

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 1900

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The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PAPER.

The following paper, laid upon the table of the House, was ordered to be printed:—Report of the Public Service Board on charges preferred by the Department of Public Works against Mr. William Taylor Jack, Inspector of Works.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

STATE OF NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*): I wish to ask the Secretary for Railways, without notice—If his attention has been drawn to a statement in the *Northern Miner* to the effect that the Northern Railway is in a dangerous condition? Will he inquire into the truthfulness of the statement, and, if it is true, take immediate steps to remedy the matter?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*) replied—My attention has not been specially called to the paragraph in question, but I will take steps to ascertain if the statement is true or not.

QUESTION.

OCCUPIERS OF FREEHOLD AND OTHER LANDS.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*), for Mr. Hardacre, asked the Home Secretary—

1. Have any returns been obtained by the Statistical Department with reference to the number of occupiers and areas of freehold and other lands in different parts of the colony, in response to a request by myself some time ago?

2. If so, will the Home Secretary cause the same to be laid upon the table of the House for the information of members.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) replied—

1. Some of the local authorities sent in returns in response to a request made by the Registrar-General, but many have not done so, for various reasons assigned by them.

2. I do not propose to lay the papers on the table of the House, as the returns are incomplete, and the information which they contain would, therefore, be misleading as regards the colony as a whole.

DEPUTY SPEAKER.

At ten minutes before 4 o'clock, Mr. Speaker being unable to continue in the Chair, the Chairman of Committees took the Chair as Deputy Speaker during the Speaker's absence.

COMPULSORY CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION.

Resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. C. McDonald's motion, That this House is of opinion that the time has arrived when the Government should introduce a Compulsory Conciliation and Arbitration Bill for the better settlement of industrial disputes.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): In rising to resume the discussion of this motion, I think I ought to thank the hon. junior member for Mackay for the courtesy he showed to the mover of the motion when it was last under discussion, in resuming his seat before he had finished what he wanted to say on the subject, for the purpose of allowing the motion to be placed in a favourable position on the business-paper. I think it was all the more laudable on the hon. member's part, because this is one of those subjects in which the hon. member for Mackay revels on private members' afternoon. I generally disagree very much with the hon. member's conclusions on such subjects, but there are very few members who do not enjoy listening to the hon. member, because he goes into his subject very heartily. I think a motion of this kind is an indication that even in Queensland progress has not come altogether to a standstill, and that there is still some little hope of some further advancement in civilisation. In the old days, when two gentlemen had a quarrel, the method of settling it was to go out into the backyard and prod one another with small swords until one or both had had enough of it. Trial by combat was a recognised method of settling disputes between individuals, and society looked on with a smile.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It is not out of date with nations yet.

Mr. KIDSTON: Unfortunately not, but even in international disputes, as the hon. gentleman knows, there is a rapidly growing consensus of opinion amongst the more highly civilised and advanced nations that war as a means of settling international disputes is not only an expensive method, but a very bad method of settling them. As a matter of fact, it never settles anything, except which of the two is the stronger.

Mr. JACKSON: Have you never heard of eminent men justifying war?

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes. I am not saying that the development of nations may not have been in some important respects helped on by the struggle between nationalities which we call war. I am sure that in my own country the development of national character was very much assisted by its centuries of struggle against a neighbouring power. But in spite of that it is a growing conviction amongst the best and highest men of modern times that war is a desirable thing to abolish, if we can see our way to abolish it.

Mr. DAWSON: Why; Bridges justifies war.

Mr. KIDSTON: The only difficulty is about seeing our way to abolish it. In civil disputes the only place where trial by combat remains as the method of settling them is in regard to industrial disputes. In all other disputes that arise amongst men, the State has made provision that they shall be settled by an appeal to the law, by an appeal to reason; that they shall be adjudicated upon and decided.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: We settle ours here by counting which is the stronger party.

Mr. KIDSTON: And I think, as I said, the very movement that is going on to place industrial disputes in the same category in which we have already placed so many of our important civil quarrels is an evidence of a yet further development in civilisation. I should like to point out what seems to me to be a rather striking feature in this matter. You will notice that not only in Queensland, but in every other place where the matter is being agitated, that it is the extreme Labour men—the agitators, the low people who go about fomenting troubles and all that sort of thing—who are trying to get the settlement of this class of disputes put upon such a footing as will end the evil consequences of strikes and lockouts. On the other hand, it is the very superior persons—it is the class who always modestly describe themselves as right-thinking persons—who are opposing, and in some cases opposing very bitterly, any attempt to do away with the evil consequences of trade disputes. So far as I have had anything to do with industrial disputes, I think it is quite futile to say to the men, "Do not strike," or to the masters, "Do not lock out." So long as there are two classes engaged in industrial enterprise—so long as there is one class getting wages and another class paying wages, it is natural and human to suppose that repeated and continual differences of opinion will grow up between those two classes. Each dog wants the largest possible share of the bone; and it is only by recognising that both must suffer if they quarrel over the bone that the necessity becomes apparent that some better method should be adopted to settle their disputes. It very seldom happens that the wrong is all on one side, and that the right is all on the other side. Industrial disputes, from their very nature, are specially suited for settlement by conciliatory methods—by a tribunal to which both parties can appeal. When the Premier rose to reply to the hon. member for Milters he indicated that he had no particular objection to conciliation until you proposed to make it compulsory. But I would point out that where both parties are willing to settle the matter by conciliatory methods there is no occasion at all for the State to interfere.

Mr. JACKSON: Except to provide the machinery.

Mr. KIDSTON: Certainly; and as a matter of fact a vast amount of good has been done by such machinery in other countries. What I claim is that compulsion, if not a necessary, is at least a very desirable element in making conciliation effective. The hon. member for Mackay, with the rare faculty he has for chopping logic, attempted to make a great deal of sport out of the somewhat contradictory phrase "compulsory conciliation." But we know quite well that the average man is not a logic-chopping animal; he does not settle the business of everyday life according to the definitions he finds in the dictionary. To my mind, as I said, almost the whole virtue of such a proposal lies in the fact of making it compulsory. For instance, if you made the settlement of civil and criminal cases by our laws optional, would they be half as effective as they are? If a strong man assaulted you, and you tried to take him to

court, and found that the law provided that unless the strong man was willing to go to court you could not bring him there; or if a debtor refused to pay a debt and you proposed to take him to court, and you found the law did not permit you to take him to court unless he was willing—surely that would be a state of the law to be amended. The whole virtue of our system of law is that the weak man under it can compel the strong man to go to an impartial court and apply to have the dispute settled by an impartial third person. And I venture to say that if any man proposed to amend our system of law in accordance with the Premier's notion as to keeping compulsion out of it it would be scouted.

The PREMIER: I did not propose to do that at all.

Mr. KIDSTON: I think that in many cases of trade disputes, conciliation, without compulsion at the back of it, would be largely ineffective, just as it would be in other cases. I admit that it has done much good elsewhere, and I do not doubt that it would do a great deal of good here; but the very worst kind of cases, the very cases where some interference by the State was necessary, the very cases which most require such legislation to help towards a settlement—those would be just the kind of cases that would not be so settled when a serious trouble arose—that is, without compulsion. For instance, I think it was somewhere about 1890 that the miners and the masters at Broken Hill, after having a dispute, which was settled by a conference, came to a mutual agreement that all future disputes between them were to be settled by arbitration. And yet within two years after that, when a dispute arose, the masters refused to go to arbitration; and there was no power, either in the State or in the miners, to compel the masters to keep to their previous agreement to go to arbitration; and one of the most bitter strikes in Australia occurred there at that time, which would not have occurred at all if that agreement, which they made two years previously, could have been made compulsory, as any other civil contract can be made compulsory in the ordinary course. I think everyone recognises that there must be of necessity certain differences of opinion between the payers of wages and the receivers of wages. Such things will always occur. I think everyone recognises that, human nature being as it is, those differences of opinion will often run to a serious dispute, and I think everyone recognises that when these things do occur it is might which prevails and not right. It is the strong; it is the ones who can stand the longest, that win, irrespective of whether they are right or wrong.

Mr. JACKSON: Don't the public back the right?

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes; and that is one of the elements of the strength of the weaker party. But the sympathy of the public does not always go on the merits of the question, because the public very often does not know the merits of the question. I think it is also generally recognised that the general community may be injured, and, as a matter of fact, is always injured, by such disputes. Surely the Premier is well aware that the community, which is in the position of a third party, being unable, either on behalf of the men or on behalf of the masters, to settle the dispute, is yet injured sometimes to a very material extent by such disputes; and therefore they ought to have a voice in the settlement of them. They ought to be able to prevent the disputants from injuring the general community. And I think everyone recognises—even the Premier recognises—that it would be much better for all concerned if an appeal to reason could be substi-

tuted for an appeal to force. The hon. member for Mackay claimed that it was not practicable for the State to compel the parties to such disputes to appeal to reason; and he argued at very great length to show that it was not practicable. Now, I think that, in a matter of this kind particularly, an ounce of fact is worth a bushel of argument. What are the facts? In regard to other matters of civil disputes amongst men we have found that the law which compels all to come to court, while it does not altogether prevent those disputes, does prevent them from being carried to such lengths as to be injurious to society. And in regard to this very important matter, the experience of New Zealand has shown that there is really no more impracticability in compelling the disputants in trade disputes to come to court, and abide by the settlement of the court, than there is in other civil disputes. I have taken a good deal of interest in the working of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act in New Zealand. It is a matter I thought a good deal about a long time before the law was adopted in New Zealand; and so far as I have had an opportunity, I have noticed in New Zealand newspapers the way in which the Act has operated there; and I have no hesitation at all in saying that the experience of New Zealand for the last five or six years clearly proves that it is just as practicable to deal with cases of industrial disputes in court as it is practicable to deal with assault cases in court. The Home Secretary, while he is manifestly trying to refrain from the obnoxious habit he has of interjecting while other hon. gentlemen are speaking, yet looks up with a superior kind of smile, as if he could correct me only that he is holding himself under restraint. As a matter of fact, what I have said is common knowledge, not only in New Zealand, but also in every other place where people have paid any attention to the working of conciliation in New Zealand. Still another objection is raised, and that is whether, admitting that the State can effectively deal with this matter, it is desirable that the State should do so—whether it is not an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject—

The HOME SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: For the State to prevent men from settling their trade disputes in their own way. Now, the Home Secretary says, "Hear, hear," in a way which I take as indicating that it is his opinion that such a thing would be an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject. That is a matter which may be debated, of course, but I will just point out that the subject has exceedingly little liberty in our community.

The HOME SECRETARY: He will have less if this becomes law.

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. gentleman has just now in hand a Bill which is calculated to limit the liberty of the subject in a great many little matters of everyday life for the protection of the public health. These limitations he considers necessary in the public interest, and that is the rule in the matter—the greatest good for the greatest number. Our liberties are continually being limited by this law and by that law. A man can hardly do anything but he finds that the law has limited his right to do this thing or that. I say that no man who lives in a community has the right to do anything which is likely to injure that community. The natural social limitation of a man's personal liberty is when in the exercise of that liberty he does something which restricts some other man's liberty, which injures some other man, or which injures the community in which he is living. Now, no one will dispute that the great strike such as we had in 1891 was very injurious to the

community of Queensland. I think that no man who lived in Queensland at that time will deny that proposition for one moment. I claimed then, as I claim now, that the community of Queensland had a perfect right, according to every sound political principle, to say to the pastoralists and the pastoral workers at that time: "You will have to settle your differences without fighting; you will have to come to the arbitrament of some third person in some way or another." I think that it is the duty of the State to provide the necessary machinery for such things to be done, when the occasion occurs. I think it is the duty of the State to see that such quarrels—quarrels which affect the wellbeing of the State to such a large extent—are settled in that way. I think it is all the more the duty of the State to make such provision, when it is recognised that not only is it protecting the life and interests of the general community, but it is actually doing a service to the disputants. Surely there can be no better justification for legislative action in any civil matter. I appeal to the Hon. the Premier in this matter that this is a proposal which is calculated sooner or later to serve the best interests of the community over which he has the honour of presiding, and I appeal to him not to allow party feeling and party considerations, not to allow the fact that a member on this side of the House has suggested it; and not to allow old fossilised and conservative ideas to stand in the way of a kind of progress, which may confer so large a benefit on the people of Queensland.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. B. Dickson, *Bulimba*): I do not intend to speak at any length on this subject. It seems to me that the case which the hon. member for Rockhampton has referred to—viz., the settlement of assaults by referring them to the judicial courts of this colony—are not by any means on all fours with the disputes which may present themselves in connection with industrial matters, because, in the first place, I do not think the appellants to that court are in exactly equal positions. I think that if a compulsory Bill for the settlement of industrial disputes were introduced the men who appeal to or who are to come under the decision of the court should occupy an equal position. Now, there is a great difference in position between employers and employees. A verdict against an employer may be enforced, because he has some means against which the verdict or decision may be enforced, but many employees are not by any means in the same position.

Mr. GIVENS: How are they going to fix it in New South Wales?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know how they are going to fix it. But there is a marked distinction between the position of the two appellants to any compulsory arbitration; and, after all, I believe that these matters are far better settled by conciliation than by compulsion. It seems to me that the two things are antagonistic.

Mr. KIDSTON: That is not the experience in New Zealand.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I could see no objection to the insistence of the Government in endeavouring to provide by all possible means for conciliatory arbitration, but to make it compulsory is, I think, only calculated to cause feelings which are likely to create great bitterness, and to invoke a settlement which, to my mind, may be impossible of enforcement in the case of certain classes of appellants. Now, what, I ask, is the necessity for the introduction of this question at the present time? I look upon this as one of the sentimental ideas which are not based on any practical circumstances which present themselves. Does the hon. gentleman imagine that in that unfortunate misconception,

or that unfortunate difference of opinion which exists at the present time in connection with the coal strike, that compulsory arbitration would settle the matter more satisfactorily than mutual compromise between employers and employed?

Mr. KIDSTON: It would not prevent mutual compromise.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think that it would. I think that they would then stand out for their legal rights; that they would not consider in this question the reasonableness of the men's requests, in view of obtaining a better rate of remuneration, if the products of the industry provide that remuneration. After all, that is the basis of all employment, and what is the use of compulsory arbitration, which insists upon an employer paying more than his industry will provide? How are you to enforce it? And again, how are you to enforce against employees their acceptance of a decision as to what is a reasonable rate of remuneration if they think it is not right? These hard and drastic lines will really do no good for the settlement of industrial disputes, but they will tend in many instances to confuse the true position, and make people imagine that, by the interference of the Government, or of legislation, a settlement may be brought about. No doubt these differences of opinion will arise from time to time, but I would recommend that there should be mutual forbearance practised, and that there should be arbitration of a conciliatory character, in the endeavour to adjust fairly the burdens on either side. That will have a far better effect than anything like a hard or oppressive provision.

Mr. KIDSTON: I am afraid that is more sentiment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Any hard or oppressive provision is, to my mind, very likely to prevent the expansion of industries. I cannot see that any good is to be achieved by compulsory legislation of this sort, and I think it will inflict a very great hardship upon many. While I give the hon. gentleman credit for his interesting speech on this occasion, I recommend him to accept the opinion of the House on the omission of this word "compulsory." I construe "compulsory" to mean "coercive," and I have as great an objection to coercion as hon. gentlemen on the opposite side. I look upon the motion as intended to be coercive, and, looking upon it in that light, I cannot see how the hon. gentleman with liberal principles—which I very largely share—can agree to anything like coercion being extended to any class in the community.

Mr. REID: You did not mind giving us coercion in 1894.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We will not go back to that, but I may say that I find that the principles of rigid conservatism appear to have left this side of the House, and are being developed in the speeches and proclivities of hon. gentlemen opposite. I believe that more rigid conservatism is exhibited, on many matters, by those hon. gentlemen, than has ever been expressed upon this side of the House. I believe that drastic legislation of the character the hon. gentleman advocates would really be repressive of industrial expansion in this colony. Up to the present time all that the colony requires is that both employers and employed shall have regard for the conditions of the industry in which they are engaged. I fully believe that the great factor in the settlement of industrial disputes will be, at last, public opinion. I do not think any claim for increased remuneration for employees will have any effect unless it is sustained by the discriminating opinion of the public, after investigation of the whole question in dispute.

Mr. REID: The public take no interest in it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The public do take a very deep and an increasing interest, and I am quite surprised to hear the hon. member, who always appeals to the people of the colony as the best judges of all political and social problems, expressing any diffidence whatever as to the manner in which the public will decide in the settlement of these social problems. Without wishing to take up the time of the House unnecessarily—because this question has been thrashed out, I may say, *ad nauseam*—I cannot see how any advantage is to be gained by the introduction of a measure for compulsory arbitration. It will lead to the disturbance of a great many industries, and will be a menace to the introduction or creation of a great many more. Under the circumstances I advise the hon. gentleman to be content with a resolution that the Government should introduce a Conciliation and Arbitration Bill for the better settlement of industrial disputes. I would not have the slightest objection to that, and if such a Bill were introduced, the best and most impartial counsel on both sides of the House should be given for the purpose of passing a measure which would have some practical effect. I very much fear that if framed on the lines of coercion, which the hon. gentleman's resolution suggests, it would be nugatory of the beneficial effects which the hon. gentleman desires.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*): The Chief Secretary evidently belongs to that class of legislators who believe in individual liberty. They believe in individual liberty in the extreme, and they believe really in individual anarchy. Because those who believe in strikes or favour strikes, or who would not take means, even compulsory and coercive means—if they like to term them such—to prevent industrial war, are certainly believers in anarchy, and are not believers in peace and progress. It is very evident that this party, in advocating arbitration and conciliation, are in favour of law and order.

We are opposed to that disorder which is very often created, or at any rate very often increased, by those industrial strikes and wars which are continually taking place in our midst. We have one unfortunately at the present time in Ipswich. The Chief Secretary says he certainly favours conciliation of the voluntary sort. He believes we should say to people, "You may conciliate if you so desire." I would point out to the hon. gentleman that we have any amount of conciliation of that sort at the present time. There is nothing, and, to my knowledge, there has never been anything, to prevent both sides to an industrial strike or lockout voluntarily conciliating. But unfortunately they have failed to do so, and it is because of the proved failure of the voluntary system of conciliation that we are now asking that the compulsory brand of conciliation should be given a trial. Our experience has taught us that we should not any longer rely upon the voluntary system of conciliation, which has proved a failure all along the line. Now, to my mind this advocacy of the voluntary system of conciliation is absurd, and reminds me of two pugilists fighting in a back yard—the sort of fighting the hon. member for Mackay referred to the other night. He pointed out that two individuals might roll up their sleeves and decide to settle their disagreements by fisticuffs, by physical force, and would any man of common sense go and say to those two men: "My dear fellows, don't go on in that way; you may conciliate—you may call in a peacemaker?" No man would do such a foolish thing, and it would be much more absurd to tell them that they might call in a policeman to stop their battle. It is just as absurd, when two parties are in the heat of an industrial battle—when they have, practically rolled up their sleeves—

to say to them, "You may conciliate." It is not likely that they would voluntarily conciliate in the heat of battle. We must all remember that we are dealing with human beings and not with angels. If the units composing the human family were perfect, there would be no industrial disputes. And I may say in passing that there would be no masters and no men, and no wage system. In these industrial disputes we are dealing with human beings. Each one of us is full of faults; the whole human family is full of faults; and we cannot expect anyone to do voluntarily anything which might be termed perfection. To do this would imply that they were perfect and not full of misdeeds and failures. All along the line we find it necessary to use compulsion or, if the Chief Secretary prefers the term—coercion. The State says to parents, "You shall not bring up your children in ignorance; you must send them to school." Now, that is coercion, according to the Chief Secretary. The State says parents shall not neglect their children; therefore, the State is using coercive means. If that is coercion—and it is no more coercion than compulsory arbitration—I welcome it. We say to people who are inclined to be dishonest, "Thou shalt not steal," and I say that there is not one Act of Parliament passed by this House which does not insist on some sort of coercion. And that is good, taking the human family as it is. The State says, "Thou shalt not do this and the other." Now we say to masters who very often lockout men, "Thou shalt not do this without having arbitration on the matter." And we say to the men "You shall not go out on strike." I believe compulsory arbitration will lead to very good results. Industrial warfare has been compared to ordinary warfare. We don't hear of men losing their lives in industrial warfare—or very seldom—still, in the past, in the large and small strikes, there has been continual trouble and suffering, which does not lead to loss of life, but it does certainly shorten the lives of those who suffer from these strikes and lockouts. In that sense, it does tend to reduce the hours of life of the members of the human family. The hon. member for Mackay the other day gave an illustration in this connection, and said that an appeal to physical force was very often necessary. But when two persons decide to settle their dispute by force of arms or fisticuffs, as a rule they only injure each other. And sometimes they don't even do that; but when any injury is done, it is confined to the two individuals themselves. That is not so in industrial warfare. All in the community suffer directly or indirectly. It reminds me of the faction fights we hear of at a fair. Two parties start fighting, and wherever a head crops up they hit it. If you pop your head up, down you go. Now, in industrial warfare, all the community gets hit on the head—frequently by both parties. What is the effect on the colony of a strike of any dimensions? The Government tell us that it frightens away capital and shakes confidence in the country. That is very true. It also does injury to the State, because it lessens the amount of revenue received. If it diminishes the wealth of the community, it certainly injures the State. It lessens consumption, and therefore the State does not reap the same amount of revenue through the Customs, railways, and other sources as it otherwise would. We know that wives and children, who are not parties to industrial warfare, suffer. They are innocent sufferers, and the State has a duty to perform with regard to them. The State can do and should do that duty. Take the present strike at Ipswich. If anything occurs to reduce the wages fund received by workers, which I think will happen, not only the wives and children of the

coalminers will suffer, but every business man will suffer, because his takings will be largely reduced. The wages of the people employed by merchants, farmers and others will also be reduced, and all private life in the community will suffer. Why should that be the case? Does not the Government see that they have a duty to perform to these people? In this connection, we must go beyond the strikers and the masters: we should look to the colony as a whole, and to the effect of such industrial disputes on any section of the community in Queensland. The effects of strikes are not confined to the actual participants—the masters and the men—engaged in the fight. I suppose I must not occupy too much of the time of the House on this matter.

Mr. REID: There is no compulsion.

Mr. DUNSFORD: I know there is no compulsion in the matter of speech. Hon. members on the other side would like to introduce a little compulsion and limit the period for [4.30 p.m.] which a member may speak, and when that proposal comes along they will probably be told by members on this side that it is coercion. In nearly all cases when wages men go on strike we are told that they are in the wrong, that they should not strike, and that it is better for them to suffer the ills they know than to go out on strike. If wages men are nearly always in the wrong, why should there be any fear with regard to conciliation or arbitration of a compulsory sort? Legislation such as is asked for in this motion will prevent strikes and lockouts. Men will think a very long time before they strike if they know that they will be compelled to arbitrate; they will seriously view the whole situation. At present, very often—well, not very often, but in some cases—men go out on strike without fully considering the position, and perhaps act in a temper, and if there was a law to compel them to arbitrate they would, before they went on strike, view the matter carefully, and be absolutely sure that they were in the right, and that they were fighting only for a principle. And the same remarks will apply to the masters. We know that men as a body are very often compelled to do things which as individuals they would not like to do, because the rush for the means of livelihood is so great that competition is very keen among the wages class, as it is among the masters. Competition is so keen that men, whether they are mineowners, or manufacturers, or wages men, are frequently compelled to do things which otherwise they would not do as private individuals. We want to save those people from themselves, to save them from injuring themselves, their families, and the colony—we want to prevent the masters from locking out the men, and to prevent the men from going out on strike, and stopping the earning of wages. Strikes do injury to very many who have no influence over them, and who are in no way responsible for them. Therefore, I think the State might very well step in, and, following on the lines adopted in other colonies, do some little towards preventing these industrial wars.

* The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*): I have very little to say on this subject. Almost all that can be said on it has been said, but I think that one's own particular views may come to the House in a different way, perhaps, from the views of any other member. As members of the House are different in constitution, temper, stature, bulk, weight, and mental power, so the views of one particular member are likely to come with some new light, even though he may, to a very large extent, go over the ground that has been already traversed by those who have gone before. The way this thing strikes me is that there is an apparent confession

that conciliation pure and simple, without compulsion, is a failure. The compulsion which is foreshadowed in the measure referred to in this motion as being desirable has been likened—and I think very properly likened—to coercion. In other countries, in times past, and even in this colony, attempts have been made to introduce measures, and measures have been passed, for the purpose of establishing tribunals of conciliation for the settlement of disputes. We have such a statute on our books, and it is notorious that it has scarcely ever been availed of. I believe there are only one or two cases on record which have been dealt with by the conciliation justices.

Mr. REID: Hear, hear! That was just after it was put on the statute-book.

The HOME SECRETARY: Let us consider why that is so. Apparently people, when they have got to the stage at which they desire to go to law, or want to fight in an industrial controversy, have got beyond that stage when the intervention of friends, or of mere conciliation justices, or mere conciliation tribunals, can be of any avail with them. Temper has intervened, strong feelings have been engendered, and each side is burning for a fight. We know that that is a very common state of feeling, not only with nations and smaller communities, but even with individuals. It has been said that this compulsion which is spoken of is justifiable in much the same way as the compulsion which is placed on criminals and would-be criminals is justifiable. I combat that position entirely. The conditions are in no sense analogous. A criminal is a person who is, as it were, for the time being, in his own peculiar way—whatever that peculiar way may be—waging war against society. He is doing, or proposing to do, that which is prohibited by the laws of the country, and for which he is rendered liable to more or less heavy penalties. The reason why these penalties are enforced is that the particular act against which the penalties are directed is considered by the legislature of the country, the powers that be, one which is inimical to the interests of the community as a whole. It is therefore placed among those derelictions of duty which are commonly known as crimes, taken in its widest sense. There is another sort of wrong-doing which is a mere offence, so to speak, against a private individual. It is not a mere breach of contract, but it is a wrong done, not to the community at large, but to a private individual, or a collection of private individuals, and that wrong is known in law, not as a crime, but as a tort, concerning which, upon its commission, damages may be recovered by the party aggrieved or wronged. There is a large distinction, therefore, between what is known as a criminal offence, punishable with penalties—fines, imprisonment, or what not, as the case may be—and a mere civil wrong which is perpetrated against an individual or a collection of individuals, and which is not exactly punishable, but which can be gauged in damages at the instance of the person aggrieved, or who considers himself aggrieved—such, for instance, as libel or conversion of a man's goods—such conversion not amounting to the offence of larceny or embezzlement. I need not go through the long list. There are a thousand and one acts which could come within such a category. We have again another distinction—a very large distinction—which can be drawn, and it is this: we do not introduce any coercion, except for the payment of damages, and making good by way of compensation to the person damaged, as it is called in law, in regard to torts, but with regard to criminal offences we do. There the State, for its own purposes, introduces certain penalties as preventive measures, and introduces

what may very properly be called coercion. The principle of coercion is necessarily incident to all criminal jurisprudence. There are also included in these coercive measures such matters as have been referred to by hon. members—at all events, it was alluded to by the last speaker in connection with the compulsory education of children. Well, that is a matter which the State, after mature deliberation, considered should be dealt with in that way. For instance, Parliament passed a statute compelling persons to have their children educated, if they lived within a certain radius of a school, and so forth; and the only way in which that end could be secured was by coercion. An offence against the law which provides that compulsory education shall be given to children is treated as a criminal or quasi-criminal offence, and is dealt with accordingly, and a penalty is imposed, either by way of fine or imprisonment, or both, according to the view of the legislature which passed the law. It therefore passes into the category of criminal offences. Now, let us see what is the difference between such matters as those to which I have referred and the matter which it is proposed to be dealt with in such a Bill as is advocated by the hon. member for Flinders, who has tabled this resolution. But before doing so, I have omitted to mention one further matter. I have dealt with criminal offences, civil wrongs or torts, in which damages are recoverable, and there is also the question of a breach of contract. In that case we introduce coercion, because—although I cannot call to mind at this moment any penalty by way of fine or imprisonment imposed upon a man for a breach of contract—still, that may be done, although it is not usual. Still, a man's goods may be seized to the last penny, and in some cases his liberty may be interfered with, in the event of an attempt being made to evade the payment of certain debts in certain particular ways, in order to compel him to do justice to the man with whom he has entered into a contract. That is to say, compulsion is brought to bear in order to induce men—and, in fact, to compel them—

Mr. REID: To be honest.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not to be honest, but to carry out their contracts. I have known many a breach of contract which was perfectly honest. I have known many a man break a contract with a view of doing that which was honest rather than do that which, perhaps, was not quite so much so. But notwithstanding that, it was a breach of contract, and the law says you must carry out your contracts. It introduces the element of compulsion, and properly so. Now, let us look at the difference between such a state of affairs and the state of affairs that it is proposed to deal with under such legislation as that which is proposed by the hon. member for Flinders, and in regard to which we have instances in existence on the statute-book of New Zealand, and proposals in a concrete form in the shape of Bills before the legislatures of two other Australian colonies, if not three—that is to say, Victoria and New South Wales. I allude to the Bill introduced by Mr. Wise in New South Wales, and the Bill introduced by Mr. Trenwith in Victoria. I have pointed out where coercion is justifiable—in criminal offences, civil wrongs, and breaches of contract. Should we go any further? Is it right to go any further? Is it right to introduce the principle of coercion, and say to a man, "Whether you desire it or not, you shall enter into a contract. You may say you are a free man. You are a free man. You live in a free country; but, whether you desire it or not, you have not entered into any contract at all yet, but we say you shall enter into a contract"? Is it right that any tribunal—I care not

how eminent its members may be—should have the power to say to a free man, "You shall do that"? I do not think so. As long as conciliation is voluntary it is a most excellent thing. Unfortunately, as I have pointed out, and as others have pointed out, it has not been an eminent success; but I do not see why it should not be more successful in the future than it has been in the past. I do protest against that interference with the liberty of the subject which would be involved in the compelling of a man to enter into a contract, and to continue in the performance of that contract whether he desires to do so or not.

Mr. DAWSON: Why compel a man to pay his debts?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member has apparently only just come into the Chamber.

Mr. DAWSON: No, I have not.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, that is a breach of contract, and I have dealt with that matter. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman wants me to go all over that again. Perhaps the hon. gentleman does not understand that the non-payment of a debt is a breach of contract, and comes within the wide definition of that part of my subject with which I have already dealt. I have shown why it is necessary to compel men to do that. That is a breach of contract; but this is a compulsion to enter into a contract, whether a man likes it or not. That is the distinction, and I am truly sorry for the hon. member for Charters Towers if he is unable to see that distinction. I am surprised to find such a shallow interjection as that come from that hon. member, who, I believe, prides himself on being what he calls a "brainy man."

Mr. DAWSON: You make me weep. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: Now, how is this compulsion to be brought about? It is proposed that this tribunal shall be at liberty to say to an employer—he may be a rich employer, or he may be an impecunious one—living from hand to mouth—perhaps not nearly so well off as more than half of his employees—that is very frequently the case. I suppose this tribunal is intended to have power to say to an employer, "You shall employ these men; you shall pay them a certain wage"—and, if I mistake not—"you shall continue to employ them at a certain wage for a given period whether you like it or not." That is a necessary element of the thing, otherwise it would fall to pieces at once. I will deal with what the effect of that would be presently, but in addition to that the tribunal has also the right to say to the men, "You shall serve this particular employer at a particular rate of wage whether you like it or not."

Mr. REID: No.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, practically, because it says, "Unless you work for this employer at that wage you shall not obtain in this community any employment at a lower wage, or at any other wage."

Mr. REID: That does not say he shall work for one employer.

The HOME SECRETARY: Perhaps I am overstating the case. It is not necessary that he should work for one employer, but he must work as a member of a particular trade union.

Mr. REID: He cannot have a contract unless he is a member of some organisation.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why should he not? It has been found that in order to get at the individual employee it would be necessary to send him to gaol. That is the only way in which you can compel the individual employee to observe his contract, but that would not be compelling him to observe the order of the court

directing him to enter into a contract. It would merely punish him for not entering into the contract and carrying it out.

Mr. REID : A breach of contract.

The HOME SECRETARY : No, it is an order of the court saying to the man, "You have no contract at present, but you shall enter into a contract of that kind or you shall enter into nothing." If it does not mean that, and if that is not the remedy, then what is the remedy for the employer in the event of the employee refusing to work at the wages stated?

Mr. REID : The same as now ; he can get someone else.

The HOME SECRETARY : Well, what does that mean? The legislation which is foreshadowed in Victoria says this—

The court in its award, or by order made on the application of any party to the proceedings before it, at any time in the period during which the award is binding may—

- (a) Prescribe a minimum rate of wages, or other remuneration, with provision for the fixing in such manner, and subject to such conditions as may be specified in the award or order by some tribunal specified in the award or order of a lower rate in the case of employees who are unable to earn the prescribed minimum ; and
- (b) Direct that as between members of an industrial union of employees or trade union or branch, and other persons, such members shall be employed in preference to such other persons, other things being equal, and appoint a tribunal to finally decide in what cases an employer to whom any such direction applies may employ a person who is not a member of any such union or branch.

In order to compel the employee to observe the conditions of the award or order, it is necessary to introduce the further element of coercion—namely, that he shall become a member of a trades union whether he likes it or not.

Mr. TURLLEY : That is not the question on the business-paper.

The HOME SECRETARY : I think it has a very strong bearing on it. I can quite understand the hon. member desiring to draw me off my argument, and to endeavour not to have made prominent such a feature of the scheme which is now proposed. I tell the hon. member it is on the business-paper. This motion alludes indirectly to the only conciliation and arbitration Bills which, as far as I know, are in force, or are proposed to be in force, throughout Australasia ; and if the hon. member for Flinders desired to have our opinions upon any particular measure of conciliation and arbitration, why could he not introduce a Bill in the ordinary way? But he purposely leaves the matter vague in this way, and the hon. member for Brisbane South—with that astuteness and other unnameable qualities which he possesses—desires to evade the responsibility which attaches to those who support a measure of the particular kind suggested. Let us be frank ! Let hon. members opposite be honest in this matter, and admit at once that they have to go to New Zealand, to New South Wales, and to Victoria for the legislation which they desire, and are not game to try to put on our statute-book. They only nibble at the question. Why is a Bill not on the paper? Why do they not bring forward a concrete measure to give effect to their ideas? I am afraid it is because they are only half-hearted, and they are merely indulging in parliamentary and political fireworks.

Mr. BROWNE : Such a Bill would not require as many amendments as your Health Bill required.

The HOME SECRETARY : I do not know about that. My own opinion is that it would require a lot more, especially if it were submitted to the same ordeal that the Health Bill was submitted to ; that is to say, if it was sent round

to every local authority, to every divisional boardsman, every shire councillor and alderman and mayor, *et hoc genus omne*, for them to have a go at. Why, if I had proposed to put in the Bill all the amendments which were suggested by those gentlemen, hon. members would not have finished reading them yet.

Mr. DAWSON : Do you know you are trespassing on the hon. member for Mackay's preserves?

The HOME SECRETARY : I have referred to the question of coercion. I have pointed out that in order to give effect to a measure of this kind the element is introduced that a man shall become, whether he likes it or not, a member of a trades union. Now, let us see what the effect may be upon the employer. The employer objects, say, to paying a certain wage, and the matter is referred to the tribunal, and it is ordered that for a certain period he shall not pay less than a given wage. Is that right? Is it right that any man, in a free

country, should be compelled to enter into a contract which is obnoxious to him, or to suffer ruin?

It might be that that award would be of such a character as to compel him to carry on his business at a distinct loss, and every day he continued to carry out the *dicta* of such courts as this might lead him nearer to the verge of insolvency and throw him out of business. Who benefits by such a state of things as that? It is, as one hon. member observed, an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject to compel persons to enter into contracts whether they desire to do so or not, or to suffer ruin.

Mr. DAWSON : There is no such thing as a compulsory contract.

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member does not know all about it. There is such a thing as a compulsory contract at the present time ; that is to say, compulsion to finish a contract. Our courts at this moment can decree that a man shall finish his contract or go to gaol. But there he has been a free agent. He has already entered into that contract. He has undertaken an obligation to another individual, who, on the strength of that obligation, may have undertaken obligations himself. And so it goes on. Therefore it is desirable and necessary that there should be a power to compel persons to observe the contracts which they have made. But to say to a man practically, "You shall either starve or enter into this contract whether you desire to do so or not," is a really different thing, and, as the hon. member to whom I alluded said, an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject. Someone said just now that questions of this sort were matters upon which public opinion exercised an overwhelming influence. I believe that is so. I believe that public opinion has a very large influence indeed upon all questions relating to industrial disputes. But that public opinion is often divided, and there are very frequently two or more public opinions rife at the same time. Consequently, until matters have made some advance, and people begin to realise what is the true state of affairs, the advocates and partisans of the two parties take up the cudgels and conduct the fight by way of newspaper correspondence and other means, and so it goes on. But public opinion, after all, usually prevails.

Mr. REID : No ; it is the big battalions of free labourers, or "scabs," that usually prevail, not public opinion.

The HOME SECRETARY : It is a pity we have not an authorised parliamentary vocabulary.

Mr. REID : You will find "scab" in "Webster."

The HOME SECRETARY : There are some very offensive words in "Webster's," as in all other dictionaries—words which I should be very

sorry to see used here, and which I think the hon. member would be very sorry to hear me use with reference to himself. The fact that a word is in a dictionary does not justify its use in this House.

Mr. REID: That word is now a part of the English language, and you have to accept it. It may not be a nice word, but it is very expressive.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is expressive of the state of mind of the man who uses it. The hon. member for Enoggera interjected the other night, when reference was being made to the force of public opinion on questions of this sort, that the public, in matters of this sort, do not care.

Mr. REID: As a rule, I said.

The HOME SECRETARY: Very well; if this is a matter about which the public, as a rule, do not care, then I say it is a matter concerning which coercion should not be introduced for the public weal. If it is a matter concerning which the public are so careless as the hon. member says, it is a matter which should not be brought within the scope of those things which are dealt with as criminal or *quasi* criminal offences, or breaches of contract. I think the hon. member's interjection gives the whole case away. The public do not care. Therefore why should we put coercion upon the individual in order to make him enter into contracts which he does not desire to enter into, and which, as the hon. member himself says, are such as do not concern the public at large. We know, of course, that that is so, but I am surprised to find such a weak admission coming from the hon. member for Enoggera who, like the hon. member for Charters Towers, prides himself upon being what he calls a brainy man.

Mr. REID: You've got hold of that word; stick to it.

Mr. DAWSON: Don't you envy me? (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: Envy the hon. member his self-esteem! For the reasons I have given I do not see that there can be said to be any justice in a measure such as that which is proposed. I believe, myself, that it can be done without compulsion, without compelling men to enter into contracts which they do not desire to enter into, and to perform such contracts at the risk, I will not say of imprisonment, but of loss of goods through the bailiffs on the one hand, and possibly the loss to men, on the other hand, of their livelihood through not belonging to a trade union. For those reasons I cannot give my support to the motion as it stands, and I therefore beg to move the omission of the word "compulsory."

Amendment stated.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): I certainly cannot accept the amendment proposed by the Home Secretary, and I shall be brief in giving my reasons. In his opening remarks the hon. gentleman showed that voluntary conciliation and arbitration had been in force for some considerable time, and he admitted practically that it had been a failure; and in order to substantiate his argument he instanced the Conciliation Act in Queensland. But voluntary conciliation and arbitration have been in force nearly eighty or ninety years; and while admitting that in many cases it has done a good deal of good, it has not succeeded in stopping industrial disputes where it has been in force. In England for some considerable time they have had voluntary arbitration, but what is the use of voluntary arbitration, even according to the hon. gentleman's own showing? If I wanted arguments to support the contention that it is necessary to have compulsory arbitration, I could safely read the hon. gentleman's speech

and say that the hon. gentleman's arguments are sufficient proof that voluntary conciliation and arbitration have been a failure. Wherever the voluntary system has been tried—in the Australian colonies, in Great Britain, in America, and in France—it has been a failure as regards the settlement of industrial disputes. One of the main things in connection with our industrial life is that we must have some system by which, when a contractor has entered into an agreement to complete a contract, he shall know that he will be free from the possibility of industrial disputes; there must be some guarantee that when he has entered into a contract he will be able to complete it. As things are at present, he is not in that position; he does not know the moment when a strike may take place and throw the whole of his arrangements out of gear; and, in many cases, the employer is thrown on the mercy, if I may term it so, of the labour organisations at that particular time. If they think they are going to win, as labour is the only commodity they have to sell, they are going to try to get the highest price; and, if they can see an opportunity of compelling the employer, owing to the peculiar position in which he is situated at the time, they are going to take advantage of that, and it is only natural that they should do so. Just in the same way, when there is a large unemployed agitation, the employers know they are in a position to reduce the wages of the men, because they know they can get an ample number of men to accept the position in case of a lockout; and they take advantage of the peculiar position in which the men are placed, and make an attempt to reduce the men's wages. I don't intend to speak long on the amendment, because the hon. gentlemen's own arguments go to show beyond the shadow of a doubt that voluntary arbitration is practically a failure. The hon. gentleman admitted it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not in industrial disputes.

Mr. McDONALD: If the hon. gentleman has read anything on this subject at all, he must know that where voluntary conciliation and arbitration have prevailed for a large number of years, the system has practically been a failure. I admit that there are isolated cases in which it has done good, but they are so small as to be hardly worth talking about. The fact is that in recent years, owing to the complicated nature of our industrial organisation, together with the huge labour organisations rising up in our midst every day, as well as the employers' organisation, you have two large opposing parties in the community which are antagonistic, and the result is that sooner or later there are going to be ructions. You can't help it. Here to-day we have the coal trade dispute in the Ipswich district; and on several stations in the West, within the last few weeks, there have been strikes also; and the same thing is going on in the whole of the Australian colonies. Here we have the fact that during the last eighty years voluntary arbitration has been tried and proved a failure; and we find that since 1892, in New Zealand, where the compulsory Act has been in force, there has not been an industrial dispute during the whole of that period.

The HOME SECRETARY: Nor has there here. It was only passed in 1894.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. gentleman must know that there have been a number of strikes here since 1890.

The HOME SECRETARY: I thought the hon. gentleman said there had been none in New Zealand since the passing of the Act. That was in 1894; and I meant that there had been none here since 1894 up to the present time.

Mr. McDONALD: There is one now.

The HOME SECRETARY: Until now. There may be one in New Zealand now.

Mr. McDONALD: There is hardly a year but there is a large number of strikes in Queensland. It is no use for the hon. gentleman to say that we have practically peace here, because there is not, and there never has been. There has only been waiting on both sides to take advantage of the circumstances that will put them on top. Anyone who makes a study of industrial and economic questions must know that even supposing for a moment the employers are on top to-day the men are going to be on top next day, and *vice versa*. That thing goes on, and will go on, and there is no power under our present industrial system in Queensland to prevent it. In New Zealand, where they have compulsory arbitration, they have practically industrial peace; and there is no such thing as the tribunal, as the hon. gentleman supposed, in his speech, giving an award that would practically compel the employer to work his business at a loss or drive him out of business altogether. When the hon. gentleman is introducing a Bill here in connection with the judges, he does not imagine that a judge is going to do anything but what he believes is conscientious and right; and if a tribunal is elected under a Compulsory Conciliation and Arbitration Act—with the difference that each party has the opportunity of electing an equal number of assessors—the evidence will be given from both sides, and I think, in all fairness, it must be admitted—

The HOME SECRETARY: The elected assessors are only advocates.

Mr. McDONALD: Admitting that they are, there is an equal number from each side. As the hon. gentleman said subsequently in his speech, we have compulsory contracts; that is, where a person has entered into a contract the law can compel him to finish it or send him to gaol if he will not do so, in spite of the fact that he may not only be losing money but may be driven out of business altogether through being compelled to finish that particular contract.

The HOME SECRETARY: Entering into that contract was a voluntary act.

Mr. McDONALD: It does not matter to my mind whether they entered into it voluntarily or by a system of compulsion. The result is exactly the same, so that so far as the hon. gentleman's argument on that question is concerned I think the hon. gentleman must admit himself that it is very weak. Certainly, under the circumstances, and without wishing to take up any more of the time of the Chamber, I must refuse to accept the amendment of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I am sorry that the Government cannot see their way to accept this motion, and that the Hon. the Home Secretary has introduced this amendment. I have listened very attentively to the arguments that have been used, and it seems to me that the same old argument has been trotted out again—that you are curtailing the liberty of the subject, and compelling people to do something that they do not want to do. I think that has been the argument which has always been brought forward by the conservatives in all countries and at all times wherever any progressive legislation has been proposed. In Great Britain at the time that the first attempt was made to pass factory laws the argument used by the most eminent men in the House of Commons at that time—men like the late John Bright—was that legislation, which was going to shorten the hours of labour for men and women and children, was curtailing the liberty of the subject. What was the argument which was used when it was proposed to abolish the slave trade? If you read the debates of the House of Commons of that day you will find that the

argument used again was that they were curtailing the liberty of the subject—interfering with the liberty of a man to employ what labour he likes—and that as the slaves were bought and paid for they were his own property, and should not be taken away from him. The same arguments were used and led to the great war in the United States. What was the cry of the slaveowners of the Southern States, but that their liberty was being curtailed by the people of the Northern States, who would not allow them to exercise their right to employ whatever kind of labour they chose. The same argument is trotted out against every reform. Yet the hon. gentleman, in one of the Bills that he has introduced this session to protect and safeguard the right of the people, proposes to use compulsion to compel a man who is living on his own allotment to do certain things; and will not allow him to do what he likes on his own property, because he may cause a nuisance to the community.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hear, hear! That is the reason.

Mr. BROWNE: I am glad to hear the hon. gentleman say, "Hear, hear!" He admits that he would not allow a man to leave a little offensive matter about his place, or keep a few pigeons or some poultry in his backyard, for fear that they might be a danger to the rest of the community. But in a big strike, which is likely to lead to all sorts of outbreaks against law and order, and all the rest of it; to endless misery to hundreds of helpless human beings, because two parties are at loggerheads with one another, and will not listen to reason, and in the excitement of the moment may go to any lengths—the hon. gentleman reckons that they are not injuring their neighbours at all. Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that a strike like that which occurred in the colony in 1890, and again in 1893 and 1894, did not do more harm to the community than the leaving of a little matter in a man's backyard is likely to do? And when outrages have resulted he has not hesitated to bring coercive measures into this House.

The HOME SECRETARY: When strikers break the law, coercion properly comes in to compel them to observe the law.

Mr. BROWNE: I am very glad the hon. gentleman has brought this forward. If a strike takes place he does not care what amount of trouble, distress, and suffering is caused, directly or indirectly, to everyone in the community. If a man breaks the law, that law is enforced, and he can be punished for breaking that law; but on the occasion I have spoken of there was no evidence that there was a law which had been broken.

The HOME SECRETARY: I think so.

Mr. BROWNE: A special law was brought in and passed, because the laws we had could not get hold of them.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am speaking generally, not particularly.

Mr. BROWNE: I am speaking of one particular case, and the hon. gentleman referred to that himself. It is clear that at that time if a law had been broken, these people would have been punished for breaking that law, but the Government were not able to get at them on that plea, and thinking that they were a danger to the community, they brought in coercive legislation to punish these men. In that case, where was the liberty of the subject considered?

The HOME SECRETARY: No one was punished under that law.

Mr. BROWNE: I do not know about that. I do not say that anyone was punished, but we know that the force of public opinion was so strong against the Government in the country

that there was not a single member of the Government that was game to enforce it; and that was the reason why it was not enforced.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was enforced, and with very powerful effect.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It stopped the burning of woolsheds, at any rate.

Mr. BROWNE: I do not know whether it stopped the burning of woolsheds.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BROWNE: I think that these very interjections from the hon. gentlemen opposite, especially from the hon. gentleman who knows so much about burning woolsheds, are some evidence that some such measure as that proposed by the hon. member for Flinders is requisite. If there is a danger of woolsheds being burned, which the hon. member for Normanby seems to know so much about, it is his duty, and the duty of the Government of which he is supposed to be one of the tail-end members, and it was the duty of that Government years ago, to introduce some legislation for preventing any enticement being given to burn woolsheds.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Act you objected to prevented it; it put a stop to it at once.

Mr. BROWNE: I am not going to refer to that. It has been brought up a great many times in this House; but if hon. gentlemen are going to revive the trouble about woolsheds, we are prepared to meet them. Let us, however, drop that, and endeavour to find a more peaceful solution of these difficulties. Let us try and see if we cannot get this Government to look at things in the same way here as the Governments of other countries in the civilised world are looking at it, and not hold back, and years afterwards introduce dead and gone legislation such as we have seen in this Chamber recently in the Health Bill. Then the hon. gentleman spoke of measures as having been introduced in the English House of Parliament when other measures of much later date than that had been adopted, and the Bill which he introduced had to be altered when it came in. Some mention has been made of the legislation in the other colonies, and of New South Wales, where they have introduced this principle now. Now it appears from the amendment that the hon. gentleman has introduced that he wants a word left out so that the motion may simply refer to voluntary arbitration. It is contended by the hon. member for Flinders, and other hon. members on this side of the House, that conciliation has been proved to be a failure. Now, what was the case in New South Wales? In 1893, or 1894, a Conciliation Bill was passed forming a conciliation tribunal composed of some of the best men, I think, that could be found in New South Wales. It was presided over by a man, who, no matter what one may think of his political opinions, is highly respected, not only by every member in this House, but by every man almost in Australia who knows him directly or by repute. That is the Hon. Dr. Garran, of the Legislative Council of New South Wales. He was the chairman of the Conciliation Board. After that had been in existence for some time, in speaking on the matter, Dr. Garran said that it was necessary to take further steps than had been taken in this Bill. The Bill was a voluntary one, and he said it was necessary to make it more useful. He said—

There is a widespread opinion, that seems to have grown up naturally, that what needs to be done to make arbitration more generally useful is to insist on having the merits of all important disputes investigated.

After pointing out the unsatisfactoriness of *ex parte* decisions in courts, he goes on to say—

Let us admit that it will be a novelty to set up a system of adjudicating on trades disputes at the instance of one party only; but under the circumstances novelty is unavoidable. We are feeling our way towards a better state of things, and in doing so we have to make experiments. There is no sound political objection to such experiments, so long as there is a fair presumption in their favour, and so long as no fundamental rights or principles are infringed. This proposal to force a hearing of the merits of trade disputes is not in any way a revolutionary proposal. It in no way tends to discourage enterprise or hamper industrial energy; it in no way detracts from the liberty of the employer or wounds the self-respect of the employee. When a strike or lockout is imminent, it simply calls a halt, and endeavours to ascertain what is the justice of the case. What person, what principle, is injured by such an attempt? But there is one general conclusion to be drawn from the study of the situation, and it is this—that Parliament is justified in making such further arrangements as will enable a qualified board to get at the right of every industrial dispute of any magnitude, so far as it can do so without infringing on the liberty of the subject. We may fairly say that we have reached the stage at which our experience has made this clear, and if so, the next forward movement is no longer doubtful.

That is, that the next forward move must be compulsion. He made a very lengthy speech upon that occasion, and admitted, as he has admitted since, that the voluntary system had failed right through. Take any other legislation, even the legislation passed in this House before. For years, when the necessity for factory legislation was spoken of, the contention was that what was wanted by it would be done voluntarily. There is the early closing principle, which for years and years has been brought before this House. We had the same contention upon that, but I think every member of the House admits now the failure of the voluntary system in that respect, and the Government are even prepared to bring a Bill before the House to enforce it. Look at it from the employers' point of view, and take the case of these coal-mines about Bundamba. Four or five of the proprietors associated together there may be willing to meet the men and see if they cannot come to some fair terms, and the men may be willing to do the same. Then one employer or a body of men working in a particular mine put their foot down and say "No," and the whole community has to suffer a strike because one obstreperous individual will not come into line with the others. As the hon. member for Flinders said with regard to contractors, they go into contracts with a hope that they know exactly what they will have to pay their men, and will have no trouble of any sort, and all of a sudden a strike arises, perhaps through the action of some unscrupulous employer or of two or three unscrupulous individuals, who may be employed in one particular trade. Would it not be much better that the law should step in as it does in almost every other matter? Two men may have even the smallest little bit of a dispute, a private quarrel, and they may decide to settle it in the good old-fashioned way. They get away to a back street and take their coats off and begin knocking little bits of bark off one another. They are not injuring an individual soul in the world but themselves, and yet the strong arm of the law, in the shape of a great big policeman, steps in and interferes in the dispute, and they are run off and fined for disturbing the peace. If the law interferes in that way with two individuals who are hurting no one but themselves, is it unreasonable to ask that the law should step in where a large number of individuals are hurting not only themselves but the rest of the community besides? I do not intend to speak at any length, but I do think the motion moved by the hon. member for Flinders

is deserving of every consideration from the Government, and I have been very sorry to hear the old-time arguments about the liberty of the subject trotted out again.

* Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): It appears to me that the arguments which the Home Secretary has addressed to the subject are entirely wide of the mark. It appears that the strong argument he has against this proposal is that it proposes to compel persons who enter into an industrial dispute to-day to take their case before a properly constituted tribunal—a tribunal above suspicion, and composed of able men, who have the confidence of the community; that instead of brutally deciding it by the out-of-date weapon called a "strike," they should state their case, and a decision upon it should be given. Now, New South Wales has tried every variety of legislation for the settlement of industrial disputes that I suppose it is possible for any country to try. In 1892 they adopted a Conciliation Act, giving power to employers and employees to approach a court when a dispute takes place on a matter of hours, wages, or anything else affecting employers and employees; but it was not taken advantage of except in a very few instances. Mr. Garraan, who was chairman of that board, is a member of the Upper House in New South Wales, and he is known throughout Australia as a man whose *bona fides* are believed in by the people of New South Wales. That had no effect, and in 1898 they passed another Bill giving a discretionary power to compel a person to come before the court to get a decision after his case had been stated. But the board had no means of enforcing their decision, and that was a farce, and has been recognised as a farce, with the result that to-day they have got another Bill before the New South Wales Parliament that goes a step further than the other two, which had been proved by human experience to be failures. In this Bill they propose to give the court certain executive power to apportion awards, and to impose a fine upon the persons who do not recognise those awards. That is the compulsion which has aroused the slumbering hostility in the breast of the Home Secretary. But that compulsion exists behind all our statutes, which, after all, are but the brute force of the community transmuted into legislation. If John Smith and Bill Brown knock corners off one another in the main street, they are hauled up by the strong arm of the law. They are compelled—their liberty is invaded, and they are compelled to recognise the award made by the magistrate who tries their case. If we can trust our magistrates, surely we can trust such a tribunal as would be constituted under this proposal of the hon. member for Flinders. The idea of the Home Secretary, of course, is that a strike is a matter of no consequence at all to the general body of the community; that it simply concerns Mr. Brown, the employer, and Bill Smith and John Robinson, and the other persons employed by him. But it does not concern those persons only, but everybody else in the community. Let me give an illustration. Persons connected with the bakers' trade to-day are working from fourteen to eighteen hours a day; and say they all strike to-night, Brisbane would be without bread to-morrow. That strike would concern not only the persons employed in that trade, but the whole of the people of Brisbane. If it concerns the whole community, and is a social action of far-reaching consequence, why should not the State step in and interfere between employer and employees? That is what we want to do—to bring the striking workmen and their employer together, and to enforce certain awards made by an impartial tribunal, and we can do it for the benefit of the community as a whole. The cost of strikes

is well known, and it has been frequently harped upon by members on the other side of the House. I have here a few figures showing the enormous cost of strikes, and the gain by the appointment of an impartial tribunal which makes awards, and has the power to compel those awards to be observed. In New Zealand it cost last year £2,800 for settling internal differences which took place between employer and employees. From 1890 to 1894 strikes cost the unionists of Australia something like £200,000, and in one year alone, 1890, strikes cost them nearly £70,000. And yet in New Zealand, in one year, it only cost £2,800 to settle a whole lot of industrial disputes, because there the State gave power to a tribunal to step in between striking workmen and their employers, and settle their differences at a minimum of cost, and to the benefit of the men, of their employers, and of the community generally. Between the 25th May and the 3rd August of this year the New Zealand Arbitration Court settled no fewer than fifty-nine trades' disputes and breaches of awards—settled them as easily as a dispute between two men who bash one another in the street is settled here in a court of justice. But how do we settle strikes in Queensland? The employees come out; one portion of the Press soothes the employers on, the other soothes the employees on; and the Government assists the employers, by providing free trains for free labourers to take the places of the strikers, as was, by an answer given by the Minister for Railways, proved yesterday afternoon. So these little wars go on, costing hundreds a week, and, perhaps, running into a quarter of a million of money by the end of the year. That is our out-of-date brutal method of settling these disputes here. Now, in New Zealand the arbitration court has power to call the masters and the men before it, to hear the evidence, make its award, and compel both parties by penalties to recognise that award. That is a sensible method of settling these disputes. But as soon as we propose anything of the kind, somebody says, "That is curtailing the liberty of the subject." I say there is no Act of Parliament that does not curtail someone's liberty. As the leader of the Opposition pointed out in his speech this afternoon, reform—every step we take forward to improve the political and social conditions during the last 100 years—aye, you can go back to the dawn of civilisation—interferes to some extent with the rights of private individuals. In the old times it was considered right to do a lot of things which now are utterly illegal. For instance, at one time private individuals could pool their capital to buy vessels to go to South Africa, make raids on the savages living there, batten them down under hatches in chains on those vessels, take them to America, and there sell them at the auction block at so much per head. That was then considered a quite justifiable way of investing capital. If you look at literature of that time, you will see that Queen Elizabeth, in the 15th century, knighted a man named Hawkins for opening up, in this way, such a profitable channel for English capital, and permitted him to wear emblazoned on his coat-of-arms a negro manacled in chains. Let the Chief Secretary and the Home Secretary and the Minister without a portfolio think of that.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That has nothing to do now with this Bill; it is old-gag history.

Mr. LESINA: Yes, it has. The statement has been made that if this legislation, proposed by the hon. member for Flinders, is passed, it will interfere with the liberty of the subject.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: No one ever said so.

Mr. LESINA: Yes. It has been said by the Home Secretary. He argued that such a system of compulsion was wrong because it interfered with the liberty of the subject. But I hold that a system of making raids on native villages, seizing savages and selling them into slavery, was contrary to all feelings of humanity, and was very properly abolished by compulsion. That is my argument—that every step we take forward in human affairs is a negation of the right to do certain things. In these days we look with horror at any man being sold into slavery, and our warships are now on the coast of Africa to put down slavery. All along the line, when we take any steps forward to improve the social or political conditions of humanity, we must necessarily curtail human liberty in one way or another. In the general interests of the community we must knock off some liberty.

Mr. LEAHY: How does that apply to long speeches?

Mr. LESINA: I would not be against that, if it would apply to members on both sides of the House. I am trying to prove that if we introduce a little compulsory legislation with regard to industrial disputes, it will be a great benefit to the community.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is the point.

Mr. LESINA: Yes; but hon. members on the other side contend that no good will result to the community from such legislation. But, again, we have the example of New Zealand. The climatic conditions in New Zealand are not different to those in this colony; the people there are not different; they are not living under different conditions; they spring from the same stock as we do; they speak the same language; they have the same traditions; profess the same religion—and yet they have adopted a measure of this sort, which has been proved to have been highly beneficial—proved by facts pointed out by myself and by the hon. member for Flinders. There is one other little point I would like briefly to refer to in this connection. The New Zealand Act has been in operation since 1894 or 1895. It has settled fifty-nine trade disputes between 25th May and 3rd August this year, preventing strikes taking place. After five years' experience of the working of that Act this is what the Minister for Labour there says, in the annual report of the New Zealand Department of Labour, on the working of their Conciliation and Arbitration Act. He says—

It still holds its high position in the estimation of the industrial classes, and nothing could dismay the workers of New Zealand so much as the possibility that they might ever revert to the old warfare of strikes and locks-out.

But we seem to be determined to stick to the system of strikes and locks-out. We are not anxious, so it seems, to interfere between employers and employees, although these disputes cost the country a great deal of money. As an illustration, there is a strike now going on in the Bundamba district. Here we have a number of coalminers out on strike when coal is rising in value throughout the world, and when that may mean a lot to the future prosperity of the coal industry. The wellbeing of the people in the district will be largely affected by this strike. From what we read in the newspapers, it appears that the men demand certain increase of wages and the employers are determined not to accede to their demands. Now, this strike may last for months—public feeling may be aroused, the newspapers may take sides, harsh things may be said, and bitterness imported into the struggle—and in the meantime the industry is suffering, and wages that would otherwise be earned and spent, are not being earned. The community is suffering all round, and we have no power to

compel these people to come to a decision. If the men are willing to meet the employers, we might avail ourselves of the services of a leading gentleman like the Premier. He could hear evidence on both sides and give his award; but what is lacking is the power to compel the recognition of such an award. But we would have such power if the hon. member for Flinders' suggestion were adopted, and his proposed legislation were passed, which would also have the effect of preventing recurrences of strikes from time to time. The only way out of the difficulty is to appoint an independent tribunal, consisting of three representative gentlemen—able men, in whom we can have complete confidence, and who would not be open to any suspicion whatever. I think we can trust our judges, and if we appointed one of the judges as president of the arbitration court, and the employers and employees each appointed a representative, those three would form a tribunal who could hear evidence and give their award; and under a measure such as that suggested they would have power to enforce that award. It is utterly useless for us to pass legislation giving employers and employees power to approach an arbitration tribunal and state their grievances if that tribunal has no power to enforce its decision. In New South Wales the other day there was a strike in one of the coalmines, and the manager of the mine openly stated, or it is alleged that he openly stated, that although he went to arbitration he would not be bound by the award if it went against him. Fortunately for himself, and fortunately for the employees in the district, the award was in his favour, and he was perfectly content. But if it had been against him, the tribunal which made the award had no power to enforce it, and the result would have been that the strike would have continued, and the giving of evidence before the tribunal would have been an utter waste of time. For those and other reasons, which will, I think, occur to hon. members on both sides of the House, I am of opinion that the time is ripe for the passage of legislation of this kind in Queensland. We want compulsory interference in industrial disputes. I do not ask for it in the interest of trade unionists, or in the interest of wage-payers or wage-earners, but in the interest of the whole community, because strikes affect everybody in the community, and especially the wives and families of the strikers. I think this question should be considered altogether apart from party or political considerations; it would be a wise and humane thing if the Government passed a measure of the kind asked for at as early a date as possible. We want it on humane grounds, and on the grounds of industrial exigency; we want it because it will prevent the bitterness of strikes; and we want it for a multiplicity of reasons which I could tabulate if I had time. Any man, whether an employer or an employee, should be prepared to vote for such legislation. It matters not whether a member is a supporter of the Government or not, he should give this matter careful and unbiassed consideration. Surely the Government are not going to oppose everything that comes from this side of the House, and adopt the view that nothing good can come out of Nazareth. If a vote is taken on this motion, as I hope will be the case some time this session, and the matter is treated on party lines, it will be utterly hopeless to expect to get on with legislation in the manner in which it should be conducted. If a reasonable proposition of this sort is voted down for party considerations, that will naturally embitter us against propositions coming from the Government.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You always are.

Mr. LESINA: No; we do not always desire to be. I desire to do all I possibly can to assist the passage of legislation coming from the Government side of the House, provided—and it is a reasonable proviso—that it is in the interest of the welfare of the community as a whole. However, as I have already intimated, if party differences are going to be introduced into the consideration of a proposition of this kind, it is useless for us to make suggestions for the welfare of the community. And that being the case, hon. members on the other side cannot be at all surprised if we very often retaliate. We get every temptation to retaliate under those circumstances, and many members do occasionally do that when legislation comes from the Government side—sometimes when that legislation is absolutely necessary, perhaps, they cannot help feeling tempted to retaliate. The temptation is very strong to retaliate, though it may not always be acted upon. However, this is a matter which ought to be determined during this session, apart altogether from party considerations. We should endeavour, if possible, to get outside ourselves, to get outside Ministerial or Labour opinions, and carry this resolution, because it will put a stop to those industrial fights, which in the past have resulted in the loss of much money and created bitterness in the community.

Mr. BOWMAN (*Warrego*): I move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an Order of the Day for the 1st of November.

DISCUSSION OF POLEMICAL QUESTIONS BY THE GOVERNOR.

On the following notice of motion being called:—

Mr. KIDSTON to move—That this House, while entertaining the highest respect for His Excellency the Governor, both personally and as the representative of Her Majesty, deeply regrets that His Excellency should have taken part in the public discussion of political questions of a polemical character—

The PREMIER said: I hope the hon. member for Rockhampton will withdraw this motion. Without going into the merits or demerits of the matter, I must say that I think it would be very much better that a motion of this sort should not be discussed in the House, and I would therefore ask the hon. member to withdraw it.

Mr. McDONALD: It is his own fault; this is the second time he has taken the same course.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): I thought it was my duty to call attention to this matter. I quite admit that what the Premier says is true, that unless under very extreme circumstances it is not desirable to discuss such a motion in this House. It was only because I was forced into it that I took such an extreme step, but I hope that the way in which I have called attention to it will have the effect desired, and, with the leave of the House, I will withdraw the motion. I trust that hon. members on both sides will agree that I am doing the best thing in adopting that course.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leave is not required to withdraw the motion. If it is not moved, it will lapse.

At 7 o'clock,

The SPEAKER resumed the Chair; and the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded to discuss Government business.

FIRST READINGS.

The House having, in committee, affirmed the desirableness of introducing the following Bills,

they were read a first time, and their second readings made Orders of the Day for Tuesday next:—

Harbour Boards Act, 1892, Amendment Bill,
Census Bill,
University of Queensland Bill, and
Grammar Schools Act Amendment Bill.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—DEBATE ON FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Question—That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1899-1900, a sum not exceeding £300, to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor—stated.

* Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): I think the Treasurer may very reasonably be congratulated on having put before the Committee a Financial Statement which is clear and concise, and which is understandable by men of ordinary intelligence, and also on the fact that, in spite of some circumstances which might be considered adverse, the record for the year has been one of steady progress and advancement industrially. But having said that, I think I have said all that can be said in favour of the Treasurer or his Financial Statement, because I entirely agree with the observation of the leader of the Opposition when he said that not even the shadow of a policy is disclosed by the Statement. I think the Treasurer was in duty bound to have given us some outline of a financial policy, considering that we are shortly to enter upon an entirely new era and new conditions under federation. And I further think it was his duty—knowing as he must know that the incidence of taxation is unfair and unjust, and is borne on shoulders unfitted to bear it—to have outlined some policy which would have remedied that evil, which he was perfectly well aware of. In looking over this Statement, I find that while the estimated revenue was largely exceeded, the estimated expenditure was exceeded in almost equal amount; yet, notwithstanding that fact, the Treasurer is able to show a surplus of £47,789. That may be very gratifying to the Treasurer, and to a number of members of this House, but it is not a gratifying circumstance to me, because I contend that the Treasurer should have been fairly well able at the beginning of last financial year to have gauged the probable revenue and probable expenditure. I consider that surpluses are not in themselves desirable things, because a surplus simply means that a greater amount has been taken from the taxpayers of the colony than there was any need to take. Therefore I contend—and I think it must be obvious to any unprejudiced person—that a surplus is a standing invitation to the Treasurer to indulge in extravagance. It would be much better to gauge the probable needs of the colony so closely that the revenue to be raised would not far exceed the expenditure. The total estimated revenue last year was £4,388,445, and that sum was exceeded by £199,762. Is that not an enormous amount for the Treasurer to be out in his calculations—nearly £200,000? If there had been any phenomenal advancement in things generally, or if a great goldfield had been discovered during the year to account for it, I would not find so much fault; but, as I have said, the year has been one of steady industrial progress, and nothing whatever unusual has occurred. It seems to me that the advisers of the Treasurer, or the Treasurer himself, must have made a gross mistake when they under-estimated the revenue this time last year by close upon £200,000. Again, the Treasurer should be in a position to know about what his probable expenditure for the

financial year would be at the time he delivered his Financial Statement. Every department of the Government service are well aware what their probable requirements will be. Yet we find that the estimated expenditure last year was exceeded by £175,998.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A great portion of that is due to the despatch of the South African contingents.

Mr. GIVENS: The Treasurer should have had a full knowledge of the probable cost of sending away those contingents to South Africa.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: You tried to prevent them from going.

Mr. STEWART: That has nothing to do with the question.

Mr. GIVENS: I like to see the Chief Secretary riding his favourite hobby-horse, but I am afraid that no matter how he flogs it he will not be able to get a kick out of it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It did not get him a title.

Mr. GIVENS: When we see and know the character of a number of individuals who at present have got titles, and the means by which they got them, I think it would be very unkind to wish to see the hon. gentleman included amongst their number. To return to my subject, I contend that the taxation per head of the population is really too great for a colony such as this. Further, I contend that the expenditure per head of the population is also entirely too great, as I hope to be able to prove before I sit down. Analysing the figures, I find that the total expenditure per head of the population last year was £8 17s. 1d., and that the total departmental and general expenditure was £5 19s. 10d. If we turn back to the figures for 1890-91 we shall find that the departmental and general expenditure has not decreased one iota per head of population, notwithstanding the great increase of our population since that period. In 1890-91 the population was 393,938, whereas this year it is 512,604, or an increase of 118,666. Yet, notwithstanding this very large increase, the departmental and general expenditure per head of population has rather increased than decreased. That is out of all reason, and the Treasurer cannot present a Financial Statement that will be satisfactory to the House and the country unless he can show that by increase of population we are reducing the annual expenditure per head. In order to provide for that expenditure we have to tax our people up to the eyes, not only on the luxuries but on the very necessities of life. Analysing the figures further, I find that the revenue per head of population last year—that is, the revenue derived from taxation alone—amounted to £3 8s. 5d. That is a very severe tax, because it includes men, women, and children. If you work it out you will find that a man and his wife and three children—which I take to be an average family in the colony—are directly taxed to the amount of £17 2s. 1d.; and that is without reckoning the money received from the public services of the colony in any way. Now, if we take the total revenue from all sources—post office, railways, and everything else—and remember it is the people who have to pay that also—we find that the total revenue per head amounts to £8 18s. 10d.; in other words, that a family of five are taxed to the amount of £44 14s. 2d. per annum. That is severe taxation, and a taxation which the vast majority of the people of the colony should not be called upon to endure. Their condition will not permit them to endure it without having to suffer—to curtail themselves in the necessities and comforts of life, and in all that goes to make life worth living. I maintain that the Government should look to other sources for their revenue,

and not tax the poorer part of the population as they are taxed at the present time. As I said, although the population has increased by 118,000, the taxation per head of the population which was received into the general revenue last year, was greater than in any year since 1890-91. I intend, before I sit down, to point out some of the ways in which I, at any rate, think the incidence of taxation could be more equitably apportioned. But before coming to that subject I should like to emphasise this point: that the demands of the Treasurer per head of the population are greater now than they were in 1890-91. And I would also point out that in that year we were giving a far larger amount of endowment to local authorities than we are doing now; and yet, notwithstanding that fact, and notwithstanding the fact that our population has largely increased, the expenditure per head of population has increased also, instead of, as it should have done, decreasing very considerably. The endowment to local authorities in 1890-91 was £183,270—as can be verified by reference to Table Z4—while this year it is only £103,935, or a reduction of £79,335. Every business man who hopes to make his business a success knows that as his business increases the average of managerial expenses decreases in proportion to the volume of business done. Those may be compared to the departmental expenses of a colony, which is only a concern on a large scale; and with increase of population the percentage of departmental expenditure should diminish. It is much cheaper to manage a large affair proportionately than to manage a small affair; and it does not speak well for the Treasurer and for the Government that the result, as shown by the Treasurer's Statement, of all their financial ability, of all their great public knowledge, of all their self-sacrificing services to the colony is, that, although population has increased and the local authorities have been deprived of a large portion of their endowment, the expenditure per head of the population is increasing by leaps and bounds. Let us examine for a moment the sources from which this taxation is derived. From *ad valorem* duties the amount derived was [7.30 p.m.] £324,131 0s. 10d.; that is, on the actual necessities of life, including woollen and cotton goods, clothing, and several articles of food; and it is the great mass of the people who have to pay pretty nearly all the *ad valorem* duty. Then we have a duty on flour, which is one of the most essential necessities of life: last year there was collected on flour no less a sum than £36,628. Who pays that duty? Will it be contended that it is the wealthy? They pay their share, but the poor man will consume much more flour than they, because a man who does eight hours hard toil under a broiling sun naturally has a greater appetite than a man who works in an office, or does nothing at all, and therefore consumes more flour and consequently pays more of the tax. Is it fair to put an equality of taxation on the man who is earning only £100 and the man who is perhaps getting £100,000 a year? I say it is a system opposed to all equity, to all good government, and to the industrial and material well-being of the people of the colony. Another thing for which the people of the colony are taxed is to make up the loss on our railways, and last year the net deficit on our railways was £327,488—that is, that amount of interest on the sum expended had to be made up out of taxation last year. And that deficit has to be made up by taxing people who perhaps derive no benefit at all from those railways. There are scores of places in the colony that are not served by railways, yet the people in those places have to pay enormous amounts every year to provide other people with railways. I admit that the deficit is more

apparent than real, because we derive indirect advantages from the expenditure, but I maintain that the deficit should be made up by the people who derive the benefit.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Those are the people who travel.

Mr. GIVENS: The people who derive the most benefit are the people who own the land in the vicinity of the railways. There are people in the colony who have made fortunes by jobbing in land through the construction of railways.

Mr. HARDACRE: You would not include the Chief Secretary, surely!

Mr. GIVENS: The Chief Secretary may or may not be guilty of juggling in land where railways were going to be constructed; but if he were ever so guilty I do not blame him a little bit. Very probably I would do the same myself if I had the chance. I do not blame any man for taking advantage of circumstances as they exist; but I say that any legislator is entirely to blame if, seeing the evil of such a system, he does not devise a remedy and proceed to put it into practice. The Chief Secretary and the Minister without portfolio are both astute enough to see that evil, but they are not generous enough or just enough to the people of this colony to provide a remedy. Every shilling spent on railway construction enhances the value of private property in the vicinity of the railway line, and it would not be asking too much to make the property-owners in the vicinity of the railway make up the deficit on our railways by giving back a portion of the increment that has taken place in consequence of the construction of those railways.

Mr. RYLAND: Hear, hear! The betterment principle.

Mr. GIVENS: Instead of working people having to make up this deficit every year by taxation through the Customs and other taxation, I think it should be provided by the people who directly benefit from the construction of those railways by the adoption of the betterment principle. If that principle is applied, we will not want to go cap in hand to private syndicates to build our railways; we will have all the money we want to build all the railways we want for ourselves. Of course we know that the betterment principle finds no favour with hon. members opposite who hold a brief for the capitalists. They are full of sympathy for the working man when they want a private railway to go through; but I would like to know where their sympathy comes in when the working men are fleeced through the Customs to pay the deficit on railways built to enhance the private property of the gentlemen owning the land in the vicinity of the railways. There is a good deal too much political influence in the management of our railways, and I will mention an instance which concerns the electorate of the hon. member for Mackay. When I was in Mackay some time ago, I was credibly informed that there is a train run every morning from Eton to Mirani, which only carries a basket of bread. I camped a night at Eton, and next morning took the train to Mirani. It went to the junction with the usual number of passengers going to Mackay. The train then went on from the junction to Mirani—to Mirani West—and as a matter of fact the only passengers were the railway auditor and myself, and a basket of bread. I camped at Mirani that night; and to verify the statement I went to the station next morning when the train came in, and I found not even two dead-heads, but only the basket of bread; and I was informed by everybody there that, except for a little while every year, that is the regular thing on that railway line.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: There is not one-tenth part of the loss that there is on the Cairns line.

Mr. GIVENS: Now, the Mackay line is one which does not pay even working expenses.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Yes, it does. It pays $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest. You mistake it for Cairns.

Mr. GIVENS: We will look at the tables attached to the Statement, and see what it does do.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Take the Cairns railway for the last ten years.

Mr. GIVENS: In Table S, on page 24 of the tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement, we find there that the net revenue of the Mackay Railway last year was £8,776 7s. 6d., and the working expenses were £10,925 9s.

The TREASURER: That is only one year.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is only one year, and you picked it carefully. It has paid far better than the Cairns line.

Mr. GIVENS: Now we come to the Cairns Railway for the same year.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is the Chillagoe Company.

Mr. GIVENS: No.

The TREASURER: Take it for five years.

Mr. GIVENS: The receipts from the Cairns line last year were £23,308 5s. 9d., and the working expenses £19,754 17s. 4d.

Mr. LEAHY: What about the interest?

Mr. GIVENS: If the hon. gentleman will allow me, I will tell him all I know about it.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It has lost about half a million.

Mr. GIVENS: I am just about to finish about the Mackay Railway, and then I will tell you a little about the Cairns line.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: We know all about it.

Mr. GIVENS: Does the hon. gentleman know that that train has been running on the Mirani line to take a basket of bread?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I rise to a point of explanation. I said I knew all about the Cairns line. I did not refer to the Mackay Railway.

Mr. GIVENS: Of course, I have to accept the hon. gentleman's statement. At the same time I will vouch for the truth of the statement that I have made. I am informed by men who work on the line at Mackay that this state of things has nearly always existed. Now, I do not object to any amount of service on the Mackay Railway to suit the convenience of the people, but it is really too much to ask the taxpayers to pay for the running of trains simply to carry a basket of bread; and another thing, Mirani is a larger township than Eton, and it is quite possible that if the Government did not subsidise the baker at Eton by carrying his bread, another baker would start at Mirani, and there would be no necessity for running the train at all. I do not, as I have said, object to a reasonable amount of service for the convenience of the people, but it is certainly too much to expect the people to pay for running a train merely to carry a basket of bread. I asked the Hon. the Minister for Railways on one occasion if he were aware of any recommendations having been made by the officers of his department on this matter, and if his department were giving effect to these recommendations, but we have never had a reply to that question yet. It would be very interesting indeed if the papers were turned up to find what were the recommendations of the officers of the department with regard to the running of this line, and also the reasons assigned for not acceding to those recommendations. It does not matter what reasons were assigned, I would still

be of opinion that the principal reason why those recommendations were not given effect to is the fact that Mackay has the honour of having two Ministers to represent them. As to the enormous loss on the Cairns Railway, will any hon. gentleman tell me that there is any line in the colony which would pay if only forty-six miles of the worst portion of that railway from a construction point of view were built? There is no line that would pay under those circumstances. Why, even the Townsville line, which is the best paying line perhaps in Australia, would not pay if it were only built for forty-six miles from Townsville. The Cairns Railway is taken over a very rough range at enormous cost, and through, on the whole, very rough country. How is it possible for that line to pay after the enormous blunders that have been made in connection with it? As a matter of fact, the contractor for the second section, owing to the mismanagement of the Railway Department, made a profit of £500,000 on the building of fifteen miles of railway.

Mr. LEAHY: He went broke some months afterwards.

Mr. GIVENS: He did not go broke some months afterwards, but some years afterwards. Now, I will tell the hon. gentleman that that enormous profit was made by the contractor simply through the messing of the Government and through the messing of the engineers they had in charge of it. They know, as a matter of fact, that nearly all the engineers, with one or two honourable exceptions, were dipping their hands into the public purse of this colony and acting in collusion with the contractors. If not, will they kindly explain why they found it necessary to discharge some of those engineers afterwards? Now, why has Cairns to be saddled with the blunder of the Government, and why have we to find payable traffic to cover the blunders of the Government, as well as the legitimate charges of the railway? There ought to be taken off the cost of that railway at least £500,000, as being entirely owing to the blunders of the Government in connection with the second section. The enormous expenditure on the maintenance of the Cairns line for the last ten years has simply been caused by the mismanagement of the Government and the Government officials. The Hon. the Premier knows as well as I do, and the Minister for Railways also knows, that nearly every bridge on that line has had to be replaced a short time after they were built, owing to the inferior timber that the contractor was allowed to put in; and that is another reason why that line does not pay. If that line had been continued to the mineral country of Herberton and Mount Garnet and in that vicinity, there would be no better paying line in the colony of Queensland. We know that the second section had to go up the range, and it was impossible to bring down any local timber. Everything had to be brought up from the coast. But, as a matter of fact, there is really no good hardwood in the immediate vicinity of Cairns. There is magnificent hardwood further inland. The timber which Cairns produces in large quantities and of the best quality is cedar and other soft timbers, which are not suitable for railway bridge building. Now, ahead of that railway, in the Herberton district, right through Herberton, Montalbion, Mount Garnet, and some other places in that direction, there is the finest and richest mineral country perhaps in Australia. The miners there were paying enormous rates of carriage to the coast because the Government would not push out the line to be of service to them. The Premier knows well, and the hon. member for Woothakata, if in his place, could bear me out when I say that even after the railway was built, teams of pack mules were actually

competing with the Cairns Railway. I know for a fact that people found it cheaper to bring down the stuff by teams of pack mules, over the old track on the range, than to bring it in to Mareeba and send it down from there by the railway to Cairns. There are several things which have militated against the Cairns Railway being a paying one. I have said that the first was the enormous cost, owing to the blunders of the Government and their officials, in the building of the line.

Mr. LEAHY: Then it was not done purposely if they were only blunders.

Mr. GIVENS: I am not going to say it was done purposely, because the people who made the mistakes are not here to take part in this debate and defend themselves; but the present Government are the direct successors of the Government of that time, and they may bear a portion of the blame, for it is the same old continuous Ministry that has been blundering along in Queensland all the time.

The TREASURER: You are quite mistaken.

Mr. GIVENS: I must admit that there has never been the useless trading on the Cairns line that there has been on the Mackay line.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is only lately. I have been there. I was there before the hon. member.

Mr. GIVENS: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. Did he say he was there before I was?

The TREASURER: Yes. He was there before you came to the country.

Mr. GIVENS: I doubt it very much.

The TREASURER: He was; and I believe I was too.

Mr. GIVENS: I know the Treasurer was there, and went in for a good many operations that did not pay him as well as they ought to have done. I do not object to interjections; I hope I shall be able to make myself clear, notwithstanding the string of interjections that are being made by hon. gentlemen opposite. Another thing that militated against the Cairns Railway was the fact that it ended at a gum-tree, and a very poor gum-tree at that.

Mr. LEAHY: I thought that was the Bowen line. Is there a gum-tree at Cairns, too?

Mr. GIVENS: We will have ample opportunity to discuss the Bowen line before the close of the session, and I do not propose to waste time upon it to-night. Twenty miles from the head of the present terminus of the Cairns Railway, as the Treasurer knows, there is the finest patch of rich agricultural scrub land that is to be found in any part of Australia. The land will produce anything, and in fertility and climate the district is equal to anything in Australia. The Treasurer knows as well as I do that the timber resources of that country are practically inexhaustible.

The TREASURER: All that has been said years ago.

Mr. GIVENS: Yes, and I am here to emphasise it, for if it was said years ago, the Government appear to have taken very little heed of it, for at the present time, and within the last twelve months, three traction engines are working between Atherton and Mareeba hauling down timber, and there are, in addition, 2,000 horses carrying on that road. Is there any district in the colony of Queensland, in which it is proposed to build a railway, that can show that amount of traffic to be secured as soon as the line is built?

The TREASURER: I wonder you do not object to those engines working.

Mr. GIVENS: I have not the slightest objection to those engines working, and I am willing to welcome more of them to show up the shameful neglect of the Government.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Why, Cairns was built by Government money. The Government made it—and the Chinamen.

Mr. GIVENS: If hon. gentlemen will send their interjections along one at a time, I am willing to deal with them. I noticed the Treasurer prompted the Minister without a portfolio to interject about the Chinese in Cairns.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: He did not.

Mr. GIVENS: The Minister without a portfolio need not go beyond the town of Mackay to find as disgraceful a state of things in connection with Chinese and Japanese as exists in any part of Australia.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: No.

Mr. GIVENS: I walked in my ignorance—

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Oh, you found it out, did you? (Laughter.)

Mr. GIVENS: In my ignorance I walked through a certain street in Mackay, and I saw a Japanese woman walk from one side of the street to the other without as much costume on her as Mother Eve had.

Mr. LEAHY: Were you walking in your sleep? (Laughter.)

Mr. GIVENS: I was not walking in my sleep, and if I were it is probable I would have been much more innocent than the hon. member for Bulloo would be under similar circumstances. (Laughter.)

Mr. LEAHY: Give us the sequel.

Mr. GIVENS: As for the Chinamen having made Cairns, I say that the Chinamen have ruined Cairns. The Minister for Agriculture, when he was up there in the federal recess, became seized with the fact and spoke very strongly about it. He then expressed the opinion that the Chinese had been the curse of Cairns in that respect, and the selfish dependence upon the Chinese to come along and do things for people had had a most demoralising influence. In that opinion I entirely concur, but neither I nor the party I belong to are responsible for the presence of Chinese in Cairns or in any other portion of the colony. It is against our wish and in spite of our opposition that they have come here at all. We do not welcome them, and will not say that we have to lean on the Chinese crutch to support us through life. But what do hon. gentlemen opposite say? Inside of two minutes, if my words are doubted, I can produce a photograph taken in Cairns showing that the principal deputation that welcomed the Treasurer and the Secretary for Lands to Cairns the other day was composed of a long procession of Chinamen rigged out in oriental finery. (Laughter.)

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Did they not welcome Thomas Givens too?

Mr. GIVENS: I extended my welcome to Ministers outside of the contaminating influence of the Chinese. Probably before I sit down I will have the pleasure of producing that photograph, that hon. members may see who are the principal supporters of the Government in the Northern portion of the colony.

Mr. LEAHY: I would like to know the sequel to the other episode.

Mr. GIVENS: I dare say the hon. member for Bulloo, who is very competent to turn an episode of that kind to good account, would have been able to derive a large amount of enjoyment from it; but I can assure him that the contrary was my experience. Now, coming to taxation; I maintain that it is not fairly apportioned, because it falls on the shoulders of those least able to bear it, and is not sufficiently placed on the shoulders of those well able to bear it. Absentees pay nothing at all in the way of taxation. Now the principal portion of our revenue is derived

through the Customs. I may here state that the only thing we have at all in the shape of an income tax, a property tax, or a land tax, is the dividend tax, and that is most inequitable and injurious in its incidence.

Mr. LEAHY: It is part of our revenue.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. member is confounding territorial revenue with taxation. Territorial revenue is not taxation at all. As many hon. gentlemen seem to be very interested in the photograph of the members of the deputation that I have alluded to, I now produce the photograph showing the Chinese deputation in all their gorgeous finery. [Photograph passed round the Chamber.]

Mr. LEAHY: Why, you are amongst them.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. member for Bulloo is a countryman of mine, and if he means to insinuate that I am a Chinaman, he must also admit that he is a Chinaman. I think that instead of deriving the greatest portion of our taxation revenue through the Customs, other means could be found by which we could get a large amount of revenue, without hurting anyone. Those who own property, derive, in many cases, large advantages therefrom, but they do not contribute anything through the Customs, and I think they should contribute a fair amount through some other means. For that reason we should have an absentee tax, as I contend that it is only fair for these people to contribute something in return for the handsome advantages they receive.

Mr. LEAHY: You cannot tax an absentee.

Mr. GIVENS: Well, tax the property of these absentees. There is another matter I would like to draw attention to, and that is that a very large portion of our expenditure every year is incurred in administering the law of property, and has nothing to do with the law with regard to individuals. For that reason, I think it would be fair to make property bear a proportion of that expenditure which individuals have to bear now. The expenditure of our public money on public works—which everybody has to contribute to—enhances the value of private property, and it is only fair to ask these owners of property to contribute something towards this expenditure. Every shilling spent on public works, railways, harbour improvements, enhances the value of private property.

Mr. LEAHY: What would you do in the case of the value of property being decreased?

Mr. GIVENS: I never knew a decrease in the value of any land simply because of the construction of public works. The actual value of the land never decreases. The land is always there; but the speculative value of the land may be decreased. Certain lands are capable of producing good crops whether improvements are made in their vicinity or not.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Compare Cairns and Port Douglas.

Mr. GIVENS: Land at Port Douglas is as good to-day as it was fifty years ago. The hon. member for Mackay is a keen logician, and he must see that, even if the contention of hon. members opposite is true, that there is no greater fallacy than to generalise on individual cases. If their contention is correct, he must see that the general fact still remains, that the building of public works, railways, and harbour improvements must enhance the value of private property in the vicinity of such works. Instead of these property-owners contributing a fair portion towards this expenditure, they allow the burden to rest on the shoulders of the workers—people who derive no benefit therefrom, and who have a hard struggle to obtain the necessities of life which they have to consume. I say that argument is a

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solid one; there is no gainsaying it. Instead of maintaining the dividend tax, which, as I said before, is inequitable in its incidence, we should immediately wipe it out altogether, and substitute an income tax. What is the result of this dividend tax now? A large number of people have to pay it without deriving any real benefit at all. There are dozens of people that I know have shares in mines, and no dividend has been paid on them for a long time, but when a small dividend is declared this tax is religiously collected. At the same time they would be paying in calls to other mines a sum far in excess of the amount they were receiving in dividends, so that they would be deriving no direct income at all from mines. Indeed a man might by his mining transactions be incurring a large annual loss, and yet have to pay the dividend duty tax. And it is the same in connection with other companies. There are amounts of money invested in all our companies on behalf of widows and orphans and others, and that is the sole resource they have for their living, and yet the Treasurer comes along and collects his dividend duty, perhaps from a widow who has an income of only £100 per annum, while the man who is deriving thousands of pounds a year from other sources escapes scot free. That is altogether inequitable, and if the Government desire to be fair and just to all parties concerned, and especially if they desire to largely increase the revenue of the colony, and place the burden of taxation on the shoulders of those best able to bear it, they will wipe out the dividend tax at once, and instead put on an income tax, which would make those persons who derive handsome incomes every year from Queensland, and who benefit largely by the expenditure of public money, contribute their due quota to the revenue of the colony. Now, to come down to one or two specific matters, I find that notwithstanding the fact that the Government this year are going to introduce five private railway Bills, which they are going to try to force through this House, and the main excuse for which is that they wish to find work for the unemployed, they propose to spend £50,000 this coming year on immigration. If there are so many unemployed in the colony, and their condition is so deplorable that we have to depart from the settled policy of the country in the matter of railway construction to find work for them, why should we spend £50,000 to bring a further number of people here to swell the ranks of the unemployed? The total amount spent on immigration by this colony since its foundation is enormous. On looking at the tables, I find that the total amount spent on immigration since 1851 is £23,201,428 10s. 3d. This year the Government propose to expend £50,000, and last year the actual expenditure on immigration was £47,389 4s. 6d. It is the workers who are already here who have to find the money to pay the interest on the amount spent every year to bring immigrants to the colony. What would the farmers on the Downs have to say if the Government not only deprived them of the little protection they now have, but also spent £50,000 per annum to bring goods here to compete with the goods the farmers on the Downs produced? Yet, put in another way, that is what the Government propose to do with regard to immigration. The workers of this colony will have to contribute £50,000 next year to bring other workers to the colony to compete with them. I am totally opposed to this system of immigration. In the first place it is not effective, and in the second place it is not calculated to get the best class of citizens to come here. The best class of citizens to come to the colony are those adventurous spirits who see in it an opportunity to improve

their position, and come here on their own. Of the immigrants who have come here up to the present time we have not retained anything like the whole of them; in fact, I believe that fully one-half of them have drifted to other colonies. The system that I would advocate would be this: that by wise legislation and honest administration we should make the colony generally prosperous and attractive, so that the prospects which it held out of increased comfort would be a sufficient magnet to attract people to our shores. That is the policy which should be pursued by the Government, and which would be most effective, and which would certainly be less open to objection than any other system for peopling our colony. I have no objection to any people coming here, provided they come on proper conditions, but it is altogether unfair to ask the workers of the country to contribute £50,000 per annum in order to get a larger number of workers to come here to compete against them. There is another matter which requires a little attention, and that is the question of defence. The increase set down for the land force this year is very large, and the amount of money to be spent out of loan on defence is also very large. I think it is quite proper that we should look after the defence of the colony. We have recently had a war in South Africa from which we can very reasonably derive a lesson or two, and the salient points that have stood out in that war are that modern armaments are entirely on the side of the defenders, and that the great weapon upon which a defending army will have to rely will be modern up-to-date rifles and men skilful enough to use those rifles. While the Government here propose an enormous increase in the vote for the land force, we find that there is no corresponding increase in the naval expenditure. I am one of those who hold that our naval brigade is the most useful body of defenders which this colony possesses. Very nearly all of the men are drawn from the ranks of the workers, and they join with the intention of making themselves thoroughly efficient, and not because they are attracted by a gaudy uniform, as some other men are in the land force. They are a body of men of which any colony might be proud, and I contend that instead of this enormous increase being made in the vote for the land force, at least as big an increase should have been made in the vote for the marine branch of the Defence Force, if the increases were deemed necessary at all. But the fact is that the Marine Defence Force of the colony has been starved in order to fatten up the land force branch of the service. If ever we are assailed, it will be from beyond the sea, and our first line of defence must necessarily be the marine branch of the Defence Force, and I am happy to say that I believe they will prove equal to any call that may be made upon them. The Marine Defence Force are quite as competent for artillery service as any branch of the land force. Why, then, should this enormous sum be set down for expenditure on the land force while no corresponding prominence is given to the marine branch of the service? I think that, instead of this enormous expenditure on land defence, the Government should see that a sufficient number of up-to-date rifles should be provided, and a sufficient quantity of ammunition for those rifles; and that every man should be given a rifle and a reasonable amount of ammunition in order to practise with those rifles; and that there should be a sufficient stock of ammunition always on hand for any emergency. If that was done, I believe there is no nation in the world that could assail us with any hope of success. That could be done without this enormous expenditure at all. All that our

people require is to get the arms, and they will practise themselves without any cost whatever to the Government.

Mr. HIGGS: They might use them against the Government then.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: They might shoot some of their leaders.

Mr. GIVENS: On many occasions that I know of the Government have thrown every obstacle in the way of bushmen forming mounted corps, while they have jumped at the chance of letting townspeople form such corps. I myself made application to the Government on behalf of two country portions of my electorate for the incorporation of a number of men as mounted infantry corps, and I was flatly refused, while at the same time a corps was formed in the town of Cairns; and I can say, without any disparagement of the men in the towns—whether in Cairns or in any other town—that the best material we have for our Defence Force are the men who are drawn from the bush. They are all at home on horseback, and, without any further practice at all, they are capable of using a rifle fairly well. I do not think the Government can be very sincere in their desire to make preparations for our defence in case we should be assailed—which I do not think is very likely for some time, but still it is as well to be prepared—because, if they were sincere in their desire, they would adopt some such system as I suggest, which would cost the colony little or nothing, and which would be far more effectual than going in for this enormous expenditure for a few fancy brigades. There is just one other matter I would refer to before sitting down, and that is the Savings Bank of this colony. I notice that the total amount to the credit of the 84,793 depositors is £3,624,740. Well, that is a very satisfactory state of affairs, and I congratulate the Treasurer upon the fact that such a large number of depositors should be making use of the institution, and that they should have such large deposits. But let us see how we are treating our own citizens as compared with the treatment we are giving to people outside the colony. The utmost that any man can get in interest from the Savings Bank is 3 per cent., and yet for the loan that was lately floated we are paying foreign bondholders 3 per cent. for £91 10s.—or at the very outside, £92—because the loan did not realise more than that amount. Then it must be borne in mind that when we come to pay off those people we shall have to give them—not £92, but £100; and I would ask why should not our own citizens get equally liberal terms to those we give to people in England, and Germany, and France, because it is quite conceivable that German and French people, and Americans and others, invest their money in our loans? Why should not our own people receive as liberal treatment from the Government? In addition to that, the Government absolutely refuse to give any interest at all to anyone who deposits more than £200 in the Savings Bank, with the exception of friendly societies, or some body like that, who are allowed interest on the full amount of their deposits. It may be said, and, doubtless, will be said, that it would not be wise to encourage our people to put their money in the Savings Bank, and that the best thing we can do is to induce them to invest it in private enterprise outside. I have heard that dozens of times, but there are many people in this colony who are not in a position to invest their money in private enterprise of any kind, and, further than that, I contend that everybody should be at liberty to invest his money as he pleases, and there is no better way of investing it than by investing it in a united fund by which the people of the

country, acting as a whole, can act for the benefit of the whole colony rather than for the benefit of the individual. If the hon. gentlemen sitting on the Treasury bench can offer any decent excuse why our own citizens should not get as good a rate of interest as the foreign bondholders, I should very much like to hear it. It is quite possible that if interest were allowed on more than £200, and if the rate of interest were made to more closely approximate to the rate of interest that we pay to the foreign bondholder, we should get sufficient money in the colony to carry on the public works we require without having to go to the foreign bondholder at all. It might be said that the money would be taken away from private enterprise, but the result of borrowing from the foreign capitalists has been that we have actually sent more money out of the colony in payment of interest than the amount we have borrowed. Last year we had to pay no less a sum in interest to the bondholders outside the colony than £1,339,149. Is that not an enormous sum to send out of the colony? It has been taken away from this private enterprise which hon. members on the other side are so fond of prating about.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It is the Government railways you are talking about.

Mr. GIVENS: I was not talking about railways at all.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is what the debt has been incurred for.

Mr. GIVENS: The little wit the hon. gentleman has must have been wool-gathering, because I was not talking about railways at all, but about the amount of interest that we have to pay to the foreign bondholders.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Was that not contracted mainly on account of railways?

Mr. GIVENS: It was not altogether on railways.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The greater part of it was.

Mr. GIVENS: We have spent no less than £3,201,000 on immigration; we have spent enormous sums on public buildings, on harbour improvements, and on several other things. But, no matter what the money has been spent on, the fact remains that the interest is going out of the country, whereas, if we borrowed the money from our own citizens, the interest would be retained here, and would be available for further loans. There is another matter I would like to draw attention to, and that is our territorial revenue. I find that, notwithstanding the enormous extent of our territory, and our valuable territorial and mineral resources, the revenue from the public estate is not increasing as it should. We are receiving nothing like the revenue we should from our lands. It is probable that there are some measures to come before the House this session which will give me an opportunity of saying something further on this matter, but I would like to emphasise again the fact that, while we have such a magnificent estate, we should not be called upon to pay so much to the revenue through the Customs and in the way of general taxation as we do. It is useless for hon. members opposite to say that we cannot get any more from

[8:30 p.m.] our territorial property; that our magnificent territorial resources will only bring us in the miserable amount that we are now receiving. The grazing farmer is paying four times as much rent as the squatter, for inferior land in some cases, and the squatter is not paying a solitary farthing for a large portion of the land which he holds, as it is classed as unavailable country. The grazing farmer, on the other hand, does not get an acre of unavailable country allowed to him. I do not say the grazing farmer is paying too much. Perhaps he

is paying only a fair amount, because, at the present time, there is a rush for land even of moderate quality; but if he is only paying a fair amount, then most decidedly the squatter is paying far too little.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Poor squatter!

Mr. GIVENS: I know the hon. gentleman has so much sympathy with the poor squatter that he has none left for anyone else.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is one of your cockshies; that is all.

Mr. GIVENS: I am not in the habit, like the hon. gentleman, of setting up Aunt Sallies and knocking them down, but I like sometimes to have a shy at the Aunt Sallies the hon. gentleman sets up, for they are very easily knocked down. Now, before I sit down I want to allude to one or two local matters. I notice that the Government propose to go in for a very large expenditure in connection with public buildings in Brisbane, and I fully endorse the remarks made on that subject last night by the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Fisher. Take one case as an example. The Government propose to pull down the splendid post office which we have in Brisbane, and to build another at a cost of £175,000. There may not be sufficient accommodation in the present post office buildings, but there is nothing whatever to prevent the Government leaving the existing magnificent buildings alone, and, at a cost of £20,000 or £30,000, making additions to them, as there is plenty of room to do so. But it appears to me that they think they can forestall the Federal Parliament and bleed the Federal Government to that extent. If they do that, the Federal Government will have to pay £175,000 for our post office, and the rest of the colony will have to suffer to that extent. The Federal Government will argue that so much has been spent in Queensland already, that it will be quite out of the question to spend more on post offices, and thus the whole of the rest of the colony will have to suffer on account of the expenditure in the capital. Furthermore, when the Federal Government takes over the post and telegraph offices the Brisbane office will no longer be a general post office, and perhaps there will not be so much business to be done there, as the general post office will be at the federal capital. I would like to contrast the treatment accorded to Brisbane with that which is accorded to other places. In Cairns, which is one of the most important mail distributing centres in North Queensland, we have a little post office which is made up of shreds and patches. Originally it was a little square building with side verandas, but now skillions have been built all round it, and it is continually being repaired and pulled to pieces and added to, to try and secure the necessary accommodation.

Mr. KERR: It has been added to in weekly numbers.

Mr. GIVENS: That is a very apt remark of the hon. member's. That is really the result of the department's operations with that building. The Cairns post office distributes all the mails for the Western country right up to Normanton. It distributes the mails for Herberton, Chillagoe, Mount Garnet, Georgetown, Croydon, Normanton, and many other places, and all the mails coming back have to pass through that little office, which is not big enough for two cats to fight in when the officials are at work. This matter was brought under the notice of the Chief Secretary last year when he had charge of the Postal Estimates, and in reply to me he said on that occasion—

Only to-day a communication had been received from the Cairns Chamber of Commerce on the subject, and the matter had been referred for report to one of

the inspectors whose appointment was mentioned in connection with the Estimates. He might say he had received the following memorandum—

"There can be no two opinions about the desirability of better accommodation being provided for the public at the counter; but the question to be decided is whether it would not be wiser to wait a year or so and see if the present great commercial and financial prosperity continues, and, if it does, to take into consideration the advisability of the erection of a building which would meet all the requirements of the town and district for many years to come. If the present rate of increase to business continues, in a year or two at most the present internal space will be totally inadequate to permit of the business being done with despatch and accuracy, but for the immediate future the space at command is sufficient inside the office. The counter space might be enlarged as suggested by Inspector Bright; but I think it would be better to refer this point to the inspector of works, Mr. Park, who will be in Cairns in a fortnight's time, when I shall confer with him as to the best plan to provide additional counter accommodation, and forward you his suggestion and a rough plan showing the proposed alterations to increase the counter accommodation as soon as Mr. Park may have time to devote to this work."

The matter was receiving the earliest consideration. He thought that, in connection with these buildings, it would be inadvisable to put up new buildings which, in a few years, might become totally inadequate in a rising town such as Cairns.

Mr. GIVENS: Why not do it now?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They could not do anything now, because no money had been voted; but consideration would be given to the question of erecting a building which would be commensurate with the growth of the district in the future, and which would, no doubt, be provided for in the next Estimates.

Now, we find that no provision has been made for it on the next Estimates, and the department are still going on adding little skillions to that building; yet, in spite of the disgraceful accommodation provided for the mails in that important distributing centre, the Government propose to sacrifice the magnificent block of postal buildings in Brisbane, and replace them at a cost of £175,000. Is that anything like fair and just treatment to the rest of the colony? I contend that, after having such a distinct and definite promise from the Chief Secretary, both Cairns, and I, as its representative, have a good right to complain. Then there is another matter which I have to complain about, and that is that in spite of the definite promise given by the Chief Secretary on behalf of the Post and Telegraph Department, that they would proceed with the construction of the telegraph line from Cairns to Geraldton, no action has been taken. The distance is very short, and if that work were carried out it would duplicate the whole of the Northern system. Hon. members who have been in the habit of sending telegrams to the North know how often there are interruptions through the lines breaking down. That being so, it could be easily obviated by making this connection, and I regret very much that it has not been made in view of the promise given to me last year. In response to my representations the Chief Secretary said—

He did not think the matter had been lost sight of by the department. The report on the duplication was being prepared, and in a very short time it would be ready to forward to the Postmaster-General. It was recognised that a promise had been made, and that the service was necessary, and under those circumstances, no time would be lost in proceeding with it.

Could there be a more plain or definite statement made by any responsible Minister than that? And yet the department now refuses to go on with the work—absolutely refuses. Have the hon. gentleman's colleagues repudiated his statement? Have they gone back on him? If they have not, why have they not carried out the promise he so distinctly made on the floor of this Chamber? Or what are the Government's promises worth if, after a Minister gave such a distinct pledge, the Government refuses to carry it out? I take

it that when a Minister speaks in this Chamber he speaks for the whole Government. If he does not, it is their duty to repudiate him there and then rather than repudiate him privately. Have they repudiated the promise made by the Chief Secretary last year? If they have, I can only conclude, I suppose, that the hon. gentleman made the promise without any sense of his responsibility, and without any intention of carrying it out. But are hon. members going to allow themselves to be flouted in that fashion—that the Government can make any promise they like in order to appease opposition or to placate members who are fighting a battle for a fair thing, and then, when they are put to the test, to refuse to carry out the promise? It seems to me a disgraceful condition of things that a responsible Minister cannot or will not carry out a promise made on the floor of this House. I shall have something further to say on this matter when the Estimates are under discussion. I make my protest so strongly now because that promise has been made year after year for a number of years past. It was promised when the late Mr. T. J. Byrnes was Premier and by several other Ministers, but never so definitely as last year, when the Chief Secretary, in response to my representations, gave a distinct pledge on behalf of the Government that the work would be proceeded with without delay.

Mr. MOORE: They are waiting for federation.

Mr. GIVENS: I do not care a straw for that. The Government are bound to carry out a promise made by one of their colleagues, unless they are prepared to repudiate that colleague, and if so, they should have repudiated him at the time the promise was made. I have nothing more to add to my general remarks on the Financial Statement. I have not discussed matters as fully as I should have liked, but I will avail myself of future opportunities to discuss the various items more in detail. I have only now to thank hon. members for the courtesy they have shown in listening so patiently to what I had to say, and I hope every other hon. member who addresses the Committee will receive the same kindness that I have myself received.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): There is no doubt that when the hon. member for Cairns gets up in the Chamber he makes things a bit lively. His great trouble is always to go for the Government, but I think some of the arguments he has used to-night will hardly bear close scrutiny, and he has touched upon a number of matters which might have been better left alone until the proper time came for discussing them. He would then have a better opportunity of airing his various grievances, more especially those connected with his own electorate. Of all the speeches that have been delivered from the opposite side of the Committee there are two that are really deserving of notice. The first is the speech delivered by the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Browne—one of the most temperate speeches that could possibly have come from an hon. member on that side on a Financial Statement, and one full of complimentary criticism. The second is the speech of the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, whose carefully prepared criticisms on financial matters are always received with consideration by hon. members on this side. I believe his criticisms are not offered in any kind of party spirit, but rather with the idea of offering suggestions to the Government, which occasionally they might accept with no loss of credit to themselves. I can only say that his speech last night was one deserving of consideration by every member of the Committee. It was carefully prepared, closely reasoned, and vigorously put before us. The first remark I have to make on the speech of the hon. member

for Cairns is with reference to his statement that the Treasurer of the colony should be able to estimate his expenditure and revenue practically to within a few pounds.

Mr. GIVENS: Say to within £20,000, £30,000, or even £40,000.

Mr. FORSYTH: When the hon. member calls to mind the unforeseen contingencies that cropped up both in revenue and expenditure last year, he will see the utter impossibility of arriving at a very close computation. There is one item of unforeseen expenditure of £147,000 in connection with sending the contingents to South Africa. No Treasurer could possibly have foreseen that—

At twelve minutes to 9,

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. FORSYTH: I was remarking that no Treasurer could possibly have foreseen that the expenditure on the South African contingents would amount to £147,000. Then, on the other hand, no Treasurer could have foreseen that during the year he would receive £125,000 in stamp duty. Only an approximate estimate could be arrived at, and we all know that when a business man wants to give an approximation of what his profits from his business are likely to be during the year, he generally elects to keep under rather than over the mark. Therefore the hon. member's contention on that point is hardly deserving of consideration. The hon. member here referred to the duty of £1 a ton on flour, which he considered was a great mistake; but he must not forget that that was put on for the purpose of protecting the farmers and millers in the colony, and it has been the means—

Mr. GIVENS: It does not matter what the object was; it is taxing a necessary of life to the consumer.

Mr. FORSYTH: That may be the case; at the same time, the local flour is sold cheaper than the flour produced in the other colonies, so there is not much cause for complaint in that respect. The hon. gentleman also made a great point of the loss of £350,000 on our railways; but the fact is that our railways have never paid.

Mr. GIVENS: Who has to pay to make up the deficit?

Mr. FORSYTH: The railways are for the general good of the colony, and if there are people who don't get the benefit of them we cannot help that. In connection with the Financial Statement, it is anticipated that there will only be a drop in our railways to the extent of £28,000 this year. If those figures come out right, I can only say that the recuperative powers of the colony are very great. I only hope they will prove correct, but if we take the figures for the last two months we shall see that we must proceed with caution. If we take the first two months last year, £243,589, as against £204,382 for the first two months this year, it shows a considerable loss. The Southern Railway is supposed to show an increase this year from £810,953 to £820,000. As the drought is not so bad in this part of the colony, it is hoped that this amount will be realised. There has been a small loss for the two months, which later on may be made up, because if we have good crops on the Downs the increase will probably be greater than the Treasurer estimates. With regard to the Central Railway, the loss is estimated at only £35,000 this year, last year's receipts being £300,000 and the estimate for this year £265,000. The loss on the Central line for the two months has been £13,000, showing that the Treasurer's figures so far have not been carried out with regard to this railway. No doubt the Minister for Railways, in getting up those figures, had in his mind's eye the fact

that there was likely to be a considerable decrease in the freights on the Central Railway because of the great quantity of cattle and sheep that have died: but if his estimate is to be carried out in connection with that railway, a certain amount of caution will have to be exercised. With regard to the Northern line, it was anticipated that there would be only a small amount of decrease. The receipts last year were £262,888, and this year it is expected that £225,000 will be received, a small decrease of £37,888. For the two months last year the amount was £58,808, and for the two months this year £39,893. That shows a considerable decrease; but that may be accounted for in many ways, and I hope that, before the end of the year, the estimate made by the Treasurer will come out all right. The Cairns line shows a gratifying increase from £3,195 to £3,908 for the two months, an increase of £700. We have heard a great deal about the Chillagoe Railway, but there is no doubt that a great deal of the revenue received by the Cairns line is derived from traffic in connection with the Chillagoe line, because a large quantity of freight has been carried over the Cairns line for the Chillagoe Company.

Mr. GIVENS: A large quantity of the freight carried over the Cairns line for the Chillagoe Company does not pay the cost of carriage.

Mr. FORSYTH: If one looks at the figures I don't think they will bear out the hon. gentleman's statement. We find that for the year 1898-9 the total amount was only £14,000; last year it was £23,000; and this year the estimate is no less than £30,000; and whatever the hon. gentleman may assert in connection with the Cairns line, I distinctly assert that the bulk of the increase is entirely caused by the traffic of the Chillagoe Company. In spite of all the arguments used in this House in connection with the Chillagoe Company and the construction of that line, I say that no line in the colony shows such an increase as the Cairns line since the construction of the Chillagoe line; and I venture to predict that the increase for the Cairns line during the year will be such as to help materially to make up for the losses on other railways, such as the Central and Northern lines.

Mr. BROWNE: Would not the same result have been attained if the Government had built the line?

Mr. FORSYTH: It might; but I am only dealing with things as they are. The Normanston line also shows a gratifying increase. I find that for the two months of the present year the increase has been from £1,925 last year to £2,408, or an increase of £483; and if that increase is maintained for the year, that line will show an increase of something like 25 per cent. on last year's amount. I think that is a very gratifying result from a railway which up till last year practically paid nothing. One great reason why this particular line has not been paying till lately is because when the line was initiated the schedule of rates in connection with freights was 50 per cent. more than in the Southern division. No doubt the Government when they fixed this matter up took into consideration the fact that wages were higher and the cost of coal was higher in that district than in the Southern part of the colony, and thought it was only fair to charge a higher rate there; but an agitation took place in connection with the matter, and after some considerable time it was agreed by the Government to fix all the rates on the same basis; and if you look at the figures you will find that there was a drop when the reduction took place; but now it is going up again and the amount for the two months this year is equal to £15,000 for the year. With regard to Customs, we find that the total amount last year was

£1,461,689; this year it is anticipated that the amount will be £1,500,000, or an increase of £38,311. The August Customs were £3,514 less than the corresponding month of the previous year,

and the total taxation for the month [9 p.m.] was £3,609 less than in August, 1899.

But if we take the Customs returns for July, they show a very marked increase. But we cannot get away from the fact, as far as August is concerned, that the general taxation yielded £3,609 less than August, 1899. Now, one of the principal reasons why I put August down at a lower amount than July is that a great many business firms in Queensland take their stocks in July and in December, as the case may be, and they always endeavour to keep their stocks as low as possible, and if necessary keep stocks in bond, so that on 30th June they rush in for goods, and the Customs have the benefit of it. That will be the reason that the July estimate is higher than the August, but in any way we cannot get away from the fact that, although there is an increase of £3,950, still in August the receipts were considerably less than August last year. I point those things out to show that we want to approach this matter with a certain amount of caution. I do not do it in any carping spirit, but simply to show that we must be very careful, not only in connection with Ways and Means, but also in connection with the expenditure of the country. In land revenue he anticipates an increase of £21,856, but, as I have pointed out, there has been a falling off of £3,000 or £4,000, and to that extent the estimate has not been realised. Of course, there is one item in this Statement which, I think, must be particularly gratifying to hon. members; and that is, that rentals show an increase of £13,523. Then the rents of runs are anticipated to show an increase of £22,128. These figures, I am sure, we all hope will be realised, and if they are it will be gratifying not only to the Treasurer but to every member of this House. In connection with the increase which was spoken of by Mr. Givens, the hon. member for Cairns, it will be seen that the actual increase in the revenue was £114,121—the actual increase in the Customs being £234,302, and in railways something like £100,000. In connection with the railway increase, it will be most gratifying to everyone here to see that the railways have increased to the extent of £100,000. That is very gratifying, but, on the other hand, we cannot get away from the fact that this increase has cost the country something like £163,880. That is to say, we have made this extra £100,000 by an increased expenditure of £163,880. Now, there is one thing we have to notice, and that is, that this is put down to more rolling-stock, to the carriage of stock from the drought-stricken districts to the coast. I am sure that no hon. member will raise any objection to the fact that the Government have assisted the pastoralists in their trouble, and even if it has cost us £60,000, I think the money was very well spent. A great deal has been made, especially in the speeches of hon. members on the other side of the House in connection with the expenditure in the Chief Secretary's Department. The amount, of course, is £251,115, as against £140,127. Of course, we all know that the great cause of this increase was the despatch of the contingents; but what has been objected to so much is the fact that this year the actual amount proposed to be expended is £204,000. Now, if we look into details, we find that the total amount for the federal garrison, the contingents for South Africa, the land force, the marine force, is £204,026. The increase in the land force is £49,060, and the marine £8,000, while the loan fund increase is £54,000, making a total of £110,000. The

revenue expenditure is £204,026. Now, there is no doubt that this is a very large item, and one which, I think, may be carefully considered by the Treasurer later on, for although we pass these Estimates, I think we should be very careful to consider whether we shall spend the money or not. If our revenue does not come up to what is anticipated, I think this expenditure should be cut down. Then there is the marine force, and the increase there is from £17,389 to £25,210. You will also see by the tables that £25,000 has been set aside for six months for the expenditure in connection with the Federal Government. The hon. member for Rockhampton endeavoured to show that we should borrow money without going to London at all. He made a very full and clear statement with regard to the Treasury notes of the Government and also of the funds lying to the credit of the Savings Bank. Now, it is quite true that in connection with the Treasury notes we have £1,181,000; that we have coin in reserve amounting to £542,000; deposits, amounting to £350,000; and in the banks, £388,000; or a grand total of £1,818,000. Now, the hon. member contended that the Government really only wanted to hold £290,000 in gold, which is one-fourth of the total amount. Then they had at their disposal the sum of £243,350, and if we had the amounts which they have in deposits and also in the banks, it would total £886,000. His idea was that the whole of this money, or £800,000 of it, should be taken to loan fund, and be used in the construction of public works such as railways. Now, I think that the Government are perfectly right in retaining this large amount of reserve, because we never know what things are going to take place. We find that last year the banks returned no less than £300,000 on Treasury notes. We do not know when a great financial crisis may take place, and we might have those notes sent back, and if the Government have only £290,000 to pay a total of £1,181,000 it may so happen that the Government would be placed in a very awkward position.

Mr. JENKINSON: So they might if they had a quarter of it.

Mr. FORSYTH: What we want to see, and the banks want to see it also, is that the reserves should be made exceptionally strong, and the same thing that applies to the Treasury notes applies also to the Savings Bank. The hon. member for Rockhampton pointed out that it would be the simplest thing in the world to take over £800,000 from Treasury notes and over £600,000 from the Savings Bank, making a total roughly of £1,500,000, and he reckoned on that account that we need not go to London at all for a loan. With regard to the Savings Bank, if there is one institution in the country that the working classes believe in, and that we all believe in, it is the Savings Bank, and I consider that the Government are doing perfectly right in keeping an exceptionally strong reserve, because it gives all the people of the country complete and absolute confidence in the Savings Bank, and they know that if at any time the money there is wanted it can be got. We all know that in connection with the Savings Bank money two-thirds of it must be kept in the form of Government stock, and according to the Treasurer's financial tables we have at the present time no less than £2,773,880 in Savings Bank stock, while the total amount of deposits to the 30th June was £3,624,740, leaving a balance of £886,182, which the Treasurer has power to place at fixed deposit or leave at current account. A great deal was made last year of the fact that it so happened that at one particular time the two-thirds of the Savings Bank money had not been exactly appropriated as intended. The hon. member for Rockhampton

made a very strong point of that at the time, but if we work the figures out now we will find that two-thirds of the total amount of deposits in the bank now would be £2,416,493, and as the Government have already placed, in connection with Savings Bank stock, no less than £2,773,880, they have exceeded what is required by the Act in that way by no less than £357,000. I repeat that if there is one thing I believe in, and that all business men believe in, it is that the Government Savings Bank should be the strongest thing in the world. The Government must give confidence to the people who put their money there, or we do not know what the result will be. It is a most gratifying thing in connection with the Savings Bank to find that the deposits have increased during the year by over £453,000. The hon. member for Rockhampton, when discussing the question some little time ago, stated that we could raise money without going to London at all. I thought at the time that he meant that the average excess each year was about £500,000, and that that could be used for the purpose, but, although this year the increase is the largest on record, we do not know how long that is going to last. We cannot tell what great depression will come, when, instead of having a large increase, we may have a decrease, and therefore I do not think that is a very good fund to depend upon for raising money for building public works, such as railways. In connection with railways, I see that according to the table of Ways and Means at the beginning of the Estimates the decrease this year is supposed to be something like £26,000. Last year we received £1,422,000, and this year the Treasurer expects to receive something like £26,000 less. A great deal of discussion has taken place in connection with expenditure, but though the expenditure was exceedingly great last year, instead of having any objection to that, I am glad it took place, because I think it is a particularly good thing, when the finances of the colony are in a strong position, to improve our rolling-stock, and bring the whole of our railways up to a proper standard. The time to spend money lavishly in this way is when we have plenty of money at our disposal. It has been complained that while the expenditure last year in this direction was £947,000, the expenditure for 1898-9 was only £784,000. The increase represents £163,000, but instead of that being a reason for adverse criticism of the Government, I think they should be commended on the fact that they spent the money when they had it. It is just possible they will not be able to spend as much this year, though I notice the appropriation proposed is about the same as for last year. If the returns from our railways do not turn out as well as the Secretary for Railways anticipates, instead of spending this money—for it is only an appropriation after all—he will very likely reduce the expenditure so as to bring it more into line with the actual revenue received. That is the only way, in fact, in which it is possible to bring revenue and expenditure into fair and equitable line. With regard to the Post and Telegraph Office, we all know that the expenditure in connection with the department is one that must be continually increasing. Last year the amount received from this department was £331,000, while the amount expended was £363,000, a difference of something like £30,000; and, as a matter of fact, that is the only year for a considerable time past when the revenue and expenditure of this department approached so nearly. Though an increase of revenue of something like £14,000 is expected from this department, the estimated increase of expenditure is £24,000, so that we will go back to some extent. With regard to fees of office and

miscellaneous services, there is an increase there of £30,000, and it is a very gratifying item indeed. Going through the various tables we find that though the revenue may not come up to estimation in some cases, the estimate is increased in others, and the aggregate is all right. With regard to our imports and exports, gratifying increases are shown. Our imports last year amounted to £6,764,000; the increase per head of population was from £12 3s. 11d. to £13 5s. 10d. Our exports last year also increased to a very large extent, amounting to nearly £12,000,000; the increase per head being from £22 0s. 9d. in the previous year to £23 9s. 4d. last year. I very much doubt, however, whether our exports will keep up this year as they did last year. Take wool, which is our principal export. We find that in 1898, the total export was 15,000,000 lbs. more than in the year just closed; yet, owing to the abnormal increase in the value of wool, there was an increase of over £370,000 in the wool shipped. I am sorry that the price of wool which existed last year has not been kept up.

Mr. JENKINSON: We are all sorry for that.

Mr. FORSYTH: If hon. members will look at the commercial papers, they will see that the average decrease in the value of wool from the end of last year is about 40 per cent., which I am sure is a matter of regret to every member of this House. With regard to the figures we have presented to us as to the cattle and sheep in the colony, I think that, owing to the drought, the numbers will be considerably diminished at the end of December, 1900.

Mr. BROWNE: The figures given are only to the end of last year.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes. Instead of five and a-half millions of cattle, I would not be surprised if the total number at the end of December is only four and a-half millions.

Mr. JENKINSON: But they have increased in value.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes, that is one redeeming feature that will militate to some extent against the lack of production.

Mr. KINSTON: The increased price will limit the production of the meatworks.

Mr. FORSYTH: No doubt, the fact of cattle being scarce is the cause of the increased value. In every case, as we all know, when the demand is greater than the supply, prices go up. With regard to sheep, according to the computation of gentlemen who are competent to speak on the matter, the number is set down as 12,000,000 to end of June, 1900, instead of 15,000,000, supposed to be in the colony at the end of last year; and as the reduction in the price of wool is 40 per cent., and in the number of cattle 20 per cent., I do not anticipate that we are likely to have the same amount of exports this year as last year. But I hope that with good seasons, and with a good general rainfall, the numbers will increase. I don't think I have very much more to say, although on looking at all the items in the Statement, one might speak at considerable length on many of them. So far the criticisms on the Financial Statement have been fairly mild; and I believe it is the hope of every member of this House, no matter whether he is opposed to the Government or not, that the anticipations presented to us by the Treasurer will be realised.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FORSYTH: Personally I think we should regard them with a great amount of caution, but I hope my anticipations will be wrong, and that his figures will be right. If so,

it will show that the recuperative powers of Queensland are much greater than anyone even anticipated.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

* Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): I am one of those members sitting on this side of the House who feel that we cannot conscientiously share in the congratulations which many members on both sides have seen fit to express with regard to the Treasurer's Statement. If I felt in a gratulatory spirit, I would congratulate the people of Queensland on the fact that, despite the defects of the present Administration—and many defects of the present Administration have been pointed out, which have helped to injure the credit of the colony in the old country—the colony is so prosperous. Of course the usual surplus is shown. But the present system of keeping accounts admits of all kinds of artful dodgery. There is no proper system of keeping loan money separate from general revenue. It is bad enough to appropriate the proceeds of land sales to ordinary expenditure, but to charge ordinary expenditure to loan account, and then show a surplus, is much worse. In that way any Treasurer can show a surplus. I believe that has been done by the present Treasurer, who has brought his commercial experience to bear in the preparation of his Statement; and other Treasurers before him have done the same thing. But of all the Treasurers the present one is the most incompetent, because his attempt to fake up a surplus is so transparent. The Treasurer has announced, in his fulsome and wonderful prospectus, that the prosperity of the colony is due to hon. members in power on the other side of the Speaker. If that is the case, I would like to make a slight comparison between New Zealand and Queensland, where the party in power profess different principles to the party in power here; and if we do so, I think we might arrive at the same conclusion. For instance, I find in the Governor's Speech at the opening of the New Zealand Parliament, this statement—

Owing to the universal prosperity now prevailing, it was hoped at no distant date to reduce the Customs duties on necessities of life.

That is the result of democratic legislation. We find nothing here as to the reduction of taxation—that the burdens of the common people may be reduced by reduction of taxation on the many necessities of life. Neither do we find here any of the material advantages which the people of that colony are in receipt of. I noticed in a recent issue of the *Brisbane Courier* that the Government of New Zealand have introduced a system of penny post-ge inside and outside that colony; also a reduction of important Customs duties, in accordance with the promise they made in the Governor's Speech; of an increase in the grants to education, general and technical; of an intended rebate in the rents of Crown tenants on punctual payment; of suggestions for preferential duties and reciprocity with other parts of the Empire; and of the proposed borrowing of £1,000,000. The surplus announced was £605,351, but on this point the Premier took the public into his confidence some time ago, so that speculation was set at rest about the results of the year's finance. Penny postage within and without the colony is to be established on the 1st January, 1901. The loss to revenue, calculated in the present bulk of correspondence, would be about £80,000 per annum from this source. But of course it is expected that an increase in correspondence will make up for this. The reductions in Customs duties come into operation at once by resolution of the House. The duties on kerosene, rice and rice starch, salt, coffee and cocoa, mining, agricultural, dredging, and dairy machinery, engines and boilers for mining and dredging, and portable

and traction engines are altogether removed. Half the duty on tea—in packages over 10 lb.—on currants and raisins, candles and matches, is remitted; and that on drugs and chemicals reduced by 5 per cent. The remissions are calculated to amount to about £157,000. The Treasurer in his Financial Statement issues a challenge to hon. members on this side; but that challenge is not intended for us. It is intended for the eyes of English investors. They are invited to come to Queensland and exploit the country. It reads—

To sum up—I may express my conviction that no honourable 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.

In comparison, I am pointing to a [9.30 p.m.] country which beats us at every point, and the people there live under an entirely different form of government. The government of that country is administered on advanced democratic lines—on the lines which the party on this side of the House claim that the government of this colony should be administered. There is no mention in the Budget of our Treasurer of a reduction of taxation on the necessities of life. The poor people of Queensland will still have to pay taxation on their kerosene, rice, and other necessities. There is no mention of increased taxation in the Statement this year, but that is a thing which is coming along next year. Neither is there any mention of any encouragement to the mining industry in the form of a reduction of the taxation of mining machinery and dredging machinery. That industry, both in the North and the South, must still be carried on under the burden of heavy taxation imposed on machinery which is necessary for carrying on the industry.

The TREASURER: Quite wrong.

Mr. LESINA: In New Zealand that industry is specially encouraged, while at the same time the wages of the workers are practically increased by a reduction in taxation through the Customs. There is an increase of £28,000 in the salaries of teachers, and provision is to be made on the Supplementary Estimates for technical education. The amount to be provided for old age pensions is £200,000, or about 5s. per head of the population. For the Indian famine and the Ottawa relief funds there is a total amount of £10,000, a sum of £5,000 is to be spent under the heading of public health, £15,000 is provided for orphans' homes, and other sums are set aside for carrying out public works. New Zealand is doing all that, and can at the same time declare a surplus of £605,351. If the prosperity of Queensland is due to the political principles professed by the party to the right of the Speaker, may I not just as reasonably say that the prosperity of New Zealand is due to a strong democratic Government? The Government of this colony is responsible for piling up an enormous amount of taxation on the shoulders of the people, and if things do not look brighter than they do at the present moment, I would not be a bit surprised if, after certain services are taken over by the Federal Government, we have to resort to additional taxation. When the Chief Secretary was speaking the other evening, he said, in reply to a statement of the leader of the Labour Opposition, that the Government had practically declared a policy, that there was a policy revealed in the Financial Statement, that it ran right through the Statement like a crimson thread, and that that policy was assistance to private enterprise in mining, pastoral, and other occupations. Now, what is the Government policy? The hon. gentleman says it is assistance

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to private enterprise. But there is another policy besides assistance to private enterprise. When you want to discover what the policy of a Government is it is just as well to refer to some member of the Government, and I will refer to the Postmaster-General, and ask what he thought of this particular Government only a little while ago. His answer will be a revelation to us, because, although that hon. gentleman has changed his political principles, and is now a member of a Government which only a few months ago he denounced as unworthy of public confidence, yet we find that that Government is precisely the same as that which he described in the following terms.

Mr. BRIDGES: Not the same Government.

Mr. LESINA: Well, you might just as well say that if four persons are sitting round a table playing euchre, it is not the same pack of cards out of which they deal the second, third, or fourth hands. This is just the same Government, the same old euchre pack. One of its members, the Hon. J. R. Dickson, is referred to in *Progress*, a little paper which has lately been christened *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and which is owned by a member of the present Government. On the 2nd of December, 1899, that paper had the following with reference to the Hon. J. R. Dickson:—

Clearly nothing looms larger on the horizon of Mr. Dickson than Mr. Dickson himself. Yet if that extremely modest and unassuming gentleman will carry his thoughts back a little over twelve months he will see an aged and mellifluous politician sitting on the Ministerial cross benches, acting the "candid friend," and waiting, with a Micawber-like serenity, for "something to turn up." At that time Mr. Dickson had less weight in the political scales than the average politician. He was recognised as a pompous man of much experience and variable political principles. Had the opportunity served he would gladly have led the Opposition across the floor on to the Ministerial benches. He entered the House as an "independent," by a majority of seven votes over a straight Oppositionist, and he was manifestly ready on a minute's notice to jump into the most fertile paddock. Then Sir Hugh Nelson, in one of his humorous moods, dangled a portfolio before Mr. Dickson, and, in less time than it takes to sneeze, the ex-Premier was on the Treasury bench. For this gentleman to talk about the "morality" of any kind of political manoeuvring, or to speak of himself as an indispensable statesman, is highly ludicrous and entertaining.

Now, in place of Mr. Dickson's name, put Mr. Drake's name, and the criticism is just as true—

Clearly nothing looms larger on the horizon of Mr. Drake than Mr. Drake himself. Yet if that extremely modest and unassuming gentleman will carry his thoughts back a little over three or four months he will see a middle-aged and mellifluous politician sitting on the Independent Opposition benches, acting the "candid friend," and waiting, with a Micawber-like serenity, for "something to turn up."

It did turn up—

At that time Mr. Drake had less weight in the political scales than the average politician. He was recognised as a pompous man of much experience and variable political principles. Had the opportunity served, he would gladly have led the Independent Opposition across the floor on to the Ministerial benches.

He certainly would have done so—

He entered the House as an "Independent Oppositionist," and he was manifestly ready on a minute's notice to jump into the most fertile paddock. Then the Hon. R. Philp, in one of his humorous moods, dangled a portfolio before Mr. Drake, and, in less time than it takes to sneeze, he was on the Treasury bench.

In the Upper House—

For this gentleman to talk about the "morality" of any kind of political manoeuvring, or to speak of himself as an indispensable statesman, is highly ludicrous and entertaining.

The Government have in its ranks two members who went across from this side of the House to them, and this Government has been in office for

eight, nine, or ten years, professing practically the same political principles, only occasionally absorbing members from this side of the House, and making them members of the Cabinet.

Mr. NEWELL: There was another Government on this side last year.

Mr. LESINA: There was for only a brief period. What a humorous smile the Hon. J. R. Dickson must occasionally smile when he reads that paragraph, written very likely by the present Postmaster-General. But we have further valuable admissions from the Postmaster-General that the Government of which he is now a member is identical with the old Coalition Government which he fought against in the past. In February last year the hon. gentleman said in his little paper, *Progress*—

The effete remnant of the old Coalition Government does not venture now to claim a continuance of office on any particular merits of its own. . . . The cry of Mr. Dickson and Mr. Philp is "Take care! If you don't return us to power you will have the Labour party to govern you." Could there be a more contemptible appeal made for support? The Government have been living for years on the bogey of the Labour party, and that still is its only hope of continuing to exist.

That is what a member of the Government has to say about the Government of which he is now a member himself. Is it true, or is it false? If Mr. Drake lied when he wrote that, he is a Cabinet Minister upon whose word we can place no reliance; for, if he lied in a newspaper owned by him when he was leader of the Independent Opposition, why should he, when he takes a step higher, become any more truthful? If he told the truth then, it is still true, because nothing has changed since then. The Government are still "living on the bogey of the Labour party."

The TREASURER: He may not have written that article.

Mr. LESINA: He may not have written it, but he was editor of the paper, and he was responsible for it. He has exchanged the old Independent Opposition for the old coalition remnant. He said then that the Government were living on the bogey of the Labour party, and that the moment that bogey no longer frightened the electors of Queensland, the party on this side would cross over and administer public affairs in Queensland, on much the same lines as the present democratic Government is administering public affairs in New Zealand. I hope they will do so as successfully.

Mr. CAMPBELL: He has seen the error of his ways.

Mr. LESINA: What a change has come over the spirit of Mr. Drake's dream since he wrote that article. He is now a part of the effete remnant himself. Only a few weeks before he joined the Philp-Dickson Government he wrote a leading article in his paper in which he said—

The struggles of Queensland for a strong and an honest administration have not yet resulted in a success, but we are sufficiently sanguine to believe that the colony is suffering the birththroes that presage the advent of a new political party.

The new political party which has been born as the result of those birththroes is that composed of the hon. member for Bulimba, the hon. member for Townsville, and the late hon. member for Enoggera. They have formed a new political combination. What are their principles? What programme have they got? The Chief Secretary, in replying to the leader of the Opposition, pointed out what their policy is. It is assistance to private enterprise to develop the resources of Queensland. Now, what is that policy? First and foremost, it is syndicate railways. That stands out pre-eminent in their programme. Every speech that has been delivered on the other side of the House—not only during this debate, but on all the

various occasions that have arisen right from beginning to end—from A to Z—in their Financial Statement, in the Address from the Throne, and in the various proposals that have been introduced—syndicate railways stand out as the leading principle in the Government policy. Next to that stands immigration, assisted by the State at the expense of the taxpayers, and following in close order we have the sale of the national estate, the alienation of valuable mineral, agricultural, and pastoral areas, black labour in every department of industry, opposition to any form of direct taxation, long hours and low wages, unrestricted competition in Government contracts, and strikes—because they do not believe in compulsory conciliation and arbitration. They would leave these matters to the free will of employees and employers. They said so this afternoon, and they have said it on other occasions. And another thing the Government are opposed to is most of the reform legislation which has been passed in the neighbouring colonies.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Adult suffrage.

Mr. LESINA: Well we have compelled them to accede to that, but even now I am more or less suspicious that it is merely a bunch of carrots that they are going to dangle before the noses of hon. members until they get their syndicate railways through, and even if the Bill goes through this House, I am afraid it will be slaughtered elsewhere. The Government are opposed to most of the reform legislation which has been passed in the neighbouring colonies, and any promises they have made in that respect have never been fulfilled. In connection with the credit they take for the present fairly prosperous condition of the colony, I may say that Buckle, in his "History of Civilisation," has fairly defined the functions of politicians when he observes that—

"Their best measures are but temporary expedients which it will be the business of a later and riper age to efface;" that those loquacious and superficial politicians "who, raised to temporary power, think themselves bound to guarantee certain institutions and uphold certain opinions" are clearly wrong.

When a person like Buckle, with his vast knowledge and his ability, and his world-wide reputation, makes a statement like that, it ought to give pause to members of the Government, for they are very desirous of guaranteeing existing institutions, and of justifying the little temporary expedients which they pass through this House as the legislation which ought to last for all time. They are merely flies on the wheel. Honourable members know the story of the fly on the wheel. A fly was on the wheel of a coach as it was lumbering down a street, making an enormous noise. The fly said, "What an enormous noise I do make!" So it is with the Government. They imagine that they are responsible for the prosperity of the colony, while they have probably had no more to do with it than the fly on the wheel had with the noise. For political purposes they take advantage of it. The Treasurer in his Financial Statement, and the Chief Secretary in his speech, spoke of the necessity of encouraging capital, as they euphemistically term it, by giving certain concessions to syndicates to construct railways. As there are various measures before us dealing with those proposals, I shall defer any further remarks I have to make upon that subject until those measures come on for discussion. But I cannot resist the temptation of saying a word or two in reply to the statement of the Chief Secretary that the party sitting on the left of Mr. Speaker is responsible for scaring away capital, or capitalists, who want to make investments in Queensland properties and industries. This statement has been made not only by that hon. gentleman, but it has been made by

every hon. member on the other side, and by the Press outside. They declare year in and year out that this party is opposed to the investment of capital in Queensland. Now, I would like to give that statement an emphatic denial. We are told that by our agitation we scare away investors. I will read what Robert Blatchford, the editor of the London *Clarion*—one of the brightest reform papers published in the world—has to say about agitators—

He is not a nice man is the agitator. He disturbs the general calm; he shakes old and rotten institutions with a rude hand; he drags into the light of day some loathsome and dangerous abuse which respectable rascality or cowardly conservatism has carefully covered up and concealed under a film of humbug. He tramples on venerable shams. . . . The privileged classes hate him; the oppressed classes do not understand him; the lazy classes shun him as a pest.

Very likely when we take up the attitude of opposing concessions to enable capitalists to exploit our resources, we may be told that we are discouraging the investment of capital in the colony, but we oppose those concessions because we believe they are against the public interest. And this brings to me the Bundamba coalminer's strike. Here again it has been said by members opposite and by the Press that there would be no strike if it were not for the influence exercised by persons who encourage the men to revolt against the conditions under which they labour. Every time there is a strike some "buttoner" for the employer gets up and condemns agitators. The cry generally is that the men would be all right if it were not for the agitators—that they are the cause of all the troubles between masters and men, little and big. There are men who enjoy stirring up strife; but still somebody must step in when difficulties arise between master and men, and those men are called "agitators." It is not to be expected that the men should give way to every demand made upon them, and when they do not give way the result is a strike. No doubt a strike is a bad thing. So is war. The men will not cave in every time. They do their best for themselves. The worst feature I see about strikes is that men invariably strike to maintain wages. That makes the position thus: The employer offers a reduction. The men refuse, and strike. Then the men stand to lose something or gain nothing, while the employers stand to gain something or lose nothing. There are no real agitators in this country. If there were, "the war would be carried into Africa," and when employers offered their men a reduction the men would strike for a rise. That would make things equal—something to gain or lose on both sides. Now it is a case of "heads I win, tails you lose." In other words, the men have everything to lose and nothing to gain; the employers have everything to gain and nothing to lose. Now, in the case of the strike in the Burrum district—

The TREASURER: You are reading the wrong speech. You are reading a speech connected with the Burrum strike.

Mr. LESINA: I am reading a few paragraphs in connection with a strike in the coal district, and really referring to the very matter which we were discussing this afternoon. If, of course, the Premier would prefer that the question should be discussed next week on a motion for adjournment, it is easy to accommodate him. Labour and capital are at present at war in one of our principal coal-producing centres, and we are told by hon. members opposite that labour and capital will work harmoniously together without the aid of any conciliation measure such as that which has been so recently discussed. We are told that if we pass such a measure as has been suggested in the motion of the hon. member for Flinders, that the British investor will be

frightened out of the colony, and that if the British capitalist has money to invest he will invest it in a country where labour and capital go hand in hand together. Well, we are aware, not only that there is a strike in the coal-mining industry, but a strike in the pastoral industry, and various other strikes of small dimensions in other small industries carried on in the colony. Yet the Government of the day, instead of using their authority and influence to mediate between employer and employed, do not even go the length of encouraging the passage of conciliatory legislation which would be the means to a large extent of making disputes between employer and employed well nigh impossible. We have before us the examples set in New Zealand, in New South Wales, and in Victoria in the matter of conciliation in industrial disputes. Those colonies lead, this colony sees fit to follow, but follow in a very tardy and half-hearted manner indeed. The leaders in the colony of Queensland are prepared to wait; they are prepared to allow others to reap what disadvantages there may be attaching to experimental legislation, and then ultimately, if it is a success, to come in in a very tardy manner indeed. When difficulties arise between employer and employed, they are not even content to stand off at a distance, as it were, and take an independent attitude, but they are prepared to disarrange the train services of the colony in order to carry "blacklegs" who desire to fill the places of men whose offence is a desire to better the conditions under which they live. This Government, apparently, is never prepared to take a bold and independent step of their own. They are never prepared—or at least their actions would indicate that they are never prepared—to initiate any legislation whatever of a progressive character. They have the examples before them, they know the advantages or possible advantages to be derived, yet they decline to be in the van of progress, and prefer to wander on in the same old sleepy, aimless fashion which has characterised their reign from the beginning up to the present moment. Will nothing move them? Will examples in the other colonies not urge them to effort? Are they content to remain stagnant for ever, and only make a progressive move when every other civilised country in the world has proved that what they call experimental legislation is, in actual operation, a pronounced success elsewhere? That there is room for conciliation and arbitration in the industrial disputes which from time to time crop up in this colony, there is no doubt whatever, but the gentlemen on the other side seem afraid to take a move in the direction in which progressive countries all the world over are going. When we ask the Government to introduce a similar measure they are afraid to do so—not through fear of the Labour bogey, but through fear of those fat men outside who stand behind the Government, whose money helps to return their candidates, and whose influence keeps them on that side of the House. I pointed out, also, that, according to the annual report of the Department of Labour in New Zealand, the Minister for Labour stated that the system of conciliation and arbitration had so won its way into the hearts of the industrial classes that the only thing they were afraid of was the possibility that they might return to the old warfare of strikes and lockouts. There is one fact which occurs to me, and which shows the necessity of such legislation, and that is that, between the 25th May and the 3rd August of the present year, the New Zealand arbitration court settled fifty-nine trade disputes, thus preventing all waste of public time, all waste of public capital, to say nothing of the eventual injury

to employers and misery to working men and their wives and children. As an illustration of how the system works for all parties I may mention that the linotype machine men some time ago applied for an increase in wages to £3 15s. per week. The matter was brought before the court, and the court gave its award; but instead of getting the £3 15s. they demanded they were awarded £3 17s. for a seven hours' day. The Act works undoubtedly in the interests of both employers and employees, but that is a small illustration of the advantages which the working people themselves may derive from the establishment of legislation of that character. Setting that matter aside for the moment, as it will come up for discussion later on, I should like to refer to another statement made by the Chief Secretary. It seems that in spite of the evil character of the Labour party the colony, generally speaking, stands high in the favour of the London capitalist. Although we have got an evil character according to the Chief Secretary, we have been assured by the hon. gentleman that, in spite of the fact that we have a party in this House opposed to the introduction of foreign capital for investment in Queensland enterprises to a large extent, Queensland stands in high favour with the British capitalist. Those two statements, to say the least, are inconsistent. Our character cannot be altogether so black, or else the English capitalists are not altogether deterred by the reputation of the Labour party from investing their money here. But if we stand so high in their favour, how is it that our last loan came so close to being a miserable failure. The hon. gentleman assured a *Telegraph* scribe the other day, when interviewed, that there was no such thing as sentiment in commerce. After all, there seems to be a slight incongruity between the two statements.

[10 p.m.] If home capitalists are desirous of investing their money in English securities—if, for instance, they can invest more profitably in Government stocks in the old country, which are equal to consols, why should they be so anxious to invest in Queensland—why should we stand so high in their favour? And why should the hon. gentleman go out of his way to assure us that we stand high in the favour of persons willing to invest capital in Queensland despite the misrepresentations that our party have had to suffer at the hands of the newspaper Press supporting the policy of the present Government? But the narrow escape of the £1,400,000 loan from failure has not only caused the Government of Queensland to seriously consider their position—it has caused a considerable amount of comment throughout the Australian colonies, and it has supplied a key-note to which the financial Press of the old country have tuned many of their articles. There is evidently something radically wrong with the credit of Queensland when the colony cannot borrow a million of money except at a rate of interest bordering on usury. The foreign complications in which the Empire is involved do not account for the poor price realised. To me it is wonderful that some Ministerial genius has not discovered that it was due to the advent of the late lamented Labour Government. The truth of the matter is, that our credit has been so damaged by the attacks—

The TREASURER: Whose speech are you referring to?

Mr. LESINA: The hon. gentleman's in all likelihood. The fact is that our credit has been so damaged by the attacks—and this is a matter I pointed out, not only in the Address in Reply, but at various times during the discussion on the private syndicate railways—of the London financial press, particularly the *Investors' Review*,

that people who have money to lend regard this colony as a very unsubstantial security. The loose manner in which our finances have been managed—and there can be no question about that—the speculative character of the commercial heroes of civilisation who have controlled the colony's affairs during the past few years are beginning to have a telling effect on the London money market. The loud protestations of the Government that Queensland is sound are openly treated with derision in the home journals. The facts are also becoming known in the old country that our national debt is about £70 per head of the population—the highest in the colonies—and that we are giving away our agricultural and mineral lands to syndicates and speculators, thus depreciating the value of our national securities. Then, again, there are the disappointed immigrants to Queensland who wrote to their friends and their country newspapers informing them and the country at large of want of employment, the sweating, the low wages, and the presence of filthy coloured aliens of every variety. All this tends to further injure our national credit, and hence the partial failure of our loan. I may say in this connection that last year Sir Horace Tozer, in his report as Agent-General, mentions particularly that the thing that helps more than anything else to injure Queensland's efforts to secure people from the United Kingdom is the number of letters sent from Queensland, not so much to the newspaper Press as to private individuals—letters sent by immigrants to friends at home, telling them of the conditions under which they have to work, pointing out the character of the Government that administers public affairs, showing how high our taxation is and how high our national debt is, and that the number of coloured aliens in the colony is 25,000, or 5 per cent. of the population, who come into competition with the whites; and Sir Horace Tozer in his report says that that is an influence he cannot possibly fight against. The men who write these letters must be under the impression when they write them that the statements are true, and those letters influence a lot of people. In the last Agent-General's report you find that some of the agents have been mobbed in one or two of the agricultural counties, and in other places they could not get a hall to hold a meeting. Why is this? Because immigrants who have been inveigled here, and have had to work cheek-by-jowl with kanakas for 10s. a week, when they could have got that much at home under Christian conditions—those people, who have no hope of getting together enough money to pay their way back, have written to their friends asking them to dip the agent in the local horse-pond. And the people at home have made strenuous efforts to do so. I don't know that I have any particular sympathy with those agents in England appointed by the Agent-General. They are scattered through England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and they get 10s. 6d. for every adult, male or female, they capture, and 5s. for every child. Many of those agents have met with a hostile reception in several places; in some places they have had to flee for their lives. This is a matter that fills me with joy. (Laughter.) According to the Treasurer's Statement, he was advised by the Bank of England and other competent authorities, and he floated the loan at the very best time he possibly could choose. This only makes the want of success of the loan the more pronounced. It was placed on the market at a minimum of £94 with 3 per cent. interest, and only £11,000 more than the amount asked for was offered. Approximately the amount that the Queensland taxpayers will pay on each stock will be, according to the Treasurer,

£3 per annum. But according to one of the local papers the Queensland Government has to pay on the £94 as if it were £100, and at the end of the period buy it back at its face value of £100; and as the loan is contracted for at a cost of 25s., that means that for every £100 the Government only gets £92 15s. And out of that there are other charges to be paid, so that each £100 stands the Government in about £90—one of the lowest prices that has been obtained for some years past. The *Brisbane Telegraph* of 10th July, making some comments on the flotation of that loan, points out one or two significant facts; and as the *Telegraph* is a strong Government organ—

The TREASURER: What?

Mr. LESINA: There can be no objection to quoting what it says—

That the loan should not be floated better is less a matter for surprise than for regret. It was offered at a most auspicious moment, so far as our local affairs were concerned. We have had a splendid year. The increment of revenue was £129,400; a return which shows that, in spite of a phenomenal drought, we are doing a larger business; for that increase was due to an improved state of things in every department. Taxation gave £254,000; railways, £100,000; the other three sources of revenue gave £80,000. There is a spirit of enterprise abroad in the community; a determination to occupy the land is everywhere manifested. And yet this community cannot borrow, at 3 per cent., £94 for a £100 inscribed stock.

That is the question they ask. Then they draw a moral. They say—

Given that the loan has been floated at the minimum price, it is impossible that the most sanguine of persons will pretend that it could not have been better. If in 1896 we obtained £95 15s. 11d. for a 3 per cent. loan, what ought we not to have obtained in 1900? Compare the two years. Our revenue for the two years may be thus set down:—

June 30, 1900	£1,598,207
June 30, 1896	3,641,583

It is not necessary to state the difference in figures; and yet it ought to be stated. It is £946,624; nearly £1,000,000 increase in four years. It would be childish to say that the lower price now obtained is due to the higher.

That point is well worthy of consideration in this connection; and glancing over the loans floated in past years, we see that the prices at which they were obtained have been slowly but surely decreasing, and the interest payable has correspondingly increased—showing that the public credit of Queensland has been gradually dropping down, and down, and down. This fact in itself speaks volumes. Why should the public credit be on the decline in Queensland? This Government is a respectable Government; it is a Government that believes in respectable conservative principles; it has the whole of the respectable Press behind it, and the whole of the respectable section of the people of Queensland behind it, if we are to believe statements made in this House; it has the confidence of commercial men; yet our public credit is on the down grade. What is the influence that is at work injuring our public credit? Is it the Labour party? Is it federation? Or is it the Government administering the public affairs of Queensland? There is no use concealing the true state of the colony. Financially, Queensland is absolutely rotten. That is a statement I do not make only myself; it is a statement that has been made frequently in the London Press—in the *Financial Review*, the *Financial Times*, and sundry other papers which do not make any pretension to being financial organs, but keep a peeled eye when they are discussing colonial investments.

Mr. JENKINSON: They don't use that term.

Mr. LESINA: They use even worse terms in respect to members of the present Government. I only regret that I lost two extracts from the *Investors' Review* which I intended to use in this

House. What this country wants is a strong united Labour Government to pull it out of the mess it is in at the present time. New Zealand was in just the same plight as Queensland is in to-day when John Ballance took the reins of Government. He saw that New Zealand was suffering from a bad attack of Vogelism. Here we may call it Philpism; but Vogelism is the term by which they described the diseased financial state of New Zealand; and he saw that this desperate disease required a desperate remedy. He commenced the social reforms and socialistic legislation which, followed up so vigorously since then by Dick Seddon, placed New Zealand in the proud position of being the most solvent and financially sound colony in the Australasian group. Rightly or wrongly, the English money-lenders appear to think that the colonies are absolutely dependent on them for the wherewithal to carry on the government. It is very necessary that they should be taught that the colonies have ample resources within themselves, and that they can go on moderately well, for a time at least, without outside assistance. And just now the outside capitalist appears to forget that if the people of Queensland have borrowed something from him we have something to show for it in our railways and other public works, which alone would realise more than our whole national indebtedness. I would, therefore, suggest that the Government should have recourse to the local money market—that they should in the future avail themselves more frequently of opportunities of borrowing in Australia—in Queensland itself—than they have done in the past. There is plenty of idle money in Australia, and it would be mutually advantageous if this were invested at a fair rate of interest on debentures issued and guaranteed by the Government of the country. If the Government make a move of this kind, I am sure it will have a salutary influence in England, and must considerably raise the prestige of our colony and be to the advantage of our colonial neighbours. It is a case of God helping those who help themselves. A people that shows a capacity to overcome difficulties will soon find plenty of friends. It is of all importance that the foreign investors should be imbued with that idea. Our credit has been so damaged by the administration of the present Government, by the Queensland National Bank, and by the maladministration in connection with the loans that have been borrowed, and other reasons, that some heroic step is absolutely necessary to rehabilitate ourselves in the eyes of the financial world. Now, I notice, according to the tables supplied by the Treasurer, and attached to the Financial Statement, that the national debt of Queensland is £36,049,094, although we have in reality only received £31,568,315 net. So that we have practically lost in charges, etc., nearly £5,000,000. To that £31,568,315 we have added about £6,000,000 since 1890, whereas South Australia—with a democratic Government, with a paid and elective Legislative Council, with a land and income tax, with a State bank, with advances to settlers, and sundry other reforms—has reduced its national debt by about £2,000,000. Our national debt amounts to about £72 per head of the population, and the total annual interest charged is £1,343,244, or about £2 12s. per head of the population. Every man, woman, and child in Queensland practically is taxed £2 12s. to pay the interest upon the borrowed money which has been expended in the construction of public works and railways in Queensland. With a family of five or six persons that alone means a large annual tax. To show the enormous progress which has been made in piling up the national debt, I may mention that in 1861 it amounted only to £2 0s. 9d. per head,

ten years later it came to £36 2s. 11d., and to-day it is £72 per head of the population. The Treasurer, in his Statement, says—

EXPENDITURE, 1899-1900.

The total revenue for the year was ...	£4,588,207
The total expenditure ...	4,540,418

Giving a surplus of ...	£47,789
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A cheque for this amount has been handed to the trustees of the public debt reduction fund, the proceeds of which—together with other funds in the hands of the trustees—have been applied by them in the purchase of a debenture amounting to £50,000, which has been dealt with in terms of the Audit Act Amendment Act of 1895. Under the operation of this Act—one of the wisest pieces of financial legislation ever initiated in this House—the application of the surpluses during the last six years has resulted in a reduction of the national debt by £445,720, and a saving of interest annually amounting to £15,727.

Now, our national debt is £36,000,000, and if that is paid off at the rate of £47,789, which is the amount paid for £50,000 worth of debentures this last year, it will only take 720 years to wipe out our national debt. I do not suppose the Premier wishes to wipe out the national debt. I do not see any necessity for wiping it out, or attempting to wipe it out, or why these surpluses should be devoted to the purchase of these debentures. Every year there is a quantity of public money swamped up in that way. Every year the surpluses are swamped up to purchase these debentures for the public debt reduction fund. It is a most extraordinary thing, because I do not suppose the Treasurer is seriously determined to wipe out the national debt. What advantage would result from wiring it out?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They would like to wipe you out, now. (Laughter.)

Mr. LESINA: Well, I do not see any necessity for attempting to wipe out the public debt, and it seems to me very absurd to dispose of the surpluses year after year in purchasing these debentures in reduction of our indebtedness. I think it would be much better to knock off borrowing altogether. That is a much easier, much cheaper, and much more practical way than advocating the utilisation of surpluses in this way, but that cannot be expected. Perhaps we cannot expect that. This country has been leaning on John Bull—who seems to be the “post” Miss Shaw referred to—for so long that it cannot be expected to stand up on its feet all at once; and there is no need for the present generation to work itself to death in a vain endeavour to wipe out the accumulated indebtedness of bygone times, especially as the growth of population will make the national burden proportionately less, but there is a grave danger of any loan being used for all manner of illegitimate purposes. The old ancient wheeze about “reproductive public works” is a worn-out shibboleth which ought not to impose upon anybody. Everybody knows that every Government we have had in Queensland for the past twenty years has used borrowed money for purposes quite other than reproductive works.

The TREASURER: By the late Government.

Mr. LESINA: The late Government did not have a chance or very likely they would have done the same. The country towns have been studded with gaols and courthouses and post office buildings, which have depended for their degree of magnificence less upon the amount of business likely to be done than upon the persistency of the local member clamouring for public money to be spent in his district. Perhaps it was necessary for the colony to borrow. There is, at all events, nothing to be gained by arguing about that now, but it seems to me that if Queensland is not to become the most debt-ridden country on earth she had better stop borrowing now, except for meeting debentures falling due.

There is no reason, either, why the colony should not take up the national debt on its own account. If there is such a large bulk of material wealth in this country as is generally estimated, there is no good reason why the Government should not be able to gradually borrow money from its own people to meet engagements abroad, and thus the State would come in time to owe the debt to its own citizens instead of to people who live on the other side of the earth. This is not like a country that has been plunged into heavy debt by an unfortunate war. If we have wasted some money we have not wasted all our borrowings, and even unnecessary courthouses and gaols may be of service some day. Despite our natural disadvantages, the country is rich enough and old enough to stand alone, instead of leaning against a post. Britain has an enormous national debt, on which she pays interest amounting to £25,000,000 sterling per annum, but she pays it to her own people, and it remains in the country.

Mr. JENKINSON: Are you going all through all your notes? We will take them as read.

Mr. LESINA: With a heroism worthy of a better cause, I intend to go through them.

Mr. JENKINSON: Then the Lord have mercy on your soul!

Mr. LESINA: I say that England's debt is largely to her own people, and the money is kept in the country, a thing which would add joy to the soul of the Treasurer, because I see in one portion of his Statement that he expresses deep regret that the money is leaving the country. Under such a system there is no reduction of the total sum of the national wealth, but if Great Britain had to pay over some £25,000,000 annually to some other country she would be ruined in a generation. When the whole trade and finance of the world is based upon a stock of gold of less than £1,300,000,000, according to Mulhall, it is plain that a country that paid over £25,000,000 to another every year would soon be ruined. We are paying an enormous amount in interest to people on the other side of the earth, and if that money remained here it would be available for enterprise and investment. If New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and West Australia had not all been gold-producers they would have been ruined long ago, and if we go on borrowing as we are doing our national bankruptcy is only a question of time, and the London investors will refuse to subscribe to a new loan. We have now a debt of £36,000,000, on which we pay interest at the rate of about £1,300,000 per annum. If we are determined to go on borrowing, we should confine our operations to our own market, and try and raise the money locally, even if we have to pay a slightly higher rate of interest, because the interest will be paid to people in the country, and, going into circulation again, will encourage industry, and find fresh avenues for investment.

Mr. CAMPBELL: What is to prevent our people selling their debentures elsewhere?

Mr. LESINA: There is no particular reason why we should not sell them anywhere, but my advice is that, if possible, we should sell them to our own people and make our own people our creditors.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Our own people can sell the debentures again outside.

Mr. LESINA: There is another point in the speech I would like to refer to, and that is the question of defence. I strongly object to money for defence purposes being taken out of loan funds. I think, as the leader of the Opposition pointed out, that the Defence Force should be largely maintained out of revenue, and if we are compelled to borrow for the purpose, the borrowing should take place locally. The Chief

Secretary pointed out in the course of his speech, that in view of the complications in South Africa and China at the present time, it is absolutely necessary that our Defence Force should be on a stronger footing, that we should spend money in encouraging volunteer rifle corps, and that we should do all we possibly can to strengthen the defence of the country. I have not the slightest objection to that. I believe it is necessary, and that the work should be well done. I am not sure that there is any direct connection, as the hon. gentleman sought to prove, between the existing complications in South Africa and China, and the necessity for strengthening our defence; but I am thoroughly in accord with the expressed determination of the Government, as revealed in the Financial Statement and in the Estimates, to afford the volunteer movement substantial support. Hitherto the movement has been starved and discouraged, as witness the experiences of the Scotch and Irish volunteer force. Many of our troops were sent to South Africa with worse than useless rifles—a fact that has been proved. Only the other day we had a meeting of members of rifle clubs in the city at which vigorous protests were entered against the defective ammunition supplied by our defence authorities. Yet we are being hurried into every foreign embroilment into which Great Britain is being dragged by the Salisbury Government. I believe we should reconstruct our scheme of defence on an entirely new basis. I believe in the abolition of military life in barracks altogether and in placing our soldiers on the same footing as the police, and that commissions should be gained by service in the ranks, and as volunteers by special qualifying, not competitive, examinations. There is immediate need for a great development of the volunteer system in Queensland. Every citizen should be a soldier trained to use the rifle, and given such drill instruction as might be necessary for the performance of simple military manœuvres. Every schoolboy over a certain age ought, as a part of his school instruction, be made proficient in the use of the bayonet and the rifle. Every soldier, being also a citizen and following his daily avocations, would be a voter under this system, and consequently would exercise a wholesome check on any Government manifesting an arrogant or aggressive attitude towards its foreign neighbours. When every citizen is a soldier and a voter, liable to be, at war's alarms, dragged away from the bosom of his family, he will take fine care only to elect those legislators who will encourage the pursuits of industry and the arts of peace. I believe that the policy of Queensland abroad should be strictly non-aggressive. Our own assumed interests should not be placed before the rights of any people. We should support the principles of international agreement in distinct and definite cases, but there should be no wholesale placing of our national judgment and action in the hands of unknown keepers. The influence of the nation should be steadily but peacefully thrown on the side of those struggling for independence, and against annexations made in disregard of the will of the people. I am thoroughly in accord with the suggestion of the Hon. Mr. Thynne that we should, where practicable, adopt the Swiss model in any scheme of national defence. Switzerland spends less upon armaments and more upon education than any other European nation, and as an industrial people we should follow her example.

The TREASURER: There are no Government railways there.

Mr. LESINA: They could hardly have Government railways round the Alps. I am not forgetting—though there is no mention of it in the Statement—that under clause 113 of the

Federal Constitution, no State has power, without the consent of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, to raise or maintain any naval or military force. Hence it will appear that action in the matter of defence will have to be postponed until such time as we can approach the Federal Parliament for the necessary authority, so completely has the new Constitution tied our hands in this respect. We can, of course, go on making our arrangements in the meantime, but after that we must receive official recognition at the hands of the Federal Parliament. There are only one or two other points I would like to touch upon. It is just as well to be thorough in matters of this kind, because some members slump matters of this kind. They make a few casual remarks about anything or nothing, and then, for fear of public criticism, or the criticism of other members of this Chamber, they flop down. I cannot help having a cut at immigration, and the gigantic matrimonial agency, conducted in Great Britain by Sir Horace Tozer. Now, another £50,000 is asked for this year, also out of loan account, for the encouragement of persons who desire to come here—some of them to marry squatters and settle down in all the delights of wedded life, and others to flop into comfortable billets of £500 a-year in aristocratic Queensland. I object to that item being defrayed from loan money. During the past two years this vote has increased by 100 per cent., and I would like to ask the Treasurer, have the problematical benefits increased in a similar ratio? From 1890—the date of separation—to 30th June, 1899, Queensland has expended £3,201,428 net in assisted immigration. The colony under the present administration offers such poor inducements to persons to come here that they have to be paid to do so. I notice that some newspapers in England have drawn attention to this. An immigration agent says to a prospective emigrant, "See what a splendid country Queensland is; you should go there." The man says, "I have no money." Then the agent says, "Oh! we will pay your fare out." The prospective emigrant at once becomes suspicious as to the state of the country when the agent offers to pay his fare. If the man thought the colony was so prosperous, he would come out and pay his own fare. The fact of paying these immigrants at once raises suspicion, and the fact that the Government has to pay these agents a scalp fee of 10s. 6d. per head for adults, and 5s. per head for picaninies, only tends to injure the reputation of the colony. Another objection I have to this system of immigration is that these immigrants are brought out here on boats employing black labour. If we are going to spend all this money on immigration, I think the immigrants should be brought out here in boats employing white labour. The last boat that arrived here was the "Junna," bringing 200 immigrants, and her crew is composed chiefly of coolies. Some days after that vessel arrived, many of the female immigrants were seen in the streets drunk, arm-in-arm with these coolies, some of whom were also drunk.

The TREASURER: Quite untrue.

Mr. LESINA: Well, statements to that effect have appeared in the Brisbane Press.

Mr. KERR: I saw one drunk with a white man.

Mr. LESINA: The papers stated that many of these female immigrants were seen in the streets drunk, arm-in-arm with coolies.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They may have been seasick.

Mr. LESINA: Perhaps so, I object to immigrants being brought out here in boats employing

black labour. Let us give some encouragement to the companies who employ white men and give them white men's wages.

Mr. JENKINSON: There are no immigrant boats employing white labour.

Mr. LESINA: Yes, there are.

Mr. JENKINSON: Not coming to Queensland.

Mr. LESINA: Well, they bring them first to Sydney, perhaps. The efforts made by certain persons in receipt of Government money to induce these people to come to Queensland should be fully discussed in this House. Some of these agents who receive this scalp money at times break into poetry—in their frenzied desire to secure their fees. Mr. J. Randall, the immigration lecturer, in one of his circulars, has this poem—

There is room and there is freedom,
There is virgin soil to till;
There to gain an independence—
All that's wanted is the will!

He also talks about blue skies, gurgling brooks, great prosperity, big wages, and so on. Then Sir Horace Tozer issued another circular saying that immigrants wanted no capital in order to go on to the land; that they could get land at 2s. 6d. per acre, and only pay 3d. per acre annual rental; that they would get a number of years to pay this; that they could live in tents—as the climate was so good that they did not need a house or a roof. The result is that a number of Cheshire farmers came out here and went up to Degilbo; but they found there was no land open, and they have been camping there trying to get a selection. Then, again, the Government has been spending money on the purchase of estates to enable immigrants to settle on the land, and they have been losing money over these purchases. On the purchase of fifteen estates, there is a debit balance of £296,000, and the overdraft, £24,000, in the Trust Funds, is mainly due to the purchasing of these estates. And yet the Agent-General, per medium of private correspondence from John Michael Cross—

The TREASURER: Oh! That is the trouble.

Mr. LESINA: A one-time political opponent of the Government, but who has now come into high favour with the party in power, owing to his strong jingo attitude over the South African war and his pro-federal attitude—so we find he has been put in some snug corner in the Chief Secretary's department to write—with the assistance of scissors, a pastepot, and plenty of pens, pencils, and paper—glowing reports of the prosperity of the colony, which he sends privately to Sir Horace Tozer. And Sir Horace Tozer, acting upon the advice contained in these private and confidential reports, goes to the Welsh, Irish, and Scotch emigrants, and tells them what a glorious country Queensland is. Speaking of John Michael Cross in that little office, I am reminded of Max Adler's description of the editor of an American paper, of whom he says, "There in the privacy of his sanctum sat the editor armed with a predatory scissors and a dishonest pastepot." There Mr. Cross sits day after day, clipping extracts from the *Courier*, pasting them on slips of paper, adding his own comments to them, and then sending them to Sir Horace Tozer, who tells the people of the old country that Queensland is a glorious place, and that prosperity is booming here. "All persons," says the Agent-General, in a circular, "who are mentally and bodily sound are eligible irrespective of occupation, age, or sex." Many of the people who come here have for a long time past drifted to the southern colonies. I know of the case of a young man in Sydney who, knowing that Queens-

land was the only colony paying the passages of immigrants, wrote to his brother in the old country telling him that he could get his passage paid to Brisbane under the nomination system, and that when he came here he would pay his fare down to Sydney. The man did as he was advised, and is now a resident of Sydney. The system is utterly absurd. It has been used in all the other colonies, and has been abandoned by them, but Queensland, with that curious faculty it has of persisting in any line of policy it has once taken up, still persists in this old system, and pays £50,000 a year to bring out people, who as soon as they earn a few weeks' wages, probably take train for Sydney, or go to New Zealand. If we could anchor them here, and compel them to remain in the colony for ten years after their arrival, there might be something in the system, but we cannot do that, and what is the use of paying the passages of people over whom you have no hold after they arrive in Queensland? I shall now deal with one or two matters referring to my own electorate, and then close. I have a lot of other matters I wish to bring up on the Estimates, but I shall let them slide for the present. The matter concerning my own electorate to which I wish to refer is a short line of railway, about eleven or twelve miles in length. It has been stated during the past few weeks by the Premier, the Secretary for Railways, and other Ministers, that the Government are earnestly desirous of developing the industries of Queensland. How do they propose to do that? By authorising the construction of private railways to Callide Creek, Glassford Creek, and to Cloncurry. For years and years there has been a considerable area of coal land worked in the Clermont electorate, and the Government have been supplied by contract with coal from that area. From facts which have recently come into my possession, I give the following reasons for the construction of a railway to that coal-field—

(1) The large area of coal with no market at present, except what is supplied to the Railway Department. (2) The price of coal delivered to the railway trucks at Clermont is 17s., the coal proprietors having to pay from 10s. to 11s. per ton for hauling the same a distance of twelve miles. (3) If the line were constructed at an estimated cost of £20,000, and the Railway Department took an annual supply of 20,000 tons of coal, there would be a saving to the Government of £10,000 to £11,000 yearly. (4) The country would be developed and traffic on the line increased, especially if the freights were reduced, as in the case of the New South Wales Government, who carry coal a distance of fifty-six miles at the rate of 3d. per ton per mile. Mount Morgan, requiring from 2,000 to 3,000 tons per month, would be able to take their supply from the Central district instead of from the South, as at present. The coal of the Central district being far superior, Lake's Creek would be likely to get its supply from the same source. Further, in a few years Rockhampton would be a large consumer of coal in lieu of wood. In regard to the Callide coalmines, the Government would not draw as much revenue as at first might be imagined, as the discoverer of coal is exempt from paying a royalty. In the case of Blair Athol, there are six mines out of seven paying a royalty of 3d. per ton.

So that if the Government were to construct this line they would save from £10,000 to £11,000 per annum, and they would also gain largely in revenue from the royalty on the increased output of coal. But what have the Government done to encourage the development of the coal-mining industry at Blair Athol? They are carrying coal there by bullock teams, as they used to carry supplies from the coast years ago, and yet the Government do not construct this railway, which would be a benefit to the State. There is one argument in support of the line, and with that I will conclude. It is an argument written by a strong supporter of the Government, the editor of the *Rockhampton Record*, the Hon.

C. H. Buzacott. In the issue of that paper of the 28th of May last, the following argument is used in favour of the construction of the line :—

Among the ameliorations of the drought suggested by Mr. Bunning was railway construction. In that suggestion we cordially concur. For, while the initiation of public works to find employment for the people is indefensible as a general policy, it is unquestionably justifiable in cases such as the destitution caused by the Western drought. There are many precedents in India, and it might, with advantage to the Government as well as to the public, be adopted here. As Mr. Rieman points out in another column, the making of eleven or twelve miles of line proposed for some years past to be constructed between Clermont and the Blair Athol coamies would mean a large annual saving to the Government. It can easily consume 20,000 tons of coal a year, and after allowing 1d. a ton per mile for railage, it might save from £8,000 to £10,000 per annum by bringing coal by rail instead of by dray. The country along the route is easy. The line would run along the fringe of, if it did not actually go through, good agricultural land. The miners might also become selectors, and make comfortable homes for their families in the neighbourhood. And the mineowners would be able to greatly extend their operations through supplying steam engines in the Western country. It may be argued that other coal seams may be found nearer Rockhampton, and nearer the main line of railway. But at Clermont the seams have not only been found, but the miners have been supplying the Railway Department with good steam coal from them for years past. In any case the Clermont mines would be able to hold their own in the event of railway communication being provided. The line might be a cheap one. It certainly need not cost £25,000 to construct, and if its net earnings amounted to £1,000 a year there would be more than interest on borrowed money invested. This work might, indeed, be undertaken by the local authority, the Government lending the money for forty years at 4 per cent., or a total of £5 ls., including redemption, per annum. It is therefore not necessary in this case to await parliamentary approval, and work might be at once found for a considerable number of the destitute bushmen in the West. The local authority need not fear suffering a loss by the undertaking, and the Government could itself carry out the work, handing it over on completion to or leasing it from the local authority.

If this Government is so anxious to find employment for the Western bushmen, and to develop the industries of the colony, what objection can be urged to the construction of these twelve miles of railway? It is not as if a private company wanted to charge 50 per cent. more than the State, or as if anyone wanted a telegraphic or telephonic monopoly. It is merely a little State line that is urgently wanted, which has been promised by both the Premier and his predecessor in office, and which has been repeatedly promised in this House, and which the Secretary for Railways promised would be gone on with as soon as the plans were ready, and the money had been voted for its construction. There is another matter I would like to impress upon the Government, and that is the necessity for making additions to the courthouse at Clermont. I have brought this matter up session after session, and I am only making a mere preliminary canter now, because on every possible occasion throughout the session I shall make references to it until the matter is attended to. If the opportunity offers, I shall move the adjournment of the House later on in the session, and I will guarantee that a whole day will be wasted in discussing the matter unless it receives proper attention. The Home Secretary promised last session that the courthouse would be attended to. The citizens, all the local authorities, and all the representative bodies, and the visiting judges have pointed out the disgraceful state that the courthouse is in. It is forty years behind the times, and it is supposed to do duty for every public department in Clermont. There is a big Lands Department business done there, running into thousands of pounds per annum, and it is carried on in an office no bigger than that table, and it seems to me that the time has arrived when a little public money should be

devoted to some of the public buildings in districts of that character. The school there has been attended to, and it is now in a very much better condition than it has ever been in before, but not before it was wanted. There are no other public matters up there to call attention to at the present time, or I would ventilate them if it took till 12 o'clock to do it. I am very pleased to be in a position to congratulate the country upon having survived the maladministration of the Government. I am pleased there is a little surplus of £47,000. I have no doubt that the next financial year will close with a large deficit, seeing that the Federal Government will have by that time taken over our chief revenue producing departments, and the Treasurer will then have to inform the House that he will have to make up the deficit by imposing a direct tax upon land values and upon absentees, and that he will have to impose other forms of direct taxation, so that, although the future looks gloomy at the present time, I do not feel very downcast myself, and I have no doubt the Government do not feel very downcast either, although the Treasurer does not look particularly bright to-night.

On the motion of the TREASURER, the Chairman left the chair, reported [11 p.m. progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that this House do now adjourn. The business on Tuesday next will be the continuation of this debate. As I understand there are only two or three members who wish to speak, I hope the debate will conclude on Tuesday.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I see no reason why the debate on the Financial Statement should not conclude on Tuesday, but, at the same time, I would point out that if anyone has been put to inconvenience over this debate, it certainly has not been the followers of the hon. gentleman. I would like to make this statement, because it is being continually bruited abroad in the Press and by hon. members on the other side that we are wasting the time of the country; and I would like it to be known that during the whole of the debate on the hon. gentleman's Financial Statement there has not been an average of more than four of his supporters sitting behind him, and that the Labour party have had both to keep a quorum and to carry on the business of the country. If there has been any waste of time on the present occasion, I certainly do not think that this party can be held responsible for it.

The PREMIER: I cannot allow the statement of the hon. gentleman to go unchallenged. I have been in the House the whole time this debate has been going on, but the leader of the Opposition must know that if there are many more speeches delivered such as that which we have just listened to from the hon. member for Clermont we cannot possibly keep a House present. He himself could not quietly listen to many such speeches.

Mr. BROWNE: I am not speaking of one speech. Yesterday you had to go and fetch in a quorum yourself.

The PREMIER: I have been in the Chamber during the whole of this debate. I have been a most consistent listener to all the speeches.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear! Why do your supporters not follow your example?

The PREMIER: I am compelled to listen, unfortunately, but I do not think that speeches such as that delivered just now by the member

for Clermont are likely to lead to the elevation of this Chamber, and I am not astonished that very few members stayed to listen to it.

Mr. HIGGS: Would you not give a trifle to have him on your side?

The PREMIER: I have no desire to have him on my side, but if I had I would endeavour to control him. As far as I can see, there should be no difficulty in closing this debate on Tuesday. I can see no object in such very lengthy speeches on this subject.

Mr. KERR: There are a lot of members to speak yet.

The PREMIER: As far as I am concerned I would like to hear every member speak, provided he confined himself within reasonable limits. I like to hear good criticism. I was very glad indeed to listen yesterday to the speech of the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, because he made an excellent speech, and one that we might all be proud to make; but some of the speeches delivered since have had no reference at all to the subject.

Mr. BROWNE: That is a matter of opinion.

The PREMIER: And it is not to be wondered at if members on this side refuse to listen to them.

Mr. BROWNE: If you are content to keep only two or three of your followers here I will only ask the same number of mine to be present. It is just as well that we should understand one another.

The PREMIER: I will not ask the hon. member to keep a House together. I think it is a fair thing that both sides should be present, but it is not to be expected under the circumstances that hon. members will stay and listen to some of the speeches which we have heard.

Mr. HIGGS: The House nearly counted out when the member for Carpentaria was speaking.

The PREMIER: We have plenty of business in front of us, and the speech which the hon. member for Clermont delivered he will deliver half-a-dozen times during the session.

Mr. BROWNE: What do you want to be referring to that one speech so much for?

The PREMIER: The hon. member has kept us here all this time for nothing.

Mr. BROWNE: Oh, that is the grievance. You have missed the train.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past 11 o'clock.