

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1900**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER, 1900.

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

## QUESTIONS.

## WAY LEAVES.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

If it is his intention to introduce this session legislation amending the 62nd clause of the 1898 Mining Act dealing with "way leaves"?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) replied—

No. It is considered that the Act now adequately provides for the construction of passages intervening between leaseholds.

## ASSISTANT LAND AGENT, DALEY.

Mr. McDONALD, in the absence of Mr. Lesina (*Clermont*), asked the Premier—

What is the name of the probationer appointed to the duties of assistant land agent at Dalby.

The PREMIER replied—

Frank Gliddon Hidge is being appointed junior clerk in the Lands Office at Dalby.

## QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

RUMOUR *re* CONSTITUTION OF LAND COURT.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*), without notice, asked the Premier—Is there any truth in the rumour that the hon. member for Herbert, Mr. Cowley, is to be appointed to the Land Court in place of Mr. Tully, resigned?

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) replied—There is no vacancy at present. Mr. Tully has not resigned.

Mr. McDONALD: Is he not going to resign?

The PREMIER: I do not know; he has not resigned yet. I heard that rumour eight years ago.

## PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table of the House, was ordered to be printed—Report of the Trustees of the Queensland National Art Gallery, 1899.

## HARBOUR BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the advisableness of introducing a Bill to further amend the Harbour Boards Act, 1892.

## QUINQUENNIAL CENSUS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*), it was resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Quinquennial Census Act of 1875 with respect to the day upon which the census shall be taken in the year 1901.

## UNIVERSITY BILL.

On the motion of the Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE (*Mackay*), it was resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to incorporate and endow the University of Queensland.

### GRAMMAR SCHOOLS INSPECTION BILL.

On the motion of the HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE, it was resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the inspection of Grammar Schools.

### TRIAL OF PRISONERS FROM THURSDAY ISLAND.

On the motion of Mr. FITZGERALD (*Mitchell*), it was resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing—

(1) The numbers of persons committed for trial from Thursday Island to the Criminal Sittings of the Supreme Court at Cooktown during the years 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, and 1900 respectively.

(2) The expenses during such years of sending prisoners for trial from Thursday Island to Cooktown.

(3) The number of persons committed for trial to the Cooktown Circuit Court from places other than Thursday Island during the above years respectively.

(4) The expenses of sending same to trial.

### SUPPLY.

#### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—DEBATE ON FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Question—That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1900-1901, a sum not exceeding £300, to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor—

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I believe it is usual on occasions of this kind to congratulate the hon. gentleman who has delivered the Financial Statement. I may say that I have great pleasure in doing so on this occasion, for two reasons. In the first place, I congratulate him on the manner in which the Statement was delivered. For a man troubled as he is at the present time with the prevailing influenza, to stand up for two hours and a quarter and read the Financial Statement in the manner he did, places him in a very high rank, even amongst members of the Labour party. Another reason I have for congratulating him is on account of the effort he has made in his somewhat optimistic statement to counteract the pessimistic forebodings of his colleague, the Secretary for Railways. I say at once that I much prefer a man who is a little bit too sanguine than the man who is always looking at the dark side of things. The Statement which the hon. gentleman has delivered shows that he has faith in Queensland, whether it is well founded or not. Now, I shall not go through every item of the Statement. It seems to me that it is something like those we have been used to for the past five or six years, and which were inaugurated by Mr. (now Sir Hugh) Nelson. As has been said here more than once, it was an essay rather than what is accepted as a Financial Statement or Budget Speech in the other colonies and elsewhere. However, it is a very useful production, and although it may contain what some would think a great deal of extraneous matter, yet it is full of useful information. Whether the deductions drawn from that information by the Treasurer are right or not is another question. Reading the Speech over very carefully I am reminded of an utterance of the hon. gentleman who is now Chief Secretary, the Hon. J. R. Dickson, when speaking on a Financial Statement delivered in 1895 by Sir Hugh Nelson. The hon. gentleman, in the very nice language he can use, congratulated the then Treasurer very heartily on the Statement he had made; he spoke very highly of its literary merits, and so forth; but, acting as he then was as the candid friend of the Government, he wound

up by saying: "I would like the Treasurer, when replying, if he does reply, to point out to this House where there is any shadow of a policy in this Statement." I feel, on the present occasion, very much inclined to re-echo that hon. gentleman's request, and to ask the Treasurer, or some other member of the Government who may speak on this question, to point out where any policy is outlined in the Statement before us now. If there is any policy at all, it is chiefly in reference to the famous private enterprise of which we have heard so much recently. In almost every paragraph some reference is made to private enterprise. If that is the policy of the Government, well and good. It is their policy and not ours on this side; but it is the only policy I can discover in this speech. Of course, we are all glad to see that the Treasurer has again got a surplus. I do not wish to take away any credit that may be due to the hon. gentleman, but it seems to me that, in regard to Financial Statements, there is, generally speaking, a great amount of luck. We have receipts exceeding the estimate by close on £200,000, and it seems to me that that is a very fair margin to come and go upon. There is, however, one little thing that struck me. It is very cheering to see that these surpluses are being put to the credit of a sinking fund. I believe the Chief Secretary does not altogether endorse that, but, at all events, the present system has led to something like £445,720 being paid off the accumulated deficits of the past in about six years. Now, what surprises me is this: We are continually being told by leading members of this House, and by the Press outside, that Parliament is deteriorating; that it used to contain men of a very much better class—more statesmen and greater Treasurers. In fact they were giants in those days, and we are only pigmies in this. There were two men, we have been told, who were once leaders in this House, who were the greatest politicians that Queensland has ever seen. The late Sir Thomas McIlwraith we have heard held up time after time by members opposite as the greatest Treasurer Queensland ever had—a giant in finance and in his policies generally. The present Chief Justice, Sir Samuel Griffith, has also been held up time after time as an example of a great leader. We were told by Sir Hugh Nelson in 1893 that under the guidance of these illustrious men, whom we are told to look up to so very much, there was totted up the nice little accumulated deficit of £1,566,817. During these last few years the Treasurers who have followed them—who have professed to look to them for guidance, and to reverence them—have managed to accumulate nearly a quarter of a million surpluses. If that is so, it seems to me that the heaven-born Treasurers of the past must have been only myths, and that it is only those who have succeeded them that are heaven-born. However, that is a matter that can hardly be decided now, but it would be very interesting if we could get the opinion of those past Treasurers on the present or more recent Treasurers, because, with rival Treasurers on rival sides of the House, it is always a matter of opinion which is right and which is wrong. We cannot have a greater instance of that than is afforded by the neighbouring colony, where Mr. George Reid and Sir William Lyne are at loggerheads. Mr. Reid had the faculty of building up surpluses. All the time he was in office he used to show what splendid surpluses he had, but he has gone down. Mr. Lyne happened to get on top, and he has remained there long enough to be able to demolish all Mr. George Reid's surpluses. He has proved, as the present Government have proved, that the other Government had all deficits.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He appointed a commission.

Mr. BROWNE: And he appointed a commission. The time may come, in another year or two, when Mr. George Reid will get back again, and he may have a commission; and, considering the way that Treasurers' Statements are made up, I shall be quite prepared to see Mr. George Reid, and the commission that he appoints, demonstrating that Mr. Lyne piled up all the deficits, and Mr. George Reid's surpluses were all right enough. I am just pointing out that it seems peculiar that in the past, with all this ability, we got deficits, and now, when we are told that an inferior set of men have come in, they can make surpluses all the time. There are just one or two things in the Statement that I wish to allude to. One is the paragraph dealing with the Government Savings Bank. I do not think there is a member in the House, on this side or that, but will re-echo the Treasurer's pleasure at seeing the way in which that institution has advanced.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: I do not think there is a member in this House, more especially on this side, who will not do that, because it is another argument in favour of what we have always advocated—that is, the establishment of a State bank right out. The Treasurer's Statement here shows, that at the time of the greatest depression the people of the country had absolute confidence in the Government Savings Bank, when they had not any in any other. There are some figures in this paragraph which show the operations of the different years, and the different dates, and the hon. gentleman, of course, has taken the credit of all this to the Government. He points out that the funds in the Government Savings Bank were at their lowest ebb in 1892, but in 1893 the institution turned the corner, and the funds commenced to rise until, at the end of 1899, they had reached an amount quite unprecedented in the annals of the bank. Now, these are two rather peculiar years. I do not want to say for a moment that the reason I am going to give of the advance is the correct one, but I say we have as much justification for using it as the Government have for claiming the credit. We all remember that the depression of the years 1892-93 was followed immediately by the entrance into the Chamber of fifteen Labour men, who constituted the first Labour party announced in the Parliament of Queensland, and that very year the funds in the Government Savings Bank commenced to rise after the deplorable depletion they had suffered before.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: There was a restoration of public confidence.

Mr. BROWNE: And it is rather peculiar, but we find that last year when this unprecedented amount was held by the bank—when they had something which had never been known before—in the first quarter of that year, a Labour Government came into power in Queensland.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear! (Ministerial laughter.)

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: And went out again.

Mr. BROWNE: Now I contend, for the hon. members sitting behind me on this side of the House, that since their advent into this Chamber and since their advent into power there has been a wonderful restoration of confidence, and I think we may cordially congratulate the House upon it, and I may congratulate my friends. Now I am not going through all these items, but there is just something with regard to the railway receipts I would like to say. The hon. gentleman pointed out that there is only a slight increase there, and he expects a decrease owing, as he explained, to a very great rise in

the expenditure. Now the first reason he gives for this increase is the heavy repairs to all classes of rolling-stock, the work connected with which had been accumulating from previous years, owing to the impossibility of withdrawing the stock from traffic. Now, whose fault was that? On the front Treasury bench there are three successive Ministers for Railways. The Hon. the Chief Secretary was a Minister for Railways; the Hon. the Premier was a Minister for Railways, and the hon. member for Normanby is the present Minister for Railways. For the last six or seven years those gentlemen have been running the Railway Department. Why did they allow the engines and the rolling-stock to deteriorate in the way that they did in those years, so that the colony is now put to all this greatly increased expenditure, which has to be incurred in replacing these things at the present time when they ought to have been replaced or repaired year after year? We know that this matter has been brought up time after time in this House every year, and there is no disguising the fact that the gentleman who has been for many years the head of the locomotive branch, advised that these things should be done. Unfortunately, he was not a gentleman with a stiff enough back, and as soon as the Minister spoke to him, or the Commissioner wanted to make things look a little brighter, he withdrew, and the engines and boilers and rolling-stock were allowed to get into the discreditable condition in which they were last year. Now, I see that the present Commissioner's earnings are to be gradually used up in providing other things which ought to have been provided years ago, and during all that time the railways have been under the control of the gentleman who is there at the present time. Now, the other three reasons that they give are: Providing new boilers for a large number of locomotives; increased pay to all classes of railway employees; heavy traffic in starving stock, the receipts from which were not of a remunerative character, and the carriage of large quantities of fodder at unremunerative rates. I think it may very well be asked here, Would anyone of these objects have been achieved if the railways had been in the hands of the boasted syndicates we hear so much about just now? Would the railway employees have got a rise in wages if they had been private railways? Would they have carried starving stock at unremunerative rates throughout the whole of the colony to try to save the pastoral industry, if they had been private railways? Would they have carried large quantities of fodder at unremunerative rates, to help the pastoralist on the one side and the struggling farmer on the other? To my mind, decidedly they would not, and one of the strongest reasons why we should stick to our present system, I think, is this paragraph in the Hon. Treasurer's Statement. But we are more concerned with the estimate

[4 p.m.] of revenue for the current year than with what has taken place in the past. I notice that the hon. gentleman is very moderate in his anticipations of revenue, and I think rightly so. I think it will be the opinion of most members of the House, and of business men throughout the colony, that he has, if anything, been too sanguine, and is erring on the hopeful side, as the possibilities do not look nearly as bright as he thinks. I will not follow out that matter, as I am not going into the Statement as a budding Treasurer. I am simply pointing out facts, and I say I am glad the hon. gentleman has been moderate in his anticipations of revenue. I want to deal for a moment with the probable expenditure, and as it includes expenditure which I, with other hon. members, very strongly object to, I will deal with it a

little more lengthily. Under this heading, the very first thing I see in the Statement, under the Chief Secretary's Department, is—

A new item amounting to £40,000 appears under the head of defence, being expenses connected with the contingents for service in South Africa.

I do not so much object to that, but we are told—

The Land Force, to which considerable additions are proposed to be made, requires an increased appropriation of £49,450, and the Marine Force an increase of £7,821.

When speaking on the Address in Reply on the subject of defence, I said that, considering the outlook, the Government should have some scheme of defence to consider and some proposal for increasing the defence of the colony, and that if it was on anything like a reasonable scale I should be prepared to support it. I have some figures here, which I have carefully prepared from the Treasurer's own tables and from the Estimates, and I will ask any hon. member, when he has heard the expenditure proposed for the defence of the colony, and for the land force especially, whether he thinks the colony is able to bear it. I am going to give hon. members just what we are to be asked to vote for the current financial year. In the first place there is the increased vote required for the Land Defence Force of £49,450 from revenue, and £54,099 from loan. Then there is the increase of £7,821 from revenue required for the Marine Defence Force. This makes the total of increased votes required for the year, £111,370. Now let us see what the total of the votes we are asked to vote this year amounts to: Land Defence Force, from revenue and loan, £207,622; Marine Force, from revenue and loan, £25,210; Defence Force, new buildings, from the works vote, £5,000; land defence, headquarters office, from loan, £1,500; naval headquarters, from loan, £1,000; naval magazine, £1,800—making a total of £242,132. In addition to that we have £40,000 for the South African contingents—and hon. members must remember that has nothing whatever to do with the £145,000 already spent—£14,000 for the naval squadron and £2,657 for federal garrisons. That makes £56,657 more, so that the total amount we are to be asked to vote for defence this year will be £298,789—nearly £300,000 to be spent on defence this year! I would like hon. members to look at the Estimates and compare that amount with what we are asked to vote for any other service in the colony. I have taken the trouble to go through the amounts we are asked to vote for other services, and I find we are asked to vote for charitable allowances, £71,730; for insanity—lunatic asylums, £46,268; benevolent asylums, £22,109; public health, £6,080; labour bureau, £5,830; quarantine, £788; and reception houses, £3,102.

Mr. DAWSON: All charities.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, all charities you may say, and the total for charities, hospitals, benevolent asylums, labour bureau, and everything else is £135,907—a trifle more than half the amount we are asked to vote for the defence of the colony. I say there is no reason whatever in this, however anxious we may be for defence, and especially when, as I point out, we have federation and we will want the Federal Government to deal with the whole question of defence. I say the thing is perfectly unjustifiable, and the taxpayers of this colony should not be asked to vote that sum of money, and when we come to the Estimates I will do what I can to get it reduced. Another point to which, with other members of this House, I have previously referred is the difference between the votes for the land and marine forces. The total vote for the land force for this year is £207,622, and for the marine force it is £25,210

I can quite understand it, after some of the things we have heard said lately. Only the other day, at a little bit of a gathering I was very pleased to be at, the British army was spoken of, and we heard what a grand army it was, and that our soldiers had made Great Britain what she is, and all the rest of it. That may be so, and I have as much respect for the British army, and am as proud of it as most people; but when I went to school it was not the army that I heard made Great Britain what she is, or that kept her. There was a little thing they called the navy, and grand as the British army may be, we know it is only a small force. Everyone knows that, though man for man the British army may be equal to or superior to any other army in the world, if you put a small force like the British army against the Continental armies, it would, by the mere force of weight of numbers, be utterly crushed. No, it is the little drop of water around her and her navy that have done so much for great Britain, and that have put her in the prominent position she is in. And I have always said that if, in this country, we are to have a defence force, almost our first line of defence should be a naval force. Instead of that, here we have, in this gigantic scheme of defence for this colony, £207,000 proposed to be spent on a military force, and £25,000 only for our naval force. There is something wonderful in it. Right through we find the same thing, and what would be really useful in our army here, such as the rifle corps and volunteer branches of the force, get no encouragement at all. It is the same thing over and over again, and we are getting a military caste here in Queensland. It is evidence of what Sir Horace Tozer told us on several occasions, that they were trying to control him and the Government. It seems as if they were going to do it.

Mr. McDONALD: They have done it.

Mr. BROWNE: Going through these figures with hon. members they have told me they had no idea we were plunging into this expenditure of nearly £300,000 on defence—more than the expenditure for almost any other department, and within £12,000 of what we are asked to spend on the schools of the whole colony. We are spending £311,000 on the schools of the colony, and we have an education system we are all proud of, and we are asked to spend nearly the same amount to keep up the Defence Force. I say the thing is absurd altogether, and it is one of the things I take most exception to in the Financial Statement. That is the reason I have dwelt so lengthily on this matter.

Mr. DAWSON: A lot of that will be uniforms.

Mr. BROWNE: I notice that some reference is made to the Police Department, which is under the Home Secretary, and I would like to ask the Minister if there is going to be any discussion on that matter this year. Last year we had a very lengthy report presented to this House by the Police Commissioners; but at the expressed wish of the Home Secretary the discussion on that report was postponed. I notice that the Commissioner of Police alludes to it in not very complimentary terms. He says there were three disturbing influences, such as the Gatton and Oxley murders and the Royal Commission, so that he places the commission in the same category as those murders. However, it would be much preferable, as suggested last year, that a time should be fixed when we could discuss that report, or the report of any other commission, instead of mixing it up with other things. I will now allude to another large item in the Statement. The Treasurer states that the amount required for immigration is the same as last year. Well, immigration is another thing that hon. members on this side very strongly

object to. We are spending this £50,000 quite unnecessarily. We are making the taxpayer pay for bringing a lot of people here when we have a lot of unemployed amongst us. I am not going very lengthily into that matter, because I will have another opportunity of speaking on it. I am sorry the Chief Secretary has left the Chamber, because I know that this is his child. For many years he has been carrying about this infant, which he thinks is the panacea for all evils in the colony. I would like to draw hon. members' attention to the fact that under our present system of immigration Queensland has spent more on immigration than any of the other colonies, and nothing beneficial has resulted from it. We have spent £3,310,428 on immigration, and we don't number 500,000 people yet. The colony that has spent the next highest amount is Tasmania—£235,714.

The TREASURER: What about New Zealand?

Mr. BROWNE: I have not the figures with regard to New Zealand. I am dealing with the Australian colonies. New South Wales has spent on immigration £194,430, Western Australia £23,034, but Victoria and South Australia have never spent one shilling on immigration out of loan money.

Mr. JACKSON: Why should they when we are spending it for them?

Mr. BROWNE: That is just what I was going to say. We have been for years finding money to populate other colonies. During the last few months many immigrants have been brought here, and some of these men and women who have come here have been seen in different parts of New South Wales and even down in Victoria. They have been brought out at the expense of the taxpayers of this colony to populate the other colonies.

Mr. STEWART: That is brotherly love.

Mr. BROWNE: Before we show such brotherly or sisterly love, charity should begin at home. We should look after our own colony. The hon. gentleman's figures show that we have spent over £3,000,000 on immigration, and yet many of the people we bring here do not stop in the colony. Where do you find these people?

The TREASURER: All over the colony.

Mr. BROWNE: If all these facts and figures in the Statement are correct, we ought to have a population of over 1,000,000, instead of having less than 500,000.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They may have died.

Mr. BROWNE: I do not think so; as a rule we are pretty long-living people. I believe, as the Treasurer himself said in his Statement last year, that if we offer favourable conditions people will come here without having their passages paid. On looking at the home papers—not labour or democratic papers, but Tory papers—we find that the commission agents get 10s. 6d. per head, irrespective of age or sex, man, woman, or child, black or white, or anything else—

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. BROWNE: To these agents they are worth 10s. 6d. per head—just the same as recruiting for kanakas used to be to the captains of vessels years ago. We had to stop that, and we ought to put a stop to this system, under which many people are induced to come out under false pretences. I am not saying anything against Mr. Randall or other recognised immigration agents, but I say that people who have come out here have been deliberately led astray, and have been deluded by commission agents for the sake of this 10s. 6d. per head. However, we will deal with the matter when it comes along on the Estimates. The next subject I wish to refer to is mining. I may say that I feel just as pleased as the Treasurer with

the progress the mining industry has made during the last few years. I am very glad to see that. As long as facts are stuck to I do not care how bright they make our prospects appear; but I am not going to follow the Treasurer in all his deductions from those facts. In a paragraph on page 18 of the Financial Statement the hon. gentleman speaks about the attractiveness of our mineral exhibits at the Exhibition in London, and the splendid advertisement they were for the mining industry of Queensland. I thoroughly agree with him in that; and whatever assistance I have been able to give in that direction I have always been pleased to render, for the purpose of attracting capital and labour to the colony in order to develop our mines. But I am not in accord with the hon. gentleman when he says that—

As a result, we have now before us several applications from wealthy people who are prepared to invest their capital, not only in developing our mines, but also in constructing cheap and sure means of conveying the product to the sea-coast.

I was not in favour of the exhibition for that purpose at all, for I do not approve of the development of our mines by the construction of private railways. Hitherto the railways of the colony have been built by the people of the colony, and they are able to do that still. The hon. gentleman then draws a rather vivid picture of what can be done if those lines were worked by private companies, and of what a hive of industry the Gulf country would be if it were intersected by a network of railways. I should like to tell the hon. gentleman, and the Committee, that I am one of those who have lived for many years in the Gulf country, and who have pictured what a hive of industry we should have there if this Government, which has been in office for so many years, had done what they ought to have done for the mining industry. Let me refer hon. members to a Budget Speech delivered recently in another colony, where they have not a heaven-born Treasurer, but only an extreme democratic fellow at the head of the Government—that is, New Zealand. The Budget Speech of the Treasurer of that colony was one of the pleasantest bits of reading I have come across for a long time. Mr. Seddon, like other Treasurers, is pleased when he has a surplus, and he is the happy possessor this year of the nice surplus of £605,351. And what is Mr. Seddon doing to develop the mining industry, and help miners and other people in the colony? He is not inviting people outside to go there and build railways—nothing of the sort—but he has remitted for this year taxation on "kerosene, rice, salt, coffee, cocoa, mining machinery, dredging machinery, engines and boilers for mining and dredging, and portable and traction engines." The mining members on both sides in this House have been asking the Government time after time to have the taxes taken off mining machinery.

Mr. DAWSON: We had a fight for three nights over it on the last Tariff Bill.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, we fought for it on that Bill, and on every possible occasion. If the hon. gentleman would do that, he would do something which would make things look brighter in the Gulf country. For some thirteen or fourteen years there has been £500,000 standing voted to build a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry, and the amount is still unexpended. If that work had been carried out we should have had the hive of industry the hon. gentleman talked about in his Statement. Then, again, we have been waiting year after year to have the Norman bar dredged. A dredge was brought out especially for that work, but it was sent down to Brisbane under false pretences, and the work has remained undone for fourteen years. We have a dredge there

now, but the work ought to have been carried out long ago. The same kind of thing has happened in regard to railways and other works for the Gulf country. Governments have promised them time after time, but without any result, and this consecutive, or continuous Government, or whatever you may choose to call it, has been the biggest offender in that respect. If the Treasurer wants to give the mining industry and the miners in the Gulf country a fair chance, let him follow the example of other countries and treat them as he has treated other industries in the colony. Why should he assist the agricultural and the pastoral industries, and retain the duty on mining machinery?

The TREASURER: There is very little duty on mining machinery now.

Mr. BROWNE: We helped the farmers to get the duties taken off agricultural machinery, and when we asked that the same treatment should be meted out to the mining industry we were told that the Government could not afford to do it, and they have not afforded it yet.

The TREASURER: The duties were taken off mining machinery long ago.

Mr. BROWNE: If they were taken off long ago, what is the reason the Government are collecting 25 per cent. duty at the present time on all mining machinery coming into the colony?

The TREASURER: Not on all mining machinery.

Mr. BROWNE: On engines and boilers, and all mining machinery, with the exception of some patent machinery. On roller mills, which were exempt, or supposed to be exempt, under the tariff of 1896 they are charging duty now in the Gulf ports.

The TREASURER: That is a mistake of the Customs Department.

Mr. BROWNE: But the men who have paid the duty cannot get a refund.

The TREASURER: They may never have applied.

Mr. BROWNE: These things are hampering the industry, not only in the Gulf country, but also in other parts of the colony. I notice in that very cheerful Budget Speech delivered by Mr. Seddon, that while remitting the duties I have mentioned he is putting away £200,000, not for defence force purposes, but for old-age pensions. A provision of that sort in this colony would be a little more encouragement to the working miners, who are fretting their hearts out in gullies in the back country, thinking that eventually they will have to go to Dunwich. If a sum were put on the Estimates to requite these old soldiers of industry that would be a great deal better than spending £300,000 or £400,000 to make soldiers when we have no need for them. During the last six years the Government of New Zealand have reduced railway rates by an amount equal to £369,439. I wonder what the farmers and miners of this colony, who are asking for cheap railway freights, would think if this Government, which has been in power for some seven or eight years, had reduced railway rates to the extent of £369,439. That would have been a way to assist the industry, and it would have been a great deal better way than asking for outside aid. The speeches that we hear from the other side of the House, and the legislation that it is attempted to have passed, bring to my mind what I used to see on missionary tracts when I was a little boy going to Sunday school. There was always a picture of an island and a little blackfellow with his two hands clasped, crying, "Come over and help us." That is the position of the hon. gentleman and his colleagues; they are standing like the little boy on the island, praying syndicates to "Come over and help us." I do not intend to take up much more of the time of the Committee. With regard to the pastoral indus-

try, I shall only say that I was very pleased to see the Treasurer's statement that the percentage of losses has not been nearly so bad as many of us anticipated.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is only to the end of last year.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: They have not counted their losses yet.

Mr. BROWNE: I quite agree with the hon. member for Mackay that they have not counted their losses yet, but still I think that most hon. members who have travelled about the colony, and seen the state of the country and read descriptions of it, were quite prepared to believe that the losses had been a great deal heavier, even up to the end of last year, than appear from the Treasurer's Statement. And I am sure that hon. members on both sides of the House will be pleased that the losses have not been so great as was anticipated.

Mr. SMITH: The losses will come in next year.

Mr. BROWNE: I am afraid our losses will come in next year, as the hon.

[4.30 p.m.] member for Bowen says, but let us hope they will not be as heavy as has been anticipated. At the conclusion of the Statement there is a very nice paragraph, which is very nicely worked up. I congratulate the hon. gentleman, and feel a good deal with him in his enthusiasm in the matter in some respects; but, at the same time, there are one or two things in it which I can hardly understand. He seems to have struck a remarkable fact in one place. He says—

I am pleased to observe that the economic fact that the harmonious working together of capital and labour is essential to the well-being and advancement of both is steadily impressing itself upon the minds of the great bulk of the people.

I have been knocking about for many years, and I was always under the impression that the harmonious working together of capital and labour was a very desirable thing, and it is a thing which many of us have tried very hard to achieve, even with regard to industrial disputes. The fact that a very large deputation has waited upon the Premier this session, and that from all parts of the country at the present time petitions are coming in from the great mass of the people, asking for boards of conciliation and arbitration so as to try and get capital and labour to work harmoniously together, ought to have shown the hon. gentleman that that was considered by the great mass of the people as a very desirable thing. For years past hon. members of this party have been continually agitating for this thing, and hon. members on the other side never could recognise it. It seems to me that, instead of this thing having just struck the great mass of the people, the great unthinking mass of the people have been aware of it all the time, and that it has only just dawned on the stupendous intellects of hon. gentlemen on the front-Treasury bench that it is desirable that capital and labour should work harmoniously together. It seems as if this is a little bit of padding, unless, as I say, this has really only just struck the hon. gentleman for the first time in his life. The short summary the hon. gentleman gives at the end of his Statement is very good—

To sum up—I may express my conviction that no hon. member can point to any other country in the world in which—in a similar period of time and with such a small population—so much material and social progress has been made, and in which so much has been done to develop natural resources as in this fair territory of Queensland.

I say "Hear, hear!" heartily to that. You cannot point to any other country in the world which has developed its resources more in proportion to its population than Queensland. And above all, it has been done by the people of Queensland, all under the State, without going

home and trying to pawn Queensland to the syndicates of the old country. That is one of the things we have to be proud of, and it would be very mean of us, and we should be showing our inferiority to the men who have gone before us—who were the pioneers of this country—if, after getting this great gift from them, we went and pawned the lot at once simply to raise the wind for another year or two. I can agree with the hon. gentleman when he says—

I think it will be admitted that we can now fearlessly join in the long desired union of the Australian States, which is about to be consummated, and together assist in forming a nation which will take its place in the foremost rank of the enlightened, peaceable, and prosperous countries of the civilised world.

I did my little best, as a federalist, to help to get the referendum carried, and I believe that Queensland is quite fit to stand shoulder to shoulder with the other colonies, but I cannot help regretting that, just on the eve of that union taking place, it should be proposed that this colony should enter that union with a pawn ticket in her pocket, and that the time may come when some syndicate will sell her off just as any other pawnbroker would sell his unredeemed pledges. We have a grand colony, and we have a grand future before us. The people of the colony have done great things in the past, and I believe that the present and the rising generation are just as good as those who have gone before, that Queensland's resources are just as large as those of any other colony in the group, and that she is fit to take her place in the federation of the colonies with any of them. In conclusion, I may say, in regard to the future, that, no matter what party is in power, I hope the Treasurer's anticipations for next year will be more than realised. I hope that every time this House meets—no matter who sits on the front Treasury benches—that they will have the pleasure of showing a surplus. It is not a question of party. It is not a question of the Philp Government, or the Dickson Government, or a Government of the Labour party, or a Government from any other party in this House, when we come to the Financial Statement. It is a question of the prosperity or the wretchedness of the people of Queensland, and I say, if the country is looking bright, no matter which political party is in power, to the people of Queensland it matters not, and the people of Queensland, in matters of this sort, should be the first consideration of every hon. member in this House.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

After a pause,

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*) rose.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Wait for a Minister! What about courtesy?

Mr. KIDSTON then resumed his seat.

After a further pause,

Mr. FISHER: No defence!

\* The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*), then rose, and said: I did not intend to rise at this stage of the discussion, because I do not think that the hon. member who has just addressed the Committee has raised any serious points of debate, or any plain criticism against the merits of the Financial Statement.

Mr. LESINA: What about immigration?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We will come to that presently.

Mr. DAWSON: He has given you some very plain facts indeed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If hon. members will give me a little time, I will refer to one or two points. I say the reason why I did not rise when the hon. member for Croydon resumed his seat was because I should have preferred to have heard some more severe criticism of the Financial

Statement than the hon. member has given to it. The hon. gentleman, considering his position as leader of the Opposition, has dealt generously with the Statement, and has recognised the great care and attention which has been given to it by the Treasurer, who has produced a document which, I am sure, will be read with very great interest, not only by people in Queensland, but which will also receive very careful attention, and raise continued hopes of fuller prosperity for the great colony of Queensland among the people who will read it in the mother country. It is a very capable document, and contains the financial history and the history of the material progress of the country during the past twelve months. I am sure, as I have said, that it will be carefully perused, and will afford great satisfaction to those who take an interest in the growth and development of Queensland, and I can assure you, Mr. Grimes, that there are a very large number of people in the mother country who watch our proceedings with very great interest.

Mr. JENKINSON: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: And I believe there are a very large number of people who would desire to have larger interests and investments in Queensland if they could feel sure that they would not be penalised at some future date by some change of policy on the part of the Government. Although the loan recently sold by the Treasurer has not perhaps fulfilled expectations on this side, yet I consider it was sold satisfactorily under all the circumstances with which it was surrounded.

Mr. JENKINSON: No. Practically a failure.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot agree with my hon. friend. The loan was sold as satisfactorily as any loan could be at that particular time. It was placed on the advice of the best financial experience that could be obtained, and had it not been for the Eastern complications which just then cropped up, the loan would have realised a very much higher price. But notwithstanding the mishap of this Eastern complication being simultaneously announced with the advent of the loan, it has been considered by the financial authorities in England that it was sold as well as could possibly be expected, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that it was sold considerably higher than the loans of our sister colonies which were submitted some weeks previously.

Mr. GROOM: The *London Times* does not say so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is a fact nevertheless, and can be worked out by statistics. I did read some comments in the *Sydney Morning Herald* to that effect which really did not state the facts in connection with the price realised by the Queensland loan.

Mr. FISHER: We do not know what the price is yet.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; £94 0s. 1d. was the average price.

Mr. FISHER: The Treasurer does not know all the charges yet.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They have not yet come to hand, but he can very well guess from the charges which have been incurred in previous years.

Mr. FISHER: We have had experience of that before.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The loan was sold at £94 0s. 1d. average gross, and that is equivalent to an interest of £3 8s. per cent. That provides interest and redemption on the depreciation.

Mr. FISHER: What was the commission for underwriting?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think that was at the rate of £1 5s. per cent. However, those are the charges incidental to all loans, no matter what



the price may be which is obtained. Both the South Australian and Western Australian loans had to be underwritten, so that that charge applied to all three. The price realised by our loan was certainly better than that realised for the loans of those two colonies, because it must be borne in mind that their loans carried accrued interest for a considerable period, whereas our loan carried no interest except from the 1st July. Now, I do not intend to speak at length in reply to the hon. gentleman. I deprecate entirely his remarks about immigration. I say that, at the present time, the greatest care is being exercised in London in connection with sending immigrants out to this colony. The immigrants brought here are confined to farm labourers and domestic servants, and there are restrictions in regard to the size of families; that is to say, that people with large families are not accepted. Only a day or two ago I had a report from the Immigration Office, in which the fullest satisfaction has been expressed with the class of immigrants, and I am informed that they have readily found employment. I believe that at the present time there is only one person in the depôt. All the immigrants by the "Duke of Norfolk" and the previous vessels have been absorbed, and representations have been made that more people of a similar class could be absorbed in our different towns.

Mr. McDONALD: At the rate of wages they get.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Some of them join the unemployed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The immigrants brought here from time to time have found full employment, and certainly do not go to recruit the ranks of the unemployed.

Mr. McDONALD: They get such miserable wages.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have nothing to do with the wages question.

Mr. McDONALD: That is important.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They receive wages, I understand, to their satisfaction.

Mr. McDONALD: They must accept what they can get.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They appear to be happily settled and comfortable. I speak from actual knowledge when I say that when the immigrants by the "Jumna" were starting off, Sir Horace Tozer held a sort of social in their honour. They were invited to a large hall near the Agent-General's office, and there limelight views of Queensland were exhibited for their information—views taken from actual photographs of different portions of Queensland.

Mr. REID: Who explained the views?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir Horace Tozer himself. (Opposition laughter.) And he did it very ably and very truthfully.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: You recognised the scenes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, distinctly. I was invited to be present and address a few words of encouragement and advice to the immigrants. I told them distinctly that they need not expect that they were going to a sort of El Dorado where they would pick up gold in the streets. I said that without perseverance and industry, and abstemious living, they need not hope to get on and that they would be better where they were; but I also told them, and I repeat it now, that there is no portion of the British Empire where men or women of good character, abstemious habits, and with patient industry, can get a better reward for their labours than in Queensland. I never held to the belief that 500,000 people were destined to be the occupants of this vast portion of Australia, a country which I firmly believe will comfortably hold as many millions as there

are now thousands located in it. This I wish always to be borne in mind in my advocacy of immigration. I should very much object to a sudden descent of labour, whether of the domestic or farm labouring class on the shores of this colony, but I say we can absorb gradually the moderate amount of immigration which we are now encouraging—something like 500 every two or three months. I can only say that if hon. gentlemen opposite feel that this is an undue increase of population they must have very little confidence in the future of the colony.

Mr. BROWNE: We object to the fact that they go to the other colonies.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We have not had a census for the last ten years, and we do not know what the population of the colony really is. In this connection I may say that I was surprised to find that the statistical commission which recently sat in the south in connection with federation representatives has stated that Queensland has a population of under half a million. I only hope that the census which will be taken in the first year of the new century will prove that we have a considerably larger population than is declared to be the case by the statisticians who sat in Melbourne.

Mr. McDONALD: It was not so the last time the census was taken.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not attribute to the hon. gentleman, who has just addressed the Committee, any desire to misrepresent matters in connection with immigration for the sake of giving publicity to his views, but I can assure him that his strictures on the manner in which immigration is being conducted now by the London office are based on an entirely erroneous view.

Mr. BROWNE: I only go on the instructions from the Agent-General's office.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The instructions from the Agent-General's office have been very carefully gone over, and whatever the instructions may be, I will say that the Agent-General and his staff are particularly guarded in admitting any one to a passage to Queensland, unless they are assured that they will be valuable colonists.

Mr. LESINA: Some agents are paid 10s. per head.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, all the shipping and commission agents in London who have immigrants going to various parts of the empire receive a similar fee.

Mr. LESINA: A scalp fee.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Ten shillings per head is paid to all shipping and commission agents who obtain immigrants, whether they go to Canada or any other portion of the British Empire. That is the uniform fee paid.

Mr. KIDSTON: Like they used to pay the sponging houses in the old days for the press gang.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The only commission paid is 10s. a head, and that is not a recent disbursement. It was found several years ago that it would be an advantage to do so, because these agents come in contact with people who are desirous of going abroad, and are able to represent to them the advantages possessed by Queensland. I may say of the immigrants who have come here that they have arrived in a country where there is great scope for them, and if they choose to conduct themselves properly they will become valuable colonists. I have always held the opinion, and I shall continue to hold it, that we are justified in adopting all reasonable means of encouraging a proper class of immigrants to come to this colony.

Mr. LESINA: Why not make it a federal matter?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Well, immigration is one of the thirty-nine articles which are assigned to the discretion of the Federal Parliament, and possibly when that Parliament is created it is a question which will come up for discussion. The Federal Parliament, however, has yet to be summoned, and I contend that in the meantime the State Parliament have the right to deal with this matter. Now, with regard to defence, undoubtedly there is a very considerable increase upon the appropriations of the previous year, and I am not surprised at the hon. member's contention, and the contentions of other members, on that head, more especially when I remember that the Defence Force has always been viewed with extreme jealousy—I use that word not in an offensive sense—but I say that the appropriations for this purpose have always been viewed with extreme jealousy by hon. gentlemen in this Chamber. But circumstances have been very largely changed during the last twelve months. I am sure that hon. members must admit that there is a necessity for a larger and more efficient Defence Force at the present time than there was twelve months ago.

Mr. RYLAND: What about the volunteers?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We are encouraging the volunteers also. I may say, however, that the whole matter is one which will be far better dealt with when the Estimates come up for discussion, when I shall have fuller information to lay before the Committee from the Commandant, who I have just recently met on his return from the North, and who will enable me to deal more intelligently with this matter. There is, however, one item alone in the Defence Force which I am sure is most popular, and which it is the desire of the country should be increased, and that is the rifle clubs.

Mr. BROWNE: The increase in the armament is not in proportion to the increase in the amount.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member must bear in mind that the total increase represents something under £50,000.

Mr. BROWNE: £111,000.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the total vote. I am merely taking the revenue estimates and disbursements for the annual maintenance of the force. That represents something under £50,000, while increased provision for rifle clubs represents £7,000 of that sum.

Mr. FISHER: What are the items debited to loan?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They are what I may call the permanent arms and ordnance.

Mr. FISHER: There is no such thing as permanent arms.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Well, we may take it that when we get guns and other implements of war they may be very fairly termed permanent additions to the force.

Mr. FISHER: I do not think so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: However, that is a matter which may be better discussed when the Estimates are before us. Referring to the hon. gentleman's criticism of the size of the Defence Force, I would say that while we have every reason to be proud of the volunteers that went to South Africa, and showed such remarkable efficiency—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And who are going to stop there.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We must bear in mind that provision for the men there and for recruits to maintain the efficient strength of our Defence Force must be provided. Therefore, I think circumstances justify the Government in regarding the extension of the Defence Force as a matter of much greater importance than it has been heretofore. We are by no means sure that the Transvaal campaign is nearly at an end, though we have every reason to hope that it is. Still it is not yet concluded, and no

one can positively say when it will be finished. In addition to that, who can tell what will be the outcome of the complications in the East? I look upon the Chinese question as of far greater moment than the Transvaal question with regard to the general peace of the world, and if that question evolves serious international disputes, and possibly warfare, will it do for a great country like this to be comparatively undefended? War will be close to our very doors, and not only would we require the land force to be increased, but also we should require, as the hon. member for Croydon said—and I fully agree with him—our first line of defence, our naval force, to be also put on a larger footing. If that were attempted by the Government, it would not be £10,000 that would be required for the naval force, but a very much larger sum than is wanted for the present land force—if we were to have any adequately efficient naval armament. Of course, we cannot attempt that just now; but it may be that it will come to that in the future. But I would remind the hon. member for Croydon of what the army and navy of Great Britain cost, and ask how it compares with the revenue of the mother country. The revenue of the mother country is about £108,000,000, and over £50,000,000 is spent on the army and navy annually, besides the great khaki loan expenditure; so that really at the present time or during the last six months, there has been as much, if not more, spent on the army and navy of Great Britain than the total annual revenue of the country amounts to.

Mr. TURLEY: But there is the war going on.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, but it is as necessary for us to guard against war in this portion of the British Empire, as it is for the mother country. I think everyone at the present time must see the necessity of putting our defences on a thoroughly efficient footing. I do not want to dwell upon this subject too strongly, but I will say that to put them upon a thoroughly efficient footing commensurate with the views of experienced men in the mother country a very much larger appropriation should be asked for at the present time than is shown on these Estimates. The details of the expenditure will be prepared and laid

[5 p.m.] before hon. members before the Estimates come on for discussion.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know that there are many other points in the hon. gentleman's speech to which I need refer. His references to mining matters I will leave to mining experts, but I think it right to say that Queensland stands particularly prominent in the favourable view of British capitalists, notwithstanding our loan, to which I have referred, and the price it brought. I can assure hon. members that there are millions of money awaiting investment in Australia, and certainly in Queensland, if hon. gentlemen of this Chamber—if the Parliament of Queensland will accept the view that where the Government, of its own financial power, is unable to develop certain mineral districts, British capital should be given the right to do so on fair and equitable terms. Where we have to deal with a large country like this—a country which hon. members will remember is as large as one-third of Europe, where there are many millions of a population—if we are in our own lifetime to develop the great mineral resources of Queensland—of which even we ourselves have got but a very imperfect knowledge—if we are to have these resources developed to an extent commensurate with the growing requirements of the colony, and with that prosperity which we desire to see enjoyed by the people of Queensland, even in our own day, we must be liberal in our views, and in inviting, or at any rate in accepting, overtures

from capitalists outside the colony to develop our mines, and to improve the means of communication between those mines and the coast.

Mr. FISHER: What is stopping them now?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think we may as well speak plainly in this matter.

Mr. FISHER: Hear, hear! That is what we want to know.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: So far as you can speak of a settled policy in a new country, which is at all times open to reconsideration, at any rate, we all know that the policy of this country is certainly to allow the trunk lines of railways to be constructed by the Government and remain in their hands. We all know that, but we know also that no Government administering the affairs of a young country like this, embracing such a very great area of territory, and having only a certain financial ability at their disposal, can do all that is immediately required for the full and early development of great portions of mineral territory.

Mr. FISHER: You might tell the country what "trunk lines" are, so that we may know.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Trunk lines have been constructed, and they are enumerated in the Loan Estimates, which are open to all members of Parliament to see. It is unnecessary for me to enumerate them.

Mr. FISHER: It is a big thing, and you might tell the country what you mean by it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What I refer to are trunk lines such as have been built up to the present time, and such as may be continued or connected hereafter. But there are large mineral areas in this colony which should be developed if we want to see Queensland enjoy a full amount of prosperity, and which must remain unopened and undeveloped if the Government solely is to be left to assist the development of these areas. It is just as well to say plainly that the feeling in Great Britain is this: That private enterprise in Queensland is not regarded with favour by a certain section of Queensland politicians.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: To that view I am entirely opposed. I say that one must act as the handmaiden of the other, and development by private enterprise is as much required in this colony as the development of the country by public expenditure.

Mr. LESINA: Hear, hear! In its proper channels it is required.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We have a great extent of mineral territory in the North and North-west of our country, where there is no large amount of settlement, and which can certainly not be represented at the present time as offering any even early prospect of paying interest upon the cost of railway construction there, and what can be more proper than to give people who are willing to open up such country upon fair and equitable terms, opportunity and encouragement to do so?

Mr. W. HAMILTON: That is just the question—what are fair and equitable terms?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I say that, instead of decreasing the wage-earning power of the working classes in the community, it would considerably increase their opportunities for employment. It would develop mineral country containing, I believe, mineral "wealth beyond the dreams of avarice." But while the feeling prevails that the investment of British capitalists here is regarded with disfavour, and that opportunity will be taken to penalise them, Queensland as a place for investment will be closed to them, and they will take their capital to other parts of the world. I very much regret that this view should prevail. I have no desire to exaggerate it, but, from observation in Great

Britain, it is one great bar which exists at the present time to the very early development of the prosperity of Queensland.

Mr. BROWNE: But the same feeling exists in all the Australian colonies with regard to railways.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not care whether it be in all Australia or in all Asia or Europe; if it be wrong, why should we not rise above that feeling?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Why should we not rise above that feeling and give opportunities to investors to come here and demonstrate to the people that they have been wrong? I believe it would lead to the prosperity of the colony if hon. gentlemen would set aside party feeling in this matter, and view it in the light of what would be best in the interests, and I believe the true interests, of the country demand a much larger investment of capital than we have in circulation here at present.

Mr. LESINA: Well, borrow it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The interests of the country demand that that investment should take the form of developing the great mineral resources, of which hon. gentlemen will not deny we have unlimited stores. If the feeling of hon. members could preponderate in that direction and those willing to enter upon private enterprises could have a full assurance that they would be fairly dealt with, a new future would be opened up before Queensland—a future that would lead to the prosperity of every person in the colony, and would place the colony of Queensland in the position of being one of the greatest portions of a United Australia. I do not wish to protract the debate upon the Financial Statement. It is one which I have read with great interest, and were I a candid friend of the Government and not a member of it I think it is one which I could not criticise.

Mr. FISHER: What do you think of the estimates of expenditure?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think they have been framed with a due regard to economy combined with efficiency. (Laughter.) I am quite certain that when my colleagues propose the increases to the Committee they will be accepted as satisfactory. To my own knowledge there are several officers in the Public Service who have fair claims to increased remuneration. I will not go any further than the London office, with which I have lately come more immediately in contact. That office has a very efficient staff, and several of those officers do not receive due recognition for their services, compared with what is paid to officers holding somewhat similar positions in Queensland. Some of these men are also very heavily taxed by the income tax. Owing to the war, that tax has been increased to 5 per cent., or 1s. in the £1, and in the case of the Agent-General that amounts to £75 a year.

Mr. REID: Glad to hear it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I don't think we should be glad to hear that anyone is underpaid; they should get remuneration commensurate with the work they perform. I will not go into details, but, as I have said, I believe the Statement is one that will give general satisfaction. And I may say, in reply to the leader of the Opposition, that there is a policy running through it. There is no concealment in the Statement about certain measures which, I think, will redound to the benefit of the colony. There is a very distinct policy in the Statement running throughout—a policy desirous of assisting and encouraging private enterprise where such can be advantageously employed for the benefit of the community and of the investors. I desire to see all these matters mentioned in the Statement thrashed out fairly. I don't think

hon. members should always be bound by party obligations to resist any change which may be for the benefit of the colony. There is no concealment of the policy of the Government with regard to affording better facilities for the development of private enterprise.

Mr. BROWNE: I said that is the only policy in the Statement.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That policy is enunciated definitely and unmistakably. There are many other matters in the Statement which I might refer to at considerable length, but I simply rose up to reply to some statements made by the leader of the Opposition, and to deal with matters which have recently come under my own observation.

Mr. FISHER: You are giving us a farewell, I understand?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As long as I am here I hope I shall continue member for Bulimba. I am not aware that I am making a valedictory speech. I have no intention of addressing the Committee in that light. Even if I should have the honour of being elected to another place, I hope I shall not be considered to be any less a Queenslander or an Australian.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: However, I am not going into the Commonwealth Act just now, or into matters connected therewith. I join with the hon. member for Croydon in congratulating the Treasurer on the very excellent Statement he has presented. There is one other matter I would like to refer to. Surprise has been expressed that the trustees of the Government Savings Bank bought stock at 97, when the loan itself was sold so much lower on the London market. Some people think that these trustees did not exercise wise judgment in that transaction. On the contrary, I fully believe that if the Savings Bank commissioners had gone on the London market, they would not have got it at 97, because there is a great difference between quotations in the stock papers and prices actually received. Our stock is held by many investors as a permanent investment. Sometimes prices are quoted above par, and until any large quantities of stock are placed in the market, or until a new loan is announced, it may be difficult to purchase under that figure. I think the Savings Bank commissioners were justified in purchasing at the price they did. I hope hon. members will receive my views in the light that I am perfectly sincere, and that they are made in the best interests of the colony.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

\* Mr. KIDSTON: I rose before somewhat unwillingly because it seemed that no hon. member on the other side was willing to reply to the statements made by the hon. leader of the Opposition; and I think we owe it to the sense of courtesy on the part of the Premier that any hon. gentleman on the Treasury bench has replied to his speech.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not so.

Mr. KIDSTON: I don't think it is necessary that I should compliment the Hon. the Treasurer on his Statement, after the very complimentary speech of the leader of the Opposition, but I cannot refrain from complimenting both the Treasurer and the colony on the satisfactory results of last year's transactions. As I have said on former occasions, I think hon. members should have had the Auditor-General's report before they debate the Financial Statement. No doubt we are better off than the other colonies in that respect. I don't think the Auditor-General's report in the other colonies is presented as promptly as it is here. Of course that does not affect the Treasurer, because he knows the whole of the details, but other hon. members have not the same information at

their command. I do not say that the Auditor-General is to blame—in fact, he gives his reports much more quickly than the Auditor-General in other colonies—but I think the department is undermanned. I submit to the Treasurer that it might be worth while seeing whether extra assistance to the Auditor-General, if it was only temporary assistance, would not enable him to get out his report sooner.

The TREASURER: It is a big undertaking to bring out his report.

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes, I know, but if he had assistance his report would in all likelihood be out a week earlier.

The TREASURER: You wanted this Financial Statement.

Mr. KIDSTON: With regard to the Financial Statement, I notice that the hon. gentleman is something like the moon—he is later and later every time.

The TREASURER: It is too soon for you this time, apparently.

Mr. KIDSTON: Oh, no. As a matter of fact the hon. gentleman is later with his Financial Statement this year than either he himself or any previous Treasurer has been for the last ten years.

The TREASURER: I do not think so.

Mr. KIDSTON: The latest date that the Statement has been made for ten years previous to this year was on the 28th of August, with the exception of last year, when we had the federal session.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: It was made in October last year.

Mr. KIDSTON: The Statement was really made much sooner last year than this, although it was later in point of date, being in October, and this year it was at the end of August. But the Statement was presented to Parliament sooner after Parliament met last year than it has been presented this session. For my own part, I thought the Treasurer had delayed making his Statement owing to the difficulty he experienced in recasting the Estimates, in view of the very great changes which will take place when Queensland enters the Commonwealth; and when I heard the Statement read, I was surprised to find that he had shirked that duty altogether. The hon. gentleman evidently took the good old Scotch way of letting a difficulty settle itself.

The TREASURER: Following the footsteps of Tasmania and Victoria.

Mr. KIDSTON: The result is that the Estimates are, as usual, submitted to us as for the whole year, though the hon. gentleman knows very well that the customs and excise, both revenue and expenditure, will pass out of his hands in January. The hon. gentleman assumes that he will in all probability collect the Customs and excise revenue to the end of the present financial year. In his Statement he said—

It would appear but reasonable that the States should continue as heretofore to collect federal revenue up to 30th June, 1901.

The hon. gentleman took a very active part last year in persuading the people of Queensland to accept the Federal Constitution, but it seems a little doubtful whether he has read the Constitution. Section 69 states that—

On a date or dates to be proclaimed by the Governor-General after the establishment of the Commonwealth, the following departments of the public service in each State shall become transferred to the Commonwealth:—

Posts, telegraphs, and telephones;  
Naval and military defence;  
Lighthouses, lightships, beacons, and buoys;  
Quarantine.

But the departments of Customs and of excise in each State shall become transferred to the Commonwealth on its establishment.

It is perfectly evident from that that there is no option in the matter, that neither the Federal Treasurer nor the State Treasurer can in any way prevent Customs and excise revenue from becoming federal immediately on the proclamation of the Commonwealth. I assume that the very first thing the Federal Treasurer will do on his appointment will be to get into communication with the several heads of the Customs Departments in the various colonies, and, probably through the State Treasurers, give them instructions what to do. As has been pointed out to me, the Premier of New South Wales, Mr. Lyne, speaking on the 29th of August, when moving for the introduction of a Temporary Supply Bill, said—

He wished to explain to the House that he had intended to make his Financial Statement last Thursday, but the accountant of the Treasury Department informed him that, in consequence of the necessity for making arrangements for the transfer of over 5,000 officers to the Commonwealth on 1st January next, and making calculations with regard to the loss the colony would sustain by handing over its Customs and excise revenue to the Federal Parliament, it would be impossible for him to have the Estimates for the current financial year ready before three weeks.

So that it is not at all surprising that I anticipated that the delay which took place in the Treasurer presenting his Financial Statement to this Committee was caused by the difficulty he had in recasting his Estimates, in view of the fact that Queensland would be entering the Commonwealth in the middle of the present financial year. The hon. gentleman seems to think that instead of collecting federal revenue for himself, the Federal Treasurer will issue precepts; but I suspect that the boot will be on the other foot, and that the Federal Treasurer will take good care to collect the money himself, and then hand over what part he does not require for federal purposes to the hon. gentleman, so that the estimate of the hon. gentleman that he will receive £1,650,000 from Customs and excise is manifestly incorrect, because he cannot possibly receive more than one-half of that amount, or £800,000. And the same thing will happen with regard to the postal revenue later on, and with regard to the revenue and expenditure in connection with other services to be taken over by the Commonwealth. It seems to me that this year will be the beginning of what in one sense will be a very bad system. The Treasurer of Queensland, and, what is even of more importance, this House and this Parliament, will no longer have full control over their revenue, and in consequence of that will no longer have full control over their expenditure. The Treasurer will no longer be able, when there is a difficulty in the Treasury, to clap on 3d. a gallon on beer, or 1s. a lb. on tobacco. He will have to cut much nearer the bone when he wants additional revenue after

this, and the sooner the hon. gentleman studies the different systems of direct taxation the better. Now, as

to the probable cost of the Federal Government. I confess that I have not sufficient data to enable me to form anything like a reliable opinion as to what the federal expenditure is likely to be for the first six months after its establishment, and I regret to see that the Treasurer is very much in the same boat. He simply blindly follows the example of Victoria and Tasmania, and assumes that the cost for the first six months will be about £200,000, and he provides £25,000 on the Estimates as Queensland's quota of that cost.

The TREASURER: The Estimates vary from £300,000 to £500,000 per annum.

Mr. KIDSTON: I am not going to express a very dogmatic opinion upon this matter, because, as I said, I have not data to justify me in doing that; but my own opinion is that £200,000 is likely to be under the mark, and that the hon.

gentleman will have to find considerably more than £25,000 for the first six months. But what I wish specially to mention in connection with this matter is that it seems to me that the hon. gentleman should have framed his Estimates more in accordance with what he knows will take place. I do not think he has any right to present us with Estimates giving us the whole year's income and expenditure in regard to services which he knows he will have no control over, and when he knows that he will neither receive the revenue nor pay the expenditure after the 1st of January.

The TREASURER: I believe we will, all the same.

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. gentleman believes so, but I have shown reasons why I do not believe it. I would like to say a few words now with reference to the Savings Bank fund. I agree with all that the hon. gentleman says in regard to the value of that institution, and I was very pleased to hear the leader of this party express his appreciation of how valuable an institution the Savings Bank was. I may point out, however, that it is not only valuable to the people of the country, but, as the Treasurer has found out more than once, it is very valuable to him, and for that reason it is the business of the Treasurer to cherish and encourage it in every possible way rather than try to skin it every now and again of 1 per cent. on £500,000 or £600,000, even when he has to break the law to enable him to do it. I spoke on this matter at the end of last session, and the hon. gentleman, in a way that is characteristic of him, if I may say so, refers to the matter very obliquely, and explains, without mentioning anything of the criticism, why it was that he had done the thing that I then complained of. This is the hon. gentleman's statement on page 5 of the Financial Statement—

In the early part of last financial year, in consequence of the unexpected increase—

I wish hon. members to pay particular attention to the reason which the hon. gentleman gives—

in consequence of the unexpected increase in the amount of deposits during the previous twelve months there were Savings Bank funds requiring investment, as reported by the Auditor-General.

Now, in making a statement of that sort, the hon. gentleman ought to have remembered—I do not remember the exact scriptural phrase, but it is something like this—that “the other man cometh after and examineth.” I want to examine that Statement of the Treasurer's, that the reason for allowing the proportion of Savings Bank funds invested in Government securities to fall under the minimum two-thirds—the amount stipulated for by statute—was that in the early part of the last financial year, in consequence of the unexpected increase in the amount of deposits during the previous twelve months, there was an unusual increase in the Savings Bank funds. I shall give the increases in the Savings Bank funds for the four years that the hon. gentleman has been Treasurer. In 1897 the increase was £245,000; in 1898, £242,000; and in 1899, £365,000.

The TREASURER: Is not that a big increase?

Mr. KIDSTON: It is a big increase, but it was not anything phenomenal, and I am giving the full facts. I am not trying to misrepresent them in any way. It is £1,000, over 50 per cent., more than for the previous year. But I shall now show that that increase had nothing at all to do with the fact that less than two-thirds of the Savings Bank moneys was invested in Government securities. Here is a table showing the proportion of Savings Bank funds invested in Government securities, and the amount that was invested, more or less than the minimum required by law, on 30th June in each of the last five years. In 1896—the last year that Sir Hugh Nelson was Treasurer—the proportion of Savings

Bank funds invested in Government securities was 67·2 per cent. The law requires 66·6 per cent., so that on that occasion there were £13,000 invested above the minimum. In 1897—the year in which the present Treasurer took office—the proportion invested had fallen to 65·9 per cent.—that was, just under the minimum.

The TREASURER: Outside the pale.

Mr. KIDSTON: It is a very small percentage, but it was about £20,000 under the minimum. Still, that was nothing. In the next year—1898—the proportion invested had fallen to 63·8 per cent., and the amount below the minimum was £82,000. That was before this large increase in the Savings Bank funds took place. What I am trying to point out is that the reason the hon. gentleman gave could not possibly be the reason, because he had offended against the law in the particular respect that I mentioned before that increase took place at all. Now, I go on until 1899, when the proportion of Savings Bank funds invested in Government securities had fallen to 56·6, leaving £325,000 uninvested more than should have been. It was when it was in that condition that I complained, and I think I was perfectly justified in complaining. I will not trouble to read the section of the Savings Bank Act, because I do not think the fact is disputed in any way. I am glad to say that since my contention was made the hon. gentleman has complied with the law in this respect; so that on the 30th June of this year the proportion of funds invested in Government bank securities had risen to 69·3, or about £98,000 over the minimum required by law. Now, while the hon. gentleman has brought himself into compliance with the law in that respect, he is just as bad as ever in regard to the other point that I raised at the end of last year, and that is, that he is still using Savings Bank funds for loan purposes without paying the stipulated 3 per cent. interest. I will just show that the Savings Bank fund on the 30th June, 1900, was £1,111,000, and inscribed stock £4,000. The total funds at credit were £1,115,000; that is not including the funds invested in Government securities. Now, from a statement of the public balances as on 30th June, 1900, which hon. members will find on page 10 of the Treasurer's tables, I find this: That that £1,115,000 of Savings Bank funds were invested in this way: There was legally invested in Brisbane banks, as fixed deposits, £420,000. Some time ago the hon. member for Carpentaria, who was criticising this statement of mine, made earlier in the session, contended that there was in Brisbane banks, at fixed deposit, £750,000. He was quite correct as to the amount at fixed deposit, but if he will turn up the Auditor-General's report on the Treasury notes, of date 17th July last, he will find that £250,000 of that total of £750,000 is Treasury notes money, and has nothing at all to do with what I am speaking of—namely, that there was in the Brisbane banks £420,000 of Savings Bank money at fixed deposit. There was also at current account £170,000. That is altogether £590,000, which is the whole of the money out of that £1,115,000 in the hands of the Treasurer that he is using as the law stipulates that he shall use it. Now, in addition to that he was illegally using the following sums: In London he had £217,920, the loan fund overdrawn to the extent of £282,000, and trust funds overdrawn to the extent of £22,000, or a total of £525,000 used in a way that he has no right to use Savings Bank money until he takes it over into loan money and pays 3 per cent for it. The hon. gentleman seems to think that that is a very trifling matter, but from the figures I have shown it is manifest that he is taking from the Savings Bank unfairly and illegally 1 per cent. on half-a-

million of money, and to show that that is illegal I will again quote from section 7 of the Savings Bank Act, which provides—

As to the remaining one-third part thereof, the Treasurer shall retain in his hands such portion as in his opinion is necessary for carrying out the ordinary business of the Government Savings Bank, and shall place the same to the credit of an open account in his name with one of the public banking companies carrying on business in Brisbane, and no money so received as aforesaid shall be invested upon mortgage or dealt with in any other manner than is hereinbefore and hereinafter authorised.

The Treasurer has absolutely no right to use the Savings Bank funds in the way that he is using them without taking them into loan and paying 3 per cent. for them. I complained of that last year, and I have dealt with the matter again because I see that the Treasurer is still doing it—that the position is just the same as it was at the end of last year, with this further fault, that the Treasurer has no necessity for doing it now. He had a loan authorised by Parliament at the end of last year, and could have taken up that with Savings Bank money as he required it for the purpose of financing the colony, without breaking the law at all. And yet he has gone on doing this, and, as I say, on the 30th June, he was illegally using £500,000 of Savings Bank money. Now, since that time I notice from the Statement that the hon. gentleman has taken up another £150,000 of the loan with Savings Bank money, and if he had taken up the other £150,000—

The TREASURER: We will use that by and by.

Mr. KIDSTON: But if he had taken it up now he would not have the loan fund overdrawn. In the meantime, I say he has no right to use this money in this way, and I think the Act makes that abundantly clear. I would just like to say that what I have said before on this subject has been misrepresented as if I was saying something which militated against the security which depositors in the Government Savings Bank have. I wish to show that nothing which the Treasurer could do, nothing which the Savings Bank officials could do, could in any way vitiate the absolute security which the depositors in the Savings Bank have. The whole resources of the Government are the security for every person who deposits money in that bank, and they cannot possibly in Queensland have greater security. Now, what I am complaining of is that the Treasurer is using the funds of the bank in a way that is distinctly forbidden by statute, and in a way which robs the bank of 1 per cent. upon the money so used. In the present instance it is 1 per cent. on £500,000. Now, I think it is nothing to the Treasurer and it is to the advantage of the bank—

The TREASURER: Do you want the bank to pay more interest?

Mr. KIDSTON: No, I do not want the bank to pay more interest. The only funds available in the hands of the Savings Bank managers for paying interest, is the interest that they receive from the Government, and it is just because some of the early investments in Government securities made from Savings Bank funds were made at 4 per cent. that there is any surplus; that there is any possibility of working the Savings Bank and paying the depositors 3 per cent. And just in proportion as the amount of Savings Bank money, which is only getting 2 per cent., bears to the amount which is getting 4 per cent.—just in that proportion do you lessen the chance of the Government Savings Bank being able to pay depositors 3 per cent. and carry on the business of the bank profitably.

Mr. FISHER: Pay working expenses.

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes, pay working expenses and carry on business profitably. So, I hold, if the Treasurer really thinks about the bank, and

the service the bank is to the people and the Government of Queensland, as highly as he speaks about it in his Financial Statement, he should be careful to give the fullest encouragement that he can give it according to law; and it is not asking him much to pay for Savings Bank funds the same rate of interest that he is prepared to pay for money in London.

The TREASURER: You do not point out that all that money is bearing interest—the whole of the Savings Bank money is bearing interest. What other bank does that?

Mr. KIDSTON: The law provides that all the money shall bear interest.

The TREASURER: Oh, no.

Mr. KIDSTON: But oh yes.

The TREASURER: Except a certain amount.

Mr. KIDSTON: It does not say anything about a certain amount, but I must say that the Savings Bank, or that the depositors in that Savings Bank, are not in a worse position than if they were banking with a private bank.

The TREASURER: They are in a better position.

Mr. KIDSTON: I think that they are in a much better position. I am only pointing out that, in doing the thing that I am complaining of, the Treasurer is, on the one hand, breaking the law, and, on the other hand, he is keeping 1 per cent. from the managers of the Savings Bank which he can legitimately pay them. I think that he ought to pay it; and if he wants to encourage and make the Savings Bank the institution which everyone desires it to be, I think he will try to do that in the future. Now, I want briefly to review the Estimates of expenditure which the hon. gentleman has given us. I am aware that it is proverbially difficult to dispute a Treasurer's figures; but still I think that these—at least, those as to revenue—are unlikely to be realised. While I should be very glad to be able to think that they will be realised, I doubt if they will, and I will try to show why I doubt it. The hon. gentleman estimates an actual increase in the year's revenue over that of last year of £3,164; but he knows that the actual revenue that he will receive will be £1,000,000 short of the revenue—

The TREASURER: Oh, no!

Mr. KIDSTON: If you are £800,000 short in Customs and excise, and if the Federal Government take over the post and telegraph office, as they are likely to do in February or March, on the actual figures you are likely to have about £1,000,000 less than you have estimated. But I am taking what the hon. gentleman expects to receive as revenue for the whole year; and I may say that so far as I can see the hon. gentleman will be a long way short on the 30th of next June. I regret that; I should be very glad to believe that the result will be otherwise; but I am quite unable to go with the hon. gentleman in this matter. I shall now take the matter somewhat in detail to show why I do not think the hon. gentleman's estimate will be realised. In the first place, as to taxation—the hon. gentleman estimates a falling off in taxation of £36,000 as compared with last year. Now, when we consider that the revenue, not only shows a fairly steady increase, but a very large increase for the last six years, averaging £100,000 a year. The average increase for the last two years has been over £200,000, and last year the increase was actually £234,000. On those figures the estimate that the hon. gentleman has given us of a falling off of £36,000 seems to be unaccountably low; and yet when we take it in detail it seems to be too high. For instance, in regard to the Customs, the hon. gentleman estimated that the Customs will yield £38,000 more than last year. Now, there has been a very gratifying increase in the Customs for the last three years. In 1897-98 the increase was £8,662; in 1898-99

the increase over the previous year was £160,000 and last year, 1899-1900, the increase was £93,763; and yet, although that is true, I think present indications point to a very serious falling off in the receipts from the Customs. For instance, take the four quarters of last year; in the first quarter of the year the increase on the corresponding quarter of the previous year was £48,000; in the second quarter it was only £18,000; in the third quarter it was £23,000, and in the last quarter of the year it fell to £4,220. And if we take the whole three years, we see that the increase really began in the last quarter of 1897-98, that it reached its maximum in the middle period, 1898-99, and that it fell off last year until, in the last quarter of last year, it was only £4,000. I find that the returns for this year, so far as it

has gone, seem to accentuate the falling off indicated by the figures for the previous three years. I find

[7 p.m.] that for the month just closed there is an actual falling off, as compared with the corresponding month of last year, of £3,500. And while it is true that taking the two months of this year that have gone there is an increase of some £7,000 on the corresponding period last year, I think it is unmistakable that in the returns from the Customs for the last three years, there are evident indications that the tendency is downward. When we consider the condition of a large portion of the Western country, and what is indicated by the very sharp fall that has taken place in railway receipts, I think a fall in the amount to be received from Customs this year is much more likely than the increase of £38,000 which the Treasurer has estimated. Taking stamps, the Treasurer's estimate is really a decrease of £75,000 on last year's receipts. That seems to be allowing for a very large decrease, but when you consider that last year's increase of £124,000 was altogether abnormal, and that £122,000 of that increase was actually received in the second quarter of the last financial year, that there was a falling off of £80 in the third quarter, and a further falling off of £3,300 in the fourth quarter of the year, and that in the two months that have already gone of this year there has been a falling off of £2,600 on the corresponding two months of last year, it is unmistakable that the tendency is downwards in stamp revenue.

The TREASURER: I expect £70,000 from one estate.

Mr. KIDSTON: Another millionaire has died?

The TREASURER: We have not got all out of the last millionaire yet.

Mr. KIDSTON: If that is so, and there is a likelihood of a lump receipt like that from one estate, it will, of course, alter the position very much. The variation in receipts from stamps has been very small; indeed there were only two increases in the last ten years—£15,000 in 1896-7 and £10,000 in 1898-9. I think the Treasurer should have given us the information in his Statement he has now given by interjection, because from the figures I had before the Treasurer interjected it seemed evident that the hon. gentleman was likely to be from £40,000 to £50,000 short in his estimate. If what he says is correct, it will, of course, remedy that decrease which would have occurred in the stamp receipts.

The TREASURER: We made a claim of £60,000 or £70,000.

Mr. KIDSTON: Of course, if that is received the Treasurer may realise his estimate, and I think it probable he will more than realise it. The hon. gentleman estimates an increase this year, under the head of territorial revenue, of £24,800. Last year the increase was £43,000,



but £33,000 of that was received from the sale of mineral specimens, and there was actually a deficit in the pastoral revenue of last year.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: A deficit?

Mr. KIDSTON: An actual deficit on the previous year's receipts. As this year the Treasurer will not have any of those mineral specimens to sell, then assuming other items remain about the same, he is likely to be short by £13,000.

The TREASURER: We gave a remission of rents last year for a certain period, and they will be paid this year.

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. gentleman anticipates an increase of £15,000 from rents, but I notice that in the first two months of this year there has been a decrease from this source of £2,600.

The TREASURER: The rents are usually paid twice a year.

Mr. KIDSTON: If I do not forget there has only once been an increase in that item in the last ten years, of £15,000, but what the Treasurer has said may justify the estimate he has made, though I remark again that I think it is the duty of the hon. gentleman to say those things in his Financial Statement. Taking the pastoral revenue, I find that the Treasurer estimates an increase of £22,000, and here again he has given no reason at all for such an anticipation. I submit that the facts and figures, so far as we know them, do not justify that estimate. Four years ago there was a steady falling off in rents of runs. Last year £47,000 was received less than in 1895-96. During the same period the amount received for occupation licenses was increased by £13,000 more than 1895-96. Still that was a shortage of £34,000 as compared with 1895-96. I find that in two months in this year there has been a further decrease in the same department of £3,700. Now, I would like to know what are the facts and figures which justify the Treasurer in anticipating this sudden rise of £22,000? I ask that more particularly in view of the present regrettable conditions in a large portion of our pastoral country. I cannot see on what the hon. gentleman has based his estimate. I would be very pleased if that estimate was likely to be realised, and if he has any information which justifies him in making such an estimate, I think it is exceedingly regrettable that he has not given that information to the Committee.

The TREASURER: Look at page 14, under the head of "Land Settlement." £31,000 was received last year; the same amount will be received again this year.

Mr. KIDSTON: I do not see anything there that would lead me to alter the opinions I have expressed. I criticise the hon. gentleman's estimates according to the best information I have at my command. While it is quite possible that I may be wrong, I think it is my business to point out what I believe to be the facts. The hon. gentleman estimates a decrease for this year of £23,000 in railway receipts. When we consider the steady increase there has been in railway revenue for years back—last year for instance we received from railways £491,000 more than in 1893-94—the fact that the Treasurer anticipates a decrease in this department is significant that decreases may be expected in other sources of revenue. I notice that the increase in 1898-99, as compared with the previous year, was £164,000—the increase being fairly equal in the two halves of the year. Last year the increase was £100,000, but of that amount £70,000 was earned in the first half of the year, and only £30,000 in the second half, while for the first two months of the present financial year there has actually been a decrease of £39,000 as compared with the corresponding period of the last year.

And yet the Treasurer estimates that the decrease for the whole of this year will only be £26,000. When we consider the condition of the Western country, we must come to the conclusion that it will lead to a large reduction of railway receipts. For instance, on the Townsville line there has been an actual decrease; during the last quarter of last year and during the first two months of this year there has been a further falling off of £20,000. Then there must be a falling off in receipts on the Central line, owing to the condition of the back country. The Treasurer anticipates a small increase in the receipts on the Southern lines and on some of the minor Northern lines. While it is true that there is a larger proportion of the traffic in the South unaffected by the drought than is the case on the Northern and Central lines, yet it looks as if there will be a decrease even on the Southern lines. In the first two months of this year on the Southern lines there is an actual decrease of £6,500.

The TREASURER: There will be a better wheat crop this year.

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes; much of the Southern traffic is not at all affected by the drought, yet there is unmistakable evidence that there is likely to be a considerable falling off in railway receipts even in the South. Now, as to what the Treasurer says of the minor Northern lines—and I think it is significant when the Treasurer has to turn his hopeful eyes to the receipts from the minor Northern lines. Now, amongst those lines the Cairns Railway, with its increase of 60 per cent. last year, and showing signs of further improvement, is the only one that there is much to hope from. And as the total receipts from that line last year only amounted to £23,000, I think the Treasurer is rather optimistic in his estimate of £1,422,000 from railways. He may have information at his command which justifies him in making that estimate, but certainly the figures available to private members do not justify such an estimate. If the Treasurer had such information I think it is in every way regrettable that he did not give that information to the Committee when he was dealing with the different items. I am quite sure that, valuable as much of the information was in his Financial Statement, the information I now refer to would have been far more interesting to many hon. members, and to a great many people outside who look upon our revenue prospects for the coming year with some little doubt. The broad facts of the position as we now stand are these: The Treasurer estimates a revenue for this year of £6,164 more than last year, and for the first two months of the current year there has been a decrease of £26,000, and owing to a very large increase in the expenditure during those two months the Treasurer is actually at the present moment £124,000 worse off than he was at this time last year. Now, I should like to say a few words with regard to the hon. gentleman's estimate of expenditure. We have an estimated increase of £31,000 in the expenditure, and when we consider that last year's expenditure was £516,000 over the expenditure for the previous year, and actually £176,000 over the estimate presented to the House, I think we may very well doubt if £31,000 will be all the increase in the expenditure for this year. While we may have very good reason for doubting the hon. gentleman's estimate of revenue, I do not think we can have any reason to doubt that he will live up to his estimate of expenditure. Certainly, if the hon. gentleman fails this year to live up to his estimate of expenditure, it will be the first year that he has done so. The first year the hon. gentleman was Treasurer his actual expenditure exceeded his estimate by £47,800.



The second year the hon. gentleman was Treasurer his actual expenditure exceeded his estimate by £157,000, and last year the hon. gentleman's actual expenditure exceeded his estimate by £176,000; so that I think we may have reason to question the accuracy of his forecast when he estimates an increase in expenditure for this year of only a modest £31,000, especially as we find that for the first two months of this year the expenditure has already increased over the corresponding two months of last year by £98,000, or three times the hon. gentleman's estimated increase for the whole of the current year.

The TREASURER: Oh, no, you are wrong there.

Mr. KIDSTON: I will repeat it again to see if I am wrong. During the first two months of the present year, the actual expenditure has been £98,000 more than the actual expenditure for the corresponding two months of last year.

The TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. KIDSTON: That, I say, is three times more than the sum the hon. gentleman estimates as the increase for the whole of the current year.

The TREASURER: No, you are wrong.

Mr. KIDSTON: On page 9 of the Financial Statement, the hon. gentleman says he expects that the expenditure for 1900-1901 will exceed the actual cash expenditure for last year by £31,320.

The TREASURER: That is correct.

Mr. KIDSTON: If then the actual expenditure for the first two months of this year has been £98,000 more than the actual expenditure for the first two months of last year, I say again the result so far is that the hon. gentleman's actual expenditure for the first two months of this year is three times more than his estimated increase for the whole twelve months. Surely £98,000 is a liberal product of three times £31,000.

The TREASURER: You forget that we were spending money last year at the rate of £200,000 less than we are expending this year.

Mr. KIDSTON: I am not discussing the rightness or wrongness of it, but I would ask what is the good of such estimates of expenditure? If the hon. gentleman exceeds his estimate of expenditure by £47,000 in one year, by £150,000 the next year, and by £176,000 the following year, and the first two months of the fourth year he exceeds it by £98,000—

The TREASURER: Not the estimate for this year.

Mr. KIDSTON: What, I ask, is the good of such Estimates? Is the hon. gentleman really serious in making them?

The TREASURER: The £147,000 was explained, and so were the other items.

Mr. KIDSTON: I am not saying that the increases were not justified. I am asking what is the good of giving us an estimate which is exceeded to such an enormous extent? Surely the hon. gentleman has some control over the expenditure.

The TREASURER: I have no control over the war.

Mr. KIDSTON: I am not sure whether the hon. gentlemen had not some control over the war expenditure. However, that is by the way. I now want to refer to the enormous increases in what you may call the expenditure for governmental purposes in Queensland. I find that the expenditure has increased £1,232,000 in five years; that is to say, we spent £1,232,000 more last year than we did in 1894-5. And when we consider that the loan expenditure during those five years has increased £953,000, we find that the total increase in governmental expenditure during last year was £2,184,000 more than it was in 1894-5. In other words, the governmental expenditure last year was over £11 per head of the population, or very nearly £1 per week for every family in the colony.

Is it any wonder, when the Government are spending all that money, that there [7.30 p.m.] was something resembling prosperity in Queensland? Whether there may not be a relapse after it is another question, but it is not very remarkable that things boomed a little when the Government were spending almost £1 per week per family. I am not saying that a large expenditure is necessarily bad, not even when it is increasing so rapidly as it has done in Queensland during the last five years. I think that will be determined largely by the purposes for which the expenditure has been incurred. The expenditure may increase even more rapidly than it has with us; it may even be more per head, and yet be a very wise and profitable increase in the end. I want to briefly examine what has been the nature of the increase of expenditure that has taken place in Queensland, and to see whether it was merely for what we might call departmental purposes—for carrying on the Government, as you might say—or whether it was incurred for productive works, and to increase the productivity of the colony.

The TREASURER: The biggest item is the railways.

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes; I will tell the hon. gentleman in a minute. I am going to give the increases that have taken place in the various Government departments during the last five years. Taking first what may be called the productive departments—that is, the Lands, Mines, and Agriculture—the increase was £99,000 during the last five years. The railway expenditure increased by £371,000, and the Post and Telegraphs by £64,000. That was a total increase of £535,000. I noticed that the railways expenditure last year increased by £164,000, while the increased revenue was only £100,000, so that they spent £164,000 to earn that extra £100,000.

The TREASURER: That was not good business.

Mr. KIDSTON: It was not good business; but in such a department as the railways the expenditure might be in every way justifiable, and it may recoup itself after all; so that, without going into details, the increased expenditure incurred in those departments may turn out a good thing for the colony through increasing the productivity of the colony. Now I come to what I call the non-productive departments. For instance, the Chief and Home Secretaries' Departments had an increased expenditure during those five years of £304,800. The Department of Justice increased its expenditure by £20,498. The Education Department increased its expenditure by £74,000, and the Works Department—and it is to be remembered that this was merely for departmental works—increased its expenditure by £105,000.

The TREASURER: There were a lot of schools in that.

Mr. KIDSTON: It was for carrying on the departments. You see I draw a distinction between departmental works and those which help to develop the colony. The Treasurer's Department increased its expenditure by £69,000, and in the Schedules and the Auditor-General's Department there was an increase of £39,000—or a total increase in those non-productive departments of £613,000. That was an increase purely in the cost of governing the colony. It cost the people of Queensland £613,000 more last year to govern the colony than it did five years ago. Then let me give hon. members three figures, which will illustrate what a very large increase that was. The Treasurer told us in the course of his Statement that the increase in the population during the same five years had been 15 per cent. I think he said 14.3 per cent., but I shall call it 15 per cent. He also said that the increase in our trade during

the same period had been 42·44 per cent., and he instanced that—and legitimately instanced it—as showing the great development of the trade of Queensland in proportion to its population. There was an increase of 42 per cent. in our trade during five remarkably prosperous years, but the increase in the cost of government during those five years was 57½ per cent. I think that no hon. member can fairly consider those figures without coming to the conclusion that it is high time that some honest effort was made to stop the growth in what we may call purely governmental expenditure. I am quite aware that the Treasurer is not alone to blame in this matter—that probably every member of the House is blamable in a greater or lesser degree. I suppose we all plead with the hon. gentleman to do this, that, and the other thing in our electorates, but, at the same time, I can hardly think that the Treasurer has exercised any very firm hand in the direction of limiting the expenditure. It has increased by leaps and bounds.

The TREASURER: I wish you could see the Estimates when I first get them from the different departments.

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes, I have heard the hon. gentleman blamed more than once for the remorseless way in which he has cut down Estimates which have been submitted by the departments, but the figures I have given show that he would have been justified in cutting them down even more remorselessly. I do not know any country in the world where it costs so much to carry on the Government. I want to say a few words now about the loan fund, and I would like to draw the attention of the Treasurer to a mistake that seems to have taken place in the first paragraph. It begins on page 10, and goes over on to page 11. I do not know where the mistake is, but there seems to be a mistake of some £30,000. Probably I am making it myself, but I do not see it. The hon. gentleman says that the loan balance on the 1st July, 1899, was £1,682,974, and that the repayments to the loan fund were £159,000, that the debentures taken up by the Government Savings Bank were £750,000, the amount taken up by the trustees of the public debt reduction fund was £150,000, and the debentures taken up by the Government Savings Bank inscribed stock was £125,000. That would make a total balance of £2,867,000. Now, the loan expenditure for the year he places at £1,182,000. That ought to leave a balance of £1,685,000. The hon. gentleman says that the balance is £1,634,000, so that the balance seems to be short by £30,750. I am only taking the figures which the hon. gentleman has himself given, and that is the result I arrive at. The balance, I take it, should be £1,685,000, unless there are some items left out in his Statement. Now, there is just another matter in connection with what the hon. gentleman says about the loan fund to which I would like to refer. In a reference which the hon. gentleman makes to some remarks of mine at the end of last year with regard to the loan fund he says, referring to the previous figures which I have just quoted, that as this would bring the loan balance rather low for the requirements of the colony, he had to get a Loan Act passed. What I would refer to is the delicate manner in which the hon. gentleman puts the matter. You must remember that I tried to show at the end of last session that on 1st July, 1899, the loan fund was actually overdrawn in Brisbane to the extent of £700,000, and that even when giving credit for loan money in London there was an actual wrong side balance of at least £307,000, and in reference to that the hon. gentleman says that the credit balance on 1st July, 1899, was getting rather low. Well, I should think it was. I should say it was distinctly low. I wish to call the hon. gentleman's attention again to the fact that on

the 1st July last the position was just as bad as it was last year. On page 10 of the Treasurer's tables we are shown that the credit balance of the loan account was £1,654,000, and we are also shown that the extended deposits in the bank—the loan money locked up in the bank—was £1,937,000. So that the only balance to the credit of the loan fund on the 1st July was a balance on the wrong side of £282,000. The hon. gentleman's fault on this occasion was much more venal than it was at the beginning of last year, because on this occasion he had authority from Parliament to float a loan, and his only fault was that he did not float it all before the 1st July. I think he should have taken up another £300,000 from the Savings Bank fund and put it into loan even before the end of June, for the purpose of having the loan account in credit. I see that since the 1st July the hon. gentleman has taken up half of that money—£150,000—and put it into loan, but I think it was a mistake that he did not take up the whole amount previous to 30th June. Now, I want to say a word as to the present position of the Treasurer in regard to available loan money. I have said that on the 1st July there was a debit balance of £282,000 in the loan fund. He has floated a loan of £1,400,000 which realised, approximately, 91½ net, so that will produce £1,281,000 or thereabouts, and there is £300,000 of the loan which can be taken up locally. That is £150,000 he has taken up since July, and another £150,000 he has still to take up. That really will give him £1,581,000, less £282,000, or £1,298,000 of loan money available for the purposes of the present year. He proposes to spend this year from loan £1,683,000, which is considerably more loan money than he has available. Of course one's estimates are not very often borne out, but suppose his actual loan expenditure is approximately the same as it was last year, then, I ask, what prospect is there of a Government railway policy being initiated without a fresh loan? I do not see that there is the remotest chance of building any Government railways unless the hon. gentleman brings in a fresh Loan Bill this year.

The TREASURER: You cannot build railways unless you get a Loan Bill through.

Mr. KIDSTON: I do not think you can build any railways unless you get a new Loan Bill through, and I think it is eminently desirable to build a considerable number of railways. I think if the Government of Queensland have any special duty at the present time it is to initiate what is called a spirited public works policy.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: A spirited borrowing policy.

Mr. KIDSTON: No, I will tell you what I propose.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: But you said we could not make a railway without a loan.

Mr. KIDSTON: You had better wait until I have done. I think that the condition of Queensland, although by no means bad, is really such as demands from the Government a very distinct policy in regard to reproductive public works; and I do not think the Government should delay in initiating it. I do not mean by such public works as new lands office and post office in Brisbane or anywhere else. I wish to draw special attention to this fact, that seeing the demand and the need that there is throughout so many districts in Queensland for public works of a reproductive character, and our limited power to meet such demands, the very first duty of the Government is to sharply and severely stop all loan expenditure except on public works of a reproductive character. On reference to the Loan Estimates I find there is some £80,000 down for defence purposes. Now, I believe that the people of Queensland ought to spend more money

for defence purposes than they have spent, but I think that the money should come out of revenue. I think it is improper; it is wrong to spend loan money on rifles that may be obsolete in a few years, and on gunpowder that may be fired away a month after you get it. I think that the greater part of £80,000 of loan money put down for defence purposes, if it has to be spent, should be spent out of revenue. The Hon. Chief Secretary told us that it was the duty of the colony to provide for its defences. I have stated over and over again in this House—and I say it here now—that it is our duty to pay that out of our own pockets, and not out of the pockets of “Uncle Sam” or “Uncle John” in London. There is another item, that of immigration, which I do not think ought to be spent out of loan money. As a matter of fact, I do not think we have any right to spend £50,000 on immigration from any source just now.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The best spent money of the lot.

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. gentleman will allow me to differ with him on that head. I have no objection to immigration if it is conducted on a proper system, but I distinctly object—in view of what we have been told by the Treasurer and many hon. members on the other side of the House as to the probable condition of our Western country during the next twelve or eighteen months—to the people of Queensland being called upon to pay £50,000 this year for immigration. Then there are two other items of loan expenditure which amount to £380,000—namely, a new lands office and a post office in Brisbane. I claim that that might be quite legitimate expenditure under certain conditions, but I do not think it is legitimate expenditure under the present conditions. If the Hon. the Treasurer will go and see the site of the lands office fronting the river, and if he will go down and see the position of the post and telegraph office he will see that all the extra accommodation required in those two departments could probably be given for a cost of £30,000. I do not say that the lands office is everything that is desirable, but we cannot afford at the present time to lavish loan money where it can be saved. I say that the spending of £380,000 on a land office and a post office in Brisbane—I am not referring to the fact that it is in Brisbane, but to the fact that as much accommodation as is required could be provided for a very small part of that sum—I say the expenditure of £380,000 for such a purpose is a misappropriation of loan money. There are a considerable number of loan items that when we come to discuss them in detail may be objected to on the same grounds. I think it is spending nearly £500,000 of loan money which will not produce anything at all.

Mr. FORSYTH: The amount is spread over several years.

Mr. KIDSTON: I think the hon. gentleman should stop this wasteful and improper expenditure of loan money. I have said it is the duty of the Government to initiate public works of a reproductive character; and I was told by the Treasurer that it will necessitate another loan. I think it will necessitate another loan, and I wish to point out this: I believe that the hon. gentleman, if he will float a loan for £1,500,000, can take it all up from funds that are, or will be, in the hands of the Government within the next year without going to London for a penny of it. And I think I can show that in doing that he will save somewhere about £16,000 a year in interest, as compared with what he would have to pay if he went to London for that money at the present time. I would like to show, briefly, how

I think it can be done. First, in regard to the Treasury notes account. There is, in regard to this account, a sum of £388,833, which is advanced to a number of the banks at 2 per cent., and the interest which we get on that is £7,300. There is another sum of £250,000 on fixed deposit in the banks at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and we are paid £6,250 a year for that; and then there is surplus gold lying in the Treasury amounting to £248,000, which earns no interest at all. That is a total of £886,900, for which the Government receives an annual interest of £14,000. I believe that in addition to that,

[8 p.m.] between now and the end of the year, something over £600,000 can be taken out of the Savings Bank funds into loan account with perfect safety as to the working of the bank. That would give the Treasurer a fund of £1,500,000, and to get the same amount of money in London it would require a loan of some £1,639,000 to be floated at the price of last loan, and at 3 per cent. interest that would be an annual charge of £49,000. If we were to lose the interest on the £886,000 of Treasury notes funds which is £14,000, and paid 3 per cent. on £633,000 of Savings Bank money, £18,990, or a total of £33,000 a year, that would represent a saving of £16,000 a year compared with what we would have to pay if we got the money in London. I know that objections will be raised to this kind of thing. It will be said that it would be improper to use Treasury note money for loan purposes, but the Treasury Notes Act of 1893 distinctly provides that this can be done. Clause 4 of the Act reads thus—

The Governor in Council may from time to time and apply any sum or sums of money to arise from any such Treasury notes to any service authorised to be defrayed out of the consolidated revenue of the colony or out of a loan authorised by Parliament.

So that it would be a perfectly legal and proper thing for the Treasurer to take to loan this sum of £800,000.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It might be legal, but not judicious.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: To borrow his own notes.

Mr. KIDSTON: If the hon. member for Mackay deposits £500 in one of the banks down the street, for which he receives interest, the bank does not allow it to remain there. The bank lends it out and uses the money, and I say it is the intention of the Treasury Notes Act that the Treasurer should do the same thing with the gold he receives in the Treasury.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Only a portion of it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: You must keep a cash reserve.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: One-fourth only.

Mr. KIDSTON: Only a portion of it, the hon. member says, but I have distinctly refrained from meddling with that one-fourth. I have left that one-fourth required by law to provide gold for the notes when presented for payment. It is a part of the Treasury Notes Act that the Treasurer shall retain in the Treasury, in gold, one-fourth of the total issue of Treasury notes, so that every man who gets them may have confidence that he can get a sovereign for his note whenever he wants it. That is the only way in which you can prevent the notes depreciating. The Act of 1893 says that one-fourth of the total note issue shall be kept in gold as a guarantee to the holders of the notes; and I do not propose to make that guarantee any less, or to take away any gold to reduce that one-fourth. I propose to keep that one-fourth in the Treasury still; but in the meantime, in addition to that one-fourth of the total note issue, the Treasury has at the Treasury 240,000 sovereigns over and above that one-fourth required by law.

The TREASURER: Not now.

Mr. KIDSTON: On the 10th July that was the amount. With regard to another objection, that the using of the Treasury note funds might depreciate public confidence in our note issue, I would like to read this from "Papers on Banking and Finance."

The TREASURER: Is that "The Melbourne Banking Record"?

Mr. KIDSTON: No, it is a book I got in the library. I do not quote it as an authority, but as common sense—

The ordinary note rests either on the security of shareholders, or that of a private banker; but notes issued only against a deposit of English Government stock would rest on security as stable as the credit of the country itself. This is really the principle on which the Bank of England is allowed to issue a large proportion of its notes—money borrowed by the Government. The credit of the country is therefore pledged for that sum to the Bank of England, and it is difficult to see on what ground an objection can be taken to carrying out this principle. Every investor in the funds is secured by the guarantee of England.

Such security for a note issue is preferable to the collective security of shareholders, however numerous, of any bank.

Now, I say that the security of the Queensland Government notes must be better than the security for the notes of any corporation trading in Queensland. It is necessary to have a backing of gold in the Treasury, so that if any note is presented for payment it can be redeemed in gold at any time, and the Act provides that the amount to be reserved for this purpose shall be not less than 25 per cent. of the total note issue. I do not suggest that there should be any reduction in that amount, but instead of lending Treasury note money to the bank we should lend it to a better security—to the Government. I suppose the bank will earn the interest by lending the money out, but the Government, instead of paying 3 per cent. and a big premium in London, can use its own money. That is all I am proposing. An objection that I can see in the Chief Secretary's eye is that the banks would object, but I think the banks would have a good cheek to object. I think the Government has been exceedingly good to the banks in the colony.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is a coin reserve fund.

Mr. KIDSTON: I think I have made it clear that the Treasury Notes Act provides for a reserve of 25 per cent. of the total issue being kept in gold in the Treasury, and I do not suggest that that security should be lessened in any way. On the 1st July, the Chief Secretary must understand that, in addition to the 25 per cent. on the total issue, the Government had in hand £886,000 in Treasury note money. It is that that I propose should be used, and not the 25 per cent. As to the statement of the Chief Secretary, the only interest the public have in the matter is to get their paper money converted into gold when they want it, and so long as the 25 per cent. is in the Treasury, there can be no fear that there will not be ample money to meet all requirements, or that there will not be ample security for all Queensland Treasury notes. There are a number of other matters in the Statement that I would have liked to refer to, but I shall not touch upon them now. I hope the hon. gentleman will adopt my suggestion with regard to loan money; that he will, at an early date, initiate such a system as I have suggested. If he will proceed with works of a reproductive character, so as to increase the chances—for I believe that will very largely increase the chances—of realising his estimate of revenue, the sooner he does so, the better it will be for the colony.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW (*Maryborough*): In addressing the electors in Maryborough before the House met, I told them that I had no intention to assist in the flood of talk that had been indulged in previously, and that I would assist in getting business through. We have been here for six weeks, and we have done nothing. I hope, for the remainder of the session, that we will work at an accelerated speed. It is not my intention to adre through the whole of the Financial Statement, but I wish to make a few remarks on some points in it. I think the Statement is satisfactory to the Treasurer, and to the colony at large, but there is one disappointing feature in it with regard to land settlement. With regard to homesteads the Treasurer says there is a decrease in number of 133, and in an area of 38,065 acres. I may state that a great deal of land settlement has taken place in my district. On looking into the statistics of the Lands Department I found that there was a great increase in the number of agricultural homesteads taken up in the Maryborough and Burnett districts. In the Nanango district—the Lower Burnett—in 1898, there were 23 agricultural farms taken up, totalling 8,641 acres; in 1899, 203, totalling 45,711 acres; in 1898 there were 53 agricultural homesteads taken up, totalling 15,520 acres; in 1899, 111, totalling 26,592. The unconditional selections in 1898 taken up were 3, totalling 640 acres, and in 1899, 32, totalling 10,452 acres, making an aggregate total of 107,556 acres taken up. If any other land is thrown open there it will be taken up. In the Burnett we have a second Darling Downs. There are no less than 12 cattle stations in the Lower Burnett, and in 1901 168,320 acres will be resumable, and the leases which will expire in 1901 will comprise 96,000 acres, making a total of 264,320 acres, which can be resumed by the Government, fit for agricultural, grazing, or dairying purposes.

Mr. JENKINSON: It will all be selected.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: Yes, it will all be selected, and I am sure that if we have railway communication with that part the Treasurer will not only have an increased land revenue, but also an increased revenue through the Customs. The population of Bunya Bunya is reckoned at about 1,500, and they are only struggling to make a living at the present time, because they cannot get their produce to market at a decent price, having to cart it about seventy miles. I mention this, not so much to show the necessity of a railway being built there, as to show that our district is assisting the colony in the way of close settlement. About one-eighth of the whole of the agricultural farms taken up in the whole colony have been taken up in the Lower Burnett, and as we are now having immigration we can successfully treat with farmers coming from the old country, and not have them waiting for land to be thrown open to selection. I hope the Ministry are sincere in trying to get the lands of the Burnett thrown open to the people, and, if they are, I believe it will be found that what has been said by the members for Maryborough and district will be fully verified. With regard to loans, there is no doubt that the existence of war has been the means of making tight the money market at home; but when the war is over I do not think there will be any difficulty in our again borrowing with advantage, as we have done in former years. Borrowing is only justifiable when there is an increase in revenue or a decrease in expenditure, and in the past an increased revenue has enabled the Treasurer to borrow. In 1896-7 the revenue of the colony was £3,613,150, and in 1899-1900 it was £4,580,207, or an increase of £975,057. We have pessimists in this House and outside who feel

disappointed at our rebuff over the last loan, but if we look back at the history of the colony we shall find that we have suffered in the same way on former occasions. In 1890 our  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cents. only realised £87 6s. 1d., the following loan realised £98 14s., and some of our 4 per cents. have only realised £87 15s. I do not think we need be afraid for the future. After things settle down in the old country we shall be able to go along smoothly, and borrow with advantage. I would suggest to the Treasurer that our loans should be open to colonial as well as to British subscribers. If they were we should save flotation charges, and keep the interest in the colony among our own people, and borrowing among ourselves would not make us any poorer. It would be only one part of society lending to the other, or to the people as a community. Some people contend that we want all our own money for trade purposes. I do not think so, because the banks in the colony have very large reserves. The reserves in Australian banks are far bigger than the reserves in banks in the old country, and there are thousands upon thousands of pounds in Queensland only waiting for investment. Other colonies down south have been able to float loans successfully on their own markets, and I think we should try to do the same thing in Queensland. The Victorian Treasurer, in his recent Budget Speech, said—

I propose a loan expenditure this year, altogether from our own borrowings, of £1,286,000.

And the previous year the Government of that colony borrowed £500,000, at 3 per cent., from their own people. The minimum was fixed at £96, and the loan realised £96 6s. for every £100, and we only got £94 in the London market. New South Wales is also placing a loan of £500,000 on the local market; and why should not Queensland do the same? With reference to exports and imports, I am afraid that on account of the seasons we have had out in the Western country it will be the duty of the Government and of this House to assist the development of the coast in the way of close settlement, and in the way of trade. Trade and commerce open up a very big question, but it is one we should not shirk. New South Wales is a freetrade colony, but they protect themselves in many ways. The rates for the carriage of produce by rail in that colony are cheaper than they are in Queensland, and that to a large extent nullifies our protection duties against them. Their harbour dues are also less than ours. But under federation there will be uniformity in these matters in all the colonies. There will be no preferential or differential rates.

Mr. JENKINSON: Not on the railways?

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: No, not on the railways. If the hon. member will look at the Commonwealth Act he will find that there is to be a commission appointed to deal with that matter. Of course there will be developing rates, but they are very different from differential or preferential rates. I consider that there is an omission from the Federal Constitution, inasmuch as it does not provide for the Federal Parliament dealing with factory legislation. We know very well that if wages are different in different States, the one which pays the lower rates will have a great pull over the others. There should therefore be uniformity in factory legislation. Employers in all parts of the world are humane, and all they ask is that there may be a fair and equal fight between them.

[8.30 p.m.] At a conference of protectionists held in Sydney when representatives from all the colonies met, it was decided that the following provision should be inserted:—

That legislation should be enacted for the protection of all workers in factories and shops by means of boards of individual trades, whereon an equal number of

employers and employees shall determine all questions of hours, wages, piecework and overtime rates, trades' customs, etc., having regard to the interests of both employers and employees, and by which the Government would enforce the decisions of such board, and penalise any infraction thereof. That as a means of protection to our workmen against the debasing and demoralising competition of Chinese and other Asiatics now manufacturing in our midst, all furniture and other productions of such Asiatics should be prominently and indelibly stamped with a brand indicating the fact that they are so manufactured.

Now, I understand that in Victoria they have pretty well done away with outside work in connection with the factories, but in New South Wales they are allowed to manufacture outside, and that leads to a lot of sweating. Now, if we had a Factories Act which would apply to all the colonies, every colony would then be on an equal footing with the rest, and steps should be taken by this House to get this matter rectified. Our Factories Act wants amending in many ways, and I shall be glad to assist in making it more satisfactory to the people of this colony. If we have to pay more wages in Queensland than they pay in the other colonies, it gives them protection as against us. The next thing I wish to speak upon is the settlement of industrial disputes. We all know that such disputes as that which is going on now at Ipswich are the means of diverting trade from a district or from a colony, and that it is a difficult matter to afterwards regain that trade. We have had schemes for conciliation and arbitration legislation foreshadowed in the other colonies, and I would like to draw attention to the very simple solution of the difficulty in Denmark. The scheme adopted there is as follows:—

All suits whatever, without regard to the amounts involved, must be, in the first place, brought before these courts. The judge takes down the oral complaint of the plaintiff and defendant's oral defence, and renders judgment accordingly. If, however, either of the parties is dissatisfied with the judgment, the judge refers the case to the regular courts, in which courts, however, no other evidence is allowed to be introduced but that which was said before the judge sitting in the courts of conciliation.

The consequence is that in Denmark there is very seldom an appeal to the higher court, and a lot of litigation is thereby prevented. The next protection which the other colonies will have as against us is in regard to loans to farmers. In the southern colonies the farmers are able to borrow money from the State at cheap rates.

Mr. FISHER: You are coming round to our view now.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: It is impossible for our farmers to compete with those in the southern colonies unless we place them on an equal footing in regard to getting loans at a low rate of interest. In Victoria they advance two-thirds of the value of the property, the interest charged being  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The repayments of principal and interest amount to 6 per cent. per annum, the time for repayment is thirty-one and a-half years, and the value of the bonds that have been issued is £1,000,000, and the Treasurer of Victoria points out that there were only £100 of arrears. In New Zealand they have the Advances to Settlers Act, under which they have authorised 8,452 advances, amounting to £4,359,983, and the payments by the mortgagors have been highly satisfactory. In order to decide which is the best system to adopt, I would suggest that the Government should appoint a select committee to inquire into the different schemes, and then legislation could be introduced dealing with the subject. The next thing to which I wish to refer is harbour improvements. If we wish to compete with the other colonies, we must see that our harbours are improved, so that large vessels can come here, and that they charge no higher freights

than are paid in the other colonies. The harbour boards should have the foreshores given to them, or cash in lieu thereof, and they should also have the power to borrow money. I hope that this House will now start to work. We need not sit up late to get through the business we have before us. We have very important business affecting this colony to consider. In fact I believe this is the most important session that has ever been held. We have private railways to consider; we have State railways to bring forward, and we have all the federal matters to discuss.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: And I hope that those hon. members on the other side who cry, "Hear, hear!" will assist to get the business through.

After a pause—

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*) said: There seems to be a chronic tired feeling coming over the Committee. It is just as well that we should get through the business, as the hon. gentleman has said. It has become a feature of these debates that the Treasurer is to be congratulated upon his Financial Statement, and that the colony is to be congratulated on the position it occupies financially. I am inclined to think that the compliment to the Treasurer is well merited, as the Statement that has been put before us is well got up. The hon. gentleman is to be congratulated on his production, but I am somewhat in doubt as to whether the colony is in the prosperous condition that the Statement seems to indicate. I certainly am of opinion that the experience of the first two months of the present financial year indicate to any person who watches events carefully that we are not likely to be in the same good position at the end of the current financial year that we have been in during the last two years. I am as anxious as any hon. member that the colony should continue prosperous, but I do not think, from the evidence that has been produced, and from the careful analysis of preceding years which has been made by the hon. member for Rockhampton, that the Treasurer can reasonably expect to receive the revenue that he at present estimates. I feel sure of this that if we fail to realise the revenue anticipated, no provision has been made for cutting down expenditure, or for extra taxation, though I certainly think the country would resent taxation, and would complain a good deal over any retrenchment scheme. I certainly hope that circumstances during the latter part of the year will so turn out as to defeat any pessimistic feeling which hon. members may hold at the present time, and that the Treasurer will be able to meet Parliament next year with a Financial Statement which bears out his estimate. I shall not deal at length with the financial affairs of the colony, which have been so ably handled by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, but I wish to point out, in connection with the Savings Bank, that the Treasurer has in it one of the finest loan offices that could be found in any portion of the world. For the last few years the deposits have been so much larger than the withdrawals, that he has practically had half-a-million of money put gradually, and in an ideal way, into his hands without any underwriting or commission charges, or any trouble whatever. £50,000 a month has been found for him by the people for loan purposes. The hon. gentleman has been using that, and it is not so much to the use of the money that the hon. member for Rockhampton objects as to its use in an illegal manner, and before he provides the safeguards directed by law. I think the Treasurer should look forward to the day when the large deposits in excess of withdrawals may

cease. It would have a very serious effect on the hon. gentleman's calculations if the withdrawals exceeded the deposits in any one year by £500,000, and would leave him in a very tight place indeed.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The withdrawers might be in a stiff place, too.

Mr. FISHER: I differ from the hon. gentleman. Those people might be withdrawing their money simply for the purpose of putting it into the industries of the country, which, I believe, would be a very good thing for the prosperity of the country. Certainly that state of affairs might put the Treasurer in a very awkward position, and some day he might find himself in a position not to be able to meet his obligations. Yet at the same time the people might be exceedingly well off and prosperous. It would merely prove that they could manage their business and the Government could not manage theirs.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is the reason why the Government are keeping these cash reserves that the hon. member for Rockhampton was talking about.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. member for Rockhampton was talking of a very different thing when talking of reserves. As I understood him, he was speaking of reserves against Treasury notes, because the Act provides that at least 25 per cent. of those reserves should be kept in gold.

Mr. FORSYTH: There might be a rush with Treasury notes some day.

Mr. FISHER: Yes, there might be, but the hon. gentleman will agree with me that there is less likelihood of that than there is of a rush on the deposits in the Government Savings Bank. But, as I have pointed out, that does not necessarily mean a sign of want of prosperity. Large withdrawals from the Savings Bank may indeed mean that the people are becoming more prosperous.

Mr. FORSYTH: Nothing of the sort; the very opposite.

Mr. FISHER: I think I could quote a very good authority on that subject in the person of Sir Hugh Nelson.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You acknowledge that he is an authority, then?

Mr. FISHER: I have never known a member on this side deny that he was an authority, and perhaps the most capable Treasurer that we have had. When Sir Hugh Nelson was conducting the affairs of the Treasury he was exceedingly anxious to keep down the deposits in the Government Savings Bank, and, if I understood him rightly, he would if he could have reduced the interest from 3 to 2½ per cent. with that object in view. He desired to force the money into the commercial channels, so that it might go towards developing industries throughout the country. Would that not be a good thing, and yet the hon. member for Carpentaria says it would be an indication of disaster?

Mr. FORSYTH: So it might be if withdrawals arose from a panic.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. member is assuming that they would arise from a panic. I maintain that a reduction of the deposits to the extent of £500,000 in one year might leave the Treasurer in a very serious position, and that view of the question is worth serious consideration. There is one other item that I think is worth drawing attention to, and that is to be found on page 7 of the Statement. It has been pointed out that this railway expenditure has been swelled from causes that were complained about from this side of the House, from my knowledge, for seven years. It has been charged against the Railway Department that they were impoverishing the rolling-stock, and that the reckoning day would come. That has been pointed out from this side of the House, and it has been denied by successive Ministers on that side of the House.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You say that of everything—you must be right with some of them.

Mr. FISHER: We made a specific charge that the rolling-stock and the fixed stock of the Railway Department was not being kept in proper repair.

Mr. LEAHY: Can you tell us anything the other side said was right?

Mr. FISHER: Not a single item from the hon. gentleman's point of view, or from the Government point of view, has been right. But it is an exceedingly singular thing that when we have objected to these things everything has been denied, and yet a few years afterwards the hon. gentlemen have come down and advocated the very things that they condemned. Could there be a better illustration of that than was given to-night when the hon. the senior member for Maryborough, Mr. Bartholomew, came down and bewailed the fact that this Government do not take into consideration the necessity for introducing a system of loans to farmers, so that the farmers of Queensland may get cheap money and be able to compete with the farmers of the southern colonies who are treated in the right way. I can recollect when hon. gentlemen opposite denounced that idea as extremely socialistic.

Mr. LEAHY: Did you initiate it?

Mr. FISHER: No; certainly not. The hon. gentlemen on this side do not initiate all the schemes that they advocate. They simply advocate what previous great thinkers have initiated, but that does not put them in any worse position. They have so far given the Government support when they have proposed measures of that sort, and to all practical purposes they have been the teachers of the Government.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear! (Ministerial laughter.)

Mr. LEAHY: I thought you were the great thinkers yourselves.

Mr. FISHER: Of course we are not.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FISHER: I have found some quiet amusement in reading the speeches of hon. gentlemen in previous years, where they have denounced ideas that they are now ready to further. To read their speeches now, you would think that they were the original thinkers; that they have been out on an economic expedition and discovered these ideas which they are now anxious to spread as new and acceptable. I can only say that most of the members of our party are very careless as to who brings in these reforms, so long as they are brought in. I will say this of this party: that we are indifferent as to who brings in reforms. If we think they are desirable we will support them.

Mr. FORSYTH: So long as you believe in them.

Mr. FISHER: We do not fight as an Opposition pure and simple.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are very generous.

Mr. FISHER: Yes, we are, and the hon. gentleman himself knows it, too. We have not embarrassed the Government when they were introducing measures of this character; and as a proof of that I would like to suggest to the hon. gentlemen opposite that they should try us with an Electoral Reform Bill. Let them try us with a great measure of reform and see if they will be embarrassed. Now, here is a large item of £163,880 above the estimated expenditure. The Treasurer has given a summary of the causes which led up to that large excess. He puts the first as—

Heavy repairs to all classes of rolling-stock, the work connected with which had been accumulating from previous years, owing to the impossibility of withdrawing the stock from traffic at an earlier date.

Then he gives the reason—providing new boilers for a large number of locomotives.

Mr. LEAHY: Do you object to that?

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Mr. FISHER: Does the hon. gentleman not see that this is mentioned because it is exceptionally large. If it were nominal or ordinary, then it would be unnecessary to mention it. Exactly as has been pointed out here in previous years, this has been simply due to the mismanagement of the concern and the over-running of the stock. Any person knows that when machinery is allowed to be overrun, that is the result.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: There is no proof that it is overrun.

Mr. FISHER: There is proof in the Treasurer's Statement.

Mr. FORSYTH: There was as much spent last year.

Mr. FISHER: There is the evidence of the parties who know, but I am not going to say that it is proof, or that I am competent to give any proof that will satisfy the hon. gentleman. That is one thing we are agreed upon. Then there is the increased pay to all classes of railway employees. Now, the ordinary individual would think that this is the principal item.

Mr. FORSYTH: It is £20,000.

Mr. FISHER: Well, that is £23,000, and the whole amount of the excess is £163,000; and I say that an ordinary individual, seeing this large increase in pay, which has been spoken of and mentioned in the newspapers so much, would think it was the principal cause of this large increase.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is one cause.

Mr. FISHER: It is one cause, but a very small one.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is a very important one.

Mr. FISHER: It is a very important one, and it is a very valuable one, and it is one which the Hon. the Treasurer will get back partly in Customs and in the increased spending power of the people. But in the other instance they are practically only bringing back their assets to the book value at which they were estimated in previous years. The increase of £20,000 has been distributed among the workmen, who are spending it, and we are gaining the advantage—the country is gaining the advantage, and everyone is gaining the advantage of it.

Mr. BROWNE: The increase of the wages is only an actual restoration of what they have taken away.

Mr. FISHER: Yes. I do not say that any hon. gentleman is complaining of the restoration of these wages. Of course, I think the hon. gentlemen opposite, although they say it is such a large amount, will agree that it is only a reasonable and fair return of the retrenchments that were compulsory in 1893. Of course, if hon. gentlemen do not agree with that I cannot help it; it is their misfortune. The fourth reason is the heavy traffic in storing stock, the receipts from which were not of a remunerative character. That is highly creditable to the department. I give them all credit for that. And then they have carried large quantities of fodder at unremunerative rates. That is not a big item; I am quite sure of that. These are all the items mentioned to justify this largely increased expenditure. That is a clear proof that the contentions of hon.

members on this side were sound,  
[9 p.m.] and it would be wise for the Government not to be so unreasonable—I had almost said bigoted—regarding expressions of opinion from this side of the House. If the Government had exercised a little supervision, and a reasonable amount of common sense, £100,000 of this money might have been saved. In my opinion, the time has arrived when the



Minister should have some supervision over the Railway Department. I make that statement with a full knowledge of what I am saying.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It is very harmless. (Laughter.)

Mr. FISHER: The time has arrived when there should be some supervision. At present the Minister is practically only a recording angel. (Laughter.)

Mr. JENKINSON: Not if he has a backbone. He has himself to blame for it if he is.

Mr. BROWNE: It is the first time in his life he has been called an angel.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. member for Wide Bay says, "Not if he has a backbone."

Mr. JENKINSON: You did not say "the present Minister." You said, "the Minister."

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I am not aware that angels have backbones. (Laughter.)

Mr. FISHER: The interjection came from the hon. member for Wide Bay, and I take no responsibility for it. It is enough that I am sensible of the responsibility for what I say myself. Hon. members, I think, will agree with me when I say that the control of the railways is now out of the hands of the Minister, and even of the Government. With the exception of deciding the actual policy, there is very little supervision at all. In my opinion that is a bad and dangerous policy.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Parliament thought otherwise.

Mr. FISHER: Perhaps Parliament did, and perhaps Parliament does not agree with what I have said now.

Mr. LEAHY: What is Parliament?

Mr. FISHER: Parliament is the decision of the majority for the time being.

Mr. LEAHY: I do not know, I think it is often the decision of the minority.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. member is pleased to say so at present, but if I expressed that opinion the hon. member would make short work of me, and he could find very good arguments to support a different conclusion.

Mr. BROWNE: The ruling side has generally a minority in this Chamber until the division bell rings.

Mr. FISHER: I would like to mention with regard to mining matters that the Government might have taken into account the difficulties the miners have in connection with the cyanide process through the patent rights remaining in this colony with the original company when all the other colonies practically have bought out those rights. They might have facilitated miners in getting small cyanide plants of their own at a cheaper rate and with fewer difficulties than they have at present. At present the patentees' royalty is 5 per cent. all round, and there are other restrictions. So far as Gympie is concerned it would not affect it so much, but there are other fields where men could have small plants of their own and make a respectable living if it were free. I suggest that the Government, even at this late hour, might consider the advisability of making arrangements with the company. Six years ago the question was raised here, and a motion moved from this side that the patent should be contested as it had been in another colony, but the Government resisted that motion as if it suggested repudiation which they could not entertain. They did little afterwards in the matter, but the royalty, which was then 10 per cent., has since been reduced to 5 per cent. I ask them to take the matter again into consideration and see whether it would not be advisable to purchase the rights of the company, and let the miners of this colony have a

free run—that they might, as the hon. member for Maryborough said, have free competition with the miners in other parts of Australia.

Mr. LEAHY: It is certainly a heavy restriction.

Mr. FISHER: I am sorry the Secretary for Mines is not present, for I should like to impress upon him the necessity for the appointment of further inspectors to look after the welfare of the miners, and see that the mines are properly conducted. I would urge, also, the establishment of schools of mines in the various centres, where the younger miners possessed of the necessary talent could become qualified experts in mining matters, and where they might have facilities afforded them to acquire the necessary knowledge to enable them to rise to the highest pinnacle of their profession. Of course, I see with great pleasure that provision of the kind is made for Charters Towers; but there are other fields on which a school of mines would be acceptable and successful, and I trust the Government will take into early consideration the establishment of such an institution at Gympie. I would like to call attention to the large amount of expenditure estimated for "Buildings." We have on the Loan Estimates a proposed expenditure of £540,799, and I think that is quite an unreasonable amount to expend on buildings in a colony like this. Of this sum, over £300,000 is to be spent in Brisbane this year.

Mr. FORSYTH: It will be spread over a number of years.

Mr. FISHER: That is all very well, but, in my opinion, to destroy the present post and telegraph office is little short of the act of an insane man. I believe if the colony were polled from end to end the people would denounce as a piece of vandalism the destruction of that building. I cannot conceive how any Minister could come to the conclusion that it would be a good thing to pull down that building, in order to put up a new one at a cost of £100,000, when there is ample room at the back to make any necessary additions at a cost of £20,000 or £30,000. In my opinion, such a proposal is an absolute blunder in administration. I know it will be contended that we must possess a first-class post office before the Federal Parliament takes possession; but federation will not benefit us in this respect, because we shall be debited with the interest on the cost and we shall not benefit one single fraction. The only thing we shall have to congratulate ourselves upon will be that we will have a new post office. I think we will be acting like children if we attempt to get that nice new building before the Federal Parliament is established. It is only an attempt to give employment in Brisbane—to placate some followers of the Ministry who have been in good grace lately. I think that is very undesirable. I think that the amount of money proposed to be spent in Brisbane on buildings is far in excess of the requirements of the city, and cannot be justified from an administrative point of view.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Animus against Brisbane.

Mr. FISHER: I have no particular animus against Brisbane; I think it is entitled to a share of the public expenditure, and when there is a dire necessity for buildings to be erected here, I shall agree as quickly as anyone that they should be good ones. But I do not think there is any justification for the erection of this new post and telegraph office. In this matter the position that the Government have taken up has not been justified.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Have you been through the present building?



Mr. FISHER: I have been in the building, but I have not inspected it. I have read several reports, and I have come to the conclusion that the erection of this building is being hurried on simply because of the advent of federation.

Mr. HIGGS: The post office employees are rather overcrowded.

Mr. FORSYTH: Quite correct.

Mr. FISHER: There is room behind the present building to make any necessary additions to relieve any overcrowding. Because one or two rooms are overcrowded that does not make it necessary to pull down the present building and erect a new one at an enormous cost. If the hon. member for Carpentaria was carrying on a business, I can imagine him smiling if any architect came along and said, "You are slightly overcrowded; you want a little more space. Pull down this building and put up another one at a cost of £100,000."

Mr. FORSYTH: It would always be an asset. I would not mind having such an asset.

Mr. FISHER: Then why don't you buy it? I think Brisbane is well looked after in the way of public buildings.

Mr. FORSYTH: What about the post office in Sydney?

Mr. FISHER: You might as well refer to the post office in London. The population in Sydney is much larger than in Brisbane, and the Sydney post office is not an old building. It is a building worthy of the city of Sydney, but I do not think the necessities of the case are the same in Brisbane. The next matter to which I wish to draw attention is the working of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act. Although some of the money advanced under that Act will be a good investment, still I am inclined to think the evidence we have before us suggests that it would be wise to go slowly in making advances.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Would you say that about miners?

Mr. FISHER: If there is any class in the community who practically ask for no Government assistance it is the miners. I appeal to the Ministers present to say if they have ever found miners running to the Government for assistance. They may go once when they have a real grievance for support, but if they do not get it they go away and have a ready manner of expressing their views. Rather than waste their time going to the Government they would go out and fossick for a bit of gold on their own account. Miners are not like some other classes we know of who are always hanging round the Government offices, hoping by their importunity and pestering of Ministers to get what they desire. I utterly and emphatically condemn the principle of expending loan money for defence purposes. There is an increase of £54,000 for the Land Defence Force, and an increase of £36,500 for the purchase of small arms and ammunition. This expenditure is all from loan, and I am utterly against the spending of loan money for such purposes. I raised the same question last year, and the Chief Secretary then stated that a great deal of the money was for store ammunition, and would come back again in money payments. I have looked for those money payments, and I cannot find any but a few paltry sums not worth talking about. The fact of the matter is that this is a convenient way of spending about £80,000 out of loan, which ought to be charged to revenue, and it is a positively dangerous practice. With regard to the failure of the sugar crop, I should like to contrast the sugar-growers with the pastoralists. I think members present were somewhat astonished to discover that the losses in the area which has been badly affected with drought were only 13·2 per cent. in sheep, and 9·2 per cent. in cattle. That is up to the end of June last, of course.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: That will be up to the beginning of the year.

Mr. FISHER: I understood the Treasurer to say that it was up to the end of June.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: They do not get returns after Christmas.

Mr. FISHER: But there are ways of estimating the losses, and I believe commissioners have been sent out to make reports. Are those losses, then, up to the end of last year?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Yes; up to the time the returns were sent in.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: The heaviest losses have been since the beginning of the year.

Mr. FISHER: Do you think they would double that?

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Yes.

Mr. FISHER: Well, I would ask have any hon. members heard the sugar-growers complaining very much? If hon. members will look at page 20 of the Financial Statement, they will see the sugar-growers suffered a loss of 25 per cent. last year as compared with their previous year's crop, and I have not heard a great howl from the sugar-growers.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You are not likely to hear it in Gympie, or in Queen street.

Mr. FISHER: But you would hear it in this House.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Oh, no, we wouldn't howl.

Mr. FISHER: Although I am not connected with an agricultural district, I think it is only fair to mention that other industries, besides the pastoral industry, have suffered heavily, and have not appealed to the Government for special assistance. They have taken their losses as part of their difficulties.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: They know they get no sympathy.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman is quite wrong in saying that the sugar-growers have no sympathy from us; they have the same sympathy from this side of the House as any other producing people in the colony, and when they have a legitimate grievance will be treated with the same kindness and consideration. Because we differ on the matter of coloured labour, it is not fair to say that we have no sympathy with sugar-growers. No party in this House supported the Sugar Works Guarantee Act more strongly than the then Labour party. When £500,000 was voted under that Act the hon. member for Enoggera and myself were, I believe, the only members on this side who voted to reduce the amount to, I think, £150,000. The Sugar Works Guarantee Bill had the active support of the Labour party at the time, and I am persuaded that it was the contention and feeling of the Labour party that enabled the late Sir Thomas McIlwraith to pass the Bill. He knew that he would have the support of this side of the House, and he was powerful enough to influence the majority of his own followers to support the measure. There is another matter I should like to refer to. I should like to direct the attention of the Chief Secretary to page 15 of the Financial Statement, where, under the head of "The Agricultural Lands Purchase Act Selections" he will find all the estates which have been thrown open to selection enumerated, and the areas selected given.

Mr. McDONNELL called attention to the state of the Committee.  
[9·30 p.m.] Quorum formed.

Mr. FISHER: I was about to point out that, on page 15 of the Financial Statement, we find these words—

Since these Acts came into operation there have been purchased, up to 30th June, 1900, fifteen estates in all. Fourteen of these, of a gross area for selection of 127,811 acres, consisting of 1,086 surveyed portions,

and total purchasing price of £342,567 15s. 9d., have been opened to selection. The only estate not yet opened to selection is the Seaforth Estate, Mackay district. This is now being surveyed, and will be thrown open shortly.

Mr. HIGGS : It will never be taken up.

Mr. FISHER : It has been proved to be a distinct job. It has been proved, and it has been confirmed by documentary evidence, that there was nothing to justify the Government in paying the price they did for the Seaforth Estate, and I have heard it described, in the elegant language of hon. members on the other side—not members on this side—as a rotten transaction. That is not elegant language to use.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS : No, it is not. You should not repeat it.

Mr. FISHER : It is language that is not peculiar to this side of the House. The action of the Government in regard to this matter cannot be justified, and they make no attempt to justify it. Not one of their officers with, perhaps, one exception, will stand to them, and there are very few members on the other side outside the Ministry who will attempt to justify the transaction.

The CHIEF SECRETARY : The Land Court recommended it.

Mr. RYLAND : They winked the other eye.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE : It is a paltry matter.

Mr. FISHER : It may be a paltry matter to give £18,000 in excess of its value. It may be a paltry matter from the Government point of view, but it is an act of maladministration on their part. They may have arrived at that position when they can call the throwing away of £10,000 or £20,000 of the country's money a paltry matter, but it is certainly not a paltry matter, inasmuch as it compromises the credit of the Government and the credit of the colony. If the Government were straightforward, they would say that they had made a blunder, instead of trying to shelter themselves behind a subterfuge.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE : What rubbish !

Mr. FISHER : Here is the proof of the rubbish—that something has been done with all the other estates except this one. We were told that the Seaforth Estate had sea frontages, and that they would all be sold at good prices.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : The sale has not come off yet.

Mr. FISHER : I hope the Secretary for Lands will advertise the sale well, as I believe it will be a notable sale in Australia. The probability is that the Ministry might be put up for sale shortly afterwards.

Mr. HIGGS : What about the Mirani-Cattle Creek railway ? That was another bit of proposed swindling.

Mr. FISHER : I would just like to refer to one other matter. The Chief Secretary, while replying to the leader of the Opposition, waxed very eloquent on the fact that it was desirable that British capital and British capitalists should be informed by members on this side of the House that they would be welcome to come here and construct any railway which was not a trunk line. I asked the hon. gentleman by interjection if he would inform us what a trunk line is, because it appears to me that the Ministry would now perhaps call only one railway a trunk line, and that is the line running west from Brisbane. Their policy is as shifty as the sands of the seashore. They will do anything and everything that will suit their political friends and the financial magnates who are behind them. They have shifted their railway policy. They have veered their financial policy, and they are now proposing to shift their policy with regard to repurchased estates. Of course it is not the same Government,

When the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act was passed, we were told that it was only intended to buy back land for agricultural purposes, but now they propose to repurchase land for dairying purposes.

Mr. BRIDGES : Do we not live and learn ?

Mr. HIGGS : The purpose is to rehabilitate members on the other side.

Mr. FISHER : I am only pointing to the fact that the Government have no stable and continuous policy, but that they change their policy to please the majority of their friends, and, wherever they can be pressed strongly enough, they must yield to the pressure. I do not know whether it is on account of a mental "slew" on the part of the Government, but, at any rate, the repurchase of these estates and other little friendly arrangements which it is not necessary to mention, all indicate that we have a complaisant Government whose only concern is their own welfare, and not the welfare of the country whose honour and dignity they are sworn to uphold.

Mr. HIGGS : They haven't got any dignity left.

Mr. STEWART (Rockhampton North) : I am very sorry I cannot follow the example of several hon. gentlemen who have preceded me, and congratulate the Treasurer on his Statement. Several hon. gentlemen have said it is a lengthy Statement. No doubt that is true. It is a very long-winded production certainly. It extends over thirty pages of closely-printed matter.

Mr. HIGGS : I wonder is it all his own ?

Mr. STEWART : It took the Treasurer two hours to read it, and during that time he dealt with the financial condition of the colony for fifteen minutes. The remaining portion of the period was occupied in giving a rehash of statistics that we could find in the various official publications. I have had to complain of this kind of Statement before. It is not a Budget Speech such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the old country would deliver, or such as any Treasurer of the southern colonies would deliver. It is merely a sort of statistical account of the industries of the colony, with a little financial statement jammed in between. I think it is high time that we had a Treasurer in office who knew how to prepare a financial statement. No one reading this Statement could get a clear conception of the financial position of the colony, and, in addition to that, it is misleading. Perhaps it would not be parliamentary to say intentionally misleading, but misleading notwithstanding. It does not give an accurate view of the financial condition of the colony at the present time. The hon. gentleman, as usual, comes down and claims that he has got a surplus. He has done that for some years past. I have maintained on former occasions that there is no surplus, and I contend that now. There is no legitimate surplus. It is only in existence on paper. I do not believe for a single moment that it exists even in the imagination of the Treasurer himself. I doubt whether even the Chief Secretary imagines that there is a surplus, and we know that that hon. gentleman is about the most imaginative member in this House. Now, the Treasurer is an adept at one thing if he is not particularly clever at anything else. He can blow his own trumpet as skillfully as any person I ever listened to. He actually claims that during the last five or six years nearly £500,000 sterling has been paid off our national debt, and that we have saved at least £15,000 per annum in interest. That is something to be gratified at no doubt, but it is only one side of the shield. Whilst ostensibly we have been saving £500,000, yet in reality we have run deeper into debt to the tune of £7,000,000 or £8,000,000, and we have added over

£200,000 a year to our interest Bill. How does the hon. gentleman come by this surplus of his? We find that a certain amount of revenue has been received, and a certain amount expended, and there is a balance of unexpended revenue which is denominated a surplus. That may be true so far as it goes, but the hon. gentleman takes very good care not to tell us the whole truth. He does not tell us, for instance, that he has drawn very largely upon the loan fund to carry on the ordinary business of the country. He takes very good care to suppress that most important fact, which, if it were given the prominence it deserves, would place a very different complexion upon our public accounts. I will just deal with a few of the items of expenditure as they appear on the Estimates. Take the railway estimates. We have there an item, "Deviation and reduction of grades, Albion to Lutwyche—£5,500." Will any hon. gentleman say that that is a legitimate charge against loan money? That is merely keeping the railway in repair, and ought, I claim, to be paid out of revenue. Then there is the alteration of grades, Ipswich to Rosewood, £16,000. Is it claimed by anyone that that can legitimately be charged to loan? You might just as well charge a new shaft for a dray, or repairs to a wagon, or a plough, to borrowed money as charge this £16,000 to loan expenditure. Our system is altogether a wrong one. Here again we have the Main Range deviations and alteration of curves, £11,700; and strengthening bridges for heavier engines, £17,000. Then we have Maryborough and Gympie, deviations for easing curves, £15,000; Central division, deviations and reduction of grades, £5,000; Northern division, deviations and reductions of grades, £8,000; Cairns line, renewal of bridges, £11,000; Cooktown, for the same purposes, £1,700; and Normanton, for the same purposes, £500. In all, there is proposed to be expended in deviations, relaying, and alteration of curves, within a few pounds of £100,000. I say every farthing of that expenditure is improperly charged to loan. It should be charged to revenue. No private company would attempt to carry on its business in this fashion. If it did it would very soon run its head against the rocks of disaster. As I said a little while ago, as well might a farmer, every time he required a new coulter in his plough, or a new wheel to his dray, or anything of that kind, run to the money-lender to obtain the wherewithal to do those things, as the Government to charge those repairs—it is maintenance, nothing else—to loan money. Not only do we find the Government spending very large sums of loan money upon the maintenance of our railway lines, but we find also that in the matter of public buildings large sums are expended out of loan money which I claim again are properly chargeable to revenue. And in this connection I may point out that the Government does not seem to have any principle on which it goes. Some buildings are erected out of loan money; other buildings are erected out of revenue. I would like to know how it comes that the cost of one building is defrayed out of loan and the cost of another building is defrayed out of revenue. Perhaps some of the Ministers will be able to tell me. This may be the explanation: That a brick or stone building is charged to loan, and that a wooden building is charged to revenue. If that is so, to what would an iron building be charged, or a mud hut, if it were found necessary to build one? I will give a few examples so that hon. members may attempt, at any rate, to come to a conclusion on the subject. I have given the matter a great deal of very anxious consideration, but I have not been able to bring harmony out of the confusion which exists.

Here is the Defence Force: New buildings, repairs and additions—out of revenue, £5,000; out of loan, £4,300. Then there are courthouse buildings: £1,500 out of revenue, and £15,800 out of loan. Is a courthouse a productive asset? People who frequent courthouses are no doubt asses, but I doubt whether a courthouse can be called a productive asset. Then we come to police buildings, and I ask whether a gaol is a productive asset?

The TREASURER: It is a very useful asset.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, it is a necessary evil, and there are a great many people outside the gaol who ought to be in it. I find that out of revenue it is proposed to expend £4,000 upon police buildings, and out of loan, £28,800. I am very glad to see the Treasurer in his place. I have asked in vain the other members of the Cabinet present to give some indication of the principle upon which this money is expended; why one item is taken out of revenue, and why another item is taken out of loan. Perhaps the Treasurer will be able to tell us. Now, I find post and telegraph offices: £5,000 out of revenue and £12,000 from loan. Then we come to the Home Secretary's Department. All the buildings in that hon. gentleman's department are erected out of revenue. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman's influence has been brought to bear to bring about this very desirable result, but if it has, I think the country owes him a debt of gratitude. When we turn to the Lands Department we find that a very large sum is to be expended out of loan in building lands offices, but it appears that revenue is also to be drawn upon, the figures being £1,000 from revenue and £20,000 from loan. I would like to know how it comes that a large revenue-producing department like the Lands Department is under the painful necessity of borrowing money when it wants to erect a building in which to conduct its business. Here is a department that returns the State some £500,000 or £600,000 every year, and yet when a building to conduct its business is wanted, it has to go and borrow money. There appears to me to be something extremely out of place in a transaction of that kind. Then we come to the Department of Agriculture: £1,000 out of revenue, and £4,000 out of loan. The Department of Public Instruction, I find, erects all its buildings, amounting to £30,000, and very properly so, out of revenue. Why should a State school, I would ask the Treasurer, be built out of revenue while a gaol is not?

The TREASURER: Because one is built of wood and the other of stone or brick.

Mr. STEWART: I am glad to hear the explanation of the hon. gentleman. But suppose a building is erected of iron, would it be defrayed out of loan or out of revenue? And if built half of brick and half of wood, would one-half the cost come out of revenue and the other half out of loan? It appears that if a building is of brick the Government borrow the money to build it. They go to the English money market, say they are going to put up a brick building, and say, "Will you lend us so much money for the purpose." And I suppose the people in Great Britain labour under the impression that brick buildings are so scarce in Queensland that it takes an immense amount of money to erect them. But when a building is to be erected of wood an appeal is made, I suppose, to the wooden-headed classes of the colony to find the cash to erect it. I think the hon. gentleman would be doing very

[10 p.m.] much better for the people of the colony if he erected all those unproductive buildings out of revenue. This sort of thing cannot go on for ever; it must come to an end some time. It is

all very well to be able to renew promissory notes for a period, but the end must come some day. I think we are getting very well within sight of the end in Queensland, and it is high time we began to set our house in order. I believe that the loan fund has been drawn upon to the tune of between £200,000 and £300,000 every year.

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. STEWART: Of course, I would not dare to put my opinion against the opinion of the hon. gentleman. I am very sorry the hon. gentleman was not here when I was giving a few examples. I have shown where one post office was built out of the revenue and another out of loan; and the reason he gave was that one was built of wood and the other of brick. I wish to ask whether that is a reason that any intelligent man would accept as satisfactory. I don't think so. I also pointed out where maintenance on our railway lines was in a large measure defrayed out of loan. Easing curves, relaying —

The TREASURER: Relaying does not come out of a loan.

Mr. STEWART: It does in many cases.

The TREASURER: Only the additional value of the rails.

Mr. STEWART: It appears on the Estimates.

The TREASURER: Only a small proportion.

Mr. STEWART: Duplication might rightly come out of loan, but relaying, easing curves, and deviations, and so on, I think it is improper to charge to loan. Really they ought to be charged to maintenance, for they are maintenance, pure and simple. With regard to our public buildings, a gaol is not a productive asset, a courthouse is not a productive asset, and I think those buildings should all be erected out of revenue. That is the only way the hon. gentleman has been able to claim surpluses during the last few years—by drawing very heavily upon loan money for current expenses. That is perfectly well known. The Treasurer has not been very correct in his estimate during the last year either as to revenue or to expenditure; he under-estimated both revenue and expenditure; but, when he found that revenue was pouring in, he acted the prodigal. The revenue has no doubt been increasing—I am very glad to see it—by leaps and bounds during the last two or three years; but the expenditure has also been going up, and I hold that it was the bounden duty of the Treasurer, foreseeing, as he must have done, that the years of plenty would be followed undeniably by the lean years, to have kept a much tighter hand upon our expenditure. The hon. gentleman, I believe, will find during the next two or three years that his revenue, instead of expanding, will contract, and it will be exceedingly difficult for him to curtail expenditure. It is the easiest thing in the world to go in for increased expenditure, but when money begins to dwindle away in the Treasury it is a most difficult thing to go in for retrenchment, which is most unpopular. For that reason I hold that every Treasurer should keep as tight a rein upon expenditure as possible. There is another reason why our expenditure should be sharply controlled, and it is this: that we are most heavily taxed in Queensland; and instead of increasing taxation, as has been the habit of every Government during recent years, I think the time has about arrived when there should be some reduction. The amount of taxation paid on the necessities of life is something altogether extravagant, and I think any Treasurer who had the best interests of the country at heart, instead of spending lavishly such money as fortunately comes to his hands, would try to practise economy, so that at the first opportunity a portion at least of the burden of taxation might be lifted from the shoulders of

the taxpayers. But the hon. gentleman in charge of the Treasury has not done anything of the kind. As fast as the money rolled in he rolled it out again; he spent it with a most lavish and prodigal hand. The hon. gentleman, I believe, is the most popular Treasurer that ever occupied the position in Queensland. For why? Simply because he goes down before the assaults of all and sundry. Anybody who prefers a decent claim is not sent away empty. That may be all very good, and it may be the means of securing a good deal of popularity for the hon. gentleman, but it is not good business as far as the country is concerned, because there is this to be considered also, that very soon we will have federation upon us, and a great number of those who talked so loudly in favour of federation and who voted with such plaudits for it will wonder what snag they have struck up against when federation comes along. I don't wish to say anything that would damp the ardour of such federalists as the Chief Secretary, who is sitting opposite me, or the junior member for Gympie, who is sitting behind me; but I think it would be most improper when we are entering upon our career as a nation—one people one destiny—

Mr. REID: One flag.

Mr. STEWART: We have more than one flag now. It is not the Australian flag at all, it is some other flag we have now carried round and unfurled here, there, and everywhere. But, in any case, we must look the fact in the face that very soon we will lose in a large measure the control we have hitherto had over our own destinies, and we will be subject more or less to people who live in another portion of Australia. We will not have the power to fix our own taxation. That will be fixed for us by people outside the colony altogether. We will have a voice in the matter no doubt, but it will be a very feeble and very insignificant voice. The Hon. the Chief Secretary may be in the Federal Parliament, but he will be only one out of a great number, and I do not think his influence will be so great as to get the people in the Southern colonies to do exactly what he wishes.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot do that here.

Mr. STEWART: Not only will we not have the power to tax ourselves, but also, in a great many ways, the administration of our internal affairs will be either directly or indirectly interfered with. I am not grumbling, and I am not complaining. I am simply trying to point out to hon. gentlemen the difficulties that lie before us when federation is accomplished. It will place the Treasurer of this colony and every colony in a very peculiar position. According to the arrangement that has been come to, it will be most difficult for any Treasurer to forecast what his income will be, and, that being the case, he cannot very well be assailed if he is a little out in his expenditure. It will give rise to a good deal of looseness in the conduct of Australian finance. The Treasurers of the different colonies will not know what their revenue will be, and they cannot be grumbled at if they fail to estimate their expenditure exactly.

Mr. REID: Our Treasurer is a prophet—he has done so.

Mr. STEWART: Well, the hon. gentleman has taken a particular step. I suppose some other persons will have to be consulted as to whether that step is a correct one or not. I believe that he has done the correct thing. I think it would be much better if the Customs were handed over to the Federal Parliament at the end of the financial year than having to hand them over in the middle, but Queensland cannot itself settle when the Customs are to be handed over. That will be for the federal authorities to say. I think it will be much wiser if some arrangement could be made whereby the

Treasurer should have the control over our finances till the end of the present financial year, but if the authorities do not say so, it cannot be done. As one hon. member says, the Constitution deliberately lays down that the Customs, upon the declaration or proclamation of the federation, shall be immediately handed over to the federal authority. I do not know whether some arrangement could be made to evade that, but we know we have no great veneration for Constitutions in Australia when it suits us. Our Constitution is being ridden through by the proverbial coach and six every day in the week.

Mr. REID: A bullock dray goes through it.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, not only a coach and six, but a bullock dray is run through our Constitution every day in the week, and I have no doubt that some breach may possibly be found in the Federal Constitution yet. But what is troubling me is not that. It is the difficulties we in Queensland will find ourselves in after federation. I have no doubt that things will come all right in time. Everything does, but it does not matter what happens in the end. If we let things go on to the end they are bound to come back to their normal condition again, but there is always a period of inconvenience, and possibly a period of danger. There is, therefore, all the more reason why the persons in charge of our Treasury in the meantime should be careful. There is more reason for care at the present time than there has ever been in the history of the colony before. And that being the case, we find that the hon. gentleman at the helm of finance—

Mr. REID: A very bad helmsman.

Mr. STEWART: A very bad helmsman. The hon. gentleman simply rides on the crest of the wave, before the wind, never thinking where he is going to or what is going to happen. Now, I hope that gentleman will have an eye to the future, and will try to avoid going upon the rocks. Now there are several other matters. There is another matter to which I wish to refer shortly. I have spoken about it before when dealing with the Financial Statement, and I regret very much to see that nothing has been done in the direction of the reform I advocated. I have advocated additional taxation, not taxation on the principal taxpayer, but the imposition of such taxes as would get at the absentees particularly, and also an income tax and a land tax. Now, I believe that the only reason why the hon. gentleman in charge of the Treasury cooks his accounts annually, and draws so much upon loan funds for revenue purposes—

The TREASURER: That is not a fact.

Mr. STEWART: Draws so much upon loan funds for revenue purposes, is to save the property classes from taxation. I believe that that is the one and only reason why this method of carrying on the financial operations of the colony is adopted. Is there any reason why these people should be exempt from taxation? Is there any reason why these absentees, who do not contribute a farthing to the taxation of the colony, should not be compelled to pay something towards the cost of Government here? Why should not they stump up something to defray the cost of protecting their own property. We are going in now for increased army and navy expenditure. We are becoming a great military power, and for what? To protect not only the property of ourselves in the colony, our persons, our lives, and our property, but people who do not live here at all, but who draw immense revenues annually from our shores. That being the case, it is high time that these people were called upon to contribute something towards this cost. We have got to build railways all over the colony. We have got to found schools, we have got to find policemen, and we

have got to find telegraphs and post offices, and all the rest of it, and everything to facilitate the carrying on of the business of these people, and to the expense of all those things they contribute a most infinitesimal sum. Now, I say that they ought to be taxed. Is the hon. gentleman game to tax them? Is he prepared to ask the absentee to contribute towards the cost of running this country, or is he afraid that if he does he may meet with the fate of the rulers of the Transvaal, who made the one unfortunate mistake of taxing the absentee capitalist. Besides an absentee tax, I think we should also have an income tax. There is a very large number of persons in this colony getting very good incomes, and why should they not pay something more than the ordinary Customs and excise duties to the State?

Mr. BROWNE: Especially as we are going in for war taxation.

Mr. STEWART: Especially as, as the hon. member says, we are going in for war taxation? An income tax is one of the principal methods of raising money in Great Britain. Why cannot we follow that good example? Why place the largest proportion of the burden of taxation upon the shoulders of the poor? Why tax what a man eats, and drinks, and wears, instead of taxing what he has? That would be a much better principle of taxation than the other.

The TREASURER: We tax that, too.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. gentleman says "We tax that, too." Yes, but very lightly.

The TREASURER: One man paid £150,000 last year. That paid for the war.

Mr. STEWART: That was a windfall that is not likely to occur in our lives again, and I am very sorry that the sum was not very much larger. It would have been very much better that the country should have got £300,000, £400,000, or £500,000 out of that estate than that it should go to the lawyers, as the great proportion of it will inevitably do. Then another tax I think ought to be imposed is a land tax. The effect of that would be not only to add to the revenue of the country, but it would benefit the community in another way.

The TREASURER: We are subsidising land-owners now.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, unfortunately, we are subsidising them now.

The TREASURER: Through the local authorities.

Mr. STEWART: Well, there is some excuse for that, while those people are maintaining roads that lead in many cases to Government property, and run through Government property. Instead of curtailing the subsidy to these local bodies it ought to be increased in many instances. I would go for much higher subsidies to local bodies than are at present paid. I have stated before the system on which I would proceed. I would differentiate. In the case of a place like Brisbane I would give no subsidy. I would look upon Brisbane as the young man who had come of age and was able to do for himself, and the good father did not need to assist him any more. So also with other large towns like Gympie, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Townsville, and those places. The scale of endowment for these places would be pretty low, and would increase as the needs of the community required. Where there was a fairly dense population the endowment should be low, and in new country awaiting development it should be proportionately high. I do not think the hon. gentleman should begrudge the subsidies he pays to the local authorities.

The TREASURER: I do not, but you want to tax the same people.

Mr. STEWART: I am glad to hear the hon. gentleman does not begrudge that endowment. I think land values ought to be taxed. What has made the land in Brisbane valuable? Let us come down to particulars. A square mile of territory here in Brisbane is worth, I suppose, somewhere about £7,000,000 or £8,000,000 for the 640 acres, and that does not take into account the value of the property built upon that land. What gave that land this value? Is it not the expenditure of public money in every portion of the colony?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: And private money, too.

Mr. STEWART: I have no doubt, private money, too; but the private money has had its reward, and the public money has not had its reward.

The TREASURER: Not always.

Mr. STEWART: We know very well that if the population of Brisbane left it to-morrow, the site of Brisbane would not be worth more than £1 per acre—£640, instead of between £7,000,000 and £8,000,000.

Mr. REID: What, with a river frontage?

Mr. STEWART: With the river frontage and everything else thrown in. We find that it is population that gives land in Queensland its value.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. REID: Is that why you want immigration?

Mr. STEWART: I say that what the State gives the State ought to get, and when we claim that land values should be taxed we are simply asking for justice, and for neither more nor less than our own.

Mr. REID: What about the poor working chap with his 16-perch allotment?

Mr. RYLAND: Yes, and the widow?

Mr. STEWART: It would pay the poor working man with his 16-perch allotment to contribute a little by way of a land tax, if he could only see through it.

Mr. JACKSON: Why sell Crown lands at all? Why not nationalise the land?

Mr. STEWART: The great difficulty is that the present Government will not give him the opportunity. There is one thing I am pleased about in connection with federation, and it is about the only thing connected with it with which I am satisfied, and that is that with the advent of federation the Government of the colony will have to go in more and more for direct taxation.

Mr. REID: The "fat man" will put that off as long as he can.

Mr. STEWART: There is no doubt about that, but he will not be able to stave it off indefinitely. I want to know how it is that the Government has never done anything for—

Mr. JACKSON: Rockhampton.

Mr. STEWART: No, I hope I am not a roads and bridges member. I would scout the very idea of not retaining my seat here without coddling my own particular electorate. I would go out and sweep the streets rather than be a mere poodle for wirepullers or logrollers of that description. I hope the hon. member for Kennedy does not class me in the same boat with himself. There is one thing I am surprised at, and it is this: This Government have done a great deal for the sugar-growers and the pastoralists in the way of assisting them, and I want to know what they are going to do for the other farmers? In all the other colonies cheap money has been provided for the farmers, and the system has been successful wherever it has been tried. When is this Government going to do something for our farmers? When are they

going to take them out of the hands of the money-lender and provide them with fairly cheap money, so as to enable them to compete, on something like level terms, with the farmers of the other colonies? The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government does not believe in people putting their money into the Savings Bank. He thinks it should be put into development. I say that where an opportunity presents itself for that sort of thing, the wisest thing for a man to do is to put his money into works of development, but a great many people have cash which it is not convenient for them to expend in that fashion, and they put it into the Savings Bank. If they want to apply it to development of the resources of the colony, why should there be any impediment put in the way? I think that, instead of depending on the

London market for cash—which I [10.30 p.m.] believe some day we shall find a broken reed—we ought to depend more on our own resources. Instead of the hon. gentleman in charge of the Treasury putting impediments in the way of men putting money in the Government Savings Bank, he should give them every encouragement; and he should utilise that cash in developing the industries of the colony. I think a step in that direction would be welcomed, and would do a great deal to promote the prosperity of the colony. I do not intend to detain the Committee any longer, as I will have an opportunity of dealing with these several matters when the Estimates come before us. I only hope that the Treasurer's estimate will turn out to be a correct one, but I doubt that very much.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at twenty-four minutes to 11 o'clock.