

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST 1896

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST, 1896.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS.

The PREMIER: I ask the leave of the House to make a motion without notice, the case being somewhat urgent, and affecting the House. The 330th Standing Order prevents the Clerk of the House, who has the custody of all its journals and records, from taking any of such journals, records, or documents away from the offices of the House without the express leave or order of the House. I understand that the Clerk of the House has received notice that he will be subpoenaed to attend before the Elections Tribunal, probably to-morrow, and, in order that the Tribunal may be in a position to proceed with its business, I beg to move as follows:—

That the Clerk have leave to attend before the Elections Tribunal and produce the writ of election certifying to the return of Mr. D. T. Keogh as member for the electoral district of Rosewood, and any other of the records of the House which the Tribunal may require.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion be put without notice?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

ACTION OF ELECTORAL REGISTRAR,
LONGREACH.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. FITZGERALD: In accordance with notice I rise to move the adjournment of the House.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received the following notice:—

“I beg to give notice that I intend to move the adjournment of the House to-day, Wednesday, 5th August, to call attention to a matter of definite urgent public importance—namely, the action of the electoral registrar at Longreach, and of certain justices, in refusing, when applied to, to receive declarations of persons claiming to be placed on the electoral roll or to attest the same or to sign the certificate required by the provisions of the Elections Acts, 1885-1892.”

I may mention that I received this notice in my room. I wish to notify that in future I shall receive these notices only when I take the chair. I ask hon. members to deliver them to me then.

The required number of hon. members having risen in their places in support of the adjournment—

Mr. FITZGERALD: In moving the adjournment of the House I hope hon. members will pardon me for taking them away from the ordinary business of the day to draw attention to a question which I think they will agree with me is a matter of public importance. Every matter connected with our electoral laws and the claims of citizens to be placed on the electoral rolls must be a matter of public importance. The general fact on which I wish to base my motion is this: Complaint has been made to me that a person named John Alexander Macfarlane made an application to the electoral registrar at Longreach to witness his signature and declaration of claim to be entitled to be placed on the

roll for the electoral district of Mitchell. He also applied to him to fill in the usual certificate required by the Act, and he refused to do so for the reason that he had not known this man personally for the last preceding six months. He was not personally aware of his qualification. I have here the claim which was made by Macfarlane. [The hon. member here read the claim, which set forth that the age of the applicant was twenty-three years; occupation, shearer; residence, railway yards, Eagle street, town of Longreach, Mitchell district; qualification, residence for the last preceding six months at the above place of abode; British subject; not registered in respect of the qualification of residence for any other electoral district.] From that claim it will very easily be seen that the applicant has not changed his abode for the past six months. This incident in itself might not be sufficient to make me claim the indulgence of the House, but I have known of similar instances in Longreach time after time when the same excuse was made by the registrar and by justices; and before I left Longreach I mentioned the matter to the electoral registrar, and pointed out to him section 6 of the Act. After that complaint came into my hands I received another complaint in reference to a justice of the peace in that district, and since then I have heard of other complaints from other districts. The justice of the peace that I speak of actually gave as his reason for not signing the claim forms that he had received a written circular from a man named Bulcock advising him not to do so. We have heard of this man Bulcock before. I presume that this circular was also received by the registrars, and presumably by the justices of the colony also. I would like to know from hon. members whether they think it right that any private person should interfere like this with the registrars and justices of the colony; not only advise them about the law but actually quote bad and wrong law to them. Of course we have heard of this man Bulcock as secretary of an association of which the Premier happens to be president, but I am certain that the Premier does not know of the hanky-panky and the unscrupulous work done by this association.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the question that he has given notice of—namely, the action of the electoral registrar at Longreach and certain justices.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I am sorry if I have gone away from the subject, but I was referring to the reason given by one of the justices, and that was the action of this man Bulcock. I was simply bringing it fairly before the House as a matter that requires discussion. With reference to the action of the registrar at Longreach, I must say straightforwardly that I do not think there is a more competent or honest registrar or police magistrate in the colony than Mr. Grant, and that is what makes me feel surprised at his action in this matter. There must be some instructions given to him by someone, and it is because I feel that the justices must be influenced by some secret influence that I bring the matter forward. With reference to the law I think it is very plain.

The PREMIER: Never mind the law.

Mr. FITZGERALD:

"The justice or any other person attesting the claim shall, if he is not personally acquainted with the facts, satisfy himself, by inquiry from the claimant or otherwise, that the answers to the questions are true, and shall sign at the foot of the claim a certificate in the following form or to the like effect, that is to say—

"I hereby certify that the abovenamed A.B. has satisfied me, after full inquiry, that he possesses the qualification above stated."

That plainly shows that the Act did not contemplate the necessity for every justice of the peace being personally acquainted with every applicant for six months, and I think the Home Secretary will agree with me. There have been many complaints, not only against justices of the peace but also against electoral registrars, for not doing their duty. If a person comes before a justice of the peace with an affidavit, or goes to give evidence in the witness-box, his oath or declaration is sufficient, and it is provided that if anybody makes a false oath or declaration he will be liable for perjury, and the Elections Act also provides a punishment of two or three years' imprisonment for perjury. Besides that, the electoral registrar has to advertise these claims which come up before the court, and a list is stuck up on the court-house door and in other public places. Any time during the next three months anybody can object, and the registrar himself can object, so that when a man like this who is well known, and whose father is a high official in the Railway Department, comes before the registrar and puts in a claim, the registrar has no right to refuse to witness his signature. There are two things the registrar has to do under the Act. He has to witness the signature of the claimant, and if he is satisfied he signs the certificate; but this registrar actually refused to take the declaration. If the former registrar was not satisfied, and there was any doubt, he took the declaration and made inquiries afterwards; and if this registrar would do that it would be something. The penalties imposed upon a declarant for making a false declaration under the Act are quite sufficient to entitle the registrar to say, "Very well, I will take your declaration." I know there is a clause in the Act which says that the justice must be satisfied, but that applies to cases where a man comes to a justice of the peace and makes a declaration, and the justice sees in it something which from his own knowledge he doubts to be true. There may be some reason in such cases for not signing the certificate, but to tell a man that he will not sign the certificate because he has not known him personally for six months is against this clause of the Act, which says that if he is not satisfied he must make inquiries from the applicant himself or elsewhere. I do not think the Home Secretary or any other member of the Ministry will question this matter. There must be some secret influence at work when an intelligent and capable man like the registrar acts like this. He must have had instructions from somewhere. Under these circumstances, it is only right that I should bring the matter before this House, and I hope the few words I have said will bring it strongly before the attention of the Home Secretary, who has charge of these things, and prevent such cases occurring in future. It is very difficult to get on the rolls of the colony; the object of the Act seems to be to keep people off, more than to put them on. There are quite difficulties enough without registrars and justices of the peace, and other people we do not know anything about, putting their spoke in. I move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER: There is no justification for this waste of the time of the House—

Mr. DUNSFORD: You have a vote evidently; every man has not.

The PREMIER: I repeat there is no justification for this waste of the time of the House. The hon. member belongs to the legal profession, and ought to know the proper course to pursue. If he has any complaint to make against any justice of the peace or any registrar of a court he knows where to make it.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I have done that before and got left.

The PREMIER: He should leave his complaint with me and it will be investigated; but to bring it forward in this way, before he has made any complaint at all—

Mr. FITZGERALD: I have made enough.

The PREMIER: Is taking a mean advantage of the privileges of the House to vent some spite upon a man whom he states to be a very intelligent and capable officer.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I made no complaint against him.

Mr. TURLEY: I think any hon. member who knows, or has reason to believe that the Act passed in 1892 is being used for purposes for which it was not intended, is perfectly right in bringing before this House any knowledge he may have regarding the attestation of the claims of electors by justices of the peace.

The PREMIER: Without giving the accused an opportunity of replying. That is British justice!

Mr. TURLEY: We know that last year a member of this House had no opportunity of knowing anything about a charge that was brought against him until it was thrown out here on the floor of the House by a member of the Government. Was that case different from this? It seems as if because a man is a member of the Government he is justified in doing things that would be characterised as mean and underhand if done by anyone else. This Act was brought in by a gentleman who was a particular friend of the Premier, and who took care of himself when he was here, after it became law, so that hon. members on the other side could see that it was administered in a way that suited themselves.

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the question before the House.

Mr. TURLEY: As long as interjections are made I shall reply.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: Chair, chair!

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the question.

Mr. TURLEY: The question, as I understand it, is the conduct of certain justices of the peace in connection with the attesting electoral claims. If that is so, then I take it I have the right to refer, without breaking the rules of the House, to the opinions expressed at the time the measure was going through. At that time it was pointed out by the then member for Bundamba, Mr. Glassey, that the effect of this would be that large numbers of justices would not witness claims unless they were personally acquainted with all the particulars of the claims. The Chief Secretary at that time said that the Government was being libelled by the hon. member, because there was no such provision in the Bill. He said—

“There was no provision requiring the justice of the peace to be personally acquainted with the facts, and it was perfectly scandalous for the hon. member to get up and make such assertions.”

What has been the effect of this provision? I have known cases where men have waited on justices of the peace and asked them to attest claims, and the justices advanced all sorts of reasons and all sorts of excuses.

The PREMIER: Why don't you report them to me?

Mr. TURLEY: Report them to the hon. gentleman! There are hundreds of cases arising in the colony, and the hon. gentleman would have all his time taken up with people reporting justices of the peace who neglected to do their work in regard to attesting electoral claims. I have filled in a claim myself where a man went to a justice of the peace at his own residence—

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand, from the motion of the hon. member for Mitchell, that the justices he referred to are justices resident in Longreach. Is that so?

Mr. FITZGERALD: Yes, Sir, so far as my knowledge goes. I also referred to people who have come to me from justices outside the district.

The SPEAKER: I should not have accepted the motion if it had referred to justices generally, because a motion for adjournment must be upon a definite matter. I understand now from the hon. member that he refers to the electoral registrar and to justices at Longreach.

Mr. FITZGERALD: Yes.

The SPEAKER: That being so, I must ask the hon. member for South Brisbane to confine himself to this definite matter, and not to go into the general question.

Mr. TURLEY: Am I out of order in stating the opinion of members of the Government at the time this measure was passed?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member had gone further than that; he had stated that he knew many justices who had refused to sign claims. He must confine himself to the definite matter referred to by the hon. member for Mitchell.

Mr. TURLEY: In reply to the Premier I made that statement, and if the hon. gentleman interjects again I shall reply again. When this question was before the House the hon. member for Bundamba was accused of wanting to get some peg to hang discourses on outside the House, and of wanting to abuse the Government. From the fact that the adjournment of the House has had to be moved this afternoon in connection with this very matter, it is very clear what the effect of this provision has been. Supposing a man who lived a few miles out of Longreach asks a justice living in Longreach to attest his claim, how does the justice know that the facts are as stated in the claim? When the Bill was going through, the then Premier said that the effect would be that the justices or head teachers before whom claims were signed would not be liable to the penalty, if there should be an inquiry, but that the penalty would have to be borne by the man in whose favour the claim was made out. There had at that time apparently been some question of justices acting in the manner that has been brought before the House, and the then Premier stated that any justice who deliberately acted in this way would be struck off the roll. If the justices mentioned by the hon. member for Mitchell have acted in this manner, what is the position of the men who have been endeavouring to get their names registered? It simply means that they are being disfranchised, presumably because they are not of the right colour. It shows that the hon. member for Mackay, who objected to the clause going through, was pretty well in the right when he said that justices would be afraid to attest claims on account of the penalty of £50, with the result that large numbers of persons would not be able to get their names on the rolls. That is practically what is happening, and that, I presume, is why the hon. member for Mitchell has moved this motion. The hon. member is quite right in doing so, because large numbers of people have been put to great inconvenience through the system as it is to-day. It practically does nothing but lead to fraud in many instances, and the best thing that can be done to relieve justices from the invidious position in which they are placed is for the Government to take some action by which the residents of the colony will be given a fair opportunity of getting their names on the roll without having to run after justices, who, by the way, are all

placed on the list, I understand, with the sanction of the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now wandering entirely away from the question.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am rather surprised at the hon. member bringing this matter forward. Many hon. members on the other side know that when matters of this sort have been reported to the department and the complaint has been proved, I have directed that the magistrate should be struck off the roll.

Mr. McDONALD: Only when you were forced to it; when I threatened to expose it from the platform if you did not.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know what the hon. gentleman calls an exposure. He wrote a letter which came to the department. I made inquiry and was not satisfied with the explanation. I then directed a prosecution; the prosecution was carried out and the magistrate was fined.

Mr. McDONALD: How long afterwards?

The HOME SECRETARY: As soon as possible.

Mr. McDONALD: Four months elapsed.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

The HOME SECRETARY: As soon as the inquiry was made, I gave the magistrate an opportunity of saying what he had to say, and I should have wished on this occasion that the hon. member would have given the police magistrate and electoral registrar of Longreach—the same gentleman fills the two offices—an opportunity of saying what he had to say.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I did. I spoke to him on the question.

The HOME SECRETARY: I understood the hon. member to say that he had previously made a complaint of a similar character.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I showed him the section of the Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am certain the hon. gentleman has not made a complaint to my department.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I have.

The HOME SECRETARY: I challenge the hon. member to prove that he ever made any complaint with regard to elections that has not been attended to.

Mr. FITZGERALD: In 1893, in connection with the Aramac justices.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have no memory—and my memory is good—of any complaint made by hon. members on the other side that has not been investigated; and if I have not been able to come to the same conclusion as they, the reasons appear on the papers.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: A good many cases.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not many. Except the one brought by the hon. member for Flinders, I do not remember one.

Mr. DAWSON: A marvellous memory—good enough to remember what never happened.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is quite a fine observation and a very charitable one. There is not a man on the other side can disprove an assertion I ever made inside the House or outside of it. That is a challenge. Let them make the assertions outside they make inside, and they will very soon be given an opportunity of proving them. So far, I challenge any man to prove that, either inside or outside of this House, I ever made a statement that I cannot verify. That is a plain statement of fact! So far as regards my memory, the hon. gentleman may be correct, but I have no memory of any complaint by the hon. member. I shall look it up as I did the last complaint, when I found that my memory was correct and his was wrong.

Mr. FITZGERALD: What was that?

The HOME SECRETARY: In regard to the statement as to the Fernoy Opal Field. I have shown the petition to hon. members since, and it shows that my memory was accurate and the hon. member's was wrong.

Mr. FITZGERALD: You show the petition.

Mr. McDONALD: Lay it on the table.

The HOME SECRETARY: I should be very glad to show the exact words I stated. I know nothing whatever of Mr. Grant, the police magistrate of Longreach, personally; all I know is that from his long experience in connection with the mining district of Herberston he was specially selected to do important work at Longreach. His reputation there is good, and I am perfectly satisfied that Mr. Grant, when the matter is sent to him—and it certainly will not be sent to him except a complaint is made to the department in the proper way; not at all upon any statements made in this House by hon. members—but if a statement is made to the department that the electoral registrar of Longreach has done anything which he should not have done, I shall instantly cause an inquiry to be made, and Mr. Grant, I believe, will have a proper answer to make. The Act says that the magistrate or the electoral registrar must be satisfied after full inquiry; it is not quite sufficient that a man should merely come in and make a statement. There may be many reasons why a certificate should be refused. For instance, an applicant might be intoxicated, and then it would be only right to refuse. I am only saying that the magistrate may have an answer; and I ask, why did not the hon. member give him an opportunity of stating his answer?

Mr. FITZGERALD: I gave him an opportunity.

The HOME SECRETARY: The opportunity is open to any person outside to make a complaint against a public officer, but it should be to the Minister responsible, not a statement made prematurely to this House by the hon. member on his mere assertion, which he has not even attempted to verify. He has not even stated that he has satisfied himself as to the facts upon which he is acting.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I am perfectly satisfied.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman gives the information to this House, but does not say who has informed him. With the apparent object of getting up a general discussion he has introduced a specific subject on which he makes certain statements. He ought to know, because he has practised in the court before Mr. Grant, and he has given that magistrate a good reputation, and as far as I know he deserves it. Yet he considers that the electoral registrar has done a sufficient amount of omission or commission which justifies him in bringing that man's action before this Parliament. That goes all over Queensland, and Mr. Grant is precluded at present from saying what he has to say. If he was satisfied as to the statements made to him, he owed it to Mr. Grant, he owed it to himself and to this House, that he should have endeavoured before he brought the matter forward to focus the facts so that the House might know them. I know nothing about it; I never heard of it before, but I am satisfied that when due inquiry is made Mr. Grant will come out on top.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: Though the Home Secretary has made a very able defence of the registrar of Longreach, he has tried to draw us away from the case altogether. The facts of the case, as stated by the hon. member for Mitchell, are known to myself. The applicant is known to myself and to that hon. member, and the excuse the Home Secretary makes that the applicant may have been intoxicated—

The HOME SECRETARY: I never said so.

Mr. KERR: He said a voter might be intoxicated, but his premises are not very good. It is well known that men can conduct business even when they are intoxicated, and if everyone who has to make an application has to be sober then there would be very few on the rolls of the colony. The Premier, in replying to the hon. member for Mitchell, asked why he had not come to him to make his complaint, but hon. members are tired of making complaints, and as the hon. member for Flinders said, they would run themselves dog poor if they were to be running with every complaint they have to make. We know that this claim lodged in Longreach is not the only one which has been refused because the electoral registrar or the justices of the peace have not had personal knowledge of the applicants for six months. A stranger from Herberston is sent to Longreach as electoral registrar, and I or any other person who may have been living in the township for years may make an application to the registrar to have a claim attested, and have the application refused because the registrar or the justice of the peace appointed by the Government may not have personally known me or any other applicant for six months. Is that the spirit of the Act? I take it it is not. The hon. member for Mitchell deserves every credit for bringing this matter before the House. If the member for Mitchell and every other member on this side of the House were to bring up the cases of this kind they know of in their own districts, and move the adjournment of the House to ventilate them, the business of the House would be very much blocked; yet the Home Secretary has the effrontery to get up and say that a voter when he makes his application may be in a certain state that would debar him from having his application received. We know that justices of the peace frequently take the oaths of men who swear to things the justices of the peace know nothing at all about; but in this electoral matter a person's word or oath cannot be taken for the simple reason, as is well known, that the electoral registrars have got their instructions from a gentleman who has been named in this Chamber, Mr. Bulcock, and they and the justices of the peace have to proceed—

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the particular case mentioned in the motion, and not to bring in any other cases. The object of debating this motion is to get redress in a certain definite case, and the hon. member must confine himself to that case.

Mr. KERR: It was proved in this case, I understand, that the justice of the peace got instructions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There was no proof at all.

Mr. KERR: If the Secretary for Public Instruction wants proof, proof can be very easily given that justices of the peace have got circulars from that gentleman.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: That is quite another thing.

Mr. KERR: If the hon. gentlemen who replied to the hon. member for Mitchell were looking after their duty they would see that no such instructions should be allowed to be given to electoral registrars or justices of the peace at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you say they have got them?

Mr. KERR: I say that justices of the peace have got them.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you say that Mr. Grant ever got any?

Mr. KERR: I do not say that Mr. Grant got any, as I do not know that he did, but I say that a justice of the peace has refused to attest the

claim of a native of the colony who resides with his parents in Longreach, and whose father is a well-known Government official there; and if that can be done what chance is there for the shearers who have no parents and no home, as it were, to get their names on the electoral rolls? I believe that the motion will draw the attention of the Government and of the public to these facts, and the hon. member for Mitchell did quite right in bringing the matter before the House.

Mr. DANIELS: With regard to this case of a justice of the peace refusing to attest a claim, it has been proved that that justice of the peace or registrar would have done his duty if he had been let, but he receives instructions from a certain gentleman in Brisbane, and I would very much like to know from the Home Secretary or from the Premier who it is that gives Mr. Bulcock permission—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now going entirely outside the question. He must confine himself to the action of this particular justice.

Mr. DANIELS: I thought I was doing so, because it was stated that the reason this justice refused to attest the claim was because he had received a circular, and, that being so, I thought I was quite in order in referring to it. As I am not in order, I suppose I will have to resume my seat, but I wanted to know who gave this gentleman authority to interfere with the justices of the peace?

Mr. DAWSON: I am not very well acquainted with the particular matter referred to in this motion, but I take it the hon. member brought the matter forward because it was a matter of urgent public importance affecting particular individuals, and to some extent because it was typical of what is going on throughout the colony, and because an infringement of the Act, not intended by its authors, being in this case brought prominently before the hon. gentleman at the head of department should prevent anything of a similar nature arising in future. I certainly thought the hon. gentleman at the head of the department, instead of giving us what he did, would have made a plain, definite, and distinct statement from his place in the House that would have been a guide to electoral registrars and justices of the peace in future.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have done that before.

Mr. DAWSON: I am not aware of any case in which the hon. gentleman has taken an opportunity of doing that. He had a splendid opportunity this afternoon. While he made a complaint that the hon. member did not bring the matter to the department, he should have said that if the facts were as stated he would remove the registrar or strike the justice off the roll.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will not name the child before it is born.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. member would lead hon. members to believe that it is a new matter to him; that he has not had any complaints made to him, and I interjected at the time that his memory is marvellous. The hon. gentleman, if he calls up his excellent memory, will recollect that I personally made a complaint to him about certain justices.

The HOME SECRETARY: This is an electoral registrar.

Mr. DAWSON: The case of justices who were doing similar things was brought forward by the hon. member for Mitchell, and we want a plain statement from the hon. gentleman that will be an instruction issued to those who attest electoral claims that they must endeavour to act in the liberal spirit in which the law was framed.

I believe if the hon. gentleman would do that, in a very short time we would hear no more about these complaints.

Mr. CROSS: I am very sorry the Home Secretary took up the attitude he has taken, because he was in a fine position to have promised to inquire into the matter. I can testify that I complained to the hon. gentleman and suggested a remedy; that was the appointment of more justices of the peace.

The HOME SECRETARY: When was that?

Mr. CROSS: If I were allowed to go into details I could refresh the hon. gentleman's memory.

The HOME SECRETARY: I quite remember what members of Parliament have said about it, but not against any particular man.

Mr. CROSS: The case occurred in my own district. The interjection of the hon. member for Mitchell that he had complained to Mr. Grant about the matter, and that Mr. Grant had confirmed what the hon. member said, is surely something more than hearsay. In what other way could the hon. member bring it forward? By sworn affidavit? Surely the hon. member's word can be taken that the registrar did say the thing had been done. I am sorry that the rules of this House will not allow of a general washing out of this business, because I have some very serious complaints to make. I have a specific complaint to make against a certain justice in my own district, and I am afraid I shall have to bring it forward by a special motion for adjournment. It is a very serious case, and the reasons are precisely the same as those given by the hon. member for Mitchell. I have experience of justices of the peace deliberately refusing to attest claims because they had not known the applicant for the last preceding six months. And I have information of even worse cases. I came across one case where a justice of the peace would not attest a claim—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine himself to the question before the House.

Mr. CROSS: I am confining myself to a case that happened in my own district.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must not bring in any other cases than those mentioned by the hon. member for Mitchell.

Mr. CROSS: So far as this case is concerned I think the common sense of hon. members ought to respond; they ought not to sit silent in a matter like this. The case brought forward is a typical one in country districts, where it is not so easy to get hold of magistrates as it is in Brisbane. And if in the case of a well-known resident it is difficult to get on the roll, how much more so in cases where the applicants are not known? I think the inference is justified that it depends upon the colour of a man's politics as to whether he will have difficulty or not in getting his claim attested, but I am sure that is against the spirit of the Act. After the plain statement of the hon. member for Mitchell the action of the Home Secretary in declining to take any notice of the case unless it is brought to his office is not fair. There are other persons who are entitled to be considered, and it is only by drawing public attention to maladministration that public opinion is roused and formed on the subject. This is an old standing grievance, and it has been so often discussed that it is a matter of surprise that the Home Secretary has not long ago made searching inquiries and given specific instructions. If the Act will permit him he should impose heavy penalties upon justices who decline to do their duty. When this matter was being discussed in 1892 Sir Samuel Griffith, in reply to an hon. gentleman, said that if a justice attested a claim knowing it to be false he

should be punished; that some justices might decline to act at all, but if they did and the Government found it out they would be struck off the roll. That was the proper way to deal with justices who did not do their duty.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is a very small punishment.

Mr. CROSS: It is a very small punishment for one of the greatest political offences that can be committed—robbing a man of his citizen rights. Complaints have been made to the Home Secretary of this nature, and the hon. member for Charters Towers mentioned one.

The HOME SECRETARY: Verbally.

Mr. CROSS: I know the hon. member has been inundated with complaints of a like nature; I know he has dealt with many of them, and has issued circulars from time to time, but he must be aware that many of these officers decline to act upon them, and it would be worth the hon. member's consideration if some penalty could not be attached to such derelictions of duty. I do not think the Act ever meant such a thing, but the administration of it during the last four years has placed obstacles in the way of men getting on the rolls—obstacles insignificant in themselves, but great enough to prevent men exercising their rights. It is a well-known fact that the electoral rolls have been used for party purposes.

The SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. member that he is not debating the question before the House.

Mr. CROSS: I hope the Home Secretary will not allow this matter to pass over, but will accept the word of the hon. member for Mitchell that the registrar admitted that an offence had been committed, and that some steps will be taken to provide a remedy.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The hon. member who has just spoken appealed to hon. members to use their common sense in expressing their opinions upon this matter, and I think the common sense of hon. members will lead them to think that if the Home Secretary had been appealed to, and he had refused to grant redress, it would then have been right for the hon. member to bring the question before this House. We have the assurance of the Home Secretary that he knows nothing whatever about this matter, and I think a majority of hon. members are quite willing to accept the assurance of that gentleman over and above the arguments used against him. Reference was made by the hon. member for Barcoo to the instructions sent to electoral registrars throughout the country and to justices of the peace by the political association—

The SPEAKER: I called the hon. member for Barcoo to order for transgressing on that particular point, and I cannot, therefore, allow the hon. member to refer to it.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Reference has also been made by hon. members opposite to instructions sent by the head of the department to the different registrars. I can speak from experience with regard to my own district, and say that those instructions have been given in concise language, in such a manner that they could be easily understood, and they have given no offence whatever. Some objections were taken which were brought before the Home Secretary, who inquired thoroughly into them. I cannot see why the time of this House should be wasted, as it has been, merely to bring before the country, through *Hansard*, a question which ought to have been brought under the notice of the Home Secretary. I think if that gentleman had been approached in the first instance the difficulty would have been overcome.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is an election in sight.

Mr. ARMSTRONG : I do not think this motion will have the effect that the hon. member for Clermont contemplated, and it seems very frivolous.

Mr. CROMBIE : I know Mr. Grant very well ; I know him to be an honourable and very efficient officer. I also know Longreach and the railway yard very well, and there is no accommodation for shearing sheep there.

Mr. KERR : This man was living with his father, who is a railway official.

Mr. CROMBIE : If a man came to me with an application to be placed on the roll, stating that his occupation was a shearer, and that he lived for six months in the railway yard at Longreach, I would have very grave doubts about the truth of his statement. I should certainly inquire into the truth of it before I signed the application. If a justice refused to sign a document of such a nature until he had made inquiries, probably by the time he had made those inquiries the applicant would not be disposed to bring forward his application again.

Mr. STEWART : I sympathise with the hon. member for Lockyer in the statement he made that the discussion this evening is a complete waste of time, and for that waste of time I blame the hon. member and those in charge of the administration of the Electoral Act. If the Home Secretary would frame clear instructions there would be no difficulty.

The HOME SECRETARY : Did you ever read them ?

Mr. STEWART : They are framed in such a manner that they may be read in half a dozen different ways.

The SPEAKER : This is a motion for ventilating a complaint made against the registrar at Longreach and several justices, and not against the Home Secretary. I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the definite matter before the House.

Mr. STEWART : I was under the impression that I was doing so. It appears that this officer so interpreted the instructions that he would not accept a claim because he did not know the applicant. That is the whole point of the contention of the hon. member for Mitchell, and I thought I was quite in order in referring to the instructions issued by the Home Secretary. Some justices interpret those instructions in one way, and others in another. I am quite within my right, as a member of this House, in asking that the Home Secretary should frame instructions in such a way that they can be interpreted in one way only.

The SPEAKER : I again warn the hon. member that he is going beyond the question before the House.

Mr. STEWART : It appears to be very hard to confine one's self to one single subject in one single way. We are dealing with the electoral law, and with its administration, and with the instructions framed by the Home Secretary.

The SPEAKER : Order ! The hon. member is entirely mistaken. We are dealing with a complaint made against the electoral registrar and certain justices at Longreach ; the hon. member must confine himself to that, and not go into a general discussion of the Elections Act.

Mr. STEWART : I humbly submit that I am not going into a general discussion of the Elections Act. I object to be hauled up in this manner.

The SPEAKER : Order, order !

Mr. STEWART : How can we discuss anything if we are to be rigidly confined in the way that you wish us to be ?

The SPEAKER : The hon. member must confine himself to the Standing Orders. If he cannot confine himself to the question, he must resume his seat.

Mr. STEWART : I was merely attempting to illustrate the case in my own way. Of course, I am quite conscious that I am not up to the parliamentary level, and that I am not able to debate the matter in the way that old parliamentarians can, but I hope that if I am here long enough I shall come up to their standard. It appears that the reason the electoral registrar gave for not signing this man's claim was that he did not know him. Now, I have been a resident in Rockhampton for a number of years, and I am so well known to a number of the inhabitants that I have been sent here to represent them, and yet I question whether there is one justice in Rockhampton or North Rockhampton who could say of his own knowledge that I had lived in a particular place for six months, because I have not the honour of the intimate acquaintance of one justice in the district. If that is my case, I can quite conceive how a man living in Longreach could be quite unknown to the registrar, more especially as we are told that the officer has not been there long. I would like the Home Secretary to let us know whether the law requires that justices must know that an applicant is all he claims to be. Let us know the law. I do not think it is reasonable to require that a justice should know every claimant who comes before him. As the hon. member for Mitchell has said, in ordinary cases of signing affidavits a man goes before a justice and makes his affidavit, and the justice witnesses it without asking any questions. We should adopt the same system in connection with the witnessing of electoral claims. There are pains and penalties attaching to false declarations, and the applicant takes all the risk. The justice does not, or ought not, to take the risk, and I do not see why justices should be left in doubt in the matter. I say again the Home Secretary has failed in his duty in not making the thing clear and explicit.

Mr. McDONALD : I think that the hon. member for Mitchell deserves the thanks of the community and of this House for having brought this matter up. It is also perfectly right that hon. members should confine themselves to the particular matter before the House. I would advise hon. members who have any grievance on any definite matter to move the adjournment of the House in connection with it, instead of attempting to have a general discussion as some hon. members have desired to do this afternoon. I was rather sorry that the Premier should so far lose his temper as to deliberately charge the hon. member for Mitchell with having wasted time, because there is not the slightest doubt that the case of Mr. Macfarlane at Longreach is one that should command the earnest attention of the Home Secretary. It has not got that hon. gentleman's attention yet, because the hon. gentleman told us that he refuses to take any action until the matter is brought before him through the department. Mr. Macfarlane has been practically deprived of his vote. I do not say whether it is due to the negligence of the registrar, or on account of some peculiar instructions which he has received from any other source, but Mr. Macfarlane has been deprived of his vote. That is a very serious matter, and it is particularly serious that a man should be deprived of his vote through the neglect of an official, as appears to be the case in this instance. The hon. member for Warrego said that he would have acted just as Mr. Grant did in connection with the application. In reply to that hon. member, I may say that there are only two houses within the railway yards, and Mr. Macfarlane's people are well known to reside in that particular part of the township, so that there could not have been much doubt as to who the person was. Mr. Grant should at all events, have made sufficient inquiries to

satisfy himself that the applicant was perfectly entitled to a vote. I wish also to impress upon hon. members that I do not consider this discussion a waste of time. It seems to be part and parcel of the policy of the Premier, when anybody brings any matter before this Chamber, to deliberately accuse him of wasting time. The Premier also levelled another charge against the hon. member for Mitchell. He told us that the hon. member only brought this matter up and took advantage of his position to make a complaint against Mr. Grant. But the hon. member has stated in this House that the probable reason why Mr. Grant refused to sign this claim was because he made a mistake, and the hon. member wants to know how this mistake came to be made. That is a very reasonable request to make. The Premier goes further, and states that the hon. gentleman deliberately brought this up so as to bring a charge against this officer. That is not fair criticism, and the hon. member should treat the members of this Chamber in a fair spirit. There was another matter touched on by the Home Secretary. That I am not going to interfere with, because it is another definite matter, and I think he should not have touched upon it. I will move the adjournment of the House myself on another occasion to bring it up.

Mr. STORY: The hon. member for Clermont wonders why something has not been said by members on this side, and he seems to take it for granted that silence gave consent, but I think he may take it for the future that silence very often proves weariness, because there is a way of ending the debate if nobody speaks any more. This side of the House recognises that fact and do not speak; but if those hon. gentlemen will speak and then stop, the debate will come to an end, and a deal of time will be saved. I do not believe anyone would kill a rat on the evidence the hon. member for Mitchell has brought against Mr. Grant. If he had applied to the Home Secretary to make an inquiry into his case, and he had refused to do so, or the answer was not satisfactory, I believe every member in this House would have backed him up to see that a full inquiry was made.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STORY: I believe if a policeman is seen drunk in the street they will move this House to interfere and not report to his department. If these gentlemen want to make electioneering speeches they should travel to a place where an election is going on and stop there. I consider that they are wasting the time of the House. If every trivial matter connected with a department is to be brought before the House instead of being brought under the notice of the head of the department, I could bring 150 complaints against every department here. If I were to do that, Parliament would get to be a nice little debating society.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am beginning to believe that this House is resolving itself into a debating society. That this is a waste of time must be apparent to most people, though it will not be admitted by hon. members opposite that they are wasting time. I remember reading not long ago a story of a nigger who put up a prayer, and it was, "Lord, make me conspicuous." The hon. member for Mitchell must have had the same feeling in bringing forward this motion. If he desired to do his constituent any good he would have applied to the Home Secretary, but he wanted to advertise himself and make himself conspicuous. If he had relieved the grievance of his constituent quietly, he would not in that case have been conspicuous. That, I believe, must have been the hon. member's motive. As a lawyer, his behaviour in this case and his statements absolutely conflict, and when he comes to reflect

upon it as a lawyer I believe he will agree with me. He thought this business was serious enough to waste three hours of our time to-day.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Well, say, two hours, or an hour, and as there are forty or fifty members here being paid at the rate of £300 a year, that is worth considering. The hon. member tells us that a great wrong has been done to a constituent; that the man has been deprived of one of the greatest privileges a man can have—namely, the franchise; that a claim which was a legitimate claim was shamefully refused, and that is why this great grievance is brought before the House. He has proved that the police magistrate is a most incapable man or a most dishonest man, and yet he tells us that he believes this is one of the best magistrates in Queensland or one of the best registrars; that he is an honest man, a capable man. Yet the whole charge against this officer has been to show that he is neither honest nor capable. Therefore the hon. member as a lawyer is thoroughly inconsistent. I am not going to assist in this waste of time. If this was merely an endeavour to put a wrong right, that would have been put right in a totally different way; but, as the Home Secretary has stated, this was brought forward for electioneering reasons, or to gratify the desire of the hon. member for Mitchell to occupy a prominent position. As that is the case, the Home Secretary will not take any notice of these fireworks, but if wrong has been done, and the hon. gentleman wants to have a wrong put right, then the Home Secretary says, "Come to me and do even now what you ought to have done first of all, and whatever grievance you complain of will be removed." Nothing can be more clear than the charge that it is a waste of time. You have the *ex parte* statement of the hon. member for Mitchell, who says somebody told him something. We have not got any reply from this magistrate at all, and consequently when statements which we cannot examine, which we cannot check, are made in this House when the person affected has never been asked for a statement at all, what possible value can attach to this discussion? None at all; and I repeat that with regard to Mr. Grant, whom I do not know at all, but who is said by the hon. member for Mitchell to be honest and capable, and one of the best registrars he knows—a man of the highest character—then to bring forward a discussion of this sort, which must, if it does anything, prove that this man was a very poor sort of magistrate or a very bad registrar to do this, when he has never been to the head of the department with regard to that officer, is certainly a very unfair way of dealing with him. If the hon. gentleman wanted to have justice done the thing would have been inquired into, not only the complaint but the defence; but the hon. gentleman has taken care to secure that this officer should not be heard in his defence, but that this slander, if it is a slander, should be current, and it takes a long time, as the hon. member may know when he is older, to catch up with a slander.

Mr. HOOLAN: It would not be right to allow a statement like that to go unchallenged. The fact of the hon. member for Mitchell bringing the matter forward should be, in the minds of all hon. members, sufficient to show that there is something worth bringing before the House; and the fact of his bringing it forward with the consent of the whole of the Labour party shows that there is a double necessity for bringing it before the House and the country. This is one way of putting things before the country, and when anything is wrong in the State and affects politicians and members of

Parliament it is their duty to bring it before the Assembly of which they are members. This is a matter affecting the conduct of a Government official holding a very responsible position and having most important duties to perform in connection with our electoral laws. It is through these people we come here, and through their actions we retain our positions here. They are certainly responsible in many respects, and a number of dishonest electoral registrars and magistrates could completely empty this side of the House of the persons now sitting here, and bolster up the Government benches in such a way that the Government could carry on the business of the country without any Opposition at all.

The PREMIER: No, they could not.

Mr. HOOLAN: I am not going to traverse the whole thing or bring up any more names, but if the hon. gentleman at the head of the department wants them he can get many more instances of this kind. This is one instance, but the House is not moved to adjourn on this one instance alone. Let the Government understand that there is lots of this business going on, and that some steps will be taken—whether they infringe the rules of Parliament or not—to seek redress for what is justly called a grievance. I trust that matters of this kind will continue to be brought up, no matter how objectionable they may be. If the Government do not want reflections cast upon themselves and their officers for not doing their duty they should do as the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government promised in his election address would be done, and reform the present hideous, almost villainous, Act we labour under.

Mr. BOLES: I know nothing of the merits or demerits of this particular case, but all who have had experience in matters politic must come to the conclusion that this is the old story over again, and that there is a good deal in it. I am not prepared to say that the hon. member for Mitchell has taken the best way in order to get redress, as I think the proper thing to have done was to take the matter before the Home Secretary first of all. I admit that the hon. member was perfectly within his rights in bringing the matter before the House as he has done to give it publicity. The Home Secretary, in replying to the hon. member, challenged anyone to bring forward a case to prove that a complaint had been laid before him in connection with which he had taken no action to give redress. I can bring forward a case very similar to this, and one in which the *laches* of the officer were extremely flagrant, and in connection with which the hon. gentleman positively refused to take action. I dare say that when the Estimates come on some information will be given upon these matters. I hope the Premier will take the matter up and try to do something to put an end to a lot of the work being done by "the great unpaid" in the matter of certifying to names for the electoral rolls.

The PREMIER: I shall make no promise to do so upon this motion.

Mr. BOLES: I do not say the hon. gentleman should, but it would be a good thing if the hon. gentleman would take the matter in hand, and if it were put into the hands of one of the judges.

The PREMIER: If it is brought forward in a legitimate way it will be attended to.

Mr. BOLES: I am very glad to hear the hon. gentleman's statement, because in many places the thing is a perfect scandal. I feel that they act from the political proclivities they hold, and if in their opinion a man's political ear-mark is not of the right kind, exception may be taken to his claim, a refusal may be given to fill up his form, or it may be filled up in such a way as to render it informal. Apart from the merits or

demerits of this particular case, the Premier would do well to take steps to remedy the matter.

Mr. HAMILTON: The member for Burke states that it is perfectly right to bring the *laches* of any Civil servant before this House, and that is perfectly correct where there is no other method of redress. But I think no man of reasonable instincts would consider it fair or manly to attack a man in this House, behind his back, without giving him a chance of defending himself. The proper way in this case would be to have gone to the Home Secretary, make the complaint, and request an investigation, and if that was refused, then would be the time to bring the matter before the House. During the last few weeks I have had eight or nine such cases quite as gross as this one to bring before the heads of departments, and in every case the complaint was inquired into, and if they had not been inquired into I should have brought them before the House. I do not think it fair to attack any man behind his back in this way upon *ex parte* evidence.

Mr. FITZGERALD: Nobody is attacking him.

Mr. HAMILTON: If this is not an attack it is very strange conduct. I must say, at the same time, that I think the conduct of the hon. member who brought forward this motion is excusable in the present instance, because, as we know, there is a political battle raging, and it is perfectly right that Mr. Matt. Reid, for whom I have a great personal regard, should be assisted by his friends, and no doubt this motion is moved for that purpose.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not impute motives.

Mr. HAMILTON: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but at the same time we know that a slander of this kind has the advantage of doing the work required of it before it can be contradicted.

Mr. FITZGERALD, in reply, said: I have been accused of giving a display of fireworks and trying to make myself conspicuous. Now I think of all the speeches this afternoon the two that may be termed displays of fireworks are those of the Home Secretary and Secretary for Public Instruction. I think, on the contrary, that the general complaint against me is that I am too easy going, and certainly not conspicuous. But of all the members of this House I think the Home Secretary is most conspicuous in his reputation for sophistry and illogical deduction from argument. In his speech this afternoon he has turned completely away from the point I intended to make. I am very sorry the question has been brought down to a question as to the capacity of the registrar at Longreach, and I consider the Home Secretary and Secretary for Public Instruction to blame for bringing it down to that level. I stated at the outset that I had a great respect for Mr. Grant and that I was making no complaint against him personally, and I also said the same of the justice, who is a personal friend of my own and a man who used to be one of the best in the district for signing electoral claims.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He has been "got at."

Mr. FITZGERALD: Yes; he has been "got at." It is only since the last election that he has refused to sign these claims, and has given as his reason the letter from Bulcock, who said he was not to do it.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: "Save me from my friends."

Mr. FITZGERALD: I wish to goodness you would save yourself from your friends! It was for that reason that I said there must be something at the back of this action. I pointed out that Mr. Grant had a very good reputation,

that everyone was pleased with his action as police magistrate, and that there must be some secret influence behind him. If there had only been these two instances that I have mentioned I would have brought them before the notice of the Home Secretary. If it had been a complaint against Mr. Grant, or against the justice in question, I would never have thought of moving the adjournment of the House, but judging from the reply of this justice of the peace, it struck me forcibly that he was not the only one who had received that circular. Supposing I had gone to the Home Secretary and reported the matter, he would have made inquiries, the justice and registrar would have been communicated with, and the whole thing would have dropped; but justices of the peace all over the colony who have received this circular would have been none the wiser. I want it to be distinctly understood that I have not a word to say against the registrar or the justice of the peace. On the contrary, that justice is a personal friend of mine, and a man who is well respected. I would say the same for the electoral registrar, a most competent man, who is also a personal friend of mine. The Home Secretary has said that I never approached him before, but if he looks up his correspondence of January, 1894, he will find that I made a complaint then, and no notice was taken of it from that day to this. I am very sorry that the question has dwindled down to this personal matter, and I would ask permission to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, returning this Bill with amendments.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the message was ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

DEBATE ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Question—That £300 be granted for salary for the aide-de-camp to the Governor—put.

Mr. McDONALD: If this discussion has closed, and no one wants to speak upon the Financial Statement, I have a few words to say about this salary for the aide-de-camp to the Governor.

Mr. HOOLAN: It may seem quite out of place to continue this discussion on the Financial Statement, as there is likely to be no division, and most people are entirely in accord with it, and quite ready to heap congratulations upon the Government, but a little further thought on the matter might not be out of place. It is a new departure in financial statements, and a very commendable one. Taken on the whole it is rather a nice piece of literature, and interesting to people desirous of entering political life. It is a very valuable treatise for political students of the present day, and also for those coming on, and I am very sorry to see that a number of political apprentices who are serving their apprenticeship with so highly creditable and trustworthy a Government give so small an amount of attention to this valuable document. It gives me great pain to think that when the colony stands in need of so many capable men, and so much wisdom, when our best financiers are growing old and hoary, with the grave at no great distance from them, that so much apathy and negligence should be displayed by those sitting on the opposite benches; that this document, dealing with questions of such tremendous importance, is not even to be found amongst them. The waste-paper basket is full of them; they are utterly discredited. If hon. members opposite do not choose to take any interest in the affairs

of the colony it is their business. Although I can offer congratulations to those who prepared and printed this Statement, I can offer none to the Government, because they do not deserve them. I maintain that this is a valuable document in every way. It is not prurient or offensive literature. It is nothing like the every day police court reports, done up to attract the gaze of the vulgar. There is everything set down in connection with the state of the colony. It is all here from A to Z, and from Genesis to Revelations. To those who believe in the spiritual and supernatural, this will come second only to the Scriptures, and persons who utterly scout the spiritual and the supernatural may take this as their Bible. It is a document that may be laid on the table of the drawing-room, or the ladies' boudoir; it may be introduced into young ladies' seminaries, and passed round in Christian Brothers' schools for the young to read; it can be turned into a complete catechism and set forth categorically in question and answer form, and the youth of the colony will derive great benefit from it. It reflects credit upon those who compiled it, and the printers who printed it, and to the colony generally; and it will be very useful to politicians; so that it is a matter for regret that so little attention is being paid to it. It follows the good old system of "pay in" and "pay out," and I dare say all these things are faithfully set forth in it. No doubt there are many instances in which the "pay in" might be vastly increased for the public benefit, and many in which the "pay out" might be decreased for the public benefit also; but that is a matter that concerns the Government particularly. It only concerns me as one of seventy-two, and I can only give it one seventy-second share of the attention it deserves. It is rather painful to hear that the land revenue is on the down-grade.

The TREASURER: Only auction sales.

Mr. HOOLAN: I do not consider auction sales anything at all.

The TREASURER: You must distinguish between land revenue and pastoral revenue.

Mr. HOOLAN: Pastoral revenue is going down too—

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. HOOLAN: But that is brought in in a side way. Receipts from auction sales cannot be considered as revenue at all. No man can think that he can supplement his household expenditure by selling his coat or boots, or his tools if he is a carpenter, or his trowel if he is a bricklayer. It is an unfortunate state of affairs that any Government should be at liberty to sell that which does not belong to them. The Treasurer may say that we only alienate it for the time and use it as a marketable commodity. We hand the land over to persons who pawn it to others, who may be connected with institutions which are subservient to the Government, and who in many instances control the Government. This is one of the stock arguments we have heard before, and which politicians of the calibre of the Treasurer uphold and maintain. These are the theories by which certain politicians glide into public life, and upon which they maintain their positions.

The TREASURER: Are you not glad the system is dying out?

Mr. HOOLAN: It is one of the hideousities of the day, that public men can keep their positions by bartering away the national estate. Hon. members may say that the public estate should be alienated, because we derive a certain amount of benefit from it for the time, as we drag money out of the coffers of persons called capitalists.

The TREASURER: Where do you find that in the Statement?

Mr. HOOLAN: If the actions of these public men become a burden to the State then you can further deal with these lands by a system of taxation, and make them a further benefit to the State. These are the arguments that are put forth, but I am not of that way of thinking, and will show the reason why.

The TREASURER: I see you are wound up.

Mr. HOOLAN: I will try to wind myself up as I go along. The unfortunate part of the business is that when we have alienated the public estate it is very hard to derive any proper revenue from it or make it bear its just burdens. In the early history of the colony sundry speculators came over with their eyes open, and they manipulated the public men and the public departments, and were able to pick the eyes out of Queensland. It seemed right then to sell the land. They had a vast area, from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean, and thought there was no harm in parting with a few acres. Within the very short period that has elapsed in the history of this colony, we find innumerable evils accruing from this policy of land alienation. To it is due the state of our revenue, our exhausted loan fund, and the very peculiar and trying times we are now in, when we have to buy back from speculators at high prices the land they previously acquired from the State. Notwithstanding the fact that we have to-day news that the action of Government is very prolific to the State in one case, still a number of their purchases remain on their hands, and are likely to remain on their hands. I have inspected one of them, and in that particular case the Government have made a very bad bargain. It should have been left on the hands of the monopolist who owned it in the first instance.

Mr. BELL: Where is that?

Mr. HOOLAN: It is up near the agricultural college. I am going to inspect one or two more in a few days, and possibly will have better information about them.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In the Logan district?

Mr. HOOLAN: Ministers should not turn such a serious matter into a jest. If this House cannot see its way to confer some benefit on the public, it should not repurchase lands at all. I recognise that there is a great deal of outside pressure and clamour brought to bear on the Government to get them to repurchase estates, but they should use their discretion before they lay out public money in this way and pay it away to speculators. I am very glad to see by the Statement that the Government are already perfectly satisfied that they have not done right in laying out the public money, although they did it with the best of intentions, and that they have already had convincing evidence that they are entering into too big an arrangement with the sellers of land in the first instance and with supposed buyers in the second. Passing for the present from the barter of the public estate to pastoral occupation, which the hon. gentleman says is increasing, I wish to show that it has not increased. Pastoral occupation is paying lower rentals than it has ever done in the history of the colony, notwithstanding all the money that has been laid out on it. The Crown lands have cost an awful amount in the past; and if the cost continues at the same rate in the future, in a short time—between the heavy interest on the non-paying railways, which were built for the sake of benefiting these lands—between rabbit fencing and the tremendous cost of extending the protection of the Government to squatters and so-called pastoral agents throughout the whole colony, and particularly in the far out portions of the colony—the cost will soon cover the whole of the rents derived from pastoral occupation. It

is becoming alarming, and notwithstanding the fact that the Government are strongly supported by the pastoralists, they must try and derive more benefit from the pastoral lands. I speak without harbouring any ill thought towards the pastoralists. I wish them well in every respect; and if they had as much money as I would wish them to have, they would make very large "piles" indeed. I am sincere in wishing them well, but I say that something further must be done with our large areas of Crown lands. Successive Governments have simply been lax over the pastoral business, and that has been due to nothing else than the pastoral support. We know that the squatter—the person who rented the land from the Crown—has nothing more about him than any other piece of humanity. We know that this class has enjoyed tremendous benefits in the past; that wonderful concessions have been made to them by the State, which have enabled them to do immense credit to Australia in every way. These men were the principal means in the first place of building up a tremendously wealthy, speculative, and extravagant class. They set a bad example to the community in speculation, high living, and sporting tendencies. In the next place they grew up into an oligarchy. Instead of being satisfied with a fair share of good things, each man began to vie with his neighbours, and tried to get more than his neighbours. They became shareholders in what are termed financial institutions, from which they borrowed money as far as they could. They induced the financial institutions to borrow from the home market. They got interwoven with political life, and induced the leaders of political thought, and the persons in political positions who had charge of the affairs of the colonies, to borrow largely from the so-called moneyed men of the world, and the whole thing culminated in the breakdown that we have seen in the last few years. The Government should turn their attention seriously to the pastoral industry, though I do not say that they should give it a paramount place in their minds. We know very well that the products of the industry, such as beef, mutton, wool, and hides, as well as the horses and cattle, are a very valuable factor in the national wealth. We know that if that wealth is to be of any use to the world generally it can be increased; but, at the same time, how much benefit does the colony derive from that wealth? That is the problem that faces us year after year, and which remains unanswered by politicians, and I trust someone will show us how it can be solved. Of what benefit are those people? Have they not been an incubus in the way of the progress and prosperity of Queensland? Have they done anything to assist the country, or have they been of any assistance to themselves? If they could maintain their financial position, if they could maintain the integrity of their position as employers of labour, it would be right to let them manage their own business in their own way. But the pastoral lands belong to the State; it is for the State to deal with them, and it is the duty of politicians to give this matter their earnest consideration, and try if all the lands in the country cannot be made to be of more benefit to the State and to the world generally. The time has arrived when they are of no further benefit to the individual who stands in the road of progress between the State and the general public, and it is time the Government took into earnest consideration the position of that unfortunate individual and made him move on—even with compensation, if necessary. There is no necessity to dilate upon the fortunes and misfortunes of the persons I am now speaking of. Unfortunately, we have a certain amount of public indebtedness—to the

extent of £32,000,000 odd. That public indebtedness would not tend to destroy public progress or suppress the aspirations of the nation, as shown in each individual, were it not for the amount of private indebtedness that goes hand in hand. Persons who enter into large contracts with the State, like our pastoral tenants, enter into contracts that they cannot fulfil—contracts that go right beyond their business and their capabilities as individuals. When they do that they become hopelessly entangled in financial nets, and being persons of great importance, they bring their influence to bear on political life with the object of obtaining certain concessions. Influence is brought to bear in an improper way on members of Parliament, and the result is that we get only a paltry bit of revenue from the whole of the surface of this beautiful colony. This pastoral industry, producing so many millions yearly, is one to which the Government should give their best attention. It is no use saying that people want to pry into the affairs of other men, that they are prying into their every-day ideas, that they are inquisitorial in their actions; that their conduct is unseemly in the first place, ungenerous in the second place, unmanly in the third place, and that their pertinent inquiries become positively indecent, if not brutal. Persons who wish to do their duty by themselves in the first instance, by the public in the second instance, by the whole of Parliament combined in the third instance, and by the colony generally in the fourth instance, should know exactly the position of the public and private indebtedness of the colony. It is all very well to take a balance of our household accounts, to say that the baker is squared up with so many turnovers and so many loaves, that so much has been paid to the butcher—I am speaking in metaphor, of course—that so much has gone to the washerwoman, and that there is a balance of so much. We have an enormous revenue, and instead of showing that the revenue and the expenditure meet, and that we have a few thousands over, the Government, with £9,000,000 of export wealth, should be able to show a surplus of £1,000,000 yearly to carry on public works to benefit the colony generally. Instead of that we have a statement that simply sets forth everything that is bought and sold—every item of revenue and expenditure; and a good deal of praise has been bestowed on the Statement by the Press, but I do not see that it is deserving of any praise at all. I suppose the Government have done their best, but their best is a very poor best indeed. Still I may add that such as it is we must be thankful for it. Before proceeding to another question I may say that I do not know whether the Government has any intention of moving in public matters in a serious way. I have no power to push them on, but if I had they would either make this colony more attractive to the adjoining colonies and to people in other parts of the world, or burst in the attempt. The Government have no business to simply come here, sit with their elbows on their despatch boxes, and be satisfied with the present state of affairs. In the eyes of some the Government may be a wise Government, but in my eyes it is simply the old jog-trot Government, and is no better than could be found amongst any party of men with the faintest idea of conducting public affairs.

At 7 o'clock,

Mr. HOOLAN: Before we adjourned for tea I was dealing with the pastoral industry and its value to the State.

Mr. LEAHY called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. HOOLAN: Again referring to this unfortunately placed industry, I think certain

restrictions should be placed upon the pastoral tenants. This is a subject which this side does not care to handle, fearing that it may look spiteful upon their part, as so many of them are returned in opposition to the pastoral people and are hostile to them at election times. But there is no use in allowing an absurd thing like that to interfere with the business of the country. I know it is rumoured—and I believe it to be a fact, though I am not in a position to make the distinct assertion—that owing to what is called a depression in pastoral matters, a certain amount of influence is being brought to bear upon the Government to secure further concessions by pastoral agents and people interested deeply in this particular line of business, and that influence being inimical to the State, should be counteracted and opposed in every direction.

Mr. LEAHY: That is from the North, where all the concessions are applied for.

Mr. HOOLAN: I think everyone has the right to the concessions he deserves, and to no more, but I distinctly affirm that the pastoralists have gone beyond that right. The industry has become so interwoven, and has gone so much away from the pastoralists altogether, that the majority of the squatters are only the agents of others, and it is quite time the State interfered. It should be remembered that we have got to look years ahead in these matters, and if those who were the directors of public affairs ten years ago had only looked ten years ahead then, we would not now be in our present position.

Mr. LEAHY: You mean that we would not have a surplus?

Mr. HOOLAN: We would not have balances of loan money locked up in an institution which has given us a lot of anxiety, brought about a lot of hostility and vilification, and we would not have had a beautiful country going to waste.

The TREASURER: It has been a blessing to the Labour party at any rate.

Mr. HOOLAN: We have a tremendously wealthy State in a state of stagnation. A young country like this with all the world around it, and superior to a great portion of the world, possessing numberless advantages which the world does not possess, should be a point of vantage for wealth to rally upon, and instead of that we have a vast territory which the whole world ignores, and according to the statements we get from the other side, even the alien races are shutting their faces to it, and the kanakas, who have been the pets of the colony, have gone on strike. That would lead one to believe it is a colony that is not worth living in, and it brings me back again to my argument that we are in a bad position, an improper position, and a wrong position, which is due to the want of foresight in the legislators of the colony in past times who came here, and when they got a statement of the colony's affairs threw it aside, and allowed it to be picked up by the messengers and put in the waste-paper basket. I do not wish to interfere in the affairs of the colony when there are others more capable to do it, but what has happened must have an effect upon a thoughtful person who observes what is passing, and is convinced that the carelessness and negligence of ten years ago has brought disaster.

Mr. LEAHY: That was your party.

Mr. HOOLAN: That party was not in the State then. I was a common bullock-driver, wielding the whip, and I did not think how near I was to becoming a Minister of the Crown. If I had my shanks laid bare then ready to jump into a pair of Ministerial breeches, and to jump on to a Ministerial cushion, I might have stepped forward and brought my abilities, such as they are, to bear on the state of affairs. But

it is never too late to mend, and it is not too late to interfere now. The pastoralists, I hold, have held too much power for too long in this country. This amount of £300,000 revenue is too ridiculous. Here we have three items—wool, gold, and hides—yielding something like £5,000,000 in exports, and it is quite time that the State interfered and got more out of that industry, which is said to have acquired so many and varied interests. If it were trespassing on the rights of individuals I could understand the objection, but the rights of individuals have gone. It is well known that the pastoral industry is indebted privately to the amount of £9,000,000, and, without naming any particular place or any particular person, it may safely be said that there must be something radically wrong with that industry. It is sufficient to say that it does not contribute its fair share to the revenues of the State. On the very face of it, it appears absurd that in their present condition the pastoralists should try and get further fixity of tenure, and have their rents reduced. My opinion is that the Land Board, which has had plenty of time to show its usefulness and has failed, should—instead of appraising and assessing rents and hobnobbing with the squatters—be turned into a reliable department like the Auditor-General's Department, and go out and survey the runs. If that were done then there is no doubt when the time came the Government would be in a position to let those who wish for land get it on favourable terms. According to the Government's own statement the grazing farms, notwithstanding the way in which they have been hampered, are a tremendous success, and it is the duty of the Government to put such facilities in the way of the people that a greater area may be used as grazing farms. But are they doing so, and, further, do members of the Government intend to do it?

The TREASURER: Oh, yes.

Mr. HOOLAN: Probably the hon. member, being overburdened with work, and his memory being defective, intended to answer "Oh, no." We know that quite a number of persons are waiting for grazing farms, and the Government are not in a position to grant their requests for the reason that the lands are locked up. They are bound to uphold the existing agreements with the pastoral tenants.

The TREASURER: There is any quantity of land open.

Mr. HOOLAN: Yes, plenty of barren scrubs and the useless hills about Bogantungan, but where is the land that the grazing settler wants? It is the picked land that we want thrown open first; the poor land may be taken after, when in course of time with better appliances and more knowledge it can be turned to account. The pick of the country is locked up, and a great deal of it was sold under the forced Sales of Land Act. After years and years of appraising and reappraising and reduction of rents we find the large estates practically done, and they are now being turned into large pastoral companies for the purpose of acquiring further fixity of tenure. If they were a success I would not so much mind. They would have a perfect right to carry on ordinary commercial enterprises in the ordinary way; but I maintain that they have not been a success, and not being a success they should be removed as easily and as speedily as possible. No doubt the country is largely indebted to them for improvements; I grant that; and when the State takes over the land it must be content to take over the improvements at a fair valuation. When once these lands are taken over, I venture to say there will be an immense advance in the revenue. It is no use further moaning about the

pastoral industry. It is time to face it, and deal with it on its merits, and make ourselves alive to its merits and demerits. The hon. gentleman in referring to the great industry of mining said there was a falling off from various causes. I do not think the reasons he gives are correct, but it would take from now until this time to-morrow to give the correct reasons. It is a fluctuating industry, and, like the weather, very uncertain. And that brings me to another point. The hon. gentleman should not depend upon fluctuating industries. He should depend upon those that do not rise or fall or fluctuate in any way. Gold when it comes gives an enormous revenue, but it does not always come. When it does it can with ease be turned into shining sovereigns which will purchase anything, even virtue and honour. Governments have been depending too much upon that, but they should depend upon the staple industries of the colony. I trust the Government will take these few words as they are intended, because it will not be in the interests of the country or conduce to its welfare if they pay attention to those persons who desire a lower value for the lands of this colony and a reappraisal of the rents now being paid. We know that proposals to that end will be brought forward, and it is to be hoped that they will be stubbornly and sternly resisted. Now we come to the agricultural policy of the Government. There is to be the Minister for Agriculture, but I do not hope for much from that. Unfortunately little or no attention has been paid to this industry, which has not held out sufficient inducements to capitalists to lead them to enter into it. The only speculator I know of is the hon. member for the Valley, who makes a few pounds in the ordinary way, but neither assists nor retards the industry, and if the butter is bad he proclaims it to all the world. This is the most important industry we can have, and we should pay most attention to it. It is in a wretched state at present; and yet, because some £5,000 is to be spent upon a building somewhere, in consequence of a certain amount of agitation, we have been told that agriculture is in a flourishing condition; but it is no use taking that unctio to our souls, because we will be deceiving ourselves, and if we do that we will deceive others. Apart from the growing of sugar, which I know nothing about, the industry is in a lamentable condition, and is an eyesore to the colony, which is not creditable to those who have been politicians here for many years. It is particularly discreditable to those who live in the Southern part of the colony. Now and then during the last five years some hon. member has stood up to show that certain things were being imported from the south that could be grown here, and this kind of agitation has culminated in the agricultural college, and there it remains. So far as I can gather the industry is in a worse state than it was six years ago, and it is time that the Government and their supporters saw the responsibility of their position. It is they who should establish and encourage our industries, but hon. members on this side cannot refrain from giving advice when we see the apathy exhibited by the Government, who are so neglectful of their duties. So far as I am concerned, in my part of the country we do not care whether they do not produce a carrot or a potato or a long bean in the Southern part of the colony. We have to import all we want, and if I were an ordinary class of politician I would be content with that; but I am not, because I know that the strength and stability of the colony, and its future position in a federated Australia, will depend upon our agricultural wealth, which should increase year by year until we stand pre-eminent. We must depend upon that.

When our gold mines are only so many recollections to be looked upon with perhaps only a soft sigh and made receptacles for dead dogs and be filled up with the bodies of such as may die in the locality, the agricultural industry should be in a flourishing position, which it will never be if it is left to those now in power. I do not know whether it is the fault of those who work on farms, and who are bred to toil, but it is the duty of the legislature to encourage farmers in every way, and they are not doing it. Look at the wretched appearance of those farms—lucerne lucerne, lucerne, and in some places not even that, but a bit of barren sand. After four long years of agitation the Railway Commissioner allowed the farmers certain concessions in regard to railway rates, and the Treasurer triumphantly proclaims the fact. I would be sorry to refer to it. If it was really a boon, it should have been granted in four days; but if it took four years to get that concession, it will take 400 years for the present Government to do anything for the farming industry. It makes me smile to hear that £5,000 is to be spent upon this college. No doubt the Government are laudable and honest in their desire to afford instruction in the higher branches of agriculture, but they have selected for a site a sour part of the Lockyer electorate, where the soil is all caked in summer and boggy and groggy in winter. I maintain that the thing will be a failure from the start, and would ask the Government to seriously consider, before the blocks are put in, whether this money will not be wasted. It will not be only this £5,000, but there will soon be a howl for another £5,000. We do not want a receptacle for gentlemen's sons, where they can be put into a nicely-finished laboratory and wash themselves and learn the art of cultivating the land. The Government knew that this industry wanted fostering a long time ago, and they should have appointed a select committee or something to try to get the hang of the position. We know that the farmers are in debt and heavily mortgaged. The Government refuse to relieve them of their mortgages, or to save their homes from the clutch of the usurers. Then they should put the farmers in the way of saving their own homes. Politicians generally show an arrant neglect of the farmers. Some of my friends on this side have suggested money schemes which the other side have laughed at. I am not going to express any opinion with regard to those schemes, of which the farmers in Southern Queensland are sorely in need. Other industries have been assisted. I do not ask the Government to bring in any money scheme to assist the mining industry, or to establish crushing mills for it. But we know that in the South the greater part of the £30,000,000 of borrowed money has been spent, and there we should look for the most of our revenue, and for the most prosperous and happy class of people, but we do not find them there. If the schemes for lending money to the farmers are absurd, if they have emanated from ignorance, are not founded on proper financial knowledge, but are based upon a foundation which will give way at the first depression or boom, well and good. I do not dispute that it may be so, but, all the same, something of the kind is wanted, and it is most decidedly the duty of the Government to make provision for it. I am more anxious about the farmers in the South than about the men in my own district, because if they do not like it they can leave it; but the farmers in the South are tied down. They own the soil, they are rearing their families on it; some of them were born on it, and they are going to die on it, and those persons should be the first care of the Government. I trust the Government will try to remedy some of the defects at present existing.

I call the attention of the Government, and of hon. members who support them, and who are just as much responsible as the Government for the state of affairs, to the fact that last year this colony imported 12,476 tons of potatoes. I was reared on that homely article of consumption—the "spud"—and my ancestors lived on it. Spuds are the backbone of one of the finest nations in the world, and when that nation was overpowered by foes, and held down by most cruel and cowardly artifices, this remarkable vegetable sustained them, and it will bring them out triumphantly in the end. If they stuck to potatoes, and let religion alone, they would very soon get the better of the English Government. This may not be of any great importance in the eyes of the Premier, and of hon. members on the other side, but it is of great importance in my eyes, because, if ever our agricultural industry is to supply the people in the colony with food, the time has surely arrived when we should not require 12,000 tons of potatoes to be imported. It is time politicians were alive to the fact. It is about time for the Government to raise a new loan. What do they borrow? Gold. Where do they go for it? To John Bull. What happens then? We are tied hand and foot to a usurer from whom we have no hope of escape, and to whom we will have to turn for further loans. At the same time that we are doing this, we are allowing an industry which requires no agricultural college, which requires no apprenticeship, and which even a lunatic from Woogaroo could successfully engage in, to pass from us, while we import 12,000 tons of potatoes, on which we pay a duty of 15s. a ton. Of course the Treasurer is a financier, and is satisfied with the £9,372 which he derives in the shape of revenue from that duty. It does not matter to the hon. gentleman whether there is a potato grown in Queensland. If I strike a patch of gold and it gives me £100, it will be, "Come along and fill them up again. Hullabaloo! Cheer, boys, cheer!" Then in a short time I may be going along with holes in my hat, looking for a job. That is just the way with the Government in regard to this matter. It is right enough while they have plenty of money. We point to our exports and our imports, we proclaim the fact that we have been able to make both ends meet, and that we have been able to show a balance of £60,000. Of course that will suit the hon. gentleman's time. He is enjoying a hale, hearty old age; and his maxim is "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." I suppose he does not like to display it in a public place, otherwise he might paste that motto up on the door of the Treasury buildings. These matters should be properly looked into. It seems lamentably ridiculous that a farming community should vote at all for a nominee of the Government, or that a farming constituency should return an hon. member supporting the Government, which entirely neglects the farmers. What are the Government going to teach in their agricultural college? I don't know. Let them answer. Before they put up a college that will give important instruction which will require months or years to master the details of, they should see that there is a product which could be easily produced here, and which would command a ready sale. I say that it is nothing but wallowing in ignorance to say that we ought to set up a college to teach agriculture when people cannot grow the homely spud. You must teach yourselves before you start to educate the public. If the Government are blinding themselves, they are not going to fool me into the belief that there will be any prosperity arising from this state of affairs. The lands of the colony want looking after in a proper way; and unless they are made

to produce articles for which a ready market can be found, they are of no use to the Government or to the settlers. We must derive a revenue from our lands. Some of these days I may find myself going over to the other side to take charge of the government of this colony; and what will I take charge of? An exhausted Treasury. The pastoral industry of the squatters has been broken down by their reckless habits and their private indebtedness; the agricultural industry is getting to the verge of misery; the Government suppose that they are going to bolster it up by building an institution to teach something or other. A sanguine person might suppose that they would be able to run the country by means of our mines; but I would impress on the Government the necessity of not looking to anything that is uncertain, but to the land on which the people will have to live centuries hence, when we are mouldering in the ground and the brightest amongst us will be only very dimly remembered. Some hon. members who have not looked at the Treasurer's tables, and who never use an onion except when they attend a funeral, may think that onions are of no value, and I want them to just listen to this. Last year we imported 3,055 tons of onions.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: How many more than the previous year?

Mr. HOOLAN: I did not look at that year, and I do not want to know. It is sufficient to know that we imported that many last year when we should not have imported any. If they were grown in the colony they would find a market in the North, where they could be sold cheaper than at present, and the consumption would be greater, and all those persons growing onions would be contributing to the revenue. The homely bean and pea might also be produced more largely in the colony. I find that we imported bran and pollard to the amount of 150,000 lb. It is discreditable to the Government to give so much attention to commercial business transactions, to think so much about this constant nightmare of the Queensland National Bank, and show so little knowledge of the real condition of the country and its national wealth. These are of far more importance than the pastoral industry and the financial industry. We are supposed to be between the devil and the deep blue sea—a Government that ignores our ways of life and is indifferent to our daily concerns and a Labour party whom they fear from some presentiment of danger in the future. Is it not a shame to the colony and to Parliament that such a state of affairs should exist? Were these tables not printed and published by the Government it might be said that I was talking for the sake of talking, but here we have the facts and figures, and I hope the Government will take these matters into consideration at the earliest possible moment and try to rectify them. In the first place it is more necessary to see that the farmers are perfectly secure in their little bits of homes, and in the next place to see that they are producing commodities for which there is a market in Queensland. Here you are looking abroad for markets while the cockies of the other colonies find a market at your doors for their produce. What inducement is there for the working people to be content and to stop agitation and to be satisfied with the Government while this state of affairs is allowed to exist? A person may be put down as an agitator for declaiming against these things, but one would not be a good and honest politician if he did not declaim against a Government so neglectful of everything. It is the duty of the Government to decide this matter about the farming industry at once. I have taken the trouble to ascertain the facts, and I find that a great

number of the farmers are in a position which they should not be in; but being in that position, whether by their own fault or from circumstances over which they had no control, it is the duty of the State to get them out of that position. A good few of them are in the hands of usurers; those who are not are very fortunate; and the Government should not declaim against members on this side when they speak of cheap money. I am not going to hear members I am allied with ridiculed as nobodies and ignoramus when they bring forward a scheme for providing cheap money. Such a scheme is wanted, and instead of spending £5,000 just now on an agricultural college it would be better to put another £15,000 to the £5,000 and spend the £20,000 in redeeming those agricultural holdings that are worth redeeming, but not those that are tied up by a system of intricate mortgages out of which you cannot see. It is a most objectionable thing to see the bone and sinew of the colony on whom the wealth of the colony depends in this horrible condition, and I trust that the Government will take steps as soon as possible to remedy this state of affairs. To turn to another matter, there are a few lines of railway mentioned here, and I want to know from the Government whether it is intended to shut them up. There are a lot of things that require doing in the State, and it would be rather a wearisome thing to point them all out now. We go along in a cursory sort of way, and so long as we pay our debts we are all right, but really these things require very careful consideration. We are all a lot of spendthrifts, gentle and simple, ignorant and intellectual alike. Some time ago we had a fit of retrenchment, and a lot of homilies were preached on the subject. Now that is passed; we are told we are off in a kind of canter again, but if somebody does not check the steed he will soon be off in a gallop, if there is a gallop in him, and I for one contend that there is a really good spurt in the colony yet. I do not wish to see the steed go off in a gallop yet, and I want to draw attention to some matters in which expenditure might still be avoided. For instance, there is a railway called the Cooktown Railway; its receipts for the year were £1,852, while the working expenses were £5,572. I do not know whether the Government have any scheme for generating business in that particular part of the colony, but this railway has been like this since it was constructed. There is a staff of people employed upon it, and they are wholly unnecessary. The hon. member who represents the district will no doubt have something to say about it, but still these are the facts of the case. The place could do very well with one train a week or with one train a month, and it is as well that we should keep a strict hand and continue upon economical lines where we can. Hon. members and possibly the Press will say that we have got to look after ourselves, but it is just because I am looking after myself that I say we should retrench within bounds where we can. It is for that reason I am a very valuable person, and though I might want to put votes on the Estimates for some purposes, that may be just why I think there should be retrenchment on other items. There is next the Cairns Railway, from which the receipts were £9,081, while the working expenses amounted to £12,281. There is no necessity now to go into the cost of construction, but we know that this is one of those horrible dead losses that will lay like a nightmare on the colony for some time to come. There does not seem to be much hope of increasing the income of that railway, notwithstanding the fact that there is a beautiful show ground there that is attractive to visitors, if the visitors would only go there, which, unfortunately, they

do not. Although it is so attractive, it is unpayable, and it would be as well to reduce the expense upon it. There is another line here called the Bowen Railway.

Mr. SMITH: It is just beginning to pay. Why do they not finish it?

Mr. HOOLAN: I do not suppose that any other member of the Assembly cares about mentioning these things because they are unpleasant; but if a man in this House is not prepared to say some things that are unpleasant to himself and to others he is of very little use in it. I do not want to cry "stinking fish"; but I want to point out a few hard facts out of the multitude of hard facts that must yet be pointed out. As yet these things are pimples; but if we let them grow they will soon become boils. A soap and sugar plaster will cure them in the first instance; but it will take a good bit of linen and linsed meal to cure them if they get to the boil state. The receipts from this Bowen Railway were £978 18s. 8d., and the working expenses £3,055.

Mr. SMITH: It is only half finished.

Mr. HOOLAN: The portion finished is what I am referring to, and if it was only five miles we should run it so as it will pay. We are told over and over again that we are a commercial State. Very well, then, make things pay. There is no use in grinding in one part of the colony and losing in another. I am going to have something to say about the Bowen Railway, and what should take place in connection with it, directly.

Mr. HAMILTON: Are you going to deal with the Mount Perry Railway?

Mr. HOOLAN: These matters want looking up, and they want attention paid to them. I do not know what plans of railway construction the Government have got in hand, but I hope they will seriously consider the best way to benefit the colony. It is not by carrying out impossible works for the sake of what in former times was termed log-rolling. It is nearly time that was abolished in this colony. When the House goes into Committee of the Whole it should apply itself to this railway business in a serious way. The Northern Railway is now the best-paying line we have got, and the mining industry connected with that particular portion of the line is one of the mainstays of the colony. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that every hon. member will fall in with the idea of increasing that industry largely, and the way to do that is to connect Charters Towers by a cheap line—if a plan for cheap lines can be brought forward—with the Etheridge Gold Field, and to connect Bowen with the Towers line. We want lines built that will return interest, and also revenue, and whether they are to go to Thargomindah, Charters Towers, Burke, or elsewhere I am the man to do what I can to help to build them. We want revenue for the colony, and like the socialists we want it "in our time." It was supposed that the Cairns line would be carried through to Herberton, Georgetown, and Normanton as a transcontinental line. That is not the way, and the sooner hon. members understand the position of affairs the better. Many hon. members have no idea of the vastness of the Etheridge Gold Field, which extends as far as from here to Gympie. Gympie is a very valuable goldfield, but it is only like a spot of sand on a beach compared in extent to the Etheridge, which is 100 miles long and twenty-five miles wide. That should be connected with the other great goldfields, and then it would get the output of energy and capital from those goldfields—from Charters Towers, for instance, where they have to go down now to a depth which small speculators cannot get at. The Etheridge and Charters Towers want connecting, and the sooner that is done the better.

The Bowen line should be completed, and then there would be two ports to which to send our surplus products. Having taken up so much time, I do not wish to enter at length into what I consider a very serious matter; that is the drink traffic. Whether it is increasing or decreasing matters very little to me. All I want to say is that the amount of drink that is consumed is something awful to contemplate. In this colony the item of whisky alone amounts to 205,000 gallons, which is imported and consumed. I do not know whether you can stop it or not; but when consumption reaches that stage it becomes a vice. The people might just as well be swallowing barrels of nitric acid. And remember, too, that there is a large proportion of the community who do not touch whisky. No doubt this all brings a large amount of revenue to the State, but I do not think we should lose sight of the fact that the State can make whisky, even if it cannot grow potatoes. If you cannot stop the consumption of it you can at least keep its manufacture in the colony. All persons want to keep in a good condition—the working man, the commercial man, and the members of Parliament—and we have taken very good care that members of Parliament shall be in a good condition. I say therefore that the State might just as well be in a good condition through the manufacture of its own whisky. There are people in other lands making their millions, being knighted and acquiring large estates out of the very whisky that we drink, and out of the health and impoverishment of our people. I admit that the State cannot stop the drink traffic. It would be useless to legislate to stop it; but we might as well legislate so as to get the greatest possible revenue out of it. I suppose the Treasurer quite agrees with the duty of 14s. a gallon on spirits, but I do not believe there would be any serious objection to raising it to 28s. I have no doubt he would get a large amount of support, and I am sure it would do a great deal of good. Here also we find a large amount of revenue derived from the opium traffic. I am sure the few Chinamen in the colony do not consume it; and that is another evil we will have to contend against. I trust the Government will not ignore these things, but will take them into serious consideration, and not take too much praise to themselves for the position in which they are in. It is very easy to better the position, and it would not be hard to make it very much worse. There are very serious times ahead of this colony. How do we know how many disasters nature has in store for us? Are we prepared for them? Supposing there was a famine in other parts of the world, we have nothing we could rely upon except our beef, and that is afflicted by a pest which is so reducing our herds that we will soon have nothing left to fall back upon. We are in a most lamentable state and one that is very likely to grow worse day by day. Hon. members on this side have impressed on the head of the Government the propriety of remitting the dividend tax. I trust the hon. gentleman will not take those remarks into serious consideration. It is one of the best taxes we have. In fact it should be increased. I consider the amount now levied is very small indeed. Were I getting dividends, I do not care from what source, I should be very glad to pay the Government 10 per cent. of what I got. I think it is about the fairest tax that we have. Then there are other things we should do. We should put an export duty on gold, increase the dividend tax, and take off the duty of 6d. per lb. upon tea. The Government cannot pose as a friend to the poor man so long as they keep that iniquitous duty on the beverage which the poorest use, and which is the greatest solace and comfort

the poor have. There are many things upon which duty might well be remitted, and others upon which it might well be increased, and all round the tariff is not equally adjusted by any means. I should very much like to hear a little from some of those gentlemen who are supposed to be ardent protectionists, but who have been somewhat silent on this very important matter, both last session and this. The industries of the colony should occupy the minds of the Ministry. Presumably they do, but the cares of State are so burdensome that they may be excused for not paying more attention to them. Legislative burdens are very heavy to bear. Those hon. members who usually take an active part in legislation find it very burdensome, and it must be doubly burdensome to the Ministry, although they are surrounded with every comfort and convenience. But granting them every excuse, there is no reason why hon. members who support the Government should entirely escape. They should certainly attend to their duty and not lounge about with their hands in their pockets and take everything for granted. It is their place to insist upon the Government bringing things forward. The Government are only instruments in the hands of the House. They are only highly paid delegates to do the duty of the Assembly; but my experience of Parliament is that the Assembly is never prepared to call upon them to do anything. I wish to say that there is no desire on the part of any person or party on this side of the House to disturb the Government. They are perfectly secure, and we hope they will remain where they are, but it would not do to stop here and not point out the many defects we see in their actions. I could stop here until to-morrow morning and point out numbers of defects and show the way in which they could be improved, but I do not wish to do so. I consider it is the duty of those behind the Government to do this, but there are a number of people looking to us to formulate a better system of things. We are not the Government. The Government hedge themselves in in every possible way, and when they see the least move from this side of the House in the way of important legislation they are up in arms. I do not want it to be said that the Labour party are doing nothing, but I wish it to be known that they are not in a position to do anything. Whatever little the Government has done is due to the Labour party, and to no other party, and it is now the duty of the Government supporters to compel them to go further. I wish to put the electors who support this side of the House in a proper position, and show them that we cannot do anything. Certain steps can be taken which will improve the position of the colony; it is the duty of the Government to take those steps, and I trust that, if the Government will not do their duty, those who sit behind them will compel them to do it, or else form another Government from amongst themselves. If they think that by upsetting the Government this side will get into power they are very much mistaken, but if they are prepared to take their places we will support them. Something must be done to keep the industries of the colony together, and to regulate affairs, because there is a very important crisis coming on. We will be called upon shortly to deal with an institution that is interwoven with political life in Queensland, and we want to deal with it in a dispassionate and impartial manner, so as to separate that institution and its surroundings from public life and public men so far as we can, and preserve the strength of that institution and its standing in the colony, as well as its financial standing with other institutions. We cannot go on from year to year like this, or else the baneful shadow

that overhangs the colony now will continue to overhang it. I want the Government supporters to seriously consider the position, because they represent a large number of people, and it is their business to deal with this matter, which relates to the probity and honesty of our public men. It has been our effort to advance good government in every way, and no fault can be found with the Labour party. Whatever credit is due to the Government of Queensland is due to the efforts of the Labour party, and to their presence in this House. I hope hon. members will take these few remarks into their earnest consideration. I might say a good deal more, but I do not want to ruffle or disturb the harmony that exists. Some may think that because the Government have consented to advance the salaries of hon. members that they have drawn the teeth of the Labour party, but they have not done so. The Labour party have increased in intelligence, and are still increasing. We do not wish to throw any untoward obstacle in the way of public progress; but there is a time coming when we will have to assert our rights, and I trust that the trouble of that time will be alleviated as much as possible by the actions of hon. members on the other side.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member, who has just concluded a very interesting address, has said that it is the duty of hon. members upon this side not to depend upon the Government. I think it is the duty of hon. members opposite to assist the Government in passing measures presented here for the public good. That goes without saying; but the hon. member has said that in times past the Government did not listen to suggestions made by the Labour party. There was one suggestion that I remember in connection with village communities that the Government adopted, and those communities were a complete failure.

Mr. DAWSON: That was owing to bad administration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Of course no one can foresee what is going to happen, and it is very easy for persons to be wise after the event. The hon. member advocated the extension of our railway system in the case of certain lines, but if he desires to extend the railway system to the Etheridge, or anywhere else, he must, I imagine, construct those lines with borrowed money. That does away with a great deal of what the hon. member said in an earlier part of his speech. The hon. member blamed the people of Queensland because a considerable number of years ago, taking an optimistic view of the future, they thought they were safe in borrowing money. If that system of borrowing is still to continue, then that part of the hon. member's speech which consisted of a denunciation of the loan policy and of usurers outside the colony falls to the ground. The hon. member talked about pledging the future, and of putting a millstone round our necks, whilst he is at the same time willing to build railways which he believes will pay. At the time the railway policy was enunciated it was supported by everyone—by business people, by the people who expected to be benefited by the railways, and certainly by the working classes, and by that term I mean the manual labourers. There is no possible means by which people can be absolutely certain when they borrow money that the money will be well and profitably spent.

Mr. HOOLAN: You have the experience of past years to guide you now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I admit that the experience of past years shows us that mistakes were made,

and rational beings may be pretty certain that in the future they will make mistakes too. What has partly led me to follow the hon. member is the fact that he has dealt with certain matters in connection with the agricultural industry. The hon. member told us that during the last two or three weeks he has been making researches into this branch of industry. It is very curious that the hon. member's interest should have been so much excited of late, and the idea did occur to me that possibly a pending election has somewhat stimulated the interest which hon. members on the other side take with regard to this question. So far as I know, at the present time the only members of that party who represent farming communities are their leader and the hon. member for Cambooya.

Mr. DAWSON: More than that—the hon. members for Maranoa and Mitchell.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: At any rate, I may say that the majority of the agricultural community in Queensland are under the impression—and I think they are perfectly correct—that their interests are much safer when they are represented on this side of the House than when they are represented on the other side. I do not know how far hon. members on the other side are going to adhere to the policy of their platform, which was flaunted at one time throughout the colony. Their great notion was to nationalise everything, and also to do away with the right of bequest. Hon. members have not proclaimed it this evening, when one of their number is contesting an agricultural electorate, but on every other occasion they have put in the forefront of their programme a land tax. Now, the farmer does not want to be nationalised; he prefers, as the hon. member for Burke has said, to acquire a holding. Very naturally, I think; and if he realises the true position of affairs—if he knows the socialistic propaganda which has been put forth, and which receives the approval of certain members of the party—then it would be as reasonable for a sheep to walk into the jaws of a ravenous lion as it would be for the harmless and innocent agriculturist to walk over and support what is called the Labour Socialist party. The hon. member gave us some facts in connection with a tuber known as the potato. He told us—I really was not aware of it before—that the gentlemen from the Green Isle have hitherto lived exclusively upon potatoes.

Mr. HOOLAN: No; during troublous times.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I was under the impression that they got a great deal more than potatoes. Whatever their diet, there is no doubt they manage to thrive on it. The hon. member told us that 3,500 tons of potatoes were imported into Queensland last year, but it does not follow from that that the Government are hostile to the agriculturists.

Mr. HOOLAN: They are neglectful of them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Or neglectful of them either. They have endeavoured to exclude the competition of the foreigner in potatoes, and unless the Government grow potatoes themselves—in which case they could not very well discharge their duties in this House—I do not know what you could very well expect them to do. While on the subject of agriculture, I remember some years ago a number of gentlemen connected with the Labour party came from Charters Towers to Mackay, and said that they were going to do away with Polynesians. Of course that was also a portion of their programme, and they were going to take up land themselves and grow cane. They were offered cane land on the most favourable terms, but they have not yet carried their proposals into effect.

I am not aware that the Labour party, as a party, are going to grow potatoes; but if they desire to set the Government an example in the matter, none will object to their doing so, and I am sure they will be engaged in a particularly useful occupation. What are the facts with regard to potatoes, and why is it that potatoes have to be imported here on occasions? I wonder that it did not occur to the hon. member, who has almost a superfluous supply of intelligence, that the potato is not a vegetable which will last for ever, and that, on the whole, a fresh potato is very much more pleasant than an aged potato. The seasons here are not always favourable for growing potatoes. It is said, that "there is a time to laugh, and a time to cry." There is also a time to grow sugar-cane, and a time to grow potatoes. Nothing is more evident than this: that the stock of potatoes grown at one period of the year will not keep all the year through. I am satisfied on that point, because I have grown potatoes myself; but it does not in the least follow that because a farmer does not grow potatoes all the year round that he is neglectful of his own interests.

Mr. MCMMASTER: You must import seed potatoes. You cannot get them here.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: As the hon. member says, it is desirable to import seed potatoes from the south. Then the hon. member does not seem to think that an agricultural college would be of any service whatever. In that matter his opinion is in direct opposition to the majority of members who represent farming districts. A school in which practical agriculture is taught cannot fail to be beneficial to the people in the future. With regard to this matter of farm produce, as to which he has particularly pointed out how wrong it is for us to have recourse to any foreign country, he calls attention to the fact that there are other colonies, such as Victoria and New Zealand, which export agricultural produce, while this is an importing colony. But he has forgotten one thing: he has not made allowance for sugar. If it pays people better to produce gold, or wool, or sugar, than it pays to grow potatoes or farm produce at a very low price, as they do in other colonies, and have to seek a sale in our markets—if it pays them to grow those other commodities better, why should we interfere to prevent them? But, as a matter of fact, if you compare the exports, which are directly the result of the labour of the agriculturist—if you compare the exports of Queensland with those of any other colony, it is an absolute fact that the value of the farm produce of Queensland, including sugar, which is the manufactured product of the farmer's labour, is about 50 per cent. more than that of any other colony in Australia. And instead of drawing the conclusion that, because our export of farm produce is, as he supposes, less than that of other colonies, and that the Government are in default, if he is disposed to be just and logical he would say that in consequence of our exports being absolutely 50 per cent. in excess in value of those of any other colony, then we have a 50 per cent. better Government.

Mr. DAWSON: You have no right to include sugar, which is a manufactured article, in farm produce.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member may as well say there are only 10,000 ounces of gold exported from the colony, and exclude all the other fields except the particular one which will prove his argument. He may be very successful, but he will be very disingenuous. It is absurd to exclude sugar, which is the result of the farmer's operations. If the farmer did not grow cane there would be no sugar. He might as well also

say that the export of Queensland minerals is so much, and when it is pointed out that it is three times as much, say, "Oh, but we exclude gold." Such a statement regarding minerals would be obviously incorrect, and if anybody says that our export of agricultural produce is so much, and excludes sugar, then I say his statement requires correction. It entirely destroys the effect of the hon. member's statement when he says we do not export agricultural produce as other colonies do, if he excludes sugar, because it is directly the produce of the farmer's operations.

Mr. HOOLAN: What kind of farmers are they?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: With all respect to the hon. member, I must say that the farmer who grows cane is in all respects as proper a kind of farmer as you can possibly get. As a representative of those farmers, I should be disposed to say that on the whole he is a more proper farmer. As much as the farmer who grows wheat and potatoes he gets his living by tilling the soil.

Mr. HOOLAN: Those are ignorant farmers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We cannot prevent the hon. member from calling them ignorant farmers. He possesses a great deal of individuality of character, and he is one of the boldest members, having regard to his own constituents, that I am acquainted with. For instance, the hon. member this evening proposed an export duty on gold. I really respect his courage. As a mining member, that is distinctly the very boldest thing I ever heard of; and it appeared to me that he would be perfectly willing, as an ideal member, to sacrifice the interests of his constituents to the common good. But I do not believe, at the same time, that if you went on a goldfield, and proposed to double the duty on whisky, making it £1 8s., and take the duty off tea and coffee, and make up the £80,000 a year which would be required to replace the duty on tea by taxing the miner's gold, anybody except the hon. member himself would be returned as a representative of a mining district.

Mr. HOOLAN: I should like to do what is right. Some constituency might recognise it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member has drawn attention, as have other hon. members, to the fact that only some £300,000 has been produced from pastoral rents, and he has inferred, if I do not mistake his meaning, that that is an entirely inadequate rental; and he has suggested that it would be desirable to clear out those persons who are at present in occupation for pastoral purposes—I presume to put other people there supported by the State.

Mr. HOOLAN: No. Small holdings, and more of them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: But the hon. member also told us that those properties had to a large extent gone into the hands of financial institutions, and there were no individual rights to conserve, and it seemed to me that he was in favour probably of harsher methods with those people than he would have been disposed to use had they retained ownership. But he has pointed out, what is equally true, that those people owe £11,000,000. Does that go to show that they have been paying an inadequate rental? Does it not show quite clearly that the industry as an industry has been for some considerable period an extremely unprofitable one. If you were talking about Ireland, and it was shown that the tenants were compelled to go to other people to borrow money to pay their rent, would you in that case say, "Let us get more rent out of them"? The statement that those people owe £11,000,000 shows that they were unable to pay their way, that they had to borrow money to carry on improvements necessary to their business, and

which were undoubtedly beneficial to the State. Many of them, to my knowledge, went there without any borrowed money at all. Some of them did borrow money. But what would we think of a miner who had to borrow money, we will say to get backing on a mining show, with the result that he could not repay the backing money and could not give a half-share, because his operations did not pay? Would we argue that the Government should put a tax on him and punish him? No; we should say at once that his backing money was probably insufficient, or that the thing was not profitable; and the real cause of these unfortunate people being in debt is that during the last ten years the general operations carried on by the pastoral tenants have, in very many cases at any rate, been unprofitable. I refer to the hon. member for Kennedy on this point, and I really respect his opinion on it, more especially with regard to cattle-men, who are the main holders of country in his vicinity. It is notorious to everybody who knows anything about the matter that for several years of late if the persons who have stations had those stations for nothing it would have taken them all their time to pay expenses. That is so; and while that is so, the statement that the pastoral tenant is in some way to be squeezed and rack-rented is unreasonable, unjust, and inconsiderate. Another statement has been made, with regard to the comparison made between the pastoral tenant and the miner. I have the greatest sympathy with the miner; I sincerely trust that the miners will go on and prosper; but if you compare what the miner pays to the people or the State with what the pastoralist pays for whatever privileges he gets, you will find that the pastoralist is the one who has the most to pay and who gets relatively the least. The value of the produce exported by the pastoral industry comes to about £5,000,000 per annum, for which the pastoralists pay to the State over £300,000, or nearly £400,000 in the way of rent—that is, of course, including grazing farms. That is about what these people pay to the State in proportion to what they earn, and after all the hon. member will probably agree with me that rent is what is left after paying interest and the expense of sustenance of the man or men who work the business. That is all that any landlord can claim, and I say that, if you compare what those particular classes of producers pay for what they produce with what is paid by the miner, then the miner is the man who is best treated by the State, who pays vastly less for his advantages than the pastoralist. But in this House as a rule, as a consequence, I suppose, of there being a preponderance of mining representatives, we are always hearing how much the miner has to pay and how little the pastoralist pays. What are the facts? The pastoralists pay nearly £400,000 a year. The gold miner produces £2,000,000 worth of gold per annum, and therefore at the same rate he ought to pay the State nearly £100,000 per annum.

Mr. HOOLAN: Oh, no!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is all very well to say "Oh, no," but I should like to know, when we talk about the land belonging to the people, whether you are going to ignore the gold that is got out of the land? When the general statement is made, upon which people outside trade so much, that everything comes from the land, are you going to ignore mining? If a crop which has been nourished by the dews, the air, and the sunshine is to be debited to the land, how much more is gold to be debited to the land? There is the gold, but when the miner takes it away he leaves the land a desert, while the man who takes a crop off the land puts in another. It seems to me that from a socialist's point of view the man

who ought in the public interest to be treated more lightly is the farmer or the pastoralist. I want this to be recorded in order that people when they talk upon these topics may reflect upon the real position. I say the miner is particularly well treated. He only pays £26,000 per annum to the State. That is all the nation gets out of him.

Mr. Cross: What capital does the mining industry invest?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Without replying to interjections, I shall just deal with these two matters. The miner pays to the State—I am not saying that he should pay any more—about £26,000 a year in licenses, miner's rights, and so on, and he gets £2,000,000, which he sends out of the colony, while the pastoralist, who gets £5,000,000, pays over £300,000 in rent to the State.

Mr. HOOLAN: You forget his valuable permanent asset. Mining has not got that. It is a very uncertain thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That will cut both ways. If the pastoralist has a valuable permanent asset, the miner has taken all there is in the land, and you can get no more out of it. I wish also to reply to the statement made by the hon. member for Rockhampton last evening when he said that the whole burdens of the State were thrown upon the poor man in consequence of the revenue being derived to a large extent from Customs and excise, and in consequence of there being no tax on incomes or on land. That statement requires a certain amount of analysis. If we look at the returns we get from the Customs we shall find that there are about 450,000 people in the colony, and that these 450,000 people contribute through the Customs £1,359,000 per annum. In that sum there is 16s. per head for spirits. The hon. member who talks about raising the duty on spirits to 28s. per gallon, and says that the demon drink is most pernicious to the community, cannot possibly turn round and tell me that these are necessities of life. What he has said has been to show not only that it was pernicious, but probably that it should not be permitted. All I will contend is that it cannot be said to be a burden on the poor man—that it is, to say the least of it, a luxury of which I do not know that poor men have a monopoly. You cannot say that it is trenching on people's means of subsistence when you put on a tax which is only half that of which the hon. member would approve. Tobacco is 8s. Then there is *ad valorem* duty. You may assume that this is all on wearing apparel, which is used perhaps by those who have the least to spare, but it covers all sorts of articles, and speaking generally, they are not paid by those who can only buy necessities. For instance, amongst the *ad valorem* is machinery. That is also one of the grounds of complaint which is alleged by miners, that they have to pay for machinery, but all that was paid last year for mining machinery was not £3,000, while the sugar-grower or miller paid about £12,000 on machinery. Going back to this table the *ad valorem* duty amounts to 13s. a head. Then we come to an item which you might say fairly would be paid by those who are not well off, perhaps, to a larger extent, if you assume that there are more of them than of those who are well off. The amount is 8s. per head, but food includes fodder, horse feed, so that the 8s. would be in excess of what you may say is a burden on the people. The duty on tea and coffee amounts to 4s. per head. Then we come to another item which is chargeable fairly to those whom we may call aliens, the duty on rice and on opium. That would come to 2s. 6d. per head. Then we come to incidentals, 3s. 6d. per head. Those items

amount altogether to £3 per head. It is really impossible to suppose that much more than one-third of the sum total would be borne by those who are generally called the working classes. And from that also you must not forget that a considerable portion is returned. First of all there is the item of education, a very large item, which costs £3 per child. And the same may be said of all kinds of charitable and philanthropic institutions, such as hospitals. That is returned. Therefore, I say the statement that the greater burden is cast on the shoulders of the working man is one that requires considerable qualification. There is another item which should not be forgotten. All the expenditure in connection with the municipalities, divisional boards, marsupials, brands, sheep—taxes of that description, amounting in all to over a quarter of a million, are, with the exception of about £60,000, all a burden on the land. The whole of the local expenditure, with the exception of some £60,000 which is paid by the State as a subsidy, is found by property. I shall now give another table which I think was given a year or two ago by the Home Secretary. It was made by Mr. Atkinson, of New Zealand, to show the proportion of the taxation borne by the various classes of population, and he made out that this was the proportion.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was proved to be incorrect three years ago when the Home Secretary read it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It has never been challenged so far as I know. The hon. member for Rockhampton, if he were here, would very gladly welcome it. The wage-earner, it was calculated, paid 17s. 3d.; the person who was better off, who would probably not be called a property-owner, but would occupy an intermediate position financially, paid £2 13s. 3d.; and the property-owner would contribute, apart from the property tax, £4 10s. 3d. That was the table read in this House.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: It is perfectly worthless. Many have to pay as much as £140 a year in taxes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have given the averages. Then there was a statement with regard to socialism, to which I would like to refer. In the Financial Statement the Premier made allusion to a suggestion made to him in connection with the meat trade, and he stated that under certain circumstances if private enterprise did not engage in this project it would be possible for the State to step in. I am not aware that this is at all socialism in the sense in which it is used in the Trades Hall. I never hear anyone question the contention that State action is perfectly justifiable in all cases where work cannot be done by private persons. I do not think the monarchs of Egypt, the Pharaohs, or the kings of Nineveh ever questioned that; and I do not think the Trades Hall would have welcomed those distinguished potentates as their friends and brothers. What I want to point out is that this word "socialism" is becoming exceedingly familiar if not threadbare, and some hon. members have an idea—and I may say the members of the Labour party constantly give expression to it—that if progress is made in one direction for a certain time you must instantly do a rule-of-three sum: that having moved in a certain direction for a certain time if you double the length of time you will have moved double the distance. I wonder if they have ever carried out that calculation with regard to their children who grow about three inches a year, and have figured out what they would have grown to when they come to be two or three and thirty. Because the tide comes in at a certain rate they

say it is going to come in at that rate for ever; and I wonder what would become of Queensland if it did. They talk about "socialism"; and I would like to know from them what it means? Some say that because the Premier has put this particular passage into the Statement it shows that he and members in this part of the House are "socialistic." I wish they would tell us what "socialistic" means? Then they speak of a "tendency." Because you take a step in a certain direction there is a "tendency" to go on—I suppose they mean—to the socialism of the Trades Hall, and to nationalise everything. But a tendency is a very different thing from actuality. If you take a bird I suppose it has a tendency to fall, but we know that if it keeps on flying it will not fall. A balloon has a similar tendency, but it may go up all the time. I suppose in this latitude we are going round at from 700 to 1,000 miles an hour, and our tendency is to be thrown off to the Southern Cross, but we do not go nevertheless; we still stop in this House. If I throw this paper up in a south-west wind, there would be a tendency on the part of the paper to go to China or Japan; but does anybody suppose it would ever get there? I want to make it perfectly clear that there is a very great deal of difference between a tendency to go in any particular direction and actually going there. I would like to take notice of some of the remarks made by some hon. members opposite. If we did not take notice they might be more or less offended, considering that they had not been treated with the respect to which they were entitled. The hon. member for Kennedy led off in the absence of his leader, who, he said, was not well. The hon. member in the circumstances took up the position of leader, and, as no one contradicted what he said, I presume that all the members on the other side shared his views. For himself he said he had no fixed fiscal policy, nor had the Labour party.

Mr. CROSS: Let him speak for himself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is what he said: that the Labour party had no fiscal policy, and I can understand his saying so, because everybody knows that where there is a difficult question that would split the Labour party, no matter how important it may be, the Labour party sacrifice the public interest because they cannot afford to save the country if the expense would be a loss of votes.

Mr. KERR: They have the example of the Government to follow.

Mr. HOOLAN: That is supposititious. The position has not cropped up yet.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: At any rate in the other colonies it has cropped up, and it crops up more or less here. The hon. member for Kennedy said this fiscal question had a most important bearing upon the well-being of the colony. As patriotic gentlemen who may, as the hon. member for Burke says, by-and-by occupy these benches, it appears to me that the world is entitled to hear from them what their opinions are upon this subject, and they have no right to drop the subject simply because it is inconvenient to express an opinion upon it, more especially when one of their number makes the statement that it has an important bearing upon the well-being of the colony. It is besides a practical question, unlike socialism; you have not to wait until it comes, as it faces you at once and everywhere. On that particular subject hon. members opposite should reflect and see whether they cannot come to an agreement upon the policy which they should adopt.

Mr. HOOLAN: If they agreed on that it would be fatal to the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The Government are perfectly willing at any time to lay down their positions if it be for the good of the country.

Mr. HOOLAN: They will have a tough struggle for it though first.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Some hon. members cast doubts as usual upon the reality of the surplus, while others believed that the surplus did exist, but if it did it only proved that the money had been dragged out of the people by Customs revenue.

MEMBERS of the Labour party: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Hon. members cheer that. They evidently think that we are to increase revenue, but not by dragging it out of the people. Will hon. members opposite collectively tell me where we are to get revenue if there is not somebody to get it from? How under any circumstances is a revenue or a surplus to be derived without, as they say, taking it out of the people?

Mr. CROSS: That does not indicate the people's prosperity.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have already given a list to show how the moneys contributed through the Customs were derived, but it does not appear to me to be a very sensible criticism upon an increased or improving revenue, to say that it has been got out of somebody. Of course it has been got out of somebody. It is unfortunately but too true that many people have got a kind of notion that money does not come from anybody, and that is why they are so very anxious to get money and have it freely spent. They never recognise what everybody ought to recognise, that if they demand a "free" something, whether it be education, or a bridge which must not be put down to the locality, or some new buildings, they are simply demanding more taxation, for the Government have to get the money from somebody before they can spend it upon the object for which it is demanded. These rules should be learned very clearly and should not be forgotten. It has been stated, with regard to another portion of the Financial Statement, that the amount of interest payable in connection with the sugar works will be £40,000, while they cannot expect to make more than £45,000, and therefore the farmers had a very poor prospect before them. That statement requires analysis to the extent of showing that the implication it covers is quite incorrect. What is called interest is in fact a great deal more than interest. When they pay £40,000 a year out of £45,000 they are in fact paying for the mills, and I think with that explanation it will be seen that they will in fact do exceedingly well. With regard to the Statement, I think the Treasurer is to be congratulated upon the results attained by his operations during the past year. The returns have been £228,411 in excess of what he anticipated. Of course a Treasurer who desires that his forecasts may be relied upon is wise if he does not overestimate his returns. That is only a matter of ordinary prudence, and to discover at the end of the year that you have a considerable amount in excess of that which you estimated is really to show that if you err at all you err on the side of prudence, and that your calculations may be relied upon. If that is so, then it goes a long way towards establishing the credit of the colony, because the Statement of the Treasurer is not only criticised in the neighbouring colonies, but an estimate is formed of our position by people at the antipodes through the Treasurer's Statement. Then the expenditure was shown to be in excess of the estimate by £136,144. Now that expenditure would not have been sanctioned in the first place

unless the Treasurer had discovered that his revenue was in excess of his anticipations, and seeing that part of the money we get in the way of returns is derived from public services, the larger the revenue the greater the expense which will have to be incurred. Then the balance which we obtain is £73,336. That balance is large and satisfactory, more especially when we contrast the position of this colony with the position of our immediate neighbours.

Mr. HARDACRE: Contrast it with New Zealand.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I do not know the position of New Zealand, but I am sure that Queensland does not suffer by comparison with New Zealand, and if you examine the statements submitted by the Treasurers of the other colonies you will find that the condition of the Queensland finances is very much more satisfactory than theirs. The general results of the last year's operations are, that the Treasurer managed to pay his way, and to reduce our debt by £75,000. Now, if we individually in bad times manage to show as clear evidence of prosperity, I think we should have reason to be satisfied; and we may fairly, as people who are interested in the colony, say that the people and the Treasurer also are to be congratulated if at the end of the year, which is only three years after a period of very disastrous financial collapse, we are able to pay not only our way, but £75,000 off our debt. In the future the Treasurer tells us he expects a moderate increase, and looks for a surplus of £23,000, and as in the past his forecasts have been borne out, we may look with confidence to his anticipations being borne out on this occasion.

Mr. HOOLAN: We should expect a larger amount.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member says that we should expect a larger amount. It is a matter of reducing a surplus that would otherwise accrue, and the Treasurer proposes to take off from Customs duties a sum of about £50,000, still retaining a moderate tariff for the protection of our industries. He is taking off duties really on articles which are used in the increase of our industries. For instance, no doubt the hon. member's constituents will get the benefit of some reduction in the duty on mining material, and my constituents and the farmers generally may reap an advantage in a reduced duty on flour, sugar bags, and so on. It is in the direction of promoting our industries that the Treasurer desires to appropriate a certain sum of money which would of course otherwise appear as a surplus. Perhaps, however, I am speculating more than I have any right to do with regard to what will occur. Now, with regard to the complaint which was made by the hon. member for Rockhampton about a land and income tax. When the matter was brought forward and the country was in great straits for money, I think, if I turned up *Hansard*, I should discover that I was in favour of that particular policy, and so I should be again if the circumstances of the colony required it. I really cannot understand the extraordinary delight which some people appear to find in the mere fact of imposing taxation. They seem to want to impose taxes for the sake of imposing them, but taxes should never be imposed unless it is absolutely necessary. It is one of the maxims of taxation that we should never take from the people more than is necessary, and it was said by Adam Smith that we should never take from the people except in the least burdensome way. When we tax such things as whisky and tobacco, I think we are taxing people in the least vexatious way. The hon. member for Burke will admit, and I think everyone will admit, that if we impose an income tax we shall

not be taxing people in the least burdensome way. Inquiries have to be made and difficulties have to be overcome, and if you work upon those canons laid down for the imposition of taxation you will not put on that tax because it is vexatious. If I have taken up more time than I intended it is owing to the hon. member who preceded me, because he supplied me with a vast amount of material. To my mind it is very satisfactory to find that, generally speaking, there has been an admission in the first instance that the Treasurer's report was of a satisfactory character, secondly, that his figures are reliable, and, lastly, that he has supplied a vast amount of information which would supply persons in this colony with a compendium of useful and interesting information with regard to the position and progress and prospects of the colony.

Mr. BELL: I rise to make one or two observations upon one or two points which have occurred to me in connection with this Financial Statement. We have had an address from the hon. member for Burke, as to the length and bulk of which there cannot be very much difference of opinion. We listened to the hon. member with an amount of attention which, from a personal point of view, his well-known reputation fully entitles him to, but in addition to that the hon. member's utterances have attached to them an *éclat* that properly belongs to any hon. member who occupies the position of ex-leader of the hon. members who adorn the benches opposite. That hon. member made a long speech, and he developed for the first time, so far as I know, an unwonted interest in the agricultural industry. We had from him a very long discourse upon the importance of onions and "spuds," and I believe he wanted us to believe that at one period of his existence potatoes formed a staple article of his diet. It is possible that may have been so, but I beg leave to doubt it; at all events, I am inclined to think that the memories of potatoes which have been revived in the hon. member's mind to-night have some connection with an election which is about to take place not very many miles from Brisbane. If that election had not been going to take place, I do not think the hon. member would have alluded in such fervent terms to the importance of the agricultural industry. I do not suppose there is one hon. member in this House who in his heart of hearts can deny that this Government is about to take steps, and last session actually did take steps, more vigorously than any previous Administration, to do the best they could, according to our ideas of the functions of a Government, to assist the agricultural industry. This so-called Conservative Administration introduced an entirely new principle in the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. The hon. member for Burke criticised the administration of that measure, but so far as we can judge all the deductions we can draw from the measure are entirely favourable. I understand the Treasurer has promised to give us some information, and no doubt we will be better informed upon the subject. Nothing has occurred in connection with that measure to justify the airy condemnation which the hon. member for Burke was pleased to bestow upon it, and I believe the hon. member for Lockyer, from his own personal observation, will be able to show that the hon. member for Burke, no doubt under an entire misapprehension, has made nothing more or less than a misstatement in regard to certain portions of land in the Lockyer electorate which were purchased by the Government. I know that on the Darling Downs the repurchased lands are going off and coming under settlement slowly, steadily, and satisfactorily; and I hope that even if the Government halt for a time in regard to that measure

they are not going to cease operations permanently. At the western end of the Downs there is urgent need for the measure to be put in operation.

Mr. HARDACRE: What about the lands in the settled districts that are not thrown open?

Mr. BELL: If the hon. member will put his interjections in the form of a concrete speech it will be better. The hon. member for Burke, in criticising the actions of the Government in regard to settlement on the land, ran full tilt against the pastoral industry, and I regretted to hear him say that the pastoral tenants of the Crown, throughout their career in this colony, had set a remarkably bad example to the people. I do not know whether he was speaking of one section more than another, but he said their conduct as a whole had been bad; that they had lived extravagantly, and although he did not go into details in enumerating their vices, he considered them a very faulty class. I contend that there is no class in this or any other country who have more zealously done their duty, and set a good example to their fellow-colonists, than the pastoral tenants of Queensland, and at this period of their existence, when the position of 80 per cent. or 90 per cent. of them is absolutely pathetic, it is not becoming in any man who professes to know the facts to revile them and say they have not done their duty. Most of those men brought capital here, and have pursued their calling in as self-denying a way as it is possible for any class to do. Then the hon. member for Burke, amiable man though he is, comes under the influence of party politics, and purely from the party politics point of view sees fit to revile them. I do not think it necessary to dwell very much upon that point, beyond expressing the great regret that an ex-leader of a political party should have descended to such a method of criticism. The hon. member went on, in referring to the land administration of the Government, to say that grazing farms were thrown open to selection more out of regard to the interests of the pastoral tenants than those of selectors and grazing farmers. That statement is quite erroneous. The best land in Queensland is at this moment under grazing farm selection, and the best runs have either got grazing farmers on them or are in the process of being selected. The very eyes of Queensland have been selected by grazing farmers. In fact, I believe that the department, if they have not operated on all the runs that have been scheduled under the Land Act of 1884, have at all events operated on the bulk of them. Certainly they have operated on the best of them, and if they went further west, and endeavoured to bring any more runs under the 1884 Land Act, on the whole they would get inferior runs. Then the hon. member cast what was nothing more or less than a slur upon the Land Board. He hinted, if he did not absolutely say so in exact terms, that the Land Board was either an incapable board, or, if I am not mistaken, a dishonest board. The Land Board, Messrs. Sword and Tully, is composed of the two best men you could get to sit upon such a board. I have witnessed the performance of their functions when they are deciding upon the rent of a run, and no two men could be more judicial and impartial in listening to the evidence and in giving their decision. I am at a loss to know what impulse, or what information, could have prompted the hon. member to say that it is an incompetent board, a board which did not properly do its duty. In the Financial Statement there are two matters which seem to me of superior interest. One of them has been dealt with at some length, and I shall not make more than a passing reference to it. That is the

figures which show the immense quantity of farm produce which is annually brought into this country. I believe the Government are going the right way about putting a stop to these imports. They are throwing open land for farmers to settle on, and they are establishing colleges where the latest ideas in agriculture and a great many wrinkles can be learned, even by men who think they know all that is to be learned about agriculture.

Mr. DANIELS: They know more than you do about it.

Mr. BELL: I admit that frankly, although I think the hon. member himself has always been more associated with the grazing farmer than with the agriculturist. I am sure that something can be done in the way of inquiry as to whether the resources of the country have been exhausted in assisting the farmers of this country. At all events, it is a lamentable thing to see the immense quantity of produce that is brought here. Many of the items, not all of them, are products that we can successfully produce. The particular matter to which I wish to allude—a matter which I believe is really of paramount importance in this Financial Statement, and a matter which concerns more people than any other matter touched upon in the Statement—is the reference that the Government make to the probability and the possibility that they may have to step in and do something for the meat industry. We hear a great deal about “individualism” and “socialism,” and before any course of action is taken we hear people debating as to whether it is “individualistic” or “socialistic.” I think, if we are to have any “ism” at all, the “ism” we should follow is “opportunism.” What is “opportunism,” as I understand it? I believe that it is adopting the particular line of action which is dictated by the exigencies of the situation, irrespective of the tenets of any political party. I believe that, when any question comes before us, if we adopt that course which experience tells us we ought to adopt, without hesitating to take the step because it is socialistic or individualistic, we shall reach a successful goal much more readily than if we are influenced by mere names. I think we hear a great deal too much about socialism in this country. I have no fear of socialism, and, if, perhaps unwisely, I were to make a statement in regard to an abstract principle, I might say that I believe that on the whole the tendency of this country will be towards socialism, but very slowly, and certainly not “in our time.”

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You must be a member of the Fabian Society.

Mr. BELL: I have heard that statement made before, but I never belonged to the Fabian Society. Probably if anyone had asked me to join it, I should have done so, though not out of sympathy for its principles. I suppose that for any young man who takes an interest in public affairs there is no grander institution he could belong to than the Fabian Society. We talk of the Government taking action to develop our meat industry. I am thinking especially of the export of beef, although there is no reason why we should not export mutton. But sheep have wool, which makes a yearly return to the colony, while there is nothing but the meat to be got from bullocks. To-day in Queensland we have 7,000,000 bullocks, and we have an immense area of country which is suitable, in our present development, for nothing else than the production of bullocks.

Mr. DANIELS: You are at home on that subject. Stick to that and leave the farmers.

Mr. BELL: The hon. member for Bulloo says that I may refer to asses directly. Probably if I do, the subject may have a very great interest

for the hon. member for Cambooya. I hope hon. members on the other side will give some attention to what I say, because I am advocating, so far as I feebly can, the case of the pastoral tenants, and there is a suspicion abroad—it may be well-founded, or it may be unfounded—that the hon. members who sit on those benches are not well-disposed towards the pastoral tenants—that they are not ready to bestir themselves in regard to any course of action which will tend to the benefit of the pastoral tenants.

MEMBERS of the Opposition side: That is not true.

Mr. BELL: I merely say that such a suspicion exists. I do not say that it is well-founded. What I am endeavouring to show is that a chance exists in the direction of developing our meat exports which may result not merely in benefit to pastoral employees, but is absolutely a national affair. The industry gives employment to so many men that it is a matter which those hon. members, in their nominal capacity as representatives of labour, should devote attention to. We have reached this stage in the meat industry of Queensland: that after many years of unsuccessful, unaided individual effort, the Government step in and, by their combining power, through the influence of the meat and dairy tax, have brought about the erection of meat factories throughout Queensland. Those factories have been in existence for the last two or three years, and hundreds of thousands of beasts have been exported to Europe through their agency; yet the condition of things is such that that industry is at this moment threatened with absolute extinction. And why is that? Although Queensland at this end has done her duty—although what has hitherto been an industry of raw products has been turned into a manufacturing industry, we find to-day that, owing to causes which are operating on the other side of the water, that that manufacturing industry is threatened with extinction; and the vigorous efforts that have been made by those interested in the meat trade on this side of the water to bring about a better distribution of our products in London have been futile, and so low are the prices which are obtained there for Queensland frozen meat that it is absolutely at a loss in very many cases that cattle are sent to London. During the last eighteen months it would have paid very much better even to have sold in our wretched local markets than to have sent cattle frozen to England, and it was only the fact that engagements were made which caused them to be sent during recent months to London. In London the producer here has to fight not merely a considerable distance from the seaboard; he has not merely to fight the long distance from Europe; he has not merely to fight the internal dangers, such as the tick disease and the quarantine laws, but he has to fight some of the most formidable competitors who are straining every nerve to forward the sale of their own products. The Government in this Financial Statement have hinted—they have only hinted, I am sorry to say—that it may be necessary for them to take some action towards assisting in the meat trade. But we find that in Canada and in some of our own southern colonies the Governments have already taken resolute action towards assisting their export trade. The Canadian Government have recently made a most direct attempt, by State intervention, to assist in the successful distribution of Canadian meat and Canadian products generally in Great Britain; and for years they have had not merely a High Commissioner, but they have had an office in London entirely devoted to the commercial interests of Canada. Those are the forces against which the Queensland pastoralists have to contend. Let us look at the importance

of this industry to the people of Queensland. Let us take the operations of one company out of the five or six which are now freezing meat in the colony. Let us take the Queensland Meat and Export Company, which, during the year 1895, carried out their full exporting capacity of 1,200 tons per month. That company distributed in and around the works during that year no less a sum than £125,000. That is not inclusive of railway charges, coal, or droving, nor is it inclusive of freight. I believe a sum of £130,000 was expended in freight. No doubt a large part of that went to England, but a part of it was spent here, and it brought a fleet of ships continuously to our shores. I contend that an industry which, in only one of its agencies, can show a return like that is not an industry that can be despised by those who show an especial interest in the success of labour.

Mr. STEWART: Who is despising it?

Mr. BELL: I heard a speech to-night from the hon. member for Burke, who occupies, or did occupy, an official position in that party, which was certainly an anti-squatting speech as any Labour man need wish to listen to.

Mr. STEWART: We are not anti-squatters.

Mr. BELL: I do not think any man here—be he as rabid an anti-squatter as he may—can really say that an industry of that kind can be viewed with indifference. Let me give another instance of the importance to Queensland of the export of meat. If a producer of cattle wishes to get for an average bullock a net return of £3 within the confines of Australia—say in New South Wales—he has to get a gross return of £4 10s.; 30s. is expended in droving, travelling, and sale expenses. If that beast is sold in Sydney only half a sovereign of that 30s.—it has been put much lower—comes to Queensland. If that bullock, instead of going south, is killed at the meatworks and sent to Europe, the producer has to get a gross return of rather over £10: but of that £10 as large a sum as £3 15s. is spent within Queensland. If that goes on all over the colony—if our pastures that are capable of producing good cattle are utilised and there is a regular outlet for them, I cannot understand how any man can view with indifference the possibilities of such a trade. And when we find, as we do find, that the whole business of exporting cattle, to which we have devoted so much attention in the past, and which has so nearly reached a successful issue, is at this moment on the point of extinction, I hope the Government will not be turned aside from their duty by any political phrase, be it socialism or any other "ism," but that they will come forward as the Governments of other countries are doing, and bring their influence and capital to bear in getting a better distribution of our meat and dairy produce in Great Britain. It may be asked in what way can this be done? Well, I believe there is no reason, no political principle, why the Government should not borrow £500,000 towards the prosecution of this purpose. I admit that they will have to make due inquiry as to the exact channels in London in which that money can be expended, and into the particular method by which they can carry out their purpose, but once they have determined that, there is no reason why they should not borrow £500,000 in order to attain that object. Such a loan would be just as legitimate as any money ever borrowed for the construction of our railways. We build railways in order to develop the country, and if we go to London to borrow money in order to extend our meat industry we are making as real a contribution towards the development of Queensland as any line of railway ever did. If the Government want to know what guarantee they have for the repayment of money I would

remind them that we have got the meat and dairy fund, which returns £40,000 or £50,000 a year, and is capable of paying, not only the interest on a loan of £500,000, but also a large amount by way of redemption. But I submit that an undertaking of this kind is a national undertaking, and that it would be an altogether unfair proposal to saddle on any one class of the community the burden of such a loan, when the money is borrowed for an entirely national purpose. I make no pretension to be a financial authority, but I have indicated the way in which I believe the thing can be done, and it is for the Government to consider the matter. When we have a most important industry in a most critical position, the Government would not be doing their duty if they did not give their earnest attention to the matter. With regard to the Budget itself, it proceeds from a man who enjoys a reputation for successful finance second to no man in Australia, and I believe that we on this side are proud to sit behind and follow such a leader.

Mr. STEWART: I listened with very great interest to the speech of the hon. member for Dalby on the frozen meat trade, and I sympathise with every word he uttered, with this exception—that he assumed that the Labour party, as a party, would be opposed to the State coming to the aid of the frozen meat industry in its present difficulty. He was completely in error in assuming any such thing, and had no ground for his assumption. So far as I am concerned, when the Federation Enabling Bill was being discussed here, I distinctly stated that one of the benefits to be derived from federation was the establishment of a federal export department, which would do the very thing proposed in the Financial Statement. I knew when I spoke the difficulty the frozen meat trade was in, and I saw then that that was the only method by which the difficulty could be overcome. I advocated the very system which is now proposed years ago, and I am quite confident that if this industry is to be rescued from its perilous position the State must intervene. The hon. member for Leichhardt informs me that this scheme was advocated on this side of the House years ago. There has been some talk about socialism in the House this evening. The Secretary for Public Instruction made some remarks upon it; and I was rather astonished to find that a gentleman who has discussed socialism more than any man in Queensland perhaps does not even yet understand what it is. After all his study and all his researches he seems to be utterly oblivious as to what socialism really is. It is not my business to instruct the hon. gentleman, even if I was able to do so; but with regard to the present proposal, I would say, that if it is not socialism it is not individualism. I sympathise with the Government in the position in which they find themselves—in having even to propose to adopt a scheme which is on the face of it so plainly socialistic, after their cry at the recent general election. We were then told that the conflict was between socialism and individualism, and now we find the very men who rode into power on the individualistic cry compelled to throw that cry overboard and embrace socialism. I sympathise with them in feeling small. If I was placed in their position I should feel exceedingly small. The hon. member for Dalby also made the broad charge against this side of the House that we are against the pastoral industry, that we have a vendetta against the pastoral industry. Speaking for myself, I utterly deny such a statement. If we come here and say that the pastoralists are not paying sufficient rent, is that a reason why it should be assumed that we have a quarrel with the pastoral industry?

Mr. LEAHY: Why don't you prove that statement.

Mr. STEWART: I will come to that directly. But I ask are we not sent here commissioned by the people to look after the country's interests? And if we think that the pastoralists ought to pay more rent, we should be failing in our duty if we did not say so. If the hon. member for Bulloo thinks they are paying too much rent, it is his business to prove it.

Mr. LEAHY: I may do that yet.

Mr. STEWART: If the pastoralists of Queensland are not better men than the hon. member for Bulloo represented them to be in this House, I am sorry for them.

Mr. LEAHY: What did I say about them?

Mr. STEWART: The hon. member said that their statements on certain subjects could not be relied upon; that if we passed a law requiring them to report if their stock was diseased they would not comply with that law—that they would not tell the truth.

Mr. LEAHY: I did not.

Mr. STEWART: If that is so we may ask whether they are telling the truth with regard to their rents. They say that their runs are not paying.

Mr. LEAHY: I rise to make an explanation. I give a denial to what the hon. gentleman says. I never made that statement.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. member for Bulloo can explain what he said.

Mr. LEAHY: That is more than you can do.

Mr. STEWART: *Hansard* is there, and everybody can read it. With regard to the pastoral rents I am bound to say that I do not believe they pay sufficient. The runs on an average all over the colony pay a little over $\frac{1}{2}$ d. an acre, while the grazing farms pay $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. an acre, or exactly six times more than the runs. I do not want the runs to pay as high rent as the grazing farms, but it would be fair that the runs on an average should pay at least half the amount paid by the grazing farms. We must remember that the grazing farmers are men with small capital, who presumably cannot work their holdings to the same advantage as the men with large capital, and instead of paying higher rent they ought to pay lower. The hon. member for Dalby says the grazing farmers have the pick of the country. I am not in a position to dispute that assertion, but I believe there are members who will say that it is not the case—that the grazing farmers do not hold the best lands. On the face of it the pastoral tenants are not paying sufficiently high rents, and it is the duty of this Committee to take this matter into consideration, and see if some greater revenue cannot be derived from the public lands. I find that the total pastoral exports amount to £5,000,000 per annum, and that the rents of runs amount to about £340,000 a year, so that the gross proceeds of the runs amount to about fifteen or sixteen times the rental. That being the case, our claim that they should pay a larger rent is a fair one. We hear a great deal about the difficulties the pastoral industry is placed in. No doubt they, in common with every other class in the community, have been in difficulties during recent years, but we ought never to overlook this fact—and I do not think even the hon. member for Bulloo, who appears to hold a special brief for the pastoralists, will deny it—that the pastoral industry is largely over-capitalised owing to the gambling in runs in bygone years, and the colony is now asked to make up to those who hold mortgages over the runs for the stupidity of those who made bad bargains. I object to that on principle. I am willing to bear my own burdens, to bear the burdens of the hour, but I am not willing that the colony should be saddled with the mistakes committed by the gamblers of ten, fifteen, or twenty years

ago. There is another reason why I think the land revenue is not so large as it ought to be. We hear continually complaints that people who desire to get grazing farms cannot get them. I do not know whether there is anything in those complaints or not, but there are gentlemen round me representing pastoral constituencies who say that there is, and I heard on one occasion that a large number of Victorian farmers come to Longreach anxious to select grazing farms, and remained till some lands were thrown open. Before anything could be done those lands were suddenly withdrawn, and those Victorians had to go back disappointed. I do not think anything of that sort should be allowed to occur. We have any quantity of land, and I do not see why any man who desires to get a grazing farm should not get it at once. I read in to-day's *Courier* that there were no less than 419 applicants yesterday for thirty-eight grazing and agricultural farms on one portion of the Darling Downs. That shows that there is an extensive demand for land, and the Government should strain every nerve to satisfy that demand. There is a general impression abroad that the pastoral industry is opposed to the breaking up of runs, and to the settlement of grazing farmers adjacent to those runs. I do not know whether there is any truth in that or not, but I know that the pastoral influence is predominant in the Cabinet, and the natural conclusion is that if these grazing farms are not available it is because some influence is brought to bear on the Lands Department. The Secretary for Public Instruction sought to draw a comparison between the mining industry and the pastoral industry, and tried to show that, if the pastoral industry is called upon to pay more, the mining industry ought very much more to be called upon to pay something additional towards the revenue. But I do not consider that the two industries are on all fours at all. The mining industry is a purely speculative one. The man who puts £1,000, £5,000, or £10,000 into the mining industry does not know whether he will ever get a farthing out of it or not, while the man who puts the same amount into the pastoral industry has a very fair chance of getting not only his own money back again but also an increase. Of course I know that in some instances pastoralists and grazing farmers are ruined, but I am taking the average. In mining it all depends upon where a man speculates—he may speculate luckily or he may speculate unluckily. In some cases there have been lucky speculations, and where these lucky speculations have occurred the people who have benefited by them ought to contribute in fair measure towards the revenue. Some hon. members, even on this side, have objected to the dividend tax. Now, if there is one thing for which I give Sir Thomas McIlwraith credit it is the imposition of that tax. Even if it was done in a kind of a pet, it was still one of the wisest things he ever did. We have a mine—I need not mention the name of it—but we know that the profits from it have been something phenomenal, and we know also that these profits are not spent in the colony. We know that some of the shareholders of that mine are hobnobbing with the gentry, nobility, and royalty of Great Britain, while the miners at the mine are sweating at their work and inhaling poisonous gases and all the rest of it. We have to protect these men's property while they are holding high jinks in the metropolis of Great Britain, and I say that if they spend their money out of the colony, and if we protect their property within the colony, they ought to contribute towards the revenue; and if I was Treasurer, and had any hand in framing the Budget, they would have to pay a great deal more than they do. The hon. member

for Fitzroy need not get agitated, as it will last his time, I have no doubt.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He lives in the colony.

Mr. STEWART: He has that advantage, and I am quite willing to concede that; but if those other gentlemen lived in the colony and spent their money here, I would still say that they should contribute towards the public revenue, but I would not be quite so anxious to impose a large tax upon them. We had a few general reflections from the Secretary for Public Instruction upon the general question of taxation, but the only thing he told us about it was that we should not levy more from the people than we actually need. Anybody who has ever studied the question of taxation at all knows that; any boy fresh from school will know it. But what the hon. gentleman did not give us any information about—and it is the subject upon which we want information—is this: What are his ideas as to how taxation should be levied? Who ought to pay taxation, and what are the sources from which it should be derived? I do not wish to compliment the Premier of the colony any more, as some hon. members suggest, than I can help, but I am willing to give him credit for having, in 1890, enunciated a very clear principle upon the subject of taxation, with which I entirely agree—a common-sense principle, and one which I would be very glad to see the hon. gentleman put into operation. He said that the people who have the most ought to pay most. Why are we here collected together as a State? Why do we associate with each other in a community? Is it not for the protection of life and property? Why have we a Government, police, and courts of justice, and the whole social arrangement. Simply that our lives and properties may be protected against each other and against aggression from outside. The taxes we pay are neither more nor less than so much insurance money. When I pay taxation I pay insurance money, and the State in return for the taxation I pay insures me, so far as it can insure me, in the safe possession of my life and property. I say, then, that the man who has a great deal of property to protect ought to pay taxation in proportion. If you go to an insurance company to insure a house you pay upon the value of the property, and if it is worth £1,000 you pay more than if it is worth merely £100. An insurance company does not levy a premium upon me for what I eat, drink, wear, or smoke. It acts upon an intelligent principle, and says, "The greater the risk we take the larger the contribution you will have to make." That is not only a sensible but it is a fair, just, and reasonable method, and a sound business principle. The Treasurer prides himself upon conducting the affairs of this colony upon commercial principles, and here is a sound commercial principle which I invite him to apply to the question of taxation. The Secretary for Public Instruction laboured very hard to show that the largest portion of our taxation does not necessarily come off the shoulders of the poorer classes, but he was not successful in his undertaking. I take it that 90 per cent. of the people of the colony are upon an average well-doing or ill-doing, whichever way you like to regard it, and that the remaining 10 per cent. represents what may be termed the middle and upper classes. The man earning £1,000 a year is not likely to smoke or to drink much more than the man earning £2 a week, and even in the matter of wearing apparel he is not likely to spend a great deal more. So that I think the Secretary for Public Instruction failed entirely in his contention on that score. Then, again, he said that people pay taxes to municipal councils and divisional boards. I am surprised that a gentle-

man of his experience and knowledge should make such a random assertion as that. There is a great difference between merely local taxation and State taxation. The taxation which people pay to local authorities is all expended in improving their own roads and their own properties. Every penny they levy is spent upon themselves again, and not only that, but the rates are endowed by the general taxpayer. I will not say whether that is a good or bad principle, but to call that taxation is to mislead. I am glad to see that the railway revenue is expanding, and I think that with wise land administration that revenue would expand much more rapidly in the future. I understand that on the Darling Downs there is a very large quantity of land along the railway lines which is entirely unoccupied, held against settlement by men who bought it years ago, and that the producers on the Downs are away back from the railways. If the contrary were the case, if the producers were settled along the railway line, the traffic would be materially increased, and our railways, instead of being a burden on the general taxpayer, would become a source of revenue. I think that is worthy of the serious attention of the Government, but there is one matter particularly I wish to refer to in connection with our railways. I find it takes £308 per mile to maintain the Southern railways, £270 per mile to maintain the Northern railways, and only £204 per mile is expended upon the Central railways—actually 50 per cent. less is spent on the Central lines than on the Southern. I travelled very recently between Rockhampton and Longreach, and was very nearly seasick on that line, the train bumping and jumping along in a most extraordinary manner. The state of that line is simply disgraceful. I call the attention of the Government to that matter, and maintain that as the Centre contributes so largely to the revenue it is entitled to have its railways kept in good working condition. I could not help remarking the difference between the smooth travelling on the line from Maryborough to Brisbane and the very rough jolting on the Central line. I am glad to see that the Government propose to encourage the agricultural industry by the establishment of a college in the Southern division. I have no objection to that. Agriculture is an important industry, and will one day become our most important industry; but if the people of the South are entitled to proper instruction by means of a college, then those in the Central division are entitled to the same privilege. There may be some who think there is no farming done in the Central division, but I can assure hon. members that there is a very great deal of farming done there. We are entitled to an experimental farm there, where men can be taught by competent instructors, and can be shown how to grow most profitably the various crops. We cannot conceal the fact that a large number of men engaged in farming know very little about it. Some are men who never did a great deal of farming until they came out here, and even those who have been farmers come to a country where the conditions of climate and crops are entirely different to those which they have been accustomed to; they have to learn the whole business over again. I have no doubt in time that we in the Central district will grow a very large quantity of wheat and other crops, and fruit will be extensively grown there.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And potatoes.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, and potatoes. I have seen as fine potatoes grown in the Central district as I ever saw in my life; and if a proper system of irrigation is only established, there is nothing we cannot grow. Therefore, the Government would only be doing what is right and just

to the Central district in granting us a college or experimental farm. The subject of irrigation is one which the Government ought to take in hand. It is very evident to me that that is what is wanted to make agriculture a success. I was informed by the Attorney-General the other day that I was only a newchum; and if that is evident to a newchum, surely it must be apparent to those who have lived in the country for many years. I see by the Financial Statement that the sugar industry gave very handsome returns. The amounts received are divided so as to show how those concerned participated in the profits, and the result is so favourable that those of us who are opposed to coloured labour feel quite justified in asking for its abolition, as it is evident that the industry can now afford to pay white men white men's wages. Different members of the Government who have spoken have said that it is their settled policy to do away with coloured labour, and, if they are sincere, now is the opportunity, as the necessity for kanakas no longer exists. I do not say that the kanakas should be all sent home at once, but further importation should be stopped, and the others sent away as their terms expire. If the Government do this I will believe they are in earnest; if not, I shall doubt their sincerity. From my point of view the only thing that can be said in favour of the Financial Statement is that it shows a surplus. If there is anything I hate it is to see expenditure exceed income, and the Treasurer is to be congratulated upon the fact that ever since he has occupied his present position he has tried to keep the expenditure within the income. For that he deserves to be thanked by the House. When we look at the record of deficits for previous years, we ought to be grateful that we are now living within our income, and I trust that state of things will continue. I think the expenditure has expanded more than is desirable. I know that even in bad times a large number of men are always anxious to obtain employment under the Government. They think that a State billet is the best, and possibly they are right; but I am here to look after the interests of my constituents who have not State billets, and I object to men being employed by the State for the simple reason that we are financially in a fair position. I think the business of the State should be conducted as nearly as possible on the same lines as that of a company—upon commercial lines. Men should be paid good wages for good work, and we must remember that the money which goes to pay Civil servants comes from men who in many cases receive very small wages indeed. Even in the frozen meat industry, which was alluded to at such length by the hon. member for Dalby, the average wages for labourers runs from 31s. to 33s. per week. Of course the State has nothing to do with that, but I do not find the State employing men at such small wages. In a very large number of cases the wages of the smaller paid employees have been raised, but I cannot say whether they were entitled to such increases or not. I would remark, however, that the purchasing power of money is continually increasing, and the man who receives £150 a year now is as well off as the man who received £200 ten years ago. With regard to the higher paid Civil servants, I see some of them have received increases of as much as £100 a year: I distinctly object to that, because I do not think they are entitled to it. Some of the salaries we pay are simply scandalous. We have one official who receives £3,500 a year, while the officer in the United States holding a similar position only receives £2,200, although there is a population there of 65,000,000 as against our 450,000. I think some branches of the Civil Service are overmanned—

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that a general discussion on the Estimates is not now before the Committee, but the one vote upon which the debate on the Financial Statement takes place. The hon. member will have an opportunity of discussing the salaries when they come before us.

Mr. STEWART: I am sorry to have departed from the rules, but hon. members seem to have gone all round the shop, and I naturally concluded I would be allowed to say as much. I may not have another opportunity of giving my opinion upon these matters.

The TREASURER: Yes, you will.

Mr. STEWART: I was not aware of that. I thought that as the salary was fixed by Act of Parliament I could not refer to it. I would just suggest in closing that the Treasurer should review the incidence of taxation. It has been abundantly proved that the larger proportion of the revenue is taken from the pockets of the poorer members of the community. In fact, the whole expense of government is defrayed from the Customs. The whole of the land revenue is used up in paying the deficiencies in the railway system, the telegraphs, and the harbour system. Property might fairly be called upon to bear its share of the burden. We have borrowed £30,000,000, and we have spent that money within the colony, and it has gone to increase the value of the property of every man who owns property in the colony. I believe that the freeholds which have been sold have realised about £7,500,000. Those freeholds are now valued at about £30,000,000.

The TREASURER: Would anyone take it at that price?

Mr. STEWART: Perhaps they are overvalued. We will say they are now worth not more than £20,000,000. That gives you a margin of £12,500,000, and that margin ought to pay something towards the revenue of the colony.

The TREASURER: What about the interest earned on that money since it went into the Treasury?

Mr. STEWART: Every farthing of the borrowed money has gone to increase the value of that property.

The TREASURER: Still it will not sell.

Mr. STEWART: That is not our business. I know of properties in the neighbourhood of Rockhampton which are being held for the unearned increment. I know of one block of 500 acres of as good agricultural land as there is in the neighbourhood of Rockhampton, which is owned by a company, the members of which live in England. Agricultural land is much wanted there, but there is none available. If that land was thrown open, it would be snatched up as eagerly as the land near Warwick, of which we read in to-day's *Courier*. Yet this land is held against the public. Men who hold land, instead of helping the colony along, are doing everything in their power to keep it back. If they elect to play this dog-in-the-manger policy, they ought to be obliged to pay for the privilege. I am in favour of a land tax, and in advocating it, I am asking for the merest measure of justice. Is it not population that increases the value of land? In some cases a man may, by his private enterprise, increase the value of land by £1 or £2 an acre, but that is about the limit to which private enterprise can go. But when population comes along, we find that land which was worth only £1 an acre becomes worth £100, or £1,000, or it may be even £10,000 an acre, and some part of the value which people give to the land should come back to the people.

The HOME SECRETARY: I paid £28 10s. in stamp duty on one piece of land this week.

Mr. STEWART: That is a very small item. I do not expect that the Treasurer will adopt my ideas, but if he does not, I have not the slightest doubt that some future Treasurer will.

The TREASURER: Mr. Annear,—I move that you do now leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again. In doing so, I would like to intimate to the Committee that I believe it is the intention of both sides to finish this debate to-morrow evening. I hope that hon. members will endeavour to do so, and let us get to business.

Question put and passed; and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to 11 o'clock.