMMO: I asked the price, and in our money it represented about 14s. a ton. So the whole thing was an ideal proposition. A great deal has been done since the British Government informed the Queensland Government of their experience.

There is a commission agent in this State, by the name of Neill, who has, strange to say, conducted experiments at his own expense.

Mr. Power: Beware of those commission agents!

Mr. NIMMO: This man, I believe, is absolutely genuine. I saw the work he has done. He has taken samples of the coal from virtually every coalmine from Ipswich to the Darling Downs, and every one of those samples gave a return of 50 gallons of crude oil to the ton. That shows there is a field for investigation.

Mr. Collins: How much petrol would that refine to?

Mr. NIMMO: I did not ask that question. I am stating the production in terms of crude oil. It would be unfair to say the production was oil. Frequently statements are made giving the number of gallons of oil to the ton of shale, but it is crude oil that is referred to.

Mr. Riordan: How many gallons did you say?

Mr. NIMMO: The coal returned 50 gallons of crude oil to the ton. That shows the possibilities in Queensland, and the Government would be failing in their duty if they did not investigate these matters. My sole reason in speaking is to let the Government know that I am in favour of greater expansion if we can get a display of energy in this department. For goodness sake, never let us hear hon. members on the Government benches saying again that private enterprise, or anyone, for that matter, should not

pass on increases put on ordinary industry, because they have to be passed on. If the Industrial Court increases wages, an industry must pass on the increased cost to the consumer. The Government themselves have approved of that principle. On three occasions, when increases have been granted by the Industrial Court, they passed them on to the consumers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. A. Bruce, The Tableland) (12.51 p.m.): The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat says that the Government have done nothing whatever in regard to shale oil. Shale oil is a comparatively recent discovery in Queensland, and the Department of Mines has expended a considerable sum of money in making boring plant available in certain districts, and is at present examining the cores of these bores to ascertain the percentage of oil carried. The hon. gentleman appears to be obsessed with the idea that nothing was done at Strathpine.

Mr. Nimmo: It is so handy to Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Would it not be ridiculous to test at Strathpine, where the amount may be small, when there are larger areas in other parts of the State that offer great possibilities for testing? We are concerned more with getting oil from shale than in having the deposit handy to Brisbane. The principal thing is to get the oil.

The history of the establishment of a steel works in Queensland is well known to hon. members, particularly to the hon. member for Oxley. The Labour Government of the day, of which Mr. E. G. Theodore was Premier, proposed to start a State steel works at Bowen. The locality is ideally suitable in every way for a State steel works. The Opposition of the day—the same party to which the hon. gentleman belongs—sent a delegation to the Old Country to prevent the Labour Party at that time from raising the money required, and, consequently, they were directly, or indirectly, if one likes to have it that way, responsible for preventing Queensland from having a State steel works as far back as that time. An ill-advised and bitter opposition to the Government is the reason why there are no steel works at Bowen to-day. Investigation, surveys, and all the preliminary work had been done, and had it not been for the action of the Opposition of the day, those steel works would be an established fact. The hon. gentleman is entitled to his opinion as to whether State enterprises are wise, but I believe that had the State established the steel works then, Queensland would now have been in a position more advanced than any of the other States so far as secondary industries are concerned. An ill-advised Opposition, and the bitterness of those who wished to thwart Labour's determination to show it could govern, were responsible for these steel works not being established.

The present Government have assisted the Tableland Tin Company in its search for tin, and to-day, although it is mining with an

old reconditioned dredge, production is at the rate of 1 ton of tin a day. It intends erecting one of the biggest tin dredges in Australia; the materials are on the job, and it will be using that dredge in the very near future. This, again, is due to the fact that the Labour Government helped the men who are interested in that enterprise. If it were not for the Labour Government those men would not be there to-day.

Mr. Nimmo: Any Government would have done that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. gentleman has been criticising us and saying that we did nothing to help the mining industry. When I point out what we have been doing, he says that any Government would have done it.

The hon. member for Oxley became very involved when speaking about copper this morning. He made some wild statements, and it would seem that he would have done well to remember the old song, "Don't go down the mine, Daddy." When he did go down the mine he got lost. The actual copper position was that prior to the last war copper varied in price from £40 to £50 a ton. Six thousand men were employed in the mines at Cloncurry, and when war broke out, copper was used for war purposes, and it was also conserved for war purposes, with the result that the price rose steadily to £110 a ton.

Mr. Nimmo: I think it went higher eventually.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Mount Elliott Company, for which I was working, received £110 a ton. In the meantime, large bodies of ore were discovered in Africa and worked by black labour, and after the war the price of copper fell below £40 a ton, with the result that 6,000 men walked out of the Cloncurry district, and all the mines that were then producing good copper closed down. When the hon. gentleman spoke about gouging and scratching for copper for war purposes, he failed to realise that the mines in the Cloncurry district can be opened only by capital, for they were deep mines worked by shafts that have fallen in.

The Chillagoe smelters have been mentioned. The present Labour Government sent organised parties of prospectors into Cape York Peninsula, who discovered large bodies of low-grade ores that will be worked in years to come, and many other bodies of ore that are supplying the smelters of Chillagoe in a small way now.

Surely the hon. gentleman knows that the Federal Government have made arrangements to subsidise some of the companies with the object of obtaining more copper from Queensland? I understand the Federal Government are negotiating now with the Mount Isa Company for the development of the copper resources of the Cloncurry district. It is obvious that the prices for copper could not have been maintained at the level at which they were during the last war, and that the inevitable slump made the position very difficult indeed. It seems to be impossible to

regulate the price for base metals. Gold is being sought year in and year out, and has a permanent value, whereas base metals become important and valuable during a war, but when there is no war and they are required only for the domestic uses of the State or nation their value falls to a low level.

At 2.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS:

During the last war William Morris Hughes was Prime Minister, and he guaranteed miners a price for base metals for a period of two or three years. The result of this was that shows such as Hatcher's Creek and Wolfram Camp were employing men in the production of molybdenite, wolfram, scheelite, and other valuable metals. These base metals are principally used in the hardening of steel and their prices drop during times of peace, when there is very little call for them. I have made representations to previous Commonwealth Governments—and when I say that I do not mean as Minister, but in conversation with hon. members of the Government—to follow the system used by Mr. Hughes, of fixing a price over a period of years. The present Federal Government have only had time to deal with their Budget, and have not had time to consider everything, but if the prices for base metals were fixed encouragement would be given to the development of shows that will be profitable, and not only supply the wants of Australia, but also allow much for export and some for storage for future use. Wolfram Camp, a large producer, and Hatcher's Creek were virtually abandoned after the last war. There are many good shows at Wolfram waiting to be developed.

The Federal Government geologist said that we had limited supplies of iron ore. I think he was wise in saying that, because there was a movement by the Federal Government to prevent the Japanese from taking over Yampi Sound, and it was therefore wise to say that our supplies were on the short side. In the Cloncurry area there are deposits of iron ore in the shape of pyramids, and it is estimated that the amount of ore on the surface is 55,000,000 tons. The grade is so high that no vegetation will grow on the ore. As a matter of fact, it could nearly be put straight into the furnaces as pig iron. If that quantity is available on the surface, what must there be underground? Probably 100,000,000 tons at least. These pyramid deposits are outstanding deposits, but every smelter in the Cloncurry district uses iron ore as a flux. It was taken from near Mount Elliott and Mount Cuthbert prior to the last war. Nature, very wisely, placed some of the deposits away from the coast so that human beings would not waste them. Naturally, it would not pay to mine the ore, carry it from Cloncurry to Townsville, and then ship it to the South or to other parts of the world for treatment. It would not pay to mine the ore unless there was a smelter within a reasonable distance of a field. The

prospecting party that made the investigation behind Chillagoe on behalf of the department discovered very large bodies of low-grade copper ore, some of which is being supplied to the Chillagoe smelters to-day. Some of it contains a percentage of gold, and, of course, gold is of great value as a means of exchange, and copper is a metal that is urgently required for war purposes.

The hon. member for Oxley was correct in saying that it would probably require a great deal of capital to work the big shows. The Mount Elliott mine was worked in a very haphazard way, and when it closed down the shaft collapsed and a very large body of copper ore was covered. To open it it would be necessary to sink a new shaft and probably it might be necessary to follow the line adopted by the Mount Isa Company in the opening of its silver-lead deposits. The ore bodies that have been discovered behind Chillagoe and in the other parts of the State could be more fully developed than they are now, and in a short time supply the copper requirements of Australia, not only for the war effort, but also for peace-time needs. In the early days of copper development in Queensland the various shows were able to pay reasonably good wages, and as I previously mentioned, 6,000 men were engaged in the Cloncurry district, when copper was sold at £40 to £50 a ton. We shall have a bigger population in the future than we have to-day, and so the call for these important metals will be increased because they will be required for the development of industries for peace-time purposes.

All the mines should be developed on a sound basis. Many of the earlier lodes were disclosed by outcrops and they have been developed, but the lodes below the surface will probably be discovered in the course of time by a more scientific method of investigation than is used to-day. Geologically, the outcrops may show a lode different in formation from the undisclosed lode and that is why I say now, as I said when I was in opposition, that there is only one man who finds a mine, and that is the prospector. He finds the mine and later on the geologist tells us all about it. The amount of financial assistance given to prospectors in the far North and, indeed, all over Queensland has been very good, but I think that a great deal more should be done to help the really genuine man. There was a tendency for some men to claim mining assistance, more or less in the form of unemployment relief, but the genuine miner—that is, the man who has done the actual prospecting and who has given much of his time to this work—should be given more help, because I think it would pay everyone to give him all the consideration we can. We should give all the help we can to the genuine man, because he is the man upon whom we can depend to discover new fields; then we could weed out those who are not considered to be in this class.

Mining is one of our key industries. Many industries returning a large amount of wealth

to-day to private enterprise owe their existence in the first place to the discovery of some precious metal. I venture to say had it not been for the discovery of gold at Mount Morgan the magnificent town of Rockhampton would not now exist. Furthermore, much of our pastoral country would have remained undeveloped had it not been for the impetus given by mining. Wherever there is an opportunity to get rich quick by prospecting for gold, notwithstanding that it means hard work and hardships, as well as the taking of risks, you are always able to get adventurous men to take advantage of the opportunity. Some of the best types of men follow mining activities. Therefore, mining is invaluable not only for the product itself, but indirectly in the establishment of subsidiary industries, which otherwise would probably wait half a century to be developed. For instance, the prosperity of Victoria to-day is largely due to the discovery of gold at Bendigo and Ballarat. Thousands of men from England and other countries came to Australia after those discoveries were made. Men deserted from their ships in such numbers that they had to stop in harbour because they were not adequately manned. The motive of the rush was in the main the making of fortunes. We had the same experience after the discovery of Charters Towers and Gympie. Men of the adventurous type flocked to those localities. This rush to the goldfields is usually made by men in order to get off the bread-line. Although we have only about 7,000,000 population in Australia to-day, we can say that she is developed as highly as she is because of the discovery of rich deposits of gold, as well as other metals and coal. Coal is an essential commodity, but my colleague, the Minister in charge of this vote, knows more about it than I do. I will content myself by saying that it is one of the basic needs of our domestic life. Fortunately, we have, not only in Queensland, but throughout Australia, many rich deposits of coal, in addition to the numerous basic metals I have discussed. Western Australia would find it very difficult indeed to carry on if it were not for the large number of goldmines that are worked at the present time.

Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (2.28 p.m.): I am very much interested in mining from a national point of view. It is high time the Government considered the advisability of training our younger men in the science and arts of mining. Much evidence has been given in this Chamber that Queensland is rich in mineral wealth. In the early days, a certain amount of money was spent by the Government in searching for our hidden mineral wealth, but to-day it is somewhat neglected. I do not know the Minister's intentions, but seeing that mining has brought great wealth to Australia we should avail ourselves of the opportunity to train our younger men to take the positions now held by our older experienced miners. It is just as essential to train our young men by apprenticing them to the science of mining as it is to train them in any other industry.

I was interested the other day in the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough, who said the sons of miners in his district followed in their fathers' footsteps in the coal industry. That is something to be encouraged. The development of our mineral resources by white labour is very important, particularly from the point of view of maintaining our White Australia policy.

At 2.30 p.m.,

Mr. RIORDAN (Bowen), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. LUCKINS: The romance of gold is full of interest, but I regret to say that it is linked with tragedy and misery on the one hand and luxury and wealth on the other. Great hardships were experienced by those engaged in winning gold from the earth. We all know that Australia is rich in minerals, especially gold. Our wealth is the envy of the world, and other peoples wonder why we are so slow in extracting this wealth from the earth. The gold belt in Australia runs through New Guinea, down through Central Queensland, touches the Southern coast at Victoria, and crosses to Western Australia.

It is peculiar that the work of developing the mining wealth of this State has had little or no encouragement from the Government in past years. It has been left to private enterprise, which has gone out of its way to foster the industry and has been richly rewarded for its services.

The wealth of Western Australia is greatly dependent on the goldfields. If it were not for the discovery of gold in that State, its development would not have been as great as it has been.

The Secretary for Works and Education gave a resume of the history of the development of mining in Queensland, and in doing so referred to the discovery of the Mount Morgan goldmine. I happen to be virtually a native of Mount Morgan, and I know the tragedy associated with the discovery and production of gold at that centre. Mr. D'Arcy, a solicitor of Rockhampton, and Mr. Hall, manager of the Queensland National Bank, came up to Mount Morgan and took over control of what turned out to be the richest goldmine in the world. Of all the wealth that has been taken out of Mount Morgan, very little has been returned for the benefit of the community living in that area. That is one black chapter that can be written in the mining history of Mount Morgan. The gold was transported in bars to London, for the benefit of the company's shareholders, and much of the wealth produced was used to foster the oil industry in Persia, where D'Arcy, with many other London capitalists, was interested in an oilfield. To-day, the Commonwealth Government own 51 per cent. of interest in the Commonwealth Oil Refining Company, a subsidiary of the Anglo-Persian Company.

Coal has been a valuable asset to Australia, but our exports, because of factors that have been at work for many years, have dropped

considerably. I remember that in 1910 and 1911 we had a big export in coal, but owing to the many strikes that occurred at that time we lost a great volume of business.

Mr. Power: The strikes were due to the fact that many owners would not give the men decent conditions.

Mr. LUCKINS: That is another side of the question. We are all interested in the future of Australia, and the laws of the community should be observed in the interests of the people as a whole.

Mr. Power: They did not have them in 1911.

Mr. LUCKINS: The organisations are not altogether to blame, nor is the man who invests his money in and controls an industry in the interest of himself and Australia generally. There is not one side only to this picture. It is very unfortunate that we, as British people, one people with one destiny, cannot get down to a basis of understanding with each other, so that we can produce something for export. These differences, threatened strikes, and ill-feeling that occur in the community should be wiped out once and for all. There must be some sinister influence at work to keep men of our type fighting among themselves. It is very unfortunate that I have to stand in this Chamber and point out these things in a community who should know better and should control their business or that of the State better than it has been controlled during the last few years. I have no wish to remind hon. members opposite of what occurred in the past. Perhaps I have been subjected to more suffering in that regard than many would imagine. My father got the sack from the Mount Morgan Goldmining Company for the part he took in Labour politics.

Mr. Power: It is a pity you do not follow in his footsteps.

Mr. LUCKINS: I have followed in his footsteps. That is just where hon. members opposite are likely to make a mistake. They blindly follow footsteps that lead nowhere. Those on the Government benches are silent. They are not in a position to get up and advocate the rights of the community as I am from my place over here.

The Secretary for Public Lands: I think you have done very well out of Labour Governments' policy.

Mr. LUCKINS: I have done all right, but I remind the hon. gentleman that I spent many years away from Australia. I have gained the experience that enables me to point a moral so far as the working conditions in Australia are concerned. They are of great interest to me. I have lived in China and paid no taxes there. That is something. Let me tell hon. members that there are better conditions there, so far as taxes are concerned, than in Australia; so far, with the high taxation paid in Queensland, the community get a poor reward for their labour.

Mr. Collins: Where would you sooner live?

Mr. LUCKINS: I should prefer to live here, not because conditions are better, but because I am an Australian and a Queenslander. I am very pleased that I am a Queenslander, because I can therefore speak for Queensland, and what I advocate for Queensland is what I believe is in the best interests of Queensland and Queenslanders generally.

The hon. member for Hamilton to-day referred to Whyalla, in South Australia. I would tell the hon. member he does not know the first thing about Whyalla. Many years ago Whyalla was a village that was set up for the workers in the iron deposits at Iron Knob.

Mr. Pie: You are not telling me anything I did not know already.

Mr. LUCKINS: Then the hon. member did not tell the Committee all he knew. He wished to imply there was no iron ore there.

Mr. Brand: He said there were no raw products, such as coal.

Mr. LUCKINS: There are very fine deposits of iron ore there, and ore also comes from Broken Hill, and as sea traffic is so important it is manufactured at a point on the coast. There are furnaces at Port Pirie. Whyalla was undertaken by private enterprise. Without cost to the Government there has been built a city with a population of 7,000. The company has built good brick and stone homes for the workers, not ordinary shacks.

Mr. Jesson: They are old shacks.

Mr. LUCKINS: The company has given the best of conditions.

Mr. Jesson: They are living in caravans.

Mr. LUCKINS: It has built hospitals and it controls the hotels, and the residents pay no rates or taxes. It is the boom town of Australia. There are no aldermen there. The city is controlled by the residents—they pay no rates or taxes and they have hotels equal to anything outside the capital cities of Australia. If I had the power to do so, I should encourage the development of mining by passing suitable legislation and subsidising such ventures as that at Whyalla, where the men are interested in their work and show good will towards the employers who have treated them so well.

Mr. Williams: Have you ever been to Mount Isa?

Mr. LUCKINS: No, but now that I have a free railway pass I propose to visit Mount Isa, because I think it is my duty as a public man to see not only Mount Isa, but as much of Queensland as possible.

The Secretary for Public Works has been telling us something about the vast iron-ore wealth of the Cloncurry district. History of iron in Australia is disappointing to me, because these vast mineral resources should have been developed. I remember the time when there was great agitation for the erection of an iron and steel works at Colmslie, near Brisbane, but certain forces got to work and that proposal was abandoned in favour of one at Bowen. In my opinion, Bowen is

the more suitable site for the establishment of such an industry in that coal and other raw materials are available, and the town is situated on a harbour that could be the centre of distribution from Australia to the East and to America. Bowen has been neglected in the past. I know the political history of Queensland, however, and it is significant that development of the State is linked with the Premiers. Take Townsville. Mention of it brings Sir Robert Philp to mind. With the development of Cairns we can remember the Hon. W. McCormack, as we remember Mr. Kidston in Rockhampton's heyday. Chillagoe is connected with Mr. Theodore. Then we have the northern part of this State with the present Premier, and are reminded of the very fine work at the Mackay harbour.

The Secretary for Public Lands: You cannot show us anything that Mackay got to which it was not entitled.

Mr. LUCKINS: I am not suggesting that. I am saying that this State's development is peculiarly linked with the past Premiers of the State.

The Secretary for Public Lands: You are wrong.

Mr. LUCKINS: History shows that to be so.

Mr. Jesson: Who was the Premier of Toowoomba?

Mr. LUCKINS: There was never any from there.

Mr. Jesson: Who was the Premier of Ipswich?

Mr. LUCKINS: There was none.

Mr. Jesson: Then what are you talking about? You are just picking out certain places, and you really know nothing about it.

Mr. LUCKINS: The hon. member knows very little about Queensland, but he shall know more when I have finished. The mineral wealth of this State will have great bearing on the future development of Queensland, and I urge upon the Government the wisdom of setting aside a certain amount of money for research work, the establishment of a school of mines, and the training of apprentices. A certain amount of money has been spent in the North, and I think places like Chillagoe still receive subsidies, but no-one can say that Mt. Isa is a State enterprise.

The Secretary for Public Works: No, but it was helped by the State.

Mr. LUCKINS: That is so, and the Government deserve credit for that, but we must not lose sight of the fact that private enterprise must be encouraged. It has to be helped and fostered. I remember the time in Queensland when certain political parties condemned anything that came from private enterprise, but private enterprise is entitled to the best consideration that can be given to it. You can govern the activities of private enterprise by law, you can reduce its dividends by Act of Parliament, and you

can make it work in the interests of the community without condemning it. What happened to State enterprises in Queensland?

Mr. Power: Your Government slaughtered them. They gave the State canneries away.

Mr. LUCKINS: The hon. member's Government had power to control them. Take the Styx mines, and see what the position is. We have the greatest volume of coal and the finest coal deposits in the world in Central Queensland, but there is a frightful loss at the State coalmine. I believe it is over £250,000. When there is a good mine and the article is there, foster it, but we have been carrying the dead horse of enterprise just because a few miners and a few stalwarts of the Labour Party have been depending on it. Would it not have been better to put those men into some other venture than have them at the Styx?

A Government Member: What is the matter with the Styx?

Mr. LUCKINS: The Government have the power and authority to govern the State in the interests of the people of the State, and no excuse from any Minister of the Crown will satisfy me that it is the duty of a Government to govern in the interests of a section. Much has been said about monopolies and combines, and the hon. member for Hamilton has shown us that the bauxite people have control of bauxite in different parts of the world. They will get the control of your interests and my interests, if we permit them. The Treasurer, when I spoke recently about getting together, quoted the oft-repeated story of the elephant and the rooster. If I can contribute anything to the good of this country or this State or this Parliament I am willing to do it, notwithstanding the comparison the Treasurer makes at times to suit his own convenience and not the convenience of the people of Queensland. Monopolies and combines should have no place in our calendar. If I remember correctly, the Labour Government returned to power in 1915, were returned on the monopoly cry of "Down with combines, monopolies, and trusts." What do we find to-day? We find that they have hoisted themselves higher than the laws of the country. The cry at that time was, "Give us cheap bread, cheap butter, and cheap beef." Where do we get those things to-day? They concern every hon. member of this Chamber; and they concern the people of this State and the family man in particular.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. member that he must get back to the vote before the Committee.

Mr. LUCKINS: I am sorry if I have transgressed. I say that this is a very important vote, and I am sorry a further sum of money is not being made available for research in the interests of the development of the great mineral wealth of this State.

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (2.49 p.m.): I desire to say a word or two in regard to an aspect of this question raised by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. He

said a good deal of our export trade in coal was lost as a result of industrial disputes in 1911 and prior thereto.

Mr. Luckins: In Australia.

Mr. POWER: I call his attention to the fact that miners in this industry—and workers engaged in any other industry—are entitled to receive some benefits from the efforts of their labour. The conditions under which miners work in the various mines throughout Australia are well known. We know the trouble that took place in New South Wales, where Baron Brown called out the military because the miners were standing out for something to which they were justly entitled. We remember the contents of that gentleman's will, where he directed that thousands of pounds should be spent each year in racing. That wealth was amassed by the sweat of the workers who had to go down into the mines and work under conditions that should not have been tolerated in a civilised community.

The hon. member also said that we had industrial machinery for the settlement of disputes in Australia, but if he knew anything about the industrial laws that operated prior to 1915 he would know that before a dispute could be brought before the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, it had to extend beyond the confines of one State. Anyone who has any knowledge of the industrial laws of Australia in 1912 and prior thereto has a very lively recollection of the time that elapsed before any case could be brought on for hearing before the Federal court. The miners of Australia have played a very important part in the development of this country, and while we hear strong condemnation by the hon. member for Maree of miners who dared to strike for better conditions, he has uttered not one word of condemnation of the employers who compelled them to work under conditions that should not have been tolerated here.

The hon. member for Maree mentioned that his father was a supporter of the Labour Party, and that he went on strike to improve his industrial conditions. My reply to that is that it is a pity the hon. member did not adopt as his slogan that what was good enough for his father was good enough for him. He went on to mention that he had been in China and that no taxes were levied in that country. There is nothing to prevent the hon. member from returning to China. Are we going to repeal all our taxation and allow the conditions in this country to sink to the level of those in China? No member of the Labour Party will subscribe to that view. We are aware of the industrial conditions that prevail in China and other low-wage countries, but we, as a Labour Party, are going to see to it that those conditions do not extend to Queensland.

Much has been said about the State coalmines, and I want to remind hon. members opposite that I had some experience in the office that controls the State coalmines. When the Moore Government were in power they refused to make a concession so as to retain

an order for coal given by the Cairns Gas Company to the Hartley State coalmine. The Government refused to grant a freight concession to the mine, it was unable to compete with mines in the other States, and the coal was brought from Newcastle to the gas company at Cairns. It should also be remembered that at that time the Railway Department was receiving its coal from the State coalmines at 6d. a ton on cost of production. That meant the greater the output, the less the cost of production a ton. If the Moore Government had been willing to grant the railway concession they could have retained the order from the Cairns Gas Company, and encouraged further orders, and thus the arrangement would have been to the advantage of the Government, the Department of Mines, and the Railway Department. We also know that at that time the miners in Queensland were working short time, or at least, were not working the full working week. Figures are available to bear out my contention. They show also that screened coal was sold to the Railway Department from the State mine at 16s. a ton, this being 6d. a ton on cost, whereas it was sold to outside consumers at 20s. a ton; and unscreened coal sold to outside consumers at 16s. a ton was sold to the Railway Department at 11s. 6d. a ton. Look at the advantage that that was to the Railway Department, and look at the saving to the Government, too. The opening of State coalmines was responsible for keeping down the price of coal generally, because if there had not been any State coalmines, the price would have soared tremendously. As a result private enterprise would be receiving a greater rake-off than it did at the time. I have no objection to private enterprise.

The hon. member for Oxley raised objection to the State coalmine's increasing the price of its coal and quoted from the report of the Auditor-General in support of his statement that the increase had been made as a result of increases in wages and transport costs. I do not doubt what he said. The gravamen of his complaint was that the Government had passed on these increases to the consumers, but he quite overlooked the fact that the Government were paying increased prices for the machinery and every other requirement of those mines. Those increases have been passed on by private enterprise to the Government. Had private enterprise not increased its prices on essentials required for working the mine, naturally no increase would have been made in the price of coal to the consumers.

Much has been said on the establishment of iron and steel works at Bowen. This matter was gone into many years ago by the Government of the day. A man named Brophy was brought out from America under contract to advise the Government on the project. We all know that as a result of the despicable action of the Philp-Cowley-Walsh delegation, who went from Australia to London to prevent the Government of the day from getting money, the Government could not establish these works or buy the

Brisbane tramways, whose franchise was then expiring. Hon. members opposite, who talk of establishing iron and steel works at Bowen and suggest that the Government should now find the money for the purpose, must hark back to the history of this delegation and visualise how the progress of Queensland has been retarded in consequence. As a result of this delegation's appeal to the money-bags in London, no money was made available to this State for developmental purposes. It is a standing disgrace to the community that we should have had men in our midst who, after receiving all the benefits that Australia could give, were nevertheless willing to go overseas with the object of preventing a Labour Administration from getting finance for important State projects. The work of that delegation is a black spot in the history of Australia. Some people would very much like the history of that delegation to be forgotten, but it is as well that to-day the younger generation should be reminded of it, in order that they may realise what the opponents of Labour are at all times prepared to do to defeat the Labour movement, and adversely affect the interests of the workers.

I see no reason why money should not be available for the establishment of an iron and steel works at Bowen. I will go further, and say that in time of war such as exists at present the Commonwealth Government, in order to obtain a 100 per cent. war effort, should take over the Broken Hill Proprietary works, and similar enterprises. The Premier has done everything possible toward that end, and has stated a case for it on more than one occasion. We have had a munitions factory established in Brisbane, but we must realise that in the event of Australia's being attacked we must have all facilities for production at hand to provide the necessary defence. The previous Government in control of the national Parliament expended many millions of pounds—whether wisely or not I am not able to say because I am not acquainted with the inner workings of the matter—on the establishment of war-time factories, but none is more important than the establishment of an iron and steel works. Everything is ready for those works; all that is required is finance. I recently had a trip to Bowen, and as a result of what I saw I hope that the urgency of the establishment of these works will not be much longer ignored.

As I stated previously, the State coalmines have been of immense value to Queensland. Our opponents, who are sitting in the cool shades of Opposition, would, if they gained control of the Treasury benches, lose no time in getting rid of these mines, if they could get buyers. We know that they got rid of one coalmine when they were in office. We know what happened to the State enterprises generally. We know what happened to the State cannery. We know how these State enterprises were slaughtered, and I am sure if the Opposition got control in Queensland the same fate would be meted out to the State coalmines.

Mr. CLARK (Fitzroy) (3 p.m.): I should like to say a few words on this vote in view of the fact that one of the greatest mines in Australia, if not in the world—the Mount Morgan mine—is situated in my electorate.

I wish to deal particularly with prospecting, which is the initial stage in mining. It is pleasing to learn that the Government are advancing money to prospectors who will go out into the bush in search for something that will be of benefit to this State and Australia. I think it would be a good thing if these men were employed at the basic wage under the supervision of an inspector of mines or a geologist. To-day a prospecting allowance is paid to many men who are not prospectors at all, and I am sure if these men were sent out under the supervision of an inspector of mines or a geologist we should get a better return than we are getting to-day. Prospecting is not hard to learn if you are working with someone who is conversant with the whole business.

After all is said and done every mine that has been found in Queensland and Australia has been found by a prospector—the man who does the pick and shovel work. After the discovery, a man or a company with a few pounds to spend takes over the mine and develops it; in some cases it turns out trumps, and in other cases it does not turn out well at all.

I have heard much said about the copper-mining industry of Queensland. To-day Mount Morgan is engaged in the production of copper, and I am pleased to know the company is willing to help the Commonwealth and State Governments in their endeavour to bring about the production of more copper in Queensland.

It was mentioned during the debate this morning that the Commonwealth Government have given the Mount Morgan Company the sum of £10,000 for the opening of the old Mount Chalmers mine, which was worked in the early days by the Bewick Maun Company, the object being to ascertain whether it was possible to make the old mine pay. It is a very fine gesture on the part of the Commonwealth Government to advance £10,000 to the Mount Morgan Company for that purpose.

At 3.5 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. CLARK: The Mount Morgan company is the right company to prove whether Mount Chalmers is worth working. I worked in the Mount Chalmers mine some years ago, and my experience tells me that the company will have a very knotty problem once it gets the water out of the mine and gets down to the old workings, but I am satisfied it will see that that work is done as economically as possible.

Throughout the length and breadth of Queensland there are copper deposits that should be working to-day, seeing that the Federal Government is importing copper at over £100 a ton. As there is an abundance

of copper ores in Queensland it would pay the Federal Government and the State Government handsomely if they went a little further and provided money for the reopening of some of the old mines, as is being done at Mount Chalmers. In the Bundaberg and Mount Perry districts there are some copper lodes that it would be worth testing inasmuch as the ore in that area carries a higher percentage of copper than that in the Mount Morgan and Mount Chalmers mines.

A little further outside Mount Morgan, in the locality of the former Dee mine, there is copper of a fairly high percentage, and with aid to some of the men still gouging in that district to-day it is possible to make that mine a producer. As I have said, several mines in the Mount Perry district produced copper of a fairly high percentage in the early days, and all the copper in those mines was never taken out. It would pay the Federal Government handsomely to advance a certain amount of money for dewatering some of these mines and producing copper in Australia instead of having to import it.

Just beyond the Gladstone district is a mine that was worked by the Mount Morgan people more for its value as a flux than anything else, although it carried a small percentage of copper and gold. It would be of great advantage to the Chillagoe Smelters if that Many Peaks mine was somewhere in their vicinity. It would give them great help in the fluxing of the ores that they get in that district.

It is very good to know that the Mount Morgan Company is willing, with a little assistance from the Federal Government, to erect a refinery at Mount Morgan. That would be a great thing for Queensland, especially Central Queensland, and for Australia, and, therefore, that assistance, when all is said and done, is not much. All they ask for is a guarantee from the Federal Government, and I think that we as a Labour Government in Queensland should press the company's claim on the Federal Government. This would enable the company to save £5 on every ton of copper that at present it sends to Port Kembla. That would be a great help at the present time, because it would allow the company to treat lower grades of ore.

When we realise that the company is treating ores that return $1\frac{1}{2}$ dwt. of gold to the ton and in the vicinity of 2 per cent. of copper we appreciate how low the grade of ore is. With the process adopted there it is able to make production pay, but with the establishment of a refinery it could treat ores of an even lower grade than those it is putting through to-day. If a refinery was erected, thousands of tons of ore now dumped could be treated successfully. Mount Morgan is the ideal place for the erection of a refinery in that power is available for running such a plant. It is the centre of the copper areas of Central Queensland, and I ask the Minister to use his influence with the Federal Government with a view to obtaining aid for the erection of a refinery there. The company asked for a guarantee of a little over £100,000 and, if

the Federal Government would give that guarantee, I am satisfied that the company will proceed with the erection of the refinery.

I have said that the Mount Morgan Company is throwing away thousands of tons of ore—which could be treated successfully by another process—over the dumps, and has asked the Federal Government for aid to install a pyrite plant for the treatment of these low-grade ores. As far as I can understand, a large amount of gold could be won each year by the use of such a plant, and in addition I believe that the Mount Morgan mine could produce enough sulphur to meet Australia's requirements. This would be no mean achievement when we realise that to-day we are importing in the vicinity of £1,000,000 worth of sulphur a year. In addition, a fair amount of iron would be produced.

I confirm the statement by the hon. member for Maree that the first directors of the Mount Morgan Company invested their money in the development of the Iraq and Iran oilfields, and it is a disgrace that Mount Morgan should be the township it is when the millions of pounds of wealth that it has produced should have made it a model city. It has to be remembered, too, that the dividends were taken out of the mine at no cost whatever to the shareholders, which, of course, makes the position even worse. I am pleased to know, however, that the present Mount Morgan Company has adopted a different attitude towards its employees, and is doing whatever it possibly can for the benefit of the workers.

Mr. Luckins: I believe it gives them pretty good conditions.

Mr. CLARK: That is so, and the company is deserving of every credit for that. It gives the men employed at Mount Morgan far better conditions than the old company gave its employees.

It is very pleasing indeed to know that we in Queensland have been able to revive a mine such as Mount Morgan, particularly when we consider that it is still producing in the vicinity of 5,000 oz. of gold a month. It is a mine that is worth having in this State, and I am satisfied that if the district was prospected other lenses of ore would be found in the vicinity—some probably within a few miles, and others a good distance away—which, although they perhaps would not be quite as big, would prove of great benefit to the State. I am sure that these deposits will be found in years to come. I am sure that if prospectors were sent out they would unearth a field similar to Mount Morgan. If we listen to theory—and I have gathered this from books on mining I have read—we come to the conclusion that once you find a lense in the nature of that existing at Mount Morgan or Mount Chalmers, there are always two or three similar lenses in the vicinity. They might be lying either parallel or horizontally, and it is for that reason that I bring the matter up this afternoon. I trust the Minister will consider a scheme of sending prospectors on the basic wage out into the country under the supervision of inspectors.

The goldmining industry has been of great value to Queensland, and when we go back to the 'eighties we find that the gold won from the ground has been the means of putting this State on its feet. I believe it is possible for the industry to place Queensland in a better position than it occupies to-day. There is not one part of my electorate where you cannot go with a dish and pick and shovel and find the colour of gold at the roots of the grass or a little deeper. One might say that in any part of the Fitzroy electorate it is possible to get the colour of gold. There must be ways and means of treating gold-bearing stone economically and at the same time showing a little surplus. If that could be done, the goldmining industry would absorb many of the unemployed, and would take into its fold many of our men on their return from the war. I am satisfied that many of those serving abroad have come from the mining fields. If we can do that, I am satisfied that we shall not have the unemployment problems facing us that we had at the conclusion of the last war.

The coalmining industry also has been a wonderful asset to Queensland, and if we had an outlet for our production the industry would be of greater benefit than it is. We have coalmines scattered all over the State from the far North to the South, and it is pleasing to know that we have some of the best coal seams in the world.

I wish to impress upon the Minister the necessity for taking into consideration the matters I have brought before his notice this afternoon, and I ask him to use his influence with the Federal Government to give Mount Morgan a guarantee for the purpose of erecting a refinery at that place. I also suggest that a pyrite plant should be constructed, because that would help not only the State of Queensland, but also the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, and indeed the Commonwealth, too.

Mr. JONES (Charters Towers) (3.20 p.m.): Naturally, I should like to speak on this vote, seeing that I represent an electorate that at one time was probably one of the greatest gold-producing fields in Australia. It is pathetic to see a one-time flourishing mining town decline to a mere shadow of its previous importance. That has happened at Charters Towers. In 1886 the population of Charters Towers was about 5,400, in 1891 it had increased to 14,569, and in 1901 or 1902 it had further increased to 32,000, but since that time the population has gradually dwindled, and to-day it is about 9,000, probably less.

I was interested to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Fitzroy concerning prospectors, because recently I read a book in the Parliamentary Library entitled, "In Search of Soviet Gold." The book deals with the search for gold in Siberia, and it is written by a prominent American geologist who had been in Alaska and other prominent mining fields, and had been seconded to the Soviet Government in 1923. He pointed out that shortly after the Russian revolution, in 1917,

the Soviet Government thought that by the establishment of big schools they could train hundreds of students, give them a theoretical knowledge of mining, and then turn them adrift in the hills to discover gold in large quantities. This practice was followed for some time—the Soviet Government turned out thousands of students after giving them two or three years' training, and then expected practical reports from them. After a number of years the Government archives were filled with these reports, but there were no practical results. These young students had a great deal of theoretical knowledge. Eventually the Soviet authorities decided to give all possible encouragement to the old prospector—to bring him back into the field. He was given a special ration and, indeed, was encouraged in every way to go out into the hills to look for gold. It was not long before the changed policy brought beneficial results.

I mention this because I believe that very often more reliance is to be placed on the practical miner than on men with theoretical knowledge. I prefer to take the opinion of the experienced prospector in many cases to that of the geologist. I agree with the hon. member for Maree that the prospector deserves every encouragement, because although often fabulous wealth results from discoveries of gold, there is also much hard living and poverty, and the prospector usually gets the hard living and poverty, and nothing of the wealth. Some of the prospectors are men who have done deep mining in their day, and are now only waiting to die from the dread disease, miner's phthisis, which took tragic toll of their fellows in years gone by. However, I am glad to be able to say that we are coping to a very large extent with the disease now.

Much criticism is levelled at the Minister and the department, on the grounds that not enough consideration is given to mining proposals submitted from time to time. It is only natural that in a vast mineral-bearing State such as Queensland there will be people who will say that they have a good show of this or a good show of that—whether coal, shale, or metal.

They expect the Government to come to their aid immediately and supply the money they think is necessary to develop it. It is probably good that they should be so optimistic and enthusiastic, but it is necessary for the department to use a good deal of discretion. The department has geologists whose duty it is to report on such applications for assistance, and I have found them very helpful. They are conscientious and are out to do their best, not only for the department, but for the people interested. I have gone along to the Minister, put such proposals to him, and I have always received sympathetic consideration. He has always gone to a great deal of trouble to investigate the claims put forward by interested persons. For instance, take the Black Jack mine at Charters Towers. It was made possible largely through sympathetic treatment by the department. It lent the Black Jack syndicate £3,300, which has since been repaid, to assist in developing the mine. My point is that

this advance made it possible for the syndicate to develop the mine. To-day this mine has 65 men working in and around it.

At the present moment a mine known as the North Butler is being developed adjacent to the Black Jack and the indications are that it will be quite successful. There is no little optimism concerning the Charters Towers goldfield. There are some men who are very optimistic. Take Mr. W. H. Clark, for instance, who is managing director of the Black Jack and North Butler; he has shown great sincerity in all his undertakings on the goldfield. He is certainly enthusiastic, and, what is more to his credit, has put his own cash into his enterprises. After all, that is the best test of a man's sincerity. Mr. Clark, as a result of his optimism, has been responsible for much developmental work on the field. Last year, together with one or two other prominent local people, he spent something like £5,000 on opening up the old Wallis Day Dawn goldmine. The department gave the syndicate certain monetary assistance, but I am sorry to say the venture did not turn out as successfully as was expected; but, even to-day, Mr. Clark is of opinion that with the expenditure of another £1,500, something worth while may be achieved.

From time to time suggestions have been made for the dewatering of the old mines at Charters Towers. It is estimated that this work will cost something like £200,000. From time to time, also, geologists have put forward certain theories. Mr. J. H. Reid, one of the departmental district geologists, who wrote a book on the Charters Towers goldfield, put forward the theory that if a shaft was sunk in Lissner Park some distance below the town, to a depth of 1,500 feet, a reef would be struck that was the junction of the various reefs that had been previously worked. That may or may not be true. I believe it would cost something like £250,000 to sink that shaft. Had there been some co-ordination among the old mineowners and people interested in mining in the early days of Charters Towers, particularly when the decline set in, some plan could have been evolved to test this theory. The shaft could have been sunk in those days for something like £100,000.

It is difficult for the Government to assist such a proposal. The taxpayers would want to know what they were doing with that sum of money. One realises that there would be no criticism if its expenditure meant a return to the conditions which existed in Charters Towers at the time of the boom in 1902. Everything in the garden would then be lovely! If, on the other hand, an amount has been expended with little result the Government are subjected to criticism from all sides. I know that even the expenditure of £3,000 on the Black Jack was criticised by small mining men, who said that the money should not have been made available to the company, and that it would have been better to have distributed it amongst the prospectors and the smaller men. Personally, I do not believe that. I think it is necessary to test out a mine like that in a big way. I am satisfied that if anything comes to

Charters Towers it will come through deep mining.

When these Estimates were under discussion last year the aerial survey undertaken by the Commonwealth Government was referred to. I hold views somewhat similar to the views expressed by the hon. member for Cooroora, who last year said he believed the survey was largely a waste of money. I am inclined to agree with him; I do not think there has been much benefit from it. If an equal amount of money was expended in giving practical help to the mining industry, I believe it would have been more beneficial to mining generally. I do not blame the geologists, but I am satisfied that no great benefit has resulted from that survey, which cost so much money; it may be that some benefit will result later on, but at the moment I cannot see any likelihood of any advantage.

As I said earlier, I believe the Charters Towers field has possibilities. The same applies to Ravenswood, which for the past 10 years has had another lease of life. The Ravenswood Goldmining Syndicate has a battery of 40 head of stamps, and is doing good work. In addition, a number of local shows are working and there is a prosperous little community there. During the last two years the Government decided to declare the road from Mingela to Ravenswood a mining-access road, which has meant a great deal to the town. Last year they constructed a traffic bridge over the Kirk River. That has proved very satisfactory, and it has been a great benefit to the people of Ravenswood. This little town, given a continuance of the encouragement it has received in the past few years, will again come into its own. There are a number of practical mining men who believe as I believe in that regard.

I think I am in order in referring to mine managers' certificates. I know that a man who manages a mine, where more than a certain number of hands are employed, must hold a certificate, but in some cases this works out rather harshly in my area. It is doubtful if Mr. Parsons, the man who is responsible for the reopening of the Swedenborg, Wallis Day Dawn, and Butler Block mines, could pass an examination because he has not had the necessary education; but, as a practical miner, there would be few to equal him on the Charters Towers field. It is agreed by the mining people in that area that when the North Butler is opened up, if it looks worth working, this man will be subordinate to somebody who may have much theoretical knowledge but probably not nearly as much ability as Parsons to work the mine.

I want to be quite fair. I understand the position, and I have discussed it with the Minister, who points out that it is necessary for this man to hold a certificate, as if the department departed from the regulations in this instance, it would probably have to do it in a number of instances. To me it certainly appears to be a little harsh, because, as I have said previously, I always have sympathy with the practical man as against the man full of theory. This man

is a practical miner known to the department, and I am satisfied that if it was possible for it to give favourable consideration to his request it would be greatly appreciated by me and the people connected with mining in the Charters Towers district.

I express my appreciation to the Minister and his officers for the assistance rendered to me at all times; I have never had reason for complaint. On any occasion I have interviewed them they have always investigated the matter I brought forward, and I am satisfied that every hon. member representing a mining electorate in this Committee who is fair must say the same thing.

Mr. MOORHOUSE (Windsor) (3.36 p.m.): This morning the Minister informed the Committee that the mineral production of Queensland over a certain period amounted to £180,000,000. That, to me, conveys one thing—i.e., that the mineral wealth of Queensland has been exploited by a few for the benefit of the few, or it has been a case of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. I urge the Government to take over all the mines from which minerals that go into war production are extracted. We have had before the House a motion submitted by the hon. member for Oxley. What the hon. gentleman wanted to do was to hand over to his friends one of the richest fields of bauxite.

Mr. Sparkes: Ah!

Mr. MOORHOUSE: That is unquestionably what it amounted to.

Mr. Sparkes: That is your imagination.

Mr. Jesson: He is quite right.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: The party to which he belongs represents those people who own Australia. If three men found £1,500,000 those men did not get that amount of money by the sweat of their own brow like the majority of Queenslanders who have to earn money.

Mr. Jesson: They may have got it from Barnes.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: I do not know where they got it, but they must have exploited the people, otherwise they could not have got that amount. They are awaiting another opportunity to use their mouthpiece in the Country-National Party in an endeavour to exploit the people of Queensland through the mining industry. We know that to-day bauxite is under the control of a combine or a monopoly. This is demonstrated in a little paper called "The Practical Patriot," which asks three questions, the most important of which will answer a number of the questions as to why certain things have not been done by the Queensland Government. The question is: "Why have Australians not yet been given permission to manufacture their own aluminium?" The reason is given: "Now we know there is a shortage. We could have saved precious time and precious materials had we not listened to the wishful thinking of the men whose financial interest lay in preventing new

production in order to preserve their monopoly after the war." That explains exactly why we have not started the Bowen steel works. When the people who own Australia have to be asked for permission to manufacture their own raw materials into finished articles, it is some indication of what voice they have in the running of their country.

We know very well that aluminium is one of the metals most extensively used in our war effort. We cannot build an aeroplane of any consequence without using much aluminium. It is also used in the manufacture of automatic rifles—the Lewis gun has an aluminium cooler—and we know that it plays a big part in the interior finishing of our naval vessels. If the hon. member for Oxley had been successful in carrying the motion he had moved, we should have found these people who own Australia making considerably more money out of the manufacture of war materials than they will do under present conditions. I urge the Government to erect their own aluminium-manufacturing plant at Mount Tamborine. Why should the Government hand this monopoly over to the people who own Australia? The Government charge royalty on timber, and if they can charge a royalty for what grows above ground, then surely they are entitled to hold what is beneath the ground? When all is said and done, the good God put it there and, that being so, why should we hand it over to these people who belong to what I call the useless section of the community?

In a recent issue of the "Courier-Mail" we read the following statement by the Minister for the Army:—

"Unless our men overseas can think at all times of Australia as a land where their fellow-countrymen are driving the war effort ahead until their sinews crack, then we are letting them down."

I maintain that this motion by the hon. member for Oxley was an attempt to let them down so far as this bauxite was concerned. We should give consideration to the end of the war and the return of our soldiers, but I should like to know where they are to be placed in employment. We shall have the same thing as is spoken about in "Smith's Weekly" of 15 November, in which it is stated that a returned soldier from this war was given unemployment registration, unemployment food relief, and a ration relief work card.

The Secretary for Mines: That was in New South Wales.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: I do not care where it is. The fact is that that is what is happening.

The Secretary for Mines: Do not make it appear as if it were happening here.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: I simply say that that is what is happening to a man who came back from this war. If we are sincere, we should establish this industry ourselves.

Mr. Sparkes: If you were sincere you would not be drawing two salaries, either.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: The hon. member for Aubigny is not competent to do one job, let alone two. If we were sincere and had the interests of not a part, but the whole of Queensland at heart, we should set about establishing these industries. I am expecting the hon. member for Bowen and the hon. member for Isis to support the Government when they bring forward a Bill for the establishment of an iron and steel works at Bowen and a bauxite industry at Tamborine Mountain. It is our duty to support such measures, and I am looking to the Government to bring forward such legislation during their present term of office.

Mr. A. J. SMITH (Carpentaria) (3.45 p.m.): I wish to associate myself with the debate on the vote before the Committee, because my electorate has received a substantial grant from the Government for assistance to the gouger. The area I represent has one of the greatest copper fields and one of the greatest silver-lead fields in the Commonwealth, but I feel that the electorate is not playing the part it might play in the war effort—that is, by the development of the copper ore deposits. I was interested to hear the remarks by hon. members opposite concerning what the Government should do to open up our mining fields, because, to my mind, the Opposition have made a political football of every mining venture a Labour Government have tried to foster over the last 20 years. They made a football of Chillagoe. The mining industry was at a low ebb after the last war, until Campbell Miles and Simpson found Mount Isa. When the late John Mullan brought before the House the possibility that Mount Isa would develop into one of the greatest silver-lead fields in the Commonwealth, the Opposition fought it tooth and nail. They were opposed to the Government's assisting in its development; they objected to the building of the railway line, and fought all other concessions strenuously. As there are no mining representatives on that side of the Committee, my impression is that they were fighting on behalf of vested interests in the Southern States; perhaps, the Broken Hill Proprietary Company has used the Opposition to fight strenuously against any support for the opening up of silver-lead or copper fields in Queensland.

One of the greatest copper fields in the Commonwealth is lying idle in the Cloncurry district. The Commonwealth Government have come to the aid of the Mount Morgan Company with a £10,000 grant to reopen Mount Chalmers, and a loan of £50,000 has been made to Mount Isa Mines Limited. If Mount Isa is going to produce refined copper, it will not be able to treat the copper-ore deposits of the Cloncurry area. With the hon. member for Fitzroy, I advocate the making of a grant from the Federal Government for the establishment of a copper refinery in this State, which would allow Mount Isa to treat all the copper ore in the Cloncurry district. When a survey was made a few years ago the Mount Oxide mine was estimated to have 300,000 tons of 10 per cent. copper ore, but at the present moment that mine is lying idle

and only a few gougers are working there and sending a few tons to Chillagoe. If Mount Oxide was again brought into production, it might be found that it was capable of producing three or four times that amount, even if the ore came down to 5 per cent.

It would be a great asset to the State. There is another mine, the Consol mine, with about 250,000 tons of 7 per cent. to 8 per cent. copper ore lying idle. There is the Trekelano mine. Again, there are the Argylla Ranges, maiden copper-bearing country, that has never been properly prospected because there is no reasonable means to enable the gouger to get his ore away. At the present time a reconnaissance survey is being carried out for a proposed road from Mount Isa to Cloncurry through this range of hills, and in a short period this copper belt may be developed. The Federal Government have been in the habit of importing from 50,000 to 60,000 tons of copper annually, and of this we use 50,000 tons of copper in our munition works every year, and of that amount Australia produces only 20,000 tons. If Japan came into the war to-morrow she would have her navy and raiders in the Pacific and they would make it very difficult for us to import copper. That would mean a serious setback to our munitions factories. The munition annexes would be short of 30,000 tons of copper a year. That means that the Federal Government must take immediate action to develop all our copper fields so that copper will be smelted for all our requirements. If Japan entered the war against us we should be isolated from the rest of the world. It is all very well for hon. members to say that this mine and that mine should be opened, but the mining industry has been revolutionised, and it is found that the man who plays the most prominent part in the production and treatment of ore to-day is the metallurgist. He has to deal with low-grade ore, whether it is copper, gold, lead, or other metals, on the basis of mass production, and that calls for the use of more modern machinery than was in general use in the past. We shall probably find that we are short of technicians, not only in the mining field, but also in the treatment plant.

Hon. members have referred to the production of copper by the Mount Morgan Company, but I want to tell them that a few years ago the Mount Morgan Company was able to have its samples tested in the laboratory of the Mount Isa Company, and thus know with certainty what was the copper content of the ore they proposed to treat, and their probable recovery of metal. I wish to emphasise the fact that there are large bodies of low-grade copper ore awaiting treatment to-day, and that a start must be made immediately so as to help us in an emergency, particularly if Japan should enter the war against us.

There are other silver-lead fields in the Gulf country north of Cloncurry. For instance, there is the silver-lead field at Lawn Hill, and there is gold at Croydon, Normanton, and Batavia. These are all low-grade deposits, and that makes the lot of the gouger all the

more difficult. As I said previously, these low-grade deposits call for the advice, not only of the expert in prospecting and mining, but also of the technician in the reduction, smelting, or refinement of the metal.

It is pleasing to find that the Carpentaria electorate has played no small part in these Estimates, and that aid has been given the gouger as well as others. That aid has helped in increasing the production of copper and thus in keeping Queensland foremost in the war-time efforts of our munition factories.

We also know that in addition to gold and other metals there are huge deposits of iron ore in the northern part of this State. I associate myself with the remarks of the hon. member for Bowen and other hon. members in pressing for the establishment of iron and steel works in Bowen. There has been an agitation in this Chamber concerning the amount of steel being used at the present time in building operations. There would be no need for any such outcry if our huge iron deposits now lying dormant were developed. As I said in my first speech in this Chamber, there are huge ore deposits lying idle in the Cloncurry and Peninsula districts. Previous requests for capital to develop our iron deposits by the establishment of iron and steel works met with the axe on quite a few occasions because of agitation from men whose interests are represented by the Opposition.

On behalf of the prospectors in the Cloncurry and Carpentaria divisions I wish to thank the Minister and his staff for the assistance they have given them in many ways in past years. It was not confined to opening up mines and working them, but extended to making roads trafficable so that ore could be transported by motor truck from the mine to the railhead.

I hope in the near future that news will be conveyed to the people in the Cloncurry district that the Mount Isa mines or some other mining organisation will be in a position to take up and work the huge copper-ore deposits now lying idle there. I know that a fair amount of experimentation must precede development, and consequently, we shall have to be patient. My experience shows that nobody can come along, sink a shaft, and produce copper or any other metal. Quite a time must elapse before production stage is reached, but I sincerely hope that with the aid of the department it will not be long before the Mount Isa mines or some other body, as I previously mentioned, will not only be producing copper in that district but also buying customers' ore, helping the gouger, and making arrangements for the reopening of such mines as the Consols, Mount Oxide, and quite a few other high-grade mines which are now idle in the district.

Mr. WILLIAMS (Port Curtis) (3.57 p.m.): This is an important vote. Judging from the number of speeches made on it and the opinions expressed by hon. members, particularly in the last year or two, it has become one of the most important to be considered by the Committee. One hon. member this morning referred to the mining industry as

being a key industry. We know that cities and towns have been built up with mining as their background, just as cities and towns have been built up with agriculture as a background. I was pleased to hear from the Minister's remarks of the progress made in the various avenues of mining activities. He gave us some illuminating figures. While they may not indicate that any marathon or record has been established, they nevertheless disclosed a continuity of progress in mining development. I have a report in my hand indicating that most countries in the world are to-day paying more attention to the development of mining because they recognise the value of their mineral resources, and the need to develop them.

Take one example—New Zealand. I read in a report that the production of minerals in that country last year increased in value by £555,388 as compared with the previous year. The largest items were gold and silver, coal and iron. These details were given in the statement presented to the New Zealand Parliament a few weeks ago by the Minister for Mines, the Hon. P. C. Webb. The actual value of minerals produced during the year was £5,037,819, compared with £4,482,431 during 1939.

That indicates the extent to which mining development is progressing in that Dominion.

One hon. member referred to the fact that the State smelters at Chillagoe were closed down for one reason or another. There is something wrong if that is so. I can understand a shortage of labour consequent on the calls for service at home and overseas, and the consequent reduction in production till it was not economic for the smelters to work continuously, but if that is the position it should be remedied and I am sure the Minister, his department, and the Government recognise the position and that it will be remedied as far as possible.

I wish to make passing reference to the part mining plays in development and the need for righting any wrong that exists in that regard. Apart from the development of the various primary industries of national importance we could look to other fields of progress—namely, secondary industries. The main consideration in developing them is the proper use of our mining resources. I firmly believe that with the assistance of the Federal Government we could develop this State to such an extent that it would be the outstanding State in Australia in point of mineral development. We must therefore consider the establishment of treatment plants in different parts of the State, if possible in proximity to approved fields such as Mount Perry, Cloncurry, Many Peaks, and even such a small centre as Rosedale, in my electorate, 30 miles north of Bundaberg, where there is virtually every known mineral. The erection of these treatment plants encourages the miner; nothing further is required because the miner develops the industry. Lack of facilities to treat ore has kept mining areas from flourishing in the past.

I know the question of finance will be raised and I recognise its importance as much as any hon. member of this Committee. It would be necessary to place the treatment plants in centres with a view to serving any factories that may exist or may be established to turn out machinery necessary for all purposes, and they should be built with a view to obtaining the best possible results. Then it would become necessary to have a housing scheme for the men employed on the mining fields. The men who build the smelters naturally would have to have accommodation; being specialists in that work they would leave the field once that work was completed and their cottages, which are preferable to barracks, could be used by the miners on the payment of a small rental to the Government. The men employed on the erection of the smelters would pass on, naturally, and the accommodation would then be available for those engaged in the smelting or mining industry.

To keep the mining industry of any country operating, of course, it would be necessary to have subsidiary factories for the manufacture of such things as wire and wire-netting, which are more required to-day than ever before. Thus we come to the question of the establishment of iron and steel works in various parts of the State. The iron and steel could be used to some extent during the present crisis, but in times of peace the works could be used for manufacturing steel to convert road and rail bridges into steel structures, the erection of buildings, and in many other ways. Dealing especially with secondary industries, there is then the necessity for the erection of tanneries, paper, cotton, woollen, and hemp mills, and the structures for housing many other industries that require a certain amount of iron, steel, and brass. Water conservation, for which there are many schemes, should encourage people to take up land. The machinery they need would be manufactured on the spot. Now is the time to prepare for the return of our men so that a depression can be avoided. Here again finance is a question that must be studied, but the financial part is as nothing compared with proper planning in the early stages to avoid all avoidable mistakes.

I have no wish to take up the time of the Committee unnecessarily, but I would point out that in my electorate are many mining fields that were once important, but are now unfortunately shorn of their past glory, and these have received very valuable assistance from the Minister and the department. Last year, approximately £1,000 was expended on the mining shows being worked there and the prospectors who applied for assistance.

To the wardens and mining registrars in particular, as well as to the officers of the department and the Minister, I pay tribute. We should encourage prospecting on as large a scale as possible. In that respect I refer to the genuine prospectors. There are many men who are prospecting in the hope only that some day they will find an El Dorado of their own. I am not concerned very much

with the work they do merely in the hope that something will turn up, but there is the genuine prospector, the ex-miner, who is worth really all his salt and a lot more if I may put it that way. I should like to see these men encouraged, and the other men discouraged. I know the mining wardens, registrars, and the Minister are eager to encourage the genuine prospector to the fullest extent possible.

This is an important vote, and is becoming increasingly popular in this Committee year after year. The Minister has nothing to regret in what his department and officers have achieved, and I think he hopes, as we hope, to see a greater sum allotted each year for the development of the mineral resources of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. D. A. Gledson, Ipswich) (4.10 p.m.): The Leader of the Opposition referred to the reduction in the quantity of the ores treated at Chillagoe. At the beginning of this year we had a succession of heavy floods in North Queensland, and for months on end we could not get traffic running, with the result that no ore supplies came to the smelters. If hon. members opposite could realise that ores have to travel hundreds of miles to the Chillagoe smelters through all sorts of country in North Queensland, first by road and then by rail, they would appreciate the difficulties associated with the transport of ore to the State smelters there. In addition to that, hon. members should realise that the treatment of ores at the smelters is not as simple as it would appear on the surface. The smelting of ore is a scientific and intricate process. It is not possible simply to take any ore out of the ground, put it in a furnace, and then run out the metal. There is more than that to be done. The metallurgist has to do a good deal of work and exercise great care to get the correct results. First, certain things have to be eliminated from the ore, and in certain ores a considerable amount of flux, coke, and coal is needed to eliminate certain metals. The manager of a smelters has to blend ores in the charging of his furnace in order to get the desired results from the smelting. This difficulty of blending is experienced more at Chillagoe than at any other smelters. For instance, at such places as Mount Lyell, Whyalla, and Port Kembla, as well as at Mount Morgan, the companies concerned are smelting their own types of ores, whereas at the State smelters at Chillagoe ores of all types from all parts of the State are treated. There we treat the customers' ores. We do not mine any of our own. We have to treat the highly siliceous gold ores from the Etheridge field, and the highly siliceous ores from other parts north of Chillagoe, and extract such metals as gold, silver, copper, and other metals contained in them. The smelter management has so to blend the ores in charging the furnace as to achieve desirable results in the interests of his customers. For instance, matte or blister copper contains a certain number of minerals—perhaps copper, gold, silver, and a number of other metals to a lesser extent.

We are treating customers' ores at the Chillagoe smelters and have to treat them for their gold and other contents. Before that is done there is a big job to be done. Every parcel or truckload of ore that comes in has to be divided, sampled, and assayed, because it is on the assay that the producer is paid by the Chillagoe smelters. Every parcel of ore that comes to the smelters has to go through the assayer's office and the producer is paid so much per cent. on the ore value. That has to be done before the smelting can take place. The smelting has to be done according to the class of ores available and it is not possible to get a smelt out of purely oxide ores. It is necessary to have sulphide ores to mix with the oxides ores to get any result at all.

We have to spend some of our energy, therefore, in getting sufficient sulphide ore to blend with the oxide ore to get a smelter's ore. We get a sulphide ore from the Trekelano mine in the Cloncurry district and it was not possible to get that ore in the beginning of the year. We had to close the smelters down this year for a certain period until we got certain quantities of this ore on hand to keep the smelters at work. That is the reason why there was a falling off in the treatment of ores at Chillagoe this year as compared with last year. Last year we were able to run for most of the year without having to close down at all. We did not have the same transport difficulties nor the treatment difficulties, because more sulphide ores were coming to hand. The producer of an ore naturally expects the department or the smelters to smelt his ore no matter what class it might be, but we can only smelt it when we get the required blend. We might have a number of oxide ores on hand, all paid for, but until we get the necessary sulphide ores to blend with them we cannot go on and get a smelt to produce the copper, gold, or silver in the ore.

The Leader of the Opposition raised the question of the production of lead. It has been found that it is not economical for us to treat these ores and recover the lead content of the ore. When you are smelting for copper, gold, and silver the blister copper is sent to the electrolytic refining works, where it is refined, and the gold and silver separated from the copper. The producer is paid for the copper content and he is also paid for the gold and silver content, but the lead is eliminated and it is not possible for us to recover that lead, and, therefore, make smelting of lead ores pay. We are not treating lead ores at all at the present time. Lead is mostly produced at Mount Isa, where the treatment plant produces lead in sufficient quantities to meet Australian requirements. That is the answer to the complaint of a decline in production at the Chillagoe State smelters last year.

The hon. member for Isis raised a question about the New Moonta mine in his electorate between Bundaberg and Mount Perry, one that had been worked 25 or 30 years ago, and then abandoned. The company concerned obtained a freehold mineral title many years ago, but it is not possible for anyone to get

a title like that now. It was obtained by the company in the early days and the Labour Government, not being one to repudiate their contracts, had to carry out the contract entered into by a Government years ago. Therefore, any work that has to be done in connection with the New Moonta mine has to be done more or less in agreement with the company and in conformity with its unusual mineral rights. No-one can go along and stake a claim on that holding, as can be done in respect of any other area required for mining purposes; the mineral rights of the company are protected by their agreement. That is the explanation concerning the New Moonta mine, and I think it is well known to the hon. member for Isis, because I was in his electorate at the beginning of the year. I visited the mine in his company, and discussed the matter with him while I was there.

The hon. member for Isis and the hon. member for Hamilton referred to the production of bauxite. Bauxite is a very poor class of ore, having very little value in itself, but it is important because its alumina content is useful in the production of aluminium, which is a rather complicated process. The alumina is extracted from rocks or clays of certain description that have been found in different parts of Australia over very many years, but it is only of late that interest in it was aroused in Queensland, when the Chief Geologist of the Department, Mr. L. C. Ball, in accordance with his usual practice, picked up a piece of ore or clay on the road from Tamborine and brought it in for analysis. Anyone who knows Mr. Ball knows that it is his unflinching practice to pick up pieces of metal wherever they attract his attention with the object of having them analysed. The piece of bauxite Mr. Ball brought in from the Mount Tamborine road was found to contain 40 per cent. of alumina, and that was regarded as fairly good for the purpose of manufacturing aluminium. He accordingly reported the matter, it was published in the "Queensland Government Mining Journal," and thus became generally known. It has been said that the metal was taken from a road where it had been placed for road-construction purposes. That is true. Bauxite makes splendid road gravel because it has a constituent in the metal, the alumina, that causes it to set like cement. It makes a splendid surface when used for roadmaking all over the world because of the alumina in it. It is even better than a bitumen road when it is rolled out.

When the light of day was turned on this discovery an interest was taken in the metal and representatives of companies came along and had a look at it. Prospecting work has been carried on throughout the area, and it has been discovered that a good deal of Tamborine Mountain contains quite an appreciable amount of bauxite ore, which is the basis of alumina that is used for the production of aluminium.

Prior to the war aluminium was imported into Australia in ingots and used by companies for the manufacturing of aluminium

utensils. In fact, prior to the war very little aluminium was required in Australia, the total importations being 2,000 tons a year. When the war broke out it was found that aluminium played a big part in the manufacture of aeroplanes, munitions, and other needs in our war effort and interest then began to be evinced in the development of our own bauxite areas with a view to the production of alumina or aluminium. Officials of the department have taken persons interested out to see the deposits. The chairman of the Australian Sulphide Company visited Brisbane for the purpose. I myself have gone out with different men, and Mr. Ball has accompanied interested persons—anyone who is willing to take up the production of aluminium has been taken out by our officers to the bauxite deposits. A company, in which were some Queenslanders, was formed to develop these deposits and practically guaranteed that it could raise £1,500,000 of Australian money without interfering with the Commonwealth Government's war effort. It did not intend to seek finance from those avenues which could be regarded as national. It made application to the Commonwealth Government for permission to raise this money. At that time, the Government in office were the Fadden-Menzies Government, and up to the time of their going out of office no decision had been reached as to whether the company could raise this money or not, nor could a decision be obtained from it. The company has taken up the matter again with the present Government and it is expected as soon as the business pertaining to the recent war loan is completed the matter will be gone into. In fact, I believe it is being discussed at the present time.

Mr. Yeates: It will be all right now with the present Government; the magic wand will be waved.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not know whether it is all right or not. I am not personally concerned with the politics of the Government so long as we get our bauxite deposits developed. We have the bauxite, and our concern is to see that the company that has been formed gets its machinery on the spot to begin work. The first process is to treat the bauxite, until the alumina is recovered in powdered form. Then by an electrolytic process the alumina is manufactured into aluminium. Inquiries are now being made with a view to getting electricity at a sufficiently attractive price to enable works to be erected to treat our bauxite deposits.

We were advised that in order to make the proposal attractive it will be necessary to get a supply of electricity for as low as from .2d. to .1d. a unit, but the best price we could get was .5d. a unit, which was not sufficiently attractive. So much bulk electricity is needed to treat this alumina that the price quoted would make the undertaking uneconomical.

Mr. Luckins: Could not the Government subsidise the industry?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think the Government are willing to subsidise or lend any aid they possibly can to such an industry, but we must remember that when the subsidies are withdrawn from many of these industries they are lost. The ideal is to establish industries on such a basis that there will be no fear of their languishing when the great demand for aluminium caused by the war falls off. These considerations were investigated. First of all, it would cost £1,500,000 to erect a plant to produce aluminium from bauxite, and install rolling mills to treat the aluminium produced.

I was down in Sydney a few months ago, and I saw an additional plant at Gladesville that was erected for the treatment of aluminium ingots to convert them into aluminium wires and other articles for commercial use, and I was informed it cost £400,000. I understand the company is going ahead with its project and hopes to reach finality shortly.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 4.36 p.m.
