

MINING CONFERENCE.

A Mining Conference was opened in the Albert Hall, Launceston on the 3rd June 1924, the Minister for Mines (Hon. A.G. Ogilvie presiding. Those present were - The Minister for Mines, Secretary for Mines (Mr. W. A. Pretzman), Government Geologists (Messrs. A. McIntosh Reid and P. B. Nye), Wardens of Mines (Mr. E. L. Hall and Mr. F. N. Stops, Devonport), Chief Inspector of Mines (Mr. J. O. Hudson), Inspectors Curtain, H. A. Vandeau, and W. H. Williams, Chairman of the Mining Board (Mr. L. E. Chambers) Government Mining Engineer (Mr. J. B. Scott), members of the Legislative Council (Messrs. A. Lawson, Hon. Minister: L. M. Shoobridge, F. B. Edwards, T. Shields, D. C. Calvert, J. W. Cheek, A. L. Wardlaw, John Hope, F. P. Hart, C. H. Pitt, A. Lillico, and E. Freeland) members of the House of Assembly (Messrs. R. E. Snowden, C. W. Grant, C. C. Becker, P. Murdoch, J. C. Newton, R. Hobbs, F. Marriott, E. F. Blyth, N. Campbell, J. A. Hurst, P. Kelly, A. T. Marshall and C. Culley, delegates from the Mines and Metals Association (Messrs. R. M. Murray, General Manager, Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company; Lindesay Clark, General Manager, Briseis Tin and General Mining Co.; Owen B. Williams, General Manager, North Mount Farrell Silver Mining Co.; Joseph Miller, Manager, Storey's Creek Tin Mine; A. W. Hutchin, Superintendent Industrial Department, Electrolytic Zinc Co., and O. W. Hawkins, Secretary, Australian Mines and Metals Assn. Inc., Tasmanian Branch) delegates from A. W. U. mining employees, Tasmanian Branch, (Messrs. W. T. Corby, General Secretary Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemens' Association; James McDonald, Organiser A. W. U. mining employees, W. H. Reece, assistant organiser), independent delegates (Messrs. J. H. Levings, superintendent Mount Bischoff tin mine); Harold Brock, Hobart; L. J. Smith, Ulverstone; Selby Wilson, Zeehan; and J. C. Macmichael, Launceston).

A Standing Orders Committee was appointed for the purpose of drawing up regulations for the conduct of the business.

The Minister in opening the conference stated that he wished to extend a very hearty welcome to all those present. He had only recently taken over the control of the Mines Department, and during the short time he had had control of the Department he had not yet had an opportunity of becoming au fait with it. He wanted to get information and not give it, so as to assist him to form the basis of a mining policy which would be of value to Tasmania. Since 1907 the mining industry had been gradually going down. In 1922 and 1923, however, there had been an increase of £200,000 in the output, and since 1870 the mines had yielded an output of over £49,000,000. At different times the mining industry had helped the people of Tasmania to tide over periods of depression. He wanted suggestions as to how the mining industry could be revived, and he wanted every member present to remember that the financial position of Tasmania was a very serious one, and he wanted them to bear in mind that a large expenditure of money would debar the Government from putting the suggestions into operation. They were going through the most serious stages in the history of Tasmania. The Government had now reached the apex of taxation, and the State was now depending on the Federal Government in order that the ledger might be squared for the coming year. He wanted them when making suggestions to remember as far as expenditure was concerned the Government would have to be very careful. He hoped and sincerely believed that some good would come out of the conference, that something would be suggested whereby he

and his colleagues and members of both Houses of Parliament would arrive at a policy helpful to Tasmania. The last conference had evolved the Aid to Mining Act, and under that Act the State had lost thousands and thousands of pounds. He had just received a recommendation from the Secretary for Mines asking him to wipe out £12,000 of bad debts incurred under that Act. The delegates present had shown that they were anxious to assist the State in their desire to put the industry on a better footing. They all realised the value of mining to Tasmania in the past and what could be done in the future provided something was done to help it along. He hoped that their deliberations would result in something constructive. He proposed to take the question first "How to revive the Mining Industry".

Mr. McIntosh Reid spoke with reference to the Geological Survey. He said that the immediate work they had in hand was the establishment of the iron industry in Tasmania. They had now been engaged nine months on it and had now come to the stage when the promoters of the concern were about to leave for England to raise the capital for the establishment of the industry. The industry would mean more to Tasmania than the Zinc Works, and it was hoped to establish the works at Burnie. He thought this industry would help the State out of some of its difficulties. They had already established in Tasmania directly as the result of the work of the Biological Survey, cement and paint industries. In connection with the development of the industry in the past it depended on the very rich ores for marketing, and had to be shipped overseas. They had very large industries of low grade ores, which were some day going to be the mainstay of Tasmania. The main point was how to attack this ore. The main drawback was lack of communication. The other point which involved money, was boring, which could safely be applied to the smaller lodes, and under guidance would probably meet with success.

Mr. Owen B. Williams said the trouble was to avoid generalities and put something concrete. He stated that the man who takes an interest in mining liked to see a return for his capital. At the present stage the return could not be seen. If they made the industry attractive to the investor he did not think there would be any difficulty in the recovery of mining in the State. The main reasons for the depression were lack of interest, general unrest, and the War, and unfortunately there was no local market for the ore.

Mr. O. W. Hawkins paid a tribute to Mr. Alex Marshall's efforts in bringing the matter before the House. In order that remedies may be suggested to enable the mining industry to get back to prosperity again it would be necessary to look at the facts which dragged it back during the last few years - the serious upheavals taking place in Europe. They had got to consider the best methods of attracting capital in the industry. The Government could not be expected to do it. He did not think the Government should be asked to provide assistance in the Mining Industry, but a greater spirit of self reliance should be shown by the people. The keystone of mining development was an extensive and systematic geological survey. As a suggestion on that it may be possible for the Geological Survey to make use of the work of the men in the bush in Tasmania. The work accomplished by the Geological Survey up to the present had been very useful indeed, but the fact still remains that we are without a comprehensive geological survey of the State. In that direction primarily the Government would have to move, and he suggested

that a soil survey may be made to run in harness with the geological survey. It was interesting to note how alike the farming industry and the mining industry were becoming. Mining was a fertiliser for the farmer, and it may be of assistance in opening up the State agriculturally. The failure of our West Coast Mines is the lack of accessibility, and people could not see where their money was going. Encouragement might be given to the construction of the West Coast Road. The Government could not consider putting in an electric railway at the present time. He stated that the Geological Survey experts were not sufficiently well-known, and there was some room for improvement in that direction.

Mr. B. H. Levings stated he was actively engaged in the mining industry on the West Coast of Tasmania. At the present time the mining industry was suffering from high costs. He had been watching the progress of the Broken Hill Company which had one of the best plants in the world, with an expenditure of £5,000,000 but was not paying expenses. He wished to see the Hoskins people exporting iron from the Comstock District, near Zeehan, it was the most important outlook he could see, although he hoped there were others. He thought the prospectors were valuable. He knew of only one discovery by a geologist, the finding of shale at Henrietta by Mr. Reid. During the Zeehan boom he remembered a statement that 1600 sections were pegged, stretching from Dundas past Pieman. Then there were about 1250 sections about Lyell, and all those sections worked two or three men. The population was expending around Mount Bischoff and the people often brought him specimens. He thought that that was the best part of the State in which to put money. He suggested setting aside an area between Cape Sorell and Port Davey, where according to prospectors some creeks would pay probably £1 a day in gold. The Government might charter some shallow draught fishing boats, and take provisions to men in such an area. The timber people at Trowutta would eventually demand a bridge over the Arthur River, and that would open the way for prospecting.

Mr. J. O. Hudson said he was a little more optimistic than Mr. Levings. He personally thought Tasmania had as good prospects as any other part of Australia. The depression in Tasmania could be put down to a lot of causes. Men could do better in other parts. They had to find a means of reviving the industry. He had advocated track cutting and prospecting for a number of years. He thought the Government should attempt to do something in that direction. Unfortunately they could not get the type of men they wanted for the money. They should devise some scheme whereby people would be induced to go out into the bush. In New Zealand, when prospecting was languishing, a conference was held and several syndicates sent out prospectors. It would mean a total revival of the industry in Tasmania if one such find could be made here. It would be more likely to come from that direction than any other.

Mr. P. B. Nye stated that the revival of the mining industry could be looked at from different view points. He thought it was largely in the hands of the mine managers. One way in which it could be improved was the utilisation of by-products. In the establishment of future enterprises everything depended on known deposits. They had already touched upon iron. He stated that 20,000,000 tons of iron were known to exist in Tasmania, and the known reserves of oil shale were 40,000,000 tons at 40 gallons to the ton, the total reserve being 160 million gallons. The coal fields at the present time had a reserve of 140 million

tons. There was plenty of scope for the extension of the industry. Utilisation of coal in pulverised form should be used which would save the importation of coal from other States, and the zinc lead sulphides at Rosebery had hardly been touched. At Ross there was sandstone, some of which had been exported to the mainland, and there should be a much larger export in that direction. There have been two cement industries established lately - at Latrobe and Maria Island. In the future the geologists would take a larger part in mining than in the past. This would save a large amount of unnecessary and unprofitable work in trying to locate in unfavourable places.

Mr. W. E. Shoobridge M.H.A. stated that co-operation was essential to mining. He thought that the mining industry must co-operate. Farming and mining were one dependent on the other. He thought one of the most important things for the revival of the industry was co-operation. It might be done by a small royalty on all importations of minerals - it wanted better organisation and cheaper power. Water was the greatest asset of Tasmania. Nothing would attract capital like the development of power and irrigation. They should map out and provide for systematic boring and prospecting. Tasmania had the steel industry of Australia in its own hands, by applying the power. In Canada hydro power had attracted 400,000 people.

Mr. E. F. Blyth stated he had been interested in mining all his life and he had always encouraged prospecting in every possible way. At the present time there were so many other investments that there was not very much speculation in Tasmania. He did not think they should try and extract too much from mining men by taxation of companies and mineral leases. They looked for assistance from the Geologists and the Geological Surveys Branch of the Mines Department. The prospector lives a very hard life. The Department at the present time charged a fee for the services of a geologist. He did not think that was right as it was not encouraging the men. The services of the geologists he thought should be given free. He did not think increasing the fees would assist mining in any way. Another thing, the laboratory might be made more up-to-date, and give mining companies the free use of same - under supervision, and their practical research work could be carried out there at a low cost, and the alteration for same might be done for £1000. There were too many other attractive investments which kept the people from speculating in mining.

Mr. N. Campbell M.H.A. said that he was glad to see so many men representing the scientific and practical side of mining. He did not have any first hand knowledge of mining. The problems of the mining industry in Tasmania could be divided into two sections, the problem of production, and the problem of marketing. He was not too sure how far the Government should assist the prospector. The increase of exports would put the industry on a better basis. He thought some method should be adopted whereby low grade ores could be treated. He endorsed the remarks of Mr. Shoobridge with regard to cheap power. He thought Advisory Board should be set up to deal with mining matters the same as there was a Board for fruit at the present time. He thought an Advisory Board should be established which would be able to attack the problems in a more scientific way.

Mr. F. Marriott M.H.A. stated that the question was "How the mining industry could be resuscitated in Tasmania",

and drew attention of the Government to how close primary production and mining were allied. He recommended that in future the Government should pay greater attention to the development and opening up of ways and means for the prospector. By-products really affected the mine managers themselves. He also recommended that the question of expenditure with regard to the Geological surveys be not considered too much. Geological work could not be carried out on the "penny wise pound foolish" basis. He also recommended to the Government when framing the estimates for the coming year, and while taking into consideration the other industries in the State, that greater attention should be paid to branches of the Geological scientific research work. Cheap power was one of the most essential factors in mining. Every effort should be made to provide for cheaper power and tracks should be opened up. Tasmania did not rely on her local investors but on the man of millions. The new Agent General will have an opportunity of informing them about the mineral resources of the State.

Mr. A. T. Marshall M.H.A. told the Minister that he had been urging to his predecessors the necessity for a conference, but they had put it off for some convenient season. The express idea to be kept before the conference was that the objective was to lay down something to provide for a deliberate and definite mining policy to be pursued over a term of years. The start should be made today. Mining legislation was in an unsatisfactory condition. He hoped the practical men would give advice as to the carrying out of the Aid to Mining Act. The Mines Department said they had to write off £12,000 bad debts under that Act, there would probably still be debts, but they should not be "bad debts". He thought the present Government's predecessors had themselves to blame for that. He had learned that under that Act, while there was a man of high repute to administer the Act, money had been provided but responsibility seemed to be cut off immediately. There was no check on the expenditure of the money. Once the money was granted apparently the Company could do anything with it. He was given to understand that the Administrator of that Act was never called in to advise the Government as to the bona fides of the claim, for which the money was asked. If they were going to do that they were going to lose money. He hoped they would have some suggestions as to the Aid to Mining Act which would be advantageous, and he would like to hear the advice of the practical men present on the cutting of tracks. Some of the tracks on which large sums of money had been expended were now overgrown and were neither good to God nor man. And the question of rewarding the prospector. What chance had a prospector? He got nothing out of it. He would like to hear what the practical men had to say as to the best method of systematically prospecting the country. If they were engaged by the Geological Surveys Department they would be given certain specific localities to prospect. He also thought an Advisory Committee should be appointed. He pointed out that conferences were held in connection with various other industries and that mining was just as valuable as other industries, and he thought a conference should be called every year.

Mr. C. Curtain urged the claims of the prospectors. At one time there were over 1000 men at Long Plains. Prospecting was like looking for a needle in a haystack. He knew of one man who had camped 200 yards from the Mount Lyell mine for several weeks without finding it. Every incentive should be given to prospecting. If the prospector could be paid a stipend, select his area, take his

party out, and find another Mount Lyell or Mount Bischoff, that prospect should belong to him. The old prospectors had to go into virgin country, and the money which they had produced had opened up the country. He thought that the prospectors' interests should be protected.

Mr. L. E. Chambers stated that something should be suggested that would offer a greater inducement to the prospector. Under Part 9 of the Mining Act provision was made for rewards to prospectors, but the provisions for the discoverer of a valuable deposit were very paltry, and did not offer any encouragement to them. He would like to see a small committee appointed by the conference to deal with the matter. He would also suggest the Geological plans be made available to mining men.

The Minister pointed out that under the Aid to Mining Act he had power to grant a sustenance allowance to prospectors if recommended by the Government Geologist, but there was a great difficulty in getting prospectors who would face the lack of communication.

The Hon. A. Lawson considered that the Gold Buyers Act, as far as his district was concerned, had been one of the biggest knocks the prospector had had. He thought the time was ripe when something should be done to allow these men to sell their small parcels of gold. With regard to tracks it was true that they had become overgrown, and in many instances they had been cut at the request of one or two persons.

Mr. Phil Kelly M.H.A. said that the mining industry had not had a fair deal from the Government in the past. He would liked to have seen the prospectors represented at the conference. The war had disorganised the mining industry, and he did not think that the Government should limit their assistance to mining. Dairying etc. had received assistance from the Government. The mining companies had always fought fairly, and much in the interests of mining lay to their credit. The Aid to Mining Act was mostly treated as a joke, although the officers had always been loyal. He referred to the treatment of low grade ores on the Zeehan field. There was half a million worth of low grade ore which could be treated on that field, and he thought the conference might suggest something on that point.

Mr. J. Hurst M.H.A. stated that a number of persons would have taken up leases held by companies if they had been able to get them but because they were being worked by tributors the right was not open to them. In other cases the men would not take tributes because of the excessive royalties demanded by companies. He moved that

"Tributor's labour should not be counted as
"part or whole compliance with the labour
"covenants of a mineral lease".

Mr. F. N. Stops pointed out that there was a great deal to be said in support of Mr. Hurst. It would leave the way open for companies to do dead work, and tributors could clear good profits by continuing. He did not support the motion, but on the other hand did not think there should be a hard and fast rule.

Mr. Lindesay Clark stated that in some instances the proposed change might operate harshly.

Mr. O. B. Williams stated that they must go very carefully into the matter. A company might work a lode

down to a certain point where it would not pay as a mining proposition, but might leave tributors to carry it on till a favourable development arose.

Mr. E. L. Hall thought that if a lessee had land worked the Crown got what it sought. He thought that Mr. Hurst meant that a wealthy company should not exact too much from the working men. It was of very great importance that the land should not lie idle. He thought that if the Crown were going to protect the working man they should do so to the full. He did not think that this work should affect the conditions under which the land was held.

Mr. J. McDonald pointed out that the companies could nearly always get exemptions from the labour covenants very easily where a lapse of idle time was necessary. It was because tributors held the land for lazy companies that the Zeehan field had gone back. He whole-heartedly supported the motion.

Mr. Williams considered that the motion should be amended to give discretion.

Mr. Curtain thought that it would cut both ways, and in the long run would exterminate tributing.

Mr. Joseph Miller thought that the question of tribute labour would interfere very much with the investment of mining in Tasmania, inasmuch as it would mean insecurity of title. English investors insisted on security of title.

Mr. Williams amended his motion by saying

"That the Minister be allowed a discretionary
"power in dealing with such matters"

Mr. Hurst stated he was willing to add the words

"for a longer period than three years
"after the cessation of operations"

Mr. Marshall thought it was a particularly inopportune time for the Act to be amended. Mr. Reid was now in England seeking the interest of capitalists, and the suggestion made may lead the English investors to think that an attack was being aimed at the security of tenure.

Mr. T. Shields M.L.C. thought that the discretionary power should rest on the Wardens of Mines rather than on the Minister. He felt inclined to agree with Mr. Marshall. One of the great difficulties of the mining industry today was attracting capital, and if they were going to attract capital they would need to make the tenure of the leases as secure as possible, and anything that created doubt would tend to keep capital away. He did not wish to see a period fixed and he did not wish to see the necessary discretion left to the Minister. In some instances it was difficult to at once comply with the labour covenants, as capital had to be raised, and he thought it would be well to give the Warden of Mines a discretion in dealing with matters relating to labour covenants.

Mr. Williams then altered his amendment to give the discretionary power to the Wardens of Mines.

Mr. E. Hobbs M.H.A. stated that one Warden in one district might take a different view to another one. It

would be placing too much power in the hands of the Warden. He thought it would be better to leave well alone for the time being. He knew there was a strong opinion that could be expressed from the miners' point of view.

Mr. Kelly stated that the Warden of Mines ought to be competent to judge the merits of a case after hearing the evidence.

Mr. Chambers thought Mr. Shields' suggestion was a good one as the Warden, under the law, was the person to be satisfied.

The amendment was then carried.

Mr. O. Hawkins moved

"That, in the opinion of this conference, it is desirable in the interests of mining development in this State that the Government should use its best endeavours to proceed expeditiously and thoroughly with the geological survey of Tasmania, concentrating for the present in those areas where the survey is most likely to be of assistance to prospectors in the opinion of the geologists".

Mr. O. Williams seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

Mr. J. Hurst moved

"That no further leases be granted on the osmiridium field".

He stated that there were three large leases which were blocking the diggers, on one of which no work had been done for six years. If those leases were withdrawn it would open the way for a hundred more miners.

Mr. McIntosh Reid stated he was very much interested in osmiridium. One of the leases Mr. Hurst had mentioned yielded £14,000 in a very short time, but he did not agree that further leases should be granted. In the nineteen Mile field and Savage River the osmiridium came from an area of about 200 acres, and the same applied to the Wilson River. As the osmiridium field was providing employment for the men who did not work on wages he would not like to see him shoved off the field.

The motion was then amended to read

"That no further leases be granted on any field until it is entirely abandoned by the diggers"

which was carried.

Mr. McDonald stated that some of the osmiridium seekers wanted to be able to register a claim under a miner's right. At present if a miner left his claim for more than 48 hours it was liable to forfeiture, and it took some of them that long to go to the nearest town for provisions.

He moved that

"the miners shall be entitled to register the block they hold under the miners right without survey".

The Minister pointed out that the holder of any claim such as those mentioned could protect their blocks by paying 2/6 registration fee and the survey fee of £4. 4. 0.

Mr. McDonald said the difficulty of identification of a claim could be got over by the prospector's peg, and in the case of a dispute the land could be surveyed.

Mr. Inspector Vandeau pointed out that Regulation 17 of the Mining Act provided for what Mr. McDonald was advocating. He thought the 48 hours should be extended - he thought they were most certainly entitled to it.

Mr. McDonald then moves that "the time be extended to seven days" which was seconded by Mr. Hurst, and carried.

Mr. McDonald stated that the Agent General thought a direct market could be found for the osmiridium as produced in Tasmania. He thought the Government should be in a position to handle the osmiridium. He did not think the present financial stringency should affect the marketing of the osmiridium. Osmiridium was a line on which the Government could give some backing. The conditions of sale under which the osmiridium was sold under the pool system did not give entirely satisfactory results, because of certain manipulation outside of the pool. The producers should get in direct touch with the purchasers, and he thought some new effort should be made in that direction.

The Secretary for Mines described the operations of the pool and related the history of its establishment and renewal, and explained the trouble that had occurred in the past owing to the miners breaking away from the pool.

Mr. Reid stated that the geological survey had been trying to market the osmiridium, and had written to the geological surveys of all producing countries in order to get an idea of the marketing methods of the other countries. He could not get anything from America. One of the reasons of the low prices received by osmiridium miners was the prevalence of agents and subagents engaged in buying it. They all got a good bit out of it. From what he could gather the price should not be less than £50 per ounce. He noticed that it had been stated in America that the price of imported metal did not go below £40 for last year. He thought the Agent General might do something in the matter.

Mr. Hurst stated the diggers had asked him to ask the Minister to cable the Agent General and find out the actual price wanted for the metal, and how they compared with the prices in America.

Mr. McDonald moved

"That it be a recommendation to the Government
"to communicate with the Agent General with a
"view to putting the producers of osmiridium
"in more direct touch with the buyers"

Mr. P. Kelly seconded the motion, and stated that the Agent General should be written to and see if he could establish a market. He hoped that the Mines Department would give immediate attention to the recommendation.

Mr. Marriott suggested that as the present Agent General would be returning to Tasmania shortly via America, and therefore he could make enquiries in America as well as

in England. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction and the miners had a suspicion that they were not getting what they were entitled to.

Mr. McDonald then amended his motion by adding the words "Britain and elsewhere", which was then carried.

Mr. F. N. Stops moved

"That in the opinion of this conference the "Gold Act should be repealed".

He stated that when the Tasmania mine was working there was a strong suspicion that gold was being stolen from that mine on a pretty extensive scale - then the Bill had been passed, but since it had done nothing to encourage gold mining and the conditions were different now. The Act imposed a great handicap on prospectors who could not dispose of their small parcels of gold except to licensed buyers, and then they had to give a lengthy description of where it came from. There was not a single licensed gold buyer on the West Coast. The Act was harmful to the prospectors. There had only been one prosecution for gold stealing since the Act had been in force and that had been conducted under the Police Act.

Mr. Hudson seconded the motion, and stated the only way the prospectors could get rid of the gold was to have jewellery made out of it.

Mr. Marriott observed that the reserve at the Commonwealth Bank was not as big as it might be, and before taking such a drastic measure as repealing the Bill, perhaps it would be better to approach the Commonwealth Bank with a view to their representatives being authorised to buy gold.

Mr. Curtain stated that the country storekeepers should be allowed to buy gold.

The motion was then carried.

Mr. L. M. Shoobridge emphasised the near relationship of agriculture and mining. Investors desiring to invest money in mining liked to have the facilities of inspecting the various fields. They could not do so on the West Coast. The West Coast was often called a province of Victoria, and the people there found it

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that state of affairs should exist. In order to improve the communication between the mineral areas on the West Coast and the rest of the State he moved that

"This Conference urges the Government to continue the construction of the road from "Queenstown to Lake St. Clair, and thence "to Hobart and Deloraine".

The construction would not offer serious engineering difficulties and would benefit both the West Coast and the rest of the State. The question had been in the past to provide the money, and it was to be regretted that the federal grant had not been applied to the road, the estimate for which was £70,000. The road would open up a considerable area and would be of great advantage to the mining industry.

Mr. W. E. Shoobridge seconded the motion and showed how a tract could be made via Tyenna where no serious heights would be encountered, and which would be fine country for prospecting.

Mr. McDonald thought the motion was out of the scope of the conference. The matter was a controversial one, and the conference was called to deal with the industry as it affected the State as a whole, and he thought the question should be left alone. He asked the Chairman's ruling as to whether the motion should be proceeded with.

The Chairman (Hon. A. Lawson) thought the motion referred to the development of the mining industry.

Mr. P. Kelly supported the motion as it would be of great advantage to prospectors, and offer more encouragement to them than in the past.

Mr. J. Cheek M.L.C. thought the construction of the road was rather a question of public policy than of mining. He did not think the matter should be discussed as it would involve a large expenditure of money. Although he appreciated the advantage that the road would be he did not think it would ever be reproductive. He thought the road should go by Mole creek.

After further discussion Mr. McDonald moved that "the business be gone on with".

Consideration was then given to the expenditure of £10 per acre per annum and £2 per acre per annum for mineral leases.

Mr. McDonald stated that gold holdings were infinitely smaller than other mineral holdings. He did not favour the charge of rents at all. He favoured the total abolition of rents and stated that instead of rents there should be a small royalty. He did not think the rent system was a fair and equitable way of getting a return. They had a royalty system with the forests. He desired to move

"That the system of lease rents be abolished
"and royalties be substituted in lieu thereof".

It was retarding the men in levying rents and the lease rents were an unjust charge. They should endeavour to avoid them and get a sounder policy.

Mr. Lindesay Clark thought the rent system was the correct one, and in the case of successful operators, they would pay income tax. He hoped things would be left as they were.

Mr. J. H. Levings viewed the motion from the speculator's standpoint. The returns were greater from mining than from any other industry. He did not think Mr. McDonald had been considering the leases in the aggregate. If royalties were substituted it would go against speculation.

Mr. W. E. Shoobridge stated that in the timber industry royalties had been successful. As the minerals were the property of the Crown the Government should get something out of it. He was not in sympathy with the speculator, and he thought minerals in the ground ought to bring some revenue to the Crown.

Mr. Owen Williams said that royalties would not prevent speculators from coming in, but would tend to

induce legitimate investors from putting capital into mining leases. He thought the matter should stand as it was.

The Minister stated that £12,194,560 at 1% brought £11,500, but they were actually getting £11,800, which really amounted to the same thing.

Mr. J. Thompson (A.W.U.) stated that prospectors were entitled to protection against wild-cat schemes. He thought it advisable that the Government should establish roads, food depots and establish a law to protect the prospectors from wild-cat schemes. He would like to see something done for prospecting and advocated the royalty system.

Mr. F. N. Stops thought that royalties would encourage the dummieing, to an enormous extent.

Mr. Kelly pointed out that the motion was not intended to affect the big companies but the prospector. They were asking the Government to give them some guarantee that they would be assisted in the event of their being successful. He was concerned with the development of the leases, and said that a man could comply with the labor covenants but yet not do all that he could. He would like to see the resolution carried. A greater measure of protection should be offered to those to whom we are indebted for the development of the mining industry.

Mr. McDonald, the mover of the motion, said he had submitted the motion in the interests of the present holders, and not wholly to afford protection to prospectors in the future. He did not want the existing leases interfered with. He wanted to relieve the man who was getting nothing at all. He was desirous of assisting the men who were on the wrong side of the ledger. There was no-one going into mining at the present time. The idea of getting some return in the way of royalties must appeal in fairness. A man should be allowed to try out a piece of land and afterwards it could be classed. The resolution would give those interested in the mining industry food for thought.

Mr. Shields wanted to know whether the motion covered the renewal of leases.

Mr. McDonald stated that it was really a matter of legislation. So far as he was concerned he favoured existing contracts being renewed. Those who have present holdings have the right of renewal under present contract.

Mr. Shields stated that of course Parliament could break the existing contracts.

The motion was then carried.

Inspector Williams (Queenstown) stated that he would like to see a sub-committee appointed. He would like to refer to the matter of resuscitation of mining and to make reference to the motion of Mr. Hawkins and the suggestion of Mr. Chambers with respect to the necessity of amending a certain portion of the Act to be of some inducement to prospectors. What they required were new discoveries. To assist new discoveries they must have prospectors. The prospector, prospecting party or syndicate doing such work should be encouraged. One inducement was that the Department had a certain amount of money placed aside whereby prospectors could be assisted to the extent of £2 per week. With the object of being of some benefit to mining he sug-

gested that the inducement of £2 per week be extended to prospecting syndicates or parties who were prepared to combine and do prospecting. He referred to Section 185 of the Mining Act which offered the inducement of reward areas, and Section 186 of the Principal Act stated that persons discovering new mineral fields may receive rewards ranging from £500 to £10,000 but one of the conditions was that the number of persons affected be limited to 500. He would suggest that the minimum of the reward be increased to £1000 and the number of persons be reduced to 300. He also suggested that the inducements to prospectors should be advertised in the newspapers. He would also suggest that Section 192 of the Act be reviewed. They had an Advisory Board comprising a certain number of persons and he would like to see that number added to, and would therefore move

"That the number constituting the mining
"advisory council be increased, that they
"meet at regular periods, that they deliberate
"exhaustively upon all matters connected with
"the mining industry, not only on the explora-
"tion of base metal deposits, but upon all
"substances allied with the mining industry,
"that full publication be given to their
"transactions, and that no effort be spared
"to widely advertise all favourable conclu-
"sions upon possibilities and prospects as
"affecting the mining industry".

Mr. Selby Wilson thought there should be a Mining Advisory Board under the Mining Act apart from the State Development Advisory Board. He thought the present Board should be extended. The personnel of the present mining branch of the board consisted of Messrs. H. W. Gepp, M. Kennedy and himself.

Mr. Owen Williams seconded the motion, which was then carried.

Mr. Inspector Williams then moved in connection with prospecting

"That after the word 'prospectors' in section
"9, subsection (2), of the Aid to Mining Act
"1921, the words 'and prospecting syndicates'
"be added.

Mr. Lindesay Clark stated that prospecting syndicates had already availed themselves of the sustenance amount.

Mr. Hudson did not think that the Act allowed the syndicate to be assisted with the sustenance amount.

Mr. Reid stated that he knew Tasmania from two points of view - its geography and geology. He knew what the conditions were in the bush because he had been through the game himself. He thought that the main set back to prospecting was lack of communication. There were no means of getting provisions. The osmiridium diggers had to pay 3d. per lb. for packing. He thought the idea of constructing tracks was an absurdity because they would soon be overgrown. He favoured the construction of roads. Prospectors would then take advantage of the sustenance allowance if the opportunity of getting to inaccessible parts was made available.

Mr. Curtain stated that he knew of a number of men who would go out prospecting. He knew of four parties

who would go out for £2, but who wished to go out on their own and hold what they found.

Inspector Williams stated that if a prospecting syndicate was formed and they knew the Government was out to assist them they would be out to assist the Government.

The Minister said he did not see any need for the motion as they were already allowed £2 per week.

Mr. F. N. Stopps moved as an amendment

"That a sub committee of the conference be
"appointed to go into the question of
"encouraging prospecting, including rewards
"for the discovery of minerals, and report
"thereon to the Minister.

Mr. Curtain seconded the amendment.

Mr. Hudson stated there were only three applications received last year. They did not get where they were required on account of there being no roads.

Mr. Shields said he supported Mr. William's suggestion.

Mr. Levings stated that what they were asking for had been carried out for years. He knew a party that had been sent by steamer to the Pieman and had been out for two years with State assistance. They were paid \$5 a month. The discovery would belong to the prospector. It did not do to pay the men too high, as they would then probably sit in their camps and draw the salary. He could any amount of prospectors.

Mr. Kelly said that he was very surprised to see the attitude that the Mines Department took up towards prospecting. There was a great difficulty in securing good men. The allowances under the Aid to Mining Act were inadequate.

Mr. Cheek thought the matter should be dealt with in open conference and opposed the idea of a sub committee being formed. He thought Mr. Williams' suggestion was a very good one. He hoped the matter would be decided in open conference.

Mr. Hurst pointed out that the allowance of £2 per week limited the prospectors to single men, as married men with families could not live on that amount.

Capt. Marriott thought that in the event of some valuable discoveries being made the Government should receive some rebate for the advances that they had made. That would prevent wildcat schemes.

The amendment was then withdrawn by Mr. Stopps and the motion was carried.

Mr. Inspector Williams then moved

"That Section 186 of the Principal Act be
"amended so as to reduce the number of
"persons mentioned therein to 300 and
"increase the minimum reward to £1000."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Owen Williams who

thought it was a good idea.

The Minister stated that the assistance had never been granted.

Mr. J. Thompson thought the Act should apply to old abandoned fields as well as new discoveries.

The motion was then carried.

Mr. W. H. Reece moved

"That it be a recommendation to this
"conference that State mills for the
"treating of minerals be established
"in mineral areas that offer prospects
"for the employment of small syndicates
"or other co-operative bodies"

and pointed out that it would be the means of employing a great number of men. He recognised that if the Government established the mills they would have to go very carefully. They trusted to the Ministers in power dealing with these matters to see the Government was not taken down. The thing would be done on a legitimate basis. They should have state mills to develop the mining fields.

Mr. McDonald seconded the motion. He said they were not asking the Government to build mills here and there on the off-chance of a mine being found. The Victorian Government had acted on the lines of the motion and had established one of the best batteries available, and they were now making tests with same, which proved very satisfactory. In Tasmania there were many abandoned shows. There was a good battery at Lynchwood, and he thought the owner should be sought out. It would be better for the Government to take it over than to let it rust. He thought the motion should be carried.

Mr. Hudson said he was in Western Australia when the scheme was put into operation there, but it proved to be very costly. He thought that instead of state batteries the state should assist persons to place their own mills on their properties. The cost to the producer was very high.

Mr. Hurst stated he had had some experience in Western Australia as well, and he was prepared to endorse Mr. Hudson's remarks. If it were not for one battery there two or three shows would not now be working. A caretaker was placed there, and the miners supplied the labour.

Mr. McIntosh Reid had also had experience in Western Australia, and stated that the batteries were very helpful to mining. They were used by the Government in the Transvaal. A district would have to be thoroughly investigated and approved before a State battery could be recommended.

Mr. C. W. Grant M.H.A. raised the financial side of the question. The experience of Tasmania in regard to the mine at Beaconsfield and Zeehan did not make one hopeful of the financial result if it was run by the Government. He largely agreed with Mr. Hudson's remarks, and favoured the lending of money for the miners to start their own mills.

Mr. Owen Williams supported Mr. Hudson. If the Government were going to spend money they should help prospecting and conduct a geological survey. He thought the

financial side of the question should be gone into.

Mr. A. W. Hutchin stated they did not have any figures of cost before them at all. It would do to have a little more information on the subject.

The Minister thought the matter should be referred to the mining sub-committee for their investigation.

Mr. Levings stated that when aid for developmental work was received from the Government the Government required a Bill of Sale over the property, and that deterred the men.

Mr. C. Culley M.H.A. said he was rather inclined to favour Mr. Reece's motion. He thought consideration should be given to the establishment of state batteries. He had a very high opinion of the Lefroy field, but he did not think it had been prospected thoroughly. Men had gone away for a couple of years to earn some money to return and resume. He thought a battery should be provided on the Lefroy field. There was something payable there he was sure if only the men were given the opportunity. He hoped the motion would be carried.

Mr. Marriott supported the suggestion that it should be referred to the Advisory Committee. If a state battery were established the Government would have requests to set up state creameries etc. He did not think the Government would be justified in considering the expenditure.

Hon. F.B. Edwards thought that if the motion moved went to Parliament as a recommendation of the conference they should not consider the financial aspect of the matter. He favoured referring it to the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Marriott moved as an amendment

"That the matter be referred to the mining
"section of the Advisory Board".

Mr. Becker seconded the amendment, and stated that in the past he had been a strong advocate for the establishment of batteries. He thought there should be one in the Gladstone district. An enquiry should be made into the matter and report made to the Government. He thought the mining industry should be revived. The earmarking of all revenue derived from the mining industry would help in that direction. He would like to hear the views of the mining men on the question of earmarking the revenue derived from mining for the purposes of assisting the prospectors. He would support the amendment moved by Capt. Marriott.

The amendment was then carried.

Mr. L. E. Chambers referred to Sections 186 and 192 of the Mining Act. Section 192 dealt with the reward to a bona fide prospector for the discovery of a new deposit, and which was limited to £100. He thought the amount was too small and moved

"That the maximum reward for a valuable
"mineral deposit shall not exceed £500".

Mr. Vandean seconded the motion.

The motion was carried.

Mr. Chambers stated under Section 87 of the Mining Act a lessee was entitled to renew his lease under certain conditions, by applying within three months of the expiration of his lease or one month after, to renew his lease, and Section 133 gave any holder of an easement a similar privilege. In order to encourage the honest and deserving investors and to give something approaching security of tenure to people on the other side of the world he moved that the abovementioned section be amended in the following direction

"That in the event of the leasees or
"licencees having failed within one
"month after the expiration of their
"original leases to have applied for
"renewals they shall be deemed to have
"done so".

Mr. J. C. MacMichael seconded the motion.

Mr. McDonald appreciated the intention of the mover, but it did not seem to meet the requirements. He thought the period should be six or twelve months.

The Minister suggested that the question might be left over for more mature deliberation.

After discussion Mr. Chambers moved as an amendment

"That Conference affirms the desirability
"of amending two sections of the Act to
"provide that in a case of hardship the
"Minister may extend the time within which
"the application should be made and in the
"meantime the individual does not lose his
"right or another company take priority.

The motion was carried.

Inspector Williams moved

"That every publicity be given to prospecting
"by notices in newspapers etc.

The motion was carried.

Inspector Hudson moved

"That this Conference recommends to the
"Government the advisability of constructing
"roads and tracks in areas recommended by
"the geological survey, with a view to
"opening up and prospecting country".

and stated that the construction would allow the men to get into unknown country and would also allow the geological survey officers to get into a large amount of country. He thought £2000 a year spent in that direction would be a good thing.

Mr. McIntosh Reid seconded the motion. He thought that subsidiary tracks were absolutely essential. He stated that the work carried on some two years ago was laid out with the idea that the tracks would ultimately become permanent ways. Mr. Hudson thought as well that tracks should be laid out with some definite design and which would serve the district to the best advantage.

The motion was then carried.

Mr. W. E. Shoobridge moved

"That as cheap power is an important
"factor in mining this conference requests
"the Government to consider the passing of
"a Water Act, and appoint a commission to
"administer it, so that our water supplies
"may be put to the fullest use for all
"purposes, and so lessen the cost"

and stated that the supplies were so great that they could go in for big conservations cheaply. There would be a great saving of labour.

Hon. F. B. Edwards seconded the motion.

The motion was carried.

Mr. Selby Wilson had a motion which had an important bearing on mining and that was the security of tenure in regard to forfeiture, and moved

"That it be a recommendation to this
"conference that the Mining Act 1917
"be amended so as to give greater
"security of tenure than obtains at
"present, that such amendment be framed
"to repeal the provisions of the Act in
"respect of application for forfeiture of
"mining leases by any person, leaving the
"onus of proving non-compliance of the
"covenants and the cancelling of a lease
"with the Crown, but giving the lessee
"the right of appealing to the Supreme
"Court against such decision by the
"Crown".

Mr. Becker seconded the motion and stated that they had touched on a matter to which he had given a lot of thought. If it was laid down by law that a man who leased land and had to comply with labor covenants the Crown should see that he did so. Without the provision it was possible for a man to hold a section for a number of years and do nothing unless somebody wanted it. He thought it perfectly right that a man who makes application should have priority in securing it. The person securing the land should give a guarantee that he is going to comply with the conditions. He thought the legislation should be amended in that direction.

Mr. Stops said the question was of great importance. The question was whether the motion would improve matters. There was no reason for a lease to be forfeited if the lessee had a fair reason for not complying with the lease. Personally he had never refused an application for exemption if the lessee had any reasonable excuse. His objection to the motion was that it would throw the door open to political influence, and the Ministers would not like that. As the law stood now he thought there was ample security of tenure. If an application for forfeiture was successful and obtained a lease of a property he had to enter into a bond for a year. He thought Conference should consider the matter very carefully before recommending any change in the existing law.

Capt. Marriott thought that the bona fide leaseholder was amply protected at the present time. He understood that the bona fide leaseholder had ample

security of tenure as the law stood at present and it would be out of place to juggle with it.

Mr. Chambers stated that the mover had not supported his motion with facts. The legislation had operated successfully for a number of years. The conference knew that the applications had to be dealt with by the Warden of Mines in open court, on notice to the lessee etc. They could not ask a Judge of the Supreme Court to decide on a question of fact, as he would submit the question to someone else for report to him on the matter. The cost would also be much greater. The Wardens deal with the applications in a summary way and make their recommendations to the Mining Board. He did not favour the proposed change.

Mr. P. Kelly realised the effect the resolution would have. He thought the trouble lay with the Mines Department in being too lax in not forcing them to comply with the covenants. He did not think it was the function of the Mining Board to see that the covenants were complied with. It was pretty dangerous ground to tread on. The Minister should see that the promises that were made were kept. He thought the fault lay with the Mines Department.

The motion was lost.

Mr. Chambers moved

"That in lieu of the existing provision in
"the Mining Act that a lessee shall enter
"into a recognisance for the fulfilment of
"the conditions of the lease for a period
"of twelve months, the period be three
"years".

Mr. Stops seconded the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. Owen Williams moved

"That it is a recommendation of this
"conference that a clause be inserted
"in the Regulations under the Mines and
"Works Regulations Act 1915 to the effect
"that all Mine Managers managing mines
"employing more than twenty men should
"hold a Mine Manager's Certificate granted
"by this State or any other State, or by
"another country whose certificate is
"recognised."

In the first instance, Mr. Williams stated, it would raise the status of the industry in Tasmania, and would in some respects safeguard the company in that the man who held the Government certificate would have a good knowledge of the business. It would be a safeguard to the public, and consequently a safety to the men he has under his charge.

The Minister pointed out that the motion was law in the other states. The purport of the motion was contained in a Bill submitted by Sir Elliott Lewis but was defeated.

Mr. Levings seconded the motion which he thought

would not inflict hardship if put into operation right away. The Queenstown School of Mines had cost the State thousands of pounds, and the men it had trained had eventually gone out of the State.

Mr. Reece moved as an amendment

"That the figures "20" be deleted and that "the words "all mining managers" be substituted, and also that it include underground managers and underground foremen "or any other person in charge of men".

If they were going to do anything to protect the men they should "go the whole hog". He said it was not right for some man who had charge of men without some guarantee that their lives would be protected.

Mr. McDonald seconded the amendment. He thought the motion did not go far enough. In big mines direct supervision fell on men and not on the mine managers. There was one portion of the amendment he did not quite agree with, and that was that every mine manager should have a certificate, as there were some small shows with comparatively few men employed and who would be safe under the charge of experienced miners. It was essential from a national point of view that the lives of the men and their health should be amply protected.

Mr. Inspector Hudson thought that it would be best for Mr. Williams to amend his motion by making the existing legislation regarding the provision of a certificated manager for a coal mine applicable to all mines. They had to look after the small mines.

Mr. W. T. Corby wanted to know whether the act gave a guarantee that the foreman was a competent man.

Mr. Levings stated that the responsibility was still with the manager.

Mr. Corby stated he knew of incompetent men being given dangerous work. He wanted a guarantee that the man who is responsible is capable. The amendment did not provide for that.

Mr. Reece stated that the amendment provided for underground managers, foremen, and all men in charge of mines.

Mr. Owen Williams stated that in some respects he was in favour of Mr. Reece's argument. The difficulty might be got over by grade certificates. He pointed out that many competent mining men could not pass a written examination - they could not express themselves on paper.

Mr. J. B. Scott suggested a service certificate.

Mr. Inspector Vandeau also stated that some of the most competent of men could not pass a written examination, but pass an oral one.

Mr. Williams amended his motion to delete the word "twenty" and leave the issuing of a permit to the discretion of the Inspector of Mines or the Minister.

The motion as altered was carried.

Mr. J. B. Scott moved that

"The Minister have the power to grant to
"the holder of a prospector's licence a
"permit to sell any ore obtained in
"developing the ore-body on the prospect-
"ing claim."

as the holders of prospectors' licences at the present time could not sell ore.

Mr. Curtain seconded the motion which was carried.

Mr. P. B. Nye moved

"That the companies at present engaged in
"the mining and treatment of metallic and
"non-metallic minerals be urged to produce,
"whenever economically possible, every
"marketable product contained in, and also
"any by-products obtainable from the raw
"material".

Mr. Reid seconded the motion and stated that many of the largest ore bodies would not pay for the production of one element. The by-products from the mines were most important. The Renison Bell was closed because the tin contents were too low.

The motion was carried.

Mr. F. N. Stops thought the area of the prospecting claims should be increased. At present the areas were 20 acres for gold, 100 acres for coal and shale, and 40 acres for other minerals. He thought the area might be extended, but not far enough to encourage dummyming. He desired to move

"That Regulation 3 under "The Mining Act 1917"
"be amended to increase the area of prospecting
"claims to 40 acres for gold, minerals or coal
"if within five miles of a mine working and in
"other cases to 100 acres for gold or minerals
"and 160 acres for coal, shale, slate, free-
"stone or limestone, for a limited period".

Mr. Inspector Vandean seconded the motion.

Mr. McDonald stated that he did not see any reason why the area should be extended, and if each prospector was allowed to take up 100 acres there would not be enough country if a number of prospectors were in a certain area. The law as it stood, he thought, met the requirements.

The motion was then carried.

Mr. P. B. Nye moved

"That the advantages of using Tasmanian coal
"in the pulverised form be brought before the
"coal-using industries and that the Railway
"Department be urged to test the pulverised
"coal on one of their locomotives".

Mr. Reid seconded the motion. The coal on the East Coast was non-explosive, which made it particularly good for use in pulverised form. If the Tasmanian locomotives had used such coal there would have been no necessity for the ash handling plant. In Victoria the chief commissioner had converted one of the locomotives into burner of powdered coal, and the result was very satisfactory.

Mr. W. E. Shoobridge stated he had seen pulverised coal at work on locomotives. There was no doubt that there was considerable saving, and he had every confidence in recommending it as a great saving.

The motion was carried.

Mr. McDonald moved

"That in the opinion of this conference the Mining Act should be amended to reinstate the provisions permitting prospectors or others to operate on the surface of land held by other lessees provided such operation shall not be to deal with mineral or metal for which such lease is held, and provided also that such operation shall not interfere with any working of the lessee".

Mr. Chambers stated that what Mr. McDonald required was already law under Part 81 of the Act, which provided that authority could be given under the provisions of the above Part to mine or to enter upon under permit and prospect private land. Private land meant any land not being Crown Land.

The Minister then promised that he would go into the matter with Mr. Chambers, and under that assurance the motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Owen Williams stated that it was hard to get hold of the Regulations, published at the time, under the Inspection of Machinery Act. He thought a new Act and its amendments should be published.

The Minister stated that they could be obtained at a small cost on application to the Secretary for Mines.

Mr. Phil Kelly moved

"That in the opinion of this conference it would be in the interests of the mining industry that a Director of Geological Survey should be appointed"

and stated that until recently there had been a Director in Tasmania. There had been three or four Ministers of Mines within a few months. He thought there should be someone to fill the place vacated by Dr. Loftus Hills. It was absolutely necessary to have a practical man at the head of affairs.

Mr. Culley seconded the motion.

Mr. Nye asked whether Mr. Kelly meant that another member of the staff was needed, with Mr. Reid at the head.

Mr. O. W. Hawkins stated that his previous motion, he thought, covered the matter.

The Minister promised to look into the matter and confer with his officers thereon.

Mr. J. H. Levings drew attention to letter in the Examiner of that date (5/6/24) relating to the shortage of engine drivers.

The Minister read the letter to the conference.

Mr. Corby stated that there was no scarcity of engine drivers in the industry. He would say that definitely. Winding drivers would not work on the West Coast because of insufficient monetary inducement. A few winding drivers had left the State for the mainland. They could get 5 or 10/- more at Newcastle. If, as stated, there was a scarcity the responsibility was on the mine managers, who were not making honest efforts to train more men. They could not expect the association to train them. The regulations governing electricity provided that a man must have training to drive an electric winding engine. A steam driver might not be able to handle an electric plant. The managers should give more inducement if they wanted the men. The men had a right to act as individuals, and could say they would not drive winding engines at the wages offering. He had tried to get the men to take the jobs by saying it would be alright in the future, but they would not. One man stated that he would get better pay at the gas works.

Mr. Hutchins supported Mr. Corby's remarks and stated in the last two or three years he had seen 50 engine drivers in town.

Mr. Levings stated that Mr. Corby was not right in saying that the mine managers did not encourage the men. They were using electric drivers but the chief inspector of Machinery was unable to get him an electrical man to take over an electric winch.

Mr. Corby stated that a steam winding engineer at present was a competent electrical man as well, because he must have a knowledge of electrical engines. He would not agree to any amendment in that direction, because the risk to the mens lives was too great.

Mr. Reece moved

"That this conference recommends that
"the Mining Act appertaining to water
"rights be amended to prevent any person
"or persons holding water rights for
"the purpose of selling water"

and stated that it had been done to the detriment of mining.

The Minister undertook to look into the matter.

Mr. Chambers referred to the Geological Survey making plans available to the mining men, but said he thought it would be expensive. As the work of the geologists was valuable the plans should be made accessible.

The Minister undertook to look into the matter.

Mr. Curtain stated that a bulletin used to be issued every three months.

In closing the MINISTER FOR MINES thanked the delegates, and particularly the mine managers, and the representatives of the employees, for having attended at considerable inconvenience and expense to themselves, and for having given the conference the best information and advice possible. They had discussed the various matters amicably, and had attempted to place valuable information before the members of both Houses of Parliament. They had all learned a great deal in the last two days and were going away wiser than when they came. As to the expenses he had been in a position to do nothing beyond defraying their travelling expenses. Some great suggestions had been brought forward, they would not be pigeon-holed but considered by the Advisory Committee of the Board, and if possible legislation would follow. He hoped that another gathering such as this would be convened next year. Mr. Clark thanked the Minister for the latitude which he had shown to the delegates, and the conference then dispersed.