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PERTH : TUESDAY, JANUARY 12.

[1937.

ROYAL COMMISSION

WESTERN AUSTRALIA, } By His Excellency Sir James Mitchell,
TO WIT. } K.C.M.G., Lieutenant-Governor in and
JAMES MITCHELL, } over the State of Western Australia
Lieutenant-Governor. } and its Dependencies in the Common-
[L.S.] } wealth of Australia.

To Percy Lloyd Hart, of Inns of Court, Brisbane,
Barrister-at-Law:

I, THE said Lieutenant-Governor, acting with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, do hereby appoint you, Percy Lloyd Hart, to be a Commissioner to inquire into the following charges of bribery and corruption made by Mr. Thomas John Hughes in a speech on the Address-in-Reply in the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia on the 27th day of August, 1936, in relation to the following matters:—

1. *With regard to the present Premier (Hon. J. C. Willcock).*

(a) That he perpetrated the Yellowdine mining frauds, one of the worst instances of fraudulent practice in the mining history of this State.

(b) As Minister for Justice stopped Crosthwaite's trial because he was a wealthy squatter. This is the man who puts justice on the auction block for sale.

(c) The shareholders of the "Westralian Worker" were defrauded of a controlling ownership by an organization of five men, of which the present Premier is the leader.

(d) The Labour Efforts Association got registration only because the present Premier was prepared to violate the traditions of the Minister for Justice and grant an improper certificate. The "Worker" belongs to five men who obtained ownership by fraud.

2. *With regard to the "West Australian" Newspaper.*

(a) The reason why the public life of this State has deteriorated is because the Government have been the puppets of the "West Australian" newspaper, and all criticism of the Government is severely stifled in this leading capitalistic newspaper.

(b) The price of the "West Australian" newspaper was the abandonment by the Government of all the principles for which they ever stood. The shifting of the incidence of taxation from the shoulders of those in the upper-middle class and the higher class on to the backs of the workers and the lower-middle class is the price paid for the support of the "West Australian" newspaper.

3. *With regard to the Hon. E. H. Gray, M.L.C.*

Mr. Gray went to the Trades Hall at Perth, and he and his colleague took, unlawfully, £721 out of the funds of the industrial unionists of this State to pay for Mr. Gray's legal transgressions. Never was money used more fraudulently. There was a plain misappropriation of funds. That sum of £721, the property of Western Australian unionists, was misappropriated by Mr. Gray and his colleagues.

4. *With regard to Hon. A. McCallum (present Chairman of the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank).*

(a) He had the Premier of the State in an unfortunate position, in which he could blackmail the Premier into doing anything he wanted. The Premier was in the unfortunate position that he had to leave the State, and when he returned the gun was put at his head by our noble Alec McCallum. He was not game to wait and stand the chance of having his seat declared vacant, but he forced the Premier to take certain action because he had the Premier, who had been his colleague for years, at his mercy; so he demanded from the Premier the job, for which he has absolutely no qualifications at all, at £2,000 a year.

(b) (With reference to a picture show and to a hotel at Nedlands)—

But the Minister for Lands, the member for Mt. Magnet, held out on them, not wanting to let them have either the picture show or the hotel. He would not pass the necessary regulation. He held them up for four months before he would let the regulation go. Then something extraordinary happened . . . The then Premier suddenly transferred from the Minister for Lands to Mr. McCallum, who was then Minister for Works, the portfolio governing town planning; and three days before Mr. McCallum retired from public life he reversed the decision of the Minister for Lands and granted leave for the pub and the picture show.

5. *With regard to the Licensing Court.*

(a) This State of Western Australia is a paradise for gangsters and grafters. We have a licensing law. We have three men administering the Licensing Act. There had been seven or eight petitions for a pub. It is an extraordinary thing how licenses are granted by the Licensing Bench. Seven, I think, applications were made for a license in Mt. Lawley. Each petition had the required number of signatures. The blocks of land appeared to be more or less the same. All the appli-

cations were rejected, till suddenly Senator E. B. Johnston comes along, makes an application, and it is granted without any trouble.

(b) There was an hotel at Nedlands. There was trouble about the license. It was desired to have a picture show at Nedlands. A friend of the head of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. Alex. McCallum, wanted to run pictures; but the Town Planning Commission would not give him permission to make the area a business area. Then along comes another gentleman, who wants a hotel. He selected a block of land, to all intents and purposes equivalent to the one on which the hotel was afterwards built. He applied for the license, but in came Senator Johnston again for a license on the opposite corner. Last in was first home; the Senator got the license.

(c) The Licensing Bench to-day is apparently the monopoly of one or two men, and the sooner we abolish the Licensing Bench the better for the honour of Western Australia.

(d) The members of the Licensing Bench are in a terrible position. They are appointed for three years; and they know that if they do not do as they are told, out they go at the end of the three years.

6. *With regard to Starting-price Betting.*

(a) Before the last election the starting-price book-makers were promised immunity and sympathetic consideration, if they subscribed to the party funds of the Government.

(b) Between them they put up £350.

(c) That money was given to the representative of the Government on behalf of their funds.

7. *With regard to Mining Reservations.*

(a) The present Government have handed over the mining areas to Mr. de Bernales.

(b) To-day de Bernales is virtually Minister for Mines. He has a reservation of all the gold-bearing and good greenstone gold-bearing country in this State.

(c) When the Minister (referring to Hon. S. W. Munsie) went to London he was merely the smoke-screen for de Bernales.

In connection with the foregoing enumerated heads of inquiry you shall not be limited to the actual allegations hereinbefore quoted under those heads, but you may also take for the purpose of the inquiry any other statements relevant to those heads made by Mr. Hughes in his speech on the 27th August, 1936.

And I declare that you shall, by virtue of this Commission, be a Royal Commission within "The Royal Commissioners' Powers Act, 1902," as reprinted in the Appendix to the Sessional Volume of Statutes for the year 1928, and that you shall have the powers of a Royal Commission or the Chairman thereof under that Act.

And I hereby request you, as soon as reasonably may be, to report to me in writing the result of this your Commission.

Given under my hand and the Public Seal of the said State, at Perth, this 24th day of December, 1936.

By His Excellency's Command,

(Sgd.) J. WILLCOCK,
Premier.

GOD SAVE THE KING !!!