

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 1902**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER, 1902.

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

## QUESTIONS.

## PROPOSED IRRIGATION WORKS, GATTON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

Mr. PAGET (*Maackay*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

1. Has his attention been directed to a statement appearing in the *Maackay Mercury*, of the 13th instant, charging the Principal of the Gatton Agricultural College with having misled Dr. Maxwell on a certain matter in connection with the proposed irrigation works at the college?

2. In view of the great interest shown by the farming community in the proposed irrigation experiment, and as it is reported that the alleged unreliable information given by the Principal has been the means of delaying the experiment, will he cause an inquiry to be made as to the truth or otherwise of the report.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Maackay*) replied—

1. Yes.  
2. As I am already acquainted with all the facts, an inquiry is not necessary.

## CONDUCT OF A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Premier—

1. What did he mean to be inferred from his remark that Mr. Bidington, J.P., Charleville, who was recently convicted of sly grog-selling, was merely "inadvertently guilty" of a "technical breach" of the law by "lending" a case of spirits to a citizen of that town?

2. Is the honourable gentleman aware that Mr. Billington, J.P., according to an advertisement which has been appearing continuously in the *Brisbane Telegraph* for the past two years, is agent for Scotch Cream Whisky?

3. Is it competent for any advertised agent of a particular brand of spirits to open an agency and "lend" cases of liquor to citizens?

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) replied—

1. I meant what I said.  
2. No.  
3. The hon. member should consult a solicitor.

## AMENDMENT OF FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Home Secretary—

Is it the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill this session to amend Part VIII. of the Factories and Shops Act of 1900?

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

## PACIFIC ISLANDERS' PETITION TO THE KING.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*) asked the Attorney-General—

1. Has he seen the statement made by Senator Walker in the Federal Parliament, and reported in the *Federal Hansard* of 10th September, to the effect that the Pacific Islanders' Petition to the King was drafted by the Crown Prosecutor, Mr. J. J. Kingsbury, "at the request of Mr. Rutledge, the Attorney-General of the State"?

2. Is it true that the Crown Prosecutor drafted that petition?

3. Is it true he did so at the request of the Attorney-General?

4. Who called the Attorney-General's attention to the matter?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. Sir A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*) replied—

1. I had not seen the statement before notice of these questions was given.

2. Upon inquiry I learn from Mr. J. J. Kingsbury, barrister-at-law, that he was professionally employed in the ordinary way by a firm of solicitors, acting on behalf of the petitioners, to draft the petition, for which he charged and was paid the usual fee.

3. No.

4. Answered by the above.

## STARVING BLACKS IN EULO DISTRICT.

Mr. LESINA asked the Home Secretary—

1. Is it true that a number of blacks about the Eulo district are in a starving condition at present?

2. Is it true that Mr. Meston refused to pay a sum of £4 to a local storekeeper for rations supplied, on the order of Mr. Meston, to the police for the use of the starving aboriginals?

3. Is it also a fact that Mr. Meston, on the other hand, ordered the payment of a sum of £9 to Mr. Robinson, hotel and store keeper, Eulo, for accommodation supplied during a period of a few days?

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

1. No.  
2. No. The correctness of a voucher for rations was questioned, but the payment thereof has since been authorised.  
3. No.

## PAPERS.

The following paper was laid on the table:—Return to an Order, relative to exemption granted to Mount Chalmers Copper Mines, Limited, made by the House, on motion of Mr. Turner, on the 18th instant.

The HOME SECRETARY: I beg to lay on the table, pursuant to an Order of the House, papers, reports, and correspondence in connection with the cancellation of the wholesale wine and spirit license of Mr. James McCoil, of Nounundra, and in doing so I may state that there are certain police reports of a confidential character which are not included in these documents.

## VOTE FOR PARLIAMENTARY PRINTING, ETC.

The SPEAKER: The vote of £11,700, for "printing, telegrams, stationery, etc.," appearing in the Estimates for the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, being under the control of the President and Mr. Speaker, I think it proper to inform the House of the nature of the arrangements we have made for controlling the expenditure. (1) The work at the printing office in connection with the printing of papers, reports, Bills, or other matter shall be charged to the vote from the time that the same have been ordered by either House to be printed. The Government Printer was, on 22nd August last, instructed accordingly. (2) Printing proposed amendments, other than any which may be proposed by the Government, upon Bills. All these are to be submitted to the Clerk of the House concerned, unless they have been prepared by the Parliamentary Draftsman and printed under his supervision; and the Clerk will in each case give the order for printing. The practice which has obtained for the last few years of printing an extra number of all Bills introduced in the Assembly for the purpose of being included in the bound volumes of "Votes and Proceedings" is to be discontinued, each House keeping in stock a sufficient number for future reference.

RAILWAYS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.  
THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bullooh*), this Bill

was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council by message in the usual form.

#### COMPLAINTS AGAINST MR. H. MESTON.

On the motion of Mr. LESINA, it was formally resolved—

That there be laid on the table of the House copies of the whole of the papers, correspondence, etc., in connection with the inquiry into certain complaints made against Mr. Harold Meston, Protector of Aborigines, held last February at Eulo, before Mr. Moran, late police magistrate at Cunnamulla.

#### THE UNEMPLOYED DIFFICULTY.

##### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

The SPEAKER: I have received from the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, notice in writing of his intention to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of debating a definite matter of public importance—namely, “That it is desirable that the Government should take immediate steps to provide work for the large numbers of unemployed throughout Queensland.”

Mr. KIDSTON: I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion supported?

Not less than five members having risen in their places,

Mr. KIDSTON said: I may say that I intimated to the Premier this morning my intention to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of calling attention to this matter. I exceedingly regret that I should have again to call attention to it, but the circumstances of the colony have left me no option but to press this matter on the attention of the Government. I have no desire—and I wish the Premier to understand that clearly—to attempt in any way to make political capital out of the unfortunate position in which many people find themselves. I have no desire even to blame the Government unduly, for I recognise quite well that to a very large extent the Government are in no way responsible for the present unfortunate state of affairs. I simply wish to press upon their attention, and to get other members to press upon their attention, the need of doing something to provide work for the large number of the unemployed throughout Queensland. Some ten weeks ago, at the opening of Parliament, I called the attention of the Premier then to the desperate position of thousands of people throughout Queensland through lack of employment. I referred at the time to the condition of things in Rockhampton—that part of Queensland with which I was best acquainted—and I referred to a petition which had been presented by my hon. colleague the previous day. It was a petition to this House from the unemployed in Rockhampton, in which they set out what they had done by way of helping themselves, and what the hospital and the local bodies had done for them, and showing that some £600 had been spent towards ameliorating their condition, and they prayed this honourable House to take such steps as in its wisdom it should deem best to relieve them from the large amount of distress which then existed, and which was likely to exist for many months. At that time the Premier treated the matter very lightly; he told us that he was astonished at the few unemployed there were in Queensland then, and that the only complaint had come from Rockhampton. “I believe,” the hon. gentleman went on, “that the bulk of the unemployed have gone to New South Wales.” At that time, as the Premier knows, Lake’s Creek had dismissed over 400 hands, so

that the condition of things in this respect in my own district can be well imagined. After all those people tried to do for themselves, after the unmistakable recognition of the state of things by the action of the local bodies in specially devoting funds to this purpose, the Government have not lifted their little finger in the matter. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh, yes.] Oh, no. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is there not a mile or two of line being built to the wharves?] Three-quarters of a mile; I admit that. But I think the Minister will admit that the Government have done very little more than lift their little fingers. When I came here this day week I found a great crowd of the Brisbane unemployed besieging the House, and quite an array of policemen. I thought we had Wat Tyler back again. But they seemed peaceably disposed, and they asked me in the lobby to ask the Premier to receive a deputation from their number—that they had asked him to receive them, and they thought they had got an unsatisfactory reply. I asked the Premier a question on the subject, and he promised to receive the deputation. He received the deputation last Friday, and after the men had stated their case, what did the hon. gentleman tell them? It was a good thing that the Secretary for Railways was at his elbow, otherwise I don’t know what would have happened. The Premier said—

He need not tell the deputation he was very sorry indeed that they had to come to him. The Government was considering every day the best means at the present time to help them. All the public works they could pay for were being gone on with. Still the Minister for Railways said that any married men who wanted work would be given it on the railways.

So that after three months’ consideration the Government were just back to where they were at the opening of Parliament. At the opening of Parliament the Minister for Railways said there was never a man came to him and said he had a family to maintain that he did not give him a chance. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I say the same thing now.] The unemployed took the advice given them, and got up a list of something like 145 married men, with somewhere about 400 children depending upon them, and there were in addition some sixty single men. Bad as that would be, it would be a good thing if that represented the whole number of unemployed in Brisbane; but we know that many men have to be in very desperate circumstances indeed before they will put their names on an unemployed list of this kind, or make any special cry of destitution. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They do not put down their names; they are put down for them.] When I was trying to get an accurate number of unemployed in Rockhampton, I found the same hesitation—which I think is very creditable to people—in marking themselves down publicly as unemployed. They went to the Minister for Railways yesterday; and I would just like to say to the hon. gentleman that after he had been with the Premier at the deputation on Friday last, and after he had expressed his opinion there, I don’t know what he wanted with another deputation. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I didn’t want it.] All he had to do was to intimate the fact that he had work to give, and if the men did not like to go and ask for it, that was their own lookout. There need not be any insulting talk between men asking for work and the Minister. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was not. It was the men who did not want work. That is the difference.] No man who does not want work has any business there at all. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That’s exactly what I said.] I give the Minister credit for having attempted to do something in the matter; but, though there

is such a number of men wanting work, he only thought he could find work for about thirty men about Ipswich. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: At once.] Surely there are plenty of idle men about Ipswich, and there is no need to send thirty men from Brisbane to do that work. And, in any case, what are the remaining 170 to do? The Minister for Railways may be doing what little he can, but putting off the question does not exonerate the Premier from his responsibility in the matter. Here are 200 men, and the Minister does what he can—he finds work for thirty. Is that all it is the duty of the Government to do? The Premier told the deputation that nobody in this State need starve; that rations were being distributed at the Labour Bureau. I admit that it is the easiest, but it is the most shiftless and degrading and unprofitable method of attempting to deal with such a difficulty. This is a thing that ought not to be resorted to until the very last extremity. I am sure the Minister for Agriculture will agree with me that you ought never to give a man rations if you can give him work. It appears, from a letter which appeared in the *Observer* of Saturday, that some of these men took the Premier's advice, and went to the bureau. It is stated that—

One has his wife in the hospital, one child which the neighbour next door is keeping for him. He was refused. Mr. Brennan said, "We have got too many on now—over 400 families."

Then it goes on with other two similar cases. The *Evening Observer* of yesterday remarks concerning this—

The letter from Mr. J. E. Todd, president of the unemployed committee, published in our Saturday's issue, is pathetic reading, and emphasises the necessity for some definite and concerted action in reference to the sad circumstances of many in our city.

Now, the Premier at that deputation said the men lately discharged from Eagle Farm had probably saved money. I understand that the great majority of those men received only 5s. 6d. a day, and, without wishing to be impertinent, I submit that the Premier could not save much out of 5s. 6d. a day. I do not grumble at the wages paid, but I say it is clearly unfair to expect the men to have saved enough money to enable them to stand a long siege such as they are likely to have to stand. As usual, the Premier tried to disguise the fact of there being many unemployed. He said there were not many unemployed in the colony. I do not profess to consider that the unemployed question in Brisbane is of more importance than it is in Rockhampton or Toowoomba. I am simply calling attention to the matter for the purpose of having something done throughout the whole colony. It has been impossible for me to get any accurate estimate of the number of men unemployed throughout the colony, but everyone knows that the numbers are very large in almost every district, and that as an inevitable result there is widespread distress. I am aware that statements have been made which seem to contradict that. I have an extract from a letter from Mr. A. Crombie, published in the *Courier* on the 2nd instant, and I give the facts which came under his own notice. He says—

I have now before me a letter from the manager of meatworks situated near Barcaldine, stating that he could not treat his sheep because men were unobtainable. From Longreach I am advised that my drover could not travel sheep in to the railway in flocks because no men are to be had. From near Hughenden I hear that sheep cannot be fed upon scrub because men cannot be procured.

These things may be quite true. Anyone who knows the condition of the West at the present time will know that men may be absent from a

particular place when a sudden demand for labour arises. In small country places it is impossible for them to live there long waiting for work, and I would like to ask whether, in view of things of this kind, the Premier or the Government have attempted, either by means of the Labour Bureau or any other agency, to bring the men who want work in contact with the men who want work done? It is a scandal that there should be any difficulty in finding men to do work in Queensland at the present time. It is evidence of the very grossest mismanagement, because it is certainly through no scarcity of men. I think if starving stock can be travelled on the railways, the Government might see that starving men have at least the same facilities offered to them. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you mean half rates?] If the Government can get half rates, so much the better, but if it is a question of the men remaining idle or paying no rate at all, it would be more profitable to carry them free. Now, in reply to the Premier's repeated statements that there are not many unemployed in the colony, I wish to give a few facts. The other day I got a letter from a public meeting held at Clermont, asking me to press on the attention of the Government the need for something being done in that district to relieve the large number of unemployed men, and suggesting that the Government should go on with the Clermont-Blair Athol Railway extension of 12 miles, for which money was voted two years ago. That is one place, in addition to the Brisbane and Rockhampton line. In regard to the Premier's own constituency of Townsville, I saw in the *Worker* of 19th July that there are hundreds of destitute families there, and it goes on to say that the applications for relief were so numerous that the much-harassed police magistrate wired to the police magistrates at Longreach, Hughenden, and Winton, asking if work could be found there, and he received a reply saying that the Government were feeding a great number of persons at Winton. Then the *Worker* points out that the committee of the Workers' Union organised a labour bureau of their own, and they wrote to the sugar-growers all over the State, offering to supply gangs of reliable white labour for the cane-fields. And here is a suggestive thing about the matter—

This no sooner became known than the union was deluged with letters from men in every part of the country offering to take work on the plantations.

I know that men at Rockhampton offered to work on the plantations, and it is the same all over the colony. In Ipswich there were 158 appeals for work and food during April, and 720 for the six months then ended, and the *Courier* correspondent says there are a large number of *bonâ fide* unemployed in Ipswich district; yet that is the place where the Secretary for Railways proposes to send thirty unemployed from Brisbane. In Warwick, the *Courier* correspondent says there are a number of men camped on the outskirts of the town waiting for work. At Bowen Meatworks, as soon as all the billets had been filled, seventy men had to be refused. At Maryborough the *Courier* representative says that the state of the local labour market "is bad, and every day becoming worse." The Barcaldine correspondent of the *Courier* states: "There is a fearful number of unemployed in this district." A Western man, writing to the *Worker*, says there are a great number of unemployed men camped about Barcaldine, Longreach, Hughenden, and other places. At one station over 100 men applied for thirty vacancies. On the Darling Downs the *Darling Downs Gazette* reports numbers of unemployed in all the larger towns of this district, and says, "The strange faces we see waiting about the streets are the faces of men who have been forced into

idleness; the faces of men who would work if work were available." The *Mining Journal*, at Ravenswood, commenting on the increased demand for Government rations, says that "the majority of these unemployed, it must be confessed, are *bona fide* working men honestly searching for employment to enable them to live." [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is the *Worker's* version.] I am quoting from the *Mining Journal*. The same statement is made about Bundaberg, Croydon, Mosman, Alpha, Mount Morgan, Chillagoe, Peak Downs, Cairns, Barcoo, and Mirani. With regard to the interjection of the Secretary for Railways that I am giving the *Worker's* version, it is quite impossible for me to speak of my own knowledge, but I do not think there is very much doubt in the mind of the Secretary for Railways, or any other Minister, or any member of this House, that there are a large number of unemployed, and consequent destitution in a great many districts in this State. And in the face of this condition of affairs the Government are practically doing nothing. The deputation which waited on the Premier the other day are just where they were three months ago. The Premier could do nothing at all; he was helpless, and the Secretary for Railways provided work for some thirty men. I think the Secretary for Railways deserves credit for at least attempting to do something, but I do not think he has done so much as he should have done. In my district there is a considerable stretch of railway for which the money was passed by this House two years ago. In the Clermont district there is another 12 miles of railway for which the money was passed two years ago, and yet not a pick has been put into the ground. I suppose the Minister will say that he requires to get the sanction of the House to an alteration of the route of the Gladstone to Rockhampton Railway. But the House has been nearly three months in session, and no step has been taken to enable him to go on with this work at once. Whatever may happen to the unemployed who can see the Minister personally in Brisbane, that gives no help to the thousands of unemployed throughout the State who cannot come to Brisbane and get a job from the Secretary for Railways. I had other things to say, but as my time is up I shall conclude by saying that I do not seek in this matter to make an attack on the Government, or to make any political capital out of it. I simply ask the House to press upon the Government the need there is for their attempting to rise to the situation in this matter, and I do not ask anything further than that. I quite recognise the Government's difficulty, but I do not think they are doing all that they might do, and I hope the House will insist upon the Government taking some immediate steps for the relief of the unemployed.

The PREMIER: I quite admit that the Government are unable to find work for all the unemployed in Queensland, but they have been finding work for months past for hundreds of men, for over 1,000 men, I think, in different parts of the State—not only in Brisbane, but nearly everywhere where the House has authorised them to construct works. We have men working on the railway to the Tweed River, and on the Esk Railway, and a great number are working on the railways about Ipswich and Brisbane. We also have men working on the Nanango line, and at Rockhampton. There is one contract let for the railway between Gladstone and Rockhampton, and a great number of men are working there now; and but for the agitation of the people of Rockhampton for the alteration of the route the Government might have let a contract for the

second portion of that railway. But we have had to get fresh surveys made, and reports from engineers on the proposed alteration of route, and all this takes time. Very likely in a short time the Secretary for Railways will ask the House to sanction the alteration of the route. We have just finished the line to Mackay, and we are building a line from Mareeba to Atherton; also one from Hughenden towards Winton. The Secretary for Railways assures me that for some time past he has managed to get work for any married man going to him for employment. There was not the slightest occasion for the deputation of the unemployed to come to me the other day, as everything that can be done to find work is being done. As for the Labour Bureau, every member of this House knows that for years past the Government have tried to find work for those who seek work at the bureau, and are in daily correspondence with employers and immigration agents at the different parts of the State with the object of bringing together those who want workmen and those who want work. Of course I know that a number of people are too independent to go to the Labour Bureau, and I give them every credit for their independence. They prefer not to ask for rations, but to seek for work themselves. As to the men discharged from the meatworks, that happens every year, but, unfortunately, they were discharged earlier this year than they are in good times when there are plenty of stock. But the bulk of those men have been in receipt of good wages for a considerable time. I do not believe the statement that there are from 2,400 to 2,800 unemployed owing to these discharges. I have seen the meetings of unemployed in Brisbane. They are held right opposite my office, and I have rarely seen more than 100 or 150 men present, and the bulk of them I am certain are not looking for work at all. No one deplores more than I do the state of the country and the want of work, and the Government are doing all they can to find work for as many men as possible on public works. Every member of the Government is only too delighted to see the Minister for Railways putting on so many men, and we are urging him to find work for as many men as he possibly can. But our means are limited. We have not got the Bank of England behind us, and I do not think there is the number of unemployed in the colony as the acting leader of the Opposition says there are, or as the leader of the recent deputation said there were. [Mr. KIDSTON: Then it will be easier to deal with them.] We are, and we have been, dealing with them as far as we can. I have not heard a single complaint from Townsville; although I know a number of men are badly off there, they have made no complaints. Since I have been in the House to-day, I met a gentleman in the gallery who represents the Mount Perry Copper Company, and he says he is prepared to employ fifty men to-morrow. Then the other day I met a gentleman on the railway who was coming down to try and get men to cut scrub to keep his cattle alive. Another man was taking eight or ten men with him for the same work. There is a great deal of work to be found in the outside districts, but unfortunately men congregate in towns in bad times. We have not the means the other colonies have. We can't spend £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 of loan money, but we are spending what we possibly can, and we are spending it on day labour so as to try and find work for all and sundry. The Government are not picking out only the strong and stalwart, but are giving work to all classes. If a man cannot do a full day's work he is given work on contract, and I hope we will relieve the pressure. Everyone knows

the state of the colony now. Only yesterday I saw a member of the Board of Waterworks— [Mr. KIDSTON: What do you mean by "the state of the colony," if there are no unemployed?] I say that there are not so many unemployed as the acting leader of the Opposition says there are, and I don't think that Mr. Todd properly represents those 2,800 he spoke about. I remember a former leader of the Labour party said there were 97,000 unemployed in Queensland. Touching the employment in the sugar fields to cut cane, a member of the present Ministry, Mr. Gray, informed me and a public meeting that he had 1,000 acres of cane to cut on the Johnstone River: that he had advertised for men to cut that cane, and he only got applicants to cut 33 acres of that cane. [Mr. KENNA: That has been refuted.] That is Mr. Gray's statement, and I presume he speaks with authority, because he is the owner of the cane. I know it is not pleasant work. [Mr. KIDSTON: What about the rest of the cane?] I suppose it was cut by coloured labour; but he was prepared to give 5s. a ton for the cutting of that cane by white labour. Then the Government have let a big contract for the Lands Office, where there are a large number of men employed, and yet some hon. members opposite say that we should not build that office—that we might find something better to do with the money. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] They would like to see these men out of work. [Opposition members: No, no!] The whole of this money is being spent on labour. As our lands are our best asset, we should have a decent building to carry on the business in. Then there is a fine courthouse at Gympie, and I was told that in Gympie there are more men earning wages than ever there were. In Charters Towers things are prosperous, and there are a great number of men working there. The goldfields and mineral fields are taking up a large number of men. [Mr. LESINA: Your office says there are 300 unemployed at Charters Towers.] That is not a great number out of 25,000. You will always find men out of work, and I am told that the young men are given the preference now. The old men cannot perform the same work as young men can, so the young men get the preference. Now, again, the Secretary for Railways came to the rescue of Mount Morgan, where there are 1,300 men employed. He is carrying water there under cost price, not only for the Mount Morgan Company, but for the 10,000 people in Mount Morgan. I think that is showing that the Government and the Minister for Railways are doing everything they can to relieve the pressure. We were asked to give the people at Mount Morgan the water for nothing, but that we refused to do; but the water is carried to the township at a very low rate. We will still go on in this way, and I hope more work will be found. I believe a small line will be built to the coalmines at Ipswich, and perhaps that will mean the employment of fifty or 100 men for a few months, and we may be able to get the alterations in plans of the connection between Rockhampton and Gladstone passed, and call for tenders after that. We must remember that our means of finding work are limited by the amount the Treasurer has to spend. [Mr. KIDSTON: Limited by the amount of money spent on immigration.] All the money spent on immigration would not give very much work. [Mr. W. HAMILTON: £14,000 or £15,000 would give a lot of work.] I would like Labour to do something in the way of finding work. Two years ago the acting leader of the Opposition was responsible for the non-passing of one line of railway which I believe would have given employment to 2,000 men. At that time copper was £70 a ton, now it is £52 a ton. Had the line passed, I believe sufficient money could

have been found in England with which to build the railway; but the hon. member was one of those who blocked it, and he seems rather proud of what he did. We are anxious to see people coming in here and spending their money here, for we know that no Government can keep all the unemployed going. Even if they could, it would not be a very wise thing to do. It would soon be the ruin of the colony. It is not the province of the Government to provide every man with work, and besides we have not got the means of doing that. [Mr. HARDACRE: Deserving, genuine men should get it.] We are trying to find them as much work as we possibly can, and I believe private people and municipalities and other local authorities might come forward and help us. Finding work for the [4.30 p.m.] unemployed should not all fall upon the Government. I think the Federal Government might assist their friends at the present time. They are doing nothing. They will spend no money unless it is found by the States. Let them float a loan and do a little work. [Mr. KIDSTON: How would you feel if our unemployed applied to the Federal Government for work?] I would be only too pleased if the Federal Government would give them work. We were told that the Federal Government would build a new post office in Brisbane, but they have not done so. The member for Maranoa, Mr. Page, told his constituents they were going to build a post office in Charleville and some other places, and we want them to start those works. I am glad the acting leader of the Opposition has said this is not a party question, and I can assure him that we are only too anxious to find employment for all who need employment. If the Government can bring together men who want work and the men who want work done, we should be very glad to do it. In every district we have some work going on, and we should go on doing it as far as we possibly can. But notwithstanding what has been said, I do not believe the conditions are worse in Queensland than in the other colonies, as far as want of work is concerned. I find in reading the papers that in New Zealand money is being collected privately for the unemployed. We know that in Melbourne the other day there was a large meeting of the unemployed; and there is want of work in all the colonies. I believe we are doing as much as any Government in the matter at the present time with the exception of New South Wales. The New South Wales Government last year floated a very large loan, and are finding a great deal of employment; but as far as our means will allow we are doing as much as any other Government in Australia; and we will continue to do so, notwithstanding the remarks of the acting leader of the Opposition.

Mr. KENNA (*Bowen*): It seems to me that there is an evident intention on the part of the Government to belittle the severity of the distress amongst the unemployed. I have here the report of the Government Labour Bureau, showing the condition of affairs which prevailed in this State during last year, and I hold that the conditions since then have become very much aggravated. A short survey of this report will show that there is a great amount of distress not only in Brisbane but in every other part of Queensland, and that the main routes of the State are lined with men looking for work. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not at all.] This report will show that it is so. Here are a few extracts: Aramac—no work; Arrilalah—little or no employment going on; Augathella—labourmarket very bad; Barcardine—the grievous drought has borne very heavily on the labouring class; poverty and desolation appear on all sides; Banana—no applications from employers;

Bedourie—no difficulty in procuring the necessary labour in the district; Beenleigh—a few men making their way to Nerang Railway in quest of work; Blackall—labour plentiful; numbers of men travelling looking for work; stations not employing many hands; poor outlook for those travelling in search of employment; young men as well as old do not know where to go to find any; given relief to over 300 persons during the year; Bollon—very little doing; Boulia—supply more than equal to the demand; Burketown—strongly recommend men looking for work not to come to this district; some of our resident population appear to find it hard to keep the pot boiling; Bundaberg—793 applicants during the year; Cardwell—no demand for labour; supply always greater than demand; Caboolture—very few hands employed in this district; continual stream of travellers moving up and down through this township; every one of them is quite hard up; no chance of work, so I am compelled to issue rations; issued sixty-six orders last month; Childers—during the season nearly 200 Hindoos found employment in the district in connection with cane cultivation, which would partly account for the small demand for white labour; Charleville—many destitute and men looking for work; Charters Towers—supply in excess of demand, but a greater number seeking employment; Cloncurry—swagmen passed through this district; Eidsvold—rations issued to thirty-three persons seeking work; Eulo—frequent applications for rations from men travelling down the Paroo in search of work; Gatton—the South African contingent considerably relieved the labour market in this district; Georgetown—a number of men have been travelling from the Chillagoe district seeking employment; few of them have been able to obtain it here; Geraldton—ninety-nine travellers in search of employment have had rations issued to them to carry them on their way during the year; Gin Gin—swagmen travelling through the district; Goondiwindi—about seventy men looking for work were supplied with Government relief; Herberton—a great quantity of men have been seeking the usual relief from the police magistrate; Hughenden—a marked increase in the number of travellers looking for rations this year compared with last; number of travellers supplied with rations, ninety-five; number of families, twenty-three; the twenty-three families consisted of 115 persons; Ipswich—swagmen-class very much in evidence, and a considerable number of these relieved at the bureau with rations; Jondaryn—a great many men unemployed travelling through this district in search of work; Kilkivan—a large number of unemployed passed through here during the year; 195 men were supplied with orders for rations; Maryborough—many good men out of employment; Maytown—a few travelling miners passing here on their way from Chillagoe to Ebagoolah were assisted with rations by the police magistrate; Mitchell—during the year many of the unemployed went scalping, and the amount realised simply repaid them; Mount Morgan—supply of labour has far exceeded the demand; Muttaborra—given relief rations to thirty-eight destitute travellers in search of work to enable them to go further. At Rockhampton relief has been given to 1,212 destitute persons—and in a great number of cases men with large families—an increase of 977 as compared with the previous twelve months. At Roma, the police magistrate says: "People take anything they can get now, in some cases working for rations and a shilling or two." At Southport there are several swagmen passing through daily, looking for employment, and cannot get it. At Stanthorpe, applications have been made by travellers for employment and

rations. St. George—a number of Chinamen have lately arrived who have been engaged for ring-barking on stations. The Tambo clerk of petty sessions says: "Relief was afforded at various times to a considerable number of travellers, chiefly old men in search of work." The clerk of petty sessions of Thornborough says: "In December there were probably 1,800 souls in Chillagoe, and on New Year's Day there was not a drink sold in any of the hotels, the town being so deserted from the closing down of the mines. This has caused a great number of these unemployed to come to Thornborough and pass through this district in search of work." Tiaro reports that a great many men are at present travelling seeking employment. At Townsville, where the Premier led us to infer there were not a great many destitute persons, the assistant immigration agent says: "From the number of applicants applying for relief, I am sorry to say that there appears to be a great number of unemployed going about; but that is to be expected always at the close of the year, owing to the meatworks being stopped and closed down. The destitution amongst families is much in excess of former years. The heads of families being mostly unable to obtain employment, their wives and families have nothing to live on, and therefore they make application at this office for relief." The clerk of petty sessions at Winton reports that numbers of labourers anxious and willing to find employment have had to walk from end to end of this and neighbouring districts and then failed to find even a day's work. I say that is a most deplorable state of affairs. I would like to refute a statement made by the Premier with regard to the difficulty of obtaining labour at Geraldton to clear cane. There is a letter in the *Worker* of 23rd August from Mr. G. F. Stephenson, in which he says—

There are only two paddocks of cane on the river that are registered for rebate—one of 32 acres at Innishoven, and another of 23 acres at Mundoo; a total of 55 acres. The 32 acres at Innishoven have been trashed and taken off by white men at 5s. a day. I am in a position to say with certainty that no difficulty was experienced by the manager in obtaining the necessary labour. In fact, several gangs of white labourers could have been organised at that time. There has been a great number of unemployed here for several months, both white and coloured. I have been told by a friend of mine, a cane-farmer and an employer of coloured labour, that Indians have offered to cut and load cane at 1s. 6d. a ton; also, that his neighbour had let some cane-planting to Indians at 13s. an acre, and that he himself had an offer from the Indians to plant at 10s. an acre.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is going beyond the fair limits of discussion on the question before the House. The adjournment of the House has been moved for the purpose of calling attention to the necessity for the Government taking immediate steps to provide work for the unemployed, and the discussion should be confined to that proposition.

Mr. KENNA: I am very sorry that statements made by the Premier, which appear to have no foundation, should not be allowed to be refuted. I have to some extent endeavoured to refute them, and have quoted the reports of the Government Labour Bureau to show the distress that is prevalent. Further evidence of the distress prevalent in Brisbane is afforded by the reports of the Salvation Army for December last year. The Rescue Home at Taringa treated 66 adults and 5 infants; the Maternity Home at the Hamilton treated 71 adults and 93 infants; the Maternity Home at Charters Towers treated 35 adults and 72 infants; the Girls' Industrial Home at Yeronga had a total number of inmates of 39. The Prison Gate Brigade at Red Hill dealt with 80 persons; the Boys' Industrial Home at Riverview dealt with

57. inmates. During the year the Workman's Metropole in Brisbane supplied 19,107 beds and 20,020 meals; the Prison Gate Brigade supplied 3,624 beds and 10,838 meals; the Boys' Home supplied 18,467 beds and 57,070 meals; the Girls' Home, Yeronga, supplied 12,096 beds and 36,288 meals; and the Women's Homes supplied 10,743 beds and 42,772 meals.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KENNA: No further evidence is, I think, necessary to show the deplorable amount of distress existing in the colony, so that there is the fullest justification for complaining that no effort is being made to cope with the difficulty. The same slipshod methods that characterise most of the actions of the Government characterise their plan of dealing with the unemployed. Underneath all the talk of providing work for the unemployed, I believe there is no sincerity and very little humanity. Why not employ those people in clearing Crown lands of heavy timber? An intelligent farmer from South Australia came here and visited Warra, Chinchilla, and the North Coast, but could find no land suitable for settling on except heavily-timbered land. In New Zealand they have embarked the unemployed on the enterprise of clearing Crown lands, and it has proved most productive work, and has more than recouped the Government for the expenditure they incurred. I am strongly of opinion that all this latent energy which is now going to waste could be turned to lucrative account if the Government would only make up their minds to tackle this question in serious earnest. Another method is to assist the unemployed with rations, so that they may go out on poor man's goldfields, where they can always go prospecting, and where they will have a chance of getting something better than they have at present. A system of this kind has, I believe, been very successful in New South Wales, and has led to an increase in the output of gold, and enabled numbers of men to send for their wives and families and settle down on deserted goldfields which have been revived by their efforts. I do not see any reason why such a system should not be adopted in Queensland, where there are any amount of poor man's goldfields. Again, in New South Wales they have several State farms where men are given employment on the condition that they do a certain amount of work; and according to a report on one of those State farms, which I read the other day, the system has worked successfully. It is no use crying out about our "vast resources" while we have at the same time men on every road in the State with idle hands. We want to organise those idle hands, and employ their latent energy on our vast resources. Again, in New South Wales they had some success as regards irrigation works. Bores are sunk, and the unemployed are set to work to prepare the land for settlement, with the result that a deal of such land has been taken up and occupied, and the increase in the value of the land more than compensates the Government for their outlay. The unemployed difficulty is very acute now, but it will shortly be accentuated. The other day the Lake's Creek Meatworks discharged 500 men, and the Bowen, Burdekin, and Ross Creek Meatworks will shortly close down. All these things must tend further to accentuate the very grievous distress which exists. I hold that instead of dealing with this question in a slipshod fashion, the Government should attempt some organised system of dealing with the unemployed which will repay them for the initial expenditure.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no doubt that the question before the Chamber this evening is somewhat important.

It would be an important matter at any time, and under any circumstances, to see that the labour of any country was as fully employed as possible. That is an economic principle which is, I presume, known to the hon. member for Bowen and the hon. member for Rockhampton. I have listened with some pleasure, mixed with pain, to the two members on the other side who have spoken on this question. What do their arguments consist of? A tirade of abuse directed against the Government because they have not done something. But those hon. members sat down without telling us what the Government ought to do. They said we should adopt some well educated scheme, but did not tell us what that scheme was. [Mr. KENNA: I told you of four schemes.] The hon. member told us that we should do something like what they do in New Zealand, where they clear Crown lands by means of the unemployed. That is a terrible charge to make against New Zealand—that in the absence of drought, with good average seasons, and under normal conditions, the Government are forced to find work for the unemployed. We never had such a state of things in this country under normal conditions. The people here are fully employed when normal conditions prevail. The hon. member for Bowen told the House that the roads are lined with persons out of employment. But in making that statement the hon. member quoted from a report which is eighteen months or fifteen months old. I am free to admit that things were worse fifteen or eighteen months ago than they are now. I know that it is so in the Western districts particularly, where so many men have gone to New South Wales, or elsewhere, that there is now a scarcity of labour. I was out there a couple of months ago, and was told that a number of men had struck work for 35s. a week, and were out for three weeks because they could not get it; and Mr. Hamilton, of Tambo, told me that he was taking up six men from Brisbane. The report from which the hon. member for Bowen quoted was for fifteen or eighteen months ago, but the question we have to deal with now is one of urgent public importance, not one fifteen months old. I find that in to-day's *Evening Observer*, a paper which is not unfriendly to hon. members opposite, there is the following telegram:—

Thargomindah, 23rd September.

Great difficulty is being experienced by the pastoralists to obtain shearers and rouseabouts. South Comongin and Dynevor Downs stations have had to postpone their shearing, as they are unable to obtain men, and Mount Margaret is also short of shearers. Forty labourers could obtain constant work in the district as scrubcutters and rouseabouts for a few months.

That is the statement of a *Courier* correspondent, and I know myself that it is a fact. We have been told that the Government should do something like what is being done in New South Wales. I was passing through New South Wales about two months ago, and picking up a copy of the *Daily Telegraph* I found that Mr. O'Sullivan, the Minister for Works, said to a deputation which waited upon him, "Why don't you go prospecting? This is exactly the time for it, as the rivers are low." I do not think he was prepared to do what our Premier told the deputation two days ago he would do, and that was to give rations to single men who will go prospecting. [Mr. KERR: What is the use of men going prospecting if they do not know the colour of gold?] They must be an ignorant class whom hon. members opposite represent if they do not know the colour of gold. If men shift about, and get among other people, they will get a knowledge of these things. A great many persons have engaged in

many things that they knew nothing about, but if they have been willing, and have had ordinary intelligence, they have soon picked up information about those things. I had arranged with the hon. member for Clermont to receive a deputation at my office at 11 o'clock yesterday, and I waited half-an-hour for them, but they did not come, so that I could only conclude that there was nothing pressing in the matter. At all events, the fact remains. We get men

from New Zealand, South Australia, and everywhere else—we have 10,000 New South Wales people here in Queensland according to the census returns—and is it our duty to find work for them at 7s. a day? Queensland men in New South Wales don't get a day's work at that rate—they get 5s. a day; and we are supposed to give New South Wales men 7s. a day. [Mr. LESINA: Only forty-one New South Wales men came here last year. That is the official report.] I admit that probably more men went from Queensland into New South Wales than came from New South Wales into Queensland. A great many people from the West have gone into New South Wales, and probably the hon. member means that the balance is forty-one who came in. [Mr. LESINA: No.] However, we have the 10,000. We have had so many charges levelled against us that I will not have time to reply to them all in the manner I should like. I have been charged with sending men to Ipswich. Now, Ipswich is doing very well. There is an enormous amount of public money being spent there—£300,000 within the last two years; and if men from all over the colony come to the capital, I have the right to send them to Ipswich or Rockhampton, or anywhere I like; and I am going to do that, irrespective of any member of Parliament. That is my business. [Mr. KIDSTON: That does not solve the unemployed difficulty.] The hon. member has not solved it. I repeat that every married man who has come to me during the last few months, and has been willing to undertake the work I have offered him, has obtained that work. When men came to my office about a month ago asking for work, I sent some to Kilkivan and some to Southport. Statements have been made in the Press that these men could not get rations, but in cases where men had no money the inspector of engineering went over the line and got credit for these men on his own responsibility—guaranteed it himself. Moreover, some of them left the work with money in their pockets with which to buy rations, and I have seen three or four that I gave work to back again among the unemployed. Of course the work is hard, but if we pay men 7s. a day I want 7s. worth of work, and I am going to get it. A great many of these men left, either because they would not or could not do the work. They were not sacked hurriedly; they were allowed a week or two to get hard and into shape, and the most liberal construction is put on the business. I think I will be able to find work for all the married men who are able to do it. But I can't find work for accountants or printers, although I am willing to give them the kind of work I have to offer. The Premier has offered to find rations for single men, to enable them to go prospecting, so they will not starve; and there is no element of charity in it, because, if they make a rich mineral discovery, that will confer a great benefit on the country, so there is nothing to be ashamed of in the matter. If I find work for the married men, and the single men are to get rations so that they can go prospecting, in what dilemma are we placed? I am not anxious, as a matter of policy to go hunting round for men and offering them work. What would happen if I did that? Every man in an inferior billet—getting 15s. or

£1 a week—would throw it up, and come to the Government for work. I am not going to find work for those persons who are in fixed billets, but I am doing my level best to find employment for men who are out of employment through no fault of their own. The Premier said that we were going to start certain works, if I get the permission of the House; but I will anticipate that, and chance the pleasure of the House in the matter. I refer to several small branch lines connecting different coalmines, and this will give employment for a good few men for a month or two. I was in Ipswich to-day, and I found a considerable quantity of earth outside the new workshops which will have to be shifted for sidings, and such like, and that will give a good lot of work; probably it will run into tens of thousands of yards, and it will have to be done. I have decided to put them on to such work as will enable them to make the amount of money they render service for, based upon the wages which any man paid 7s. a day—I will give them full value for their work. I think I will be able to take more than thirty; probably I will take 100 men there. With regard to the *bona fides* of these hundreds of men, I don't think there are anything like the number of men out of employment that has been made out. You will also find a number of unemployed who won't work; I have seen several instances of it this year, and men who leave work on their own account don't deserve much consideration. [Mr. JACKSON: Some of them said they could not get beef.] I think a man is an epicure who complains about not getting good beef when other people can't get it. I find the same difficulty myself. [Mr. KENNA: What are you doing for the unemployed outside?] I have read a telegram from the South-west, stating that they can't get sufficient men there, and I say unhesitatingly that that is the condition of things now. [Mr. KENNA: What about the North?] Telegrams in the Press tell the same condition of affairs in the North. There are a large number of men travelling with sheep to grass, who in normal times would not be engaged in this work. A good many of the unemployed are of the same class as those who are generally travelling round from town to town, and asking the police magistrates for rations. I saw a sample of that myself at Gladstone. There was a young fellow weighing 15 or 16 stone, and twenty-five or twenty-six years old, had rations from the police magistrate; he would not work, but would go to the next police magistrate for rations. He said he would make the Government keep him. Applications may be made by the same person 365 times a year, and that is how the figures which the hon. member quoted are made up to a large extent. There is a certain class who are simply built of roving principles. They won't settle down. As soon as they get £1 they must go to the first public-house and knock it down, and then they want another job. [Mr. W. HAMILTON: There is the class of men who helped you along.] I never wanted help from them. I helped them more than they helped me. When I came to this country I took 15s. a week with Mr. Grimes, and did not go about looking for rations, and no union compelled me to loaf if I could not get 7s. a day. I never endeavoured to cut down wages. Rather than cut wages down I would prefer to give men work on such conditions that they could make 7s. or 8s. a day, and if they could earn only 4s. a day they should get only 4s. a day. I think that is the best course to adopt. I saw this thing coming two or three years ago, and if I had adopted the principle of making our railways by contract and bringing men from New South Wales and other places, there would

be a good many more men out of employment now. The hon. member admits that the action of the Government with regard to day labour has provided a good deal of employment, but he asks at the same time what we are doing. We are doing as much as we can, having regard to the facts that the resources of the Government are limited. I do not know whether we can go on very long as we are doing; unless we get more money we cannot. But members on the other side have taken action calculated to embarrass the Government with regard to getting the necessary funds for carrying on necessary public works and finding work for the unemployed. Before sitting down I would like to say that Brisbane is one-fourth of the colony in point of population, and it is only natural that there should be a very large number of unemployed here, and that the expense on that account should be correspondingly large. I am exceedingly sorry I have not time to go over the whole of the arguments used on the other side. I can only say we are doing the best we can under the circumstances; and in a day or two—not because this matter has been introduced this afternoon, because I just came back from Ipswich—I hope to be able to find work for a great many of the married men, and I will take care that the families get the money, too.

Mr. LESINA: I would like to say, in reply to the hon. gentleman's remark in reference to myself, that I felt under the impression it was much better to discuss the whole question of the unemployed here than to have these piecemeal deputations from time to time, and I express my regret in not letting the hon. gentleman know what had been decided. I am going to speak exclusively with regard to the unemployed at Clermont. The unemployed in that district are so numerous, and their condition at the present time is so distressing, that the Government should certainly make some effort, if possible, to spend the money already voted on two occasions for the construction of that small line of railway from Clermont in order to develop the coalfield in the district. It is estimated that there are 300 men out of work in the Clermont district to-day. Recently there was a big public meeting, at which clergymen and other leading men were present, the mayor being in the chair, and a resolution was passed which has been transmitted to most hon. members. This is the resolution which it was decided to present to the Minister for Railways—

That this meeting of the unemployed and citizens of Clermont do humbly ask that the present Government start to build the proposed railway from Clermont to Blair Athol, to relieve the present distress for want of employment that now exists throughout the district. As the money has now been voted and placed on the Estimates for the second time, this meeting is of opinion that this work should be commenced with at once.

It appears to me that there are many excellent reasons why this work should be undertaken if the Government are earnest in their desire to find work for the unemployed. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I told you I had no intention of doing that.] The hon. gentleman has no intention of expending public money where the House has decided it should be expended. At the meeting of which I speak it was further resolved—

That we the unemployed of Clermont and district respectfully urge upon the attention of the Government the necessity of immediately providing some employment within the district, of such extent as will relieve the widespread distress at present existing in this district.

I got a letter from the secretary of the unemployed committee there, and an attempt was made to take a kind of census of the unemployed

in the district, with the result that it was discovered that there were 300 persons in the Clermont district out of employment or earning but a very small rate of pay, some being maintained at the public cost. It is a very improper thing that £6,000 or £7,000 per annum should be spent in affording relief to unemployed men and women; and we have relieved on an average during the last twelve months over 1,000 persons a month with rations. That is a course which, to my mind, can produce only one result. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The same persons are being relieved over and over again.] I notice in looking, not at the facts and figures given by the hon. member for Bowen, but at a supplementary report of the Labour Bureau, dated the 31st July, 1902, that a wire was sent to every district requesting the number of idle men in each district, and as far as possible the class of labour they represented. On Charters Towers there were 300 men out of employment, chiefly general labourers, but very few skilled miners idle. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How many does that return give in the West as out of employment?] Many people do not register at all as being out of employment. I have received correspondence myself showing that in some of the Western districts the men are not there to register. The stock has disappeared, and the little scrub cutting that they were doing is finished. A few of the men at Clermont made a little out of opossum and kangaroo shooting, and some have done a little work sinking wells, but the Government are spending in that district alone £50 or £60 a month in keeping destitute persons. It is no use blinking at the facts as they exist. The country is in a very bad state just now, and the conditions are gradually getting worse. At Degilbo there are 200 timber-getters and farm labourers out of work; at Gympie there are 220 men out of work—150 being miners and 70 general labourers. There are 300 men, mostly of the general labouring class, out of work at Herberton; 100 men at Ipswich, representing all classes of labour; 70 timber-getters and farm labourers at Killarney; 20 shearers and rouseabouts at Jundah; 12 station hands at Charleville; 300 farm hands and general labourers at Maryborough. At Mackay there are no unemployed at all; there are 41 persons out of employment at Mount Garnet; 30 timber-getters at Tewantin; and in the Texas district there is no opening for labour. In Brisbane, 309 persons are registered at the bureau, and the Government are feeding about 1,000 persons weekly. So that you see the state of affairs is bad, and something should be done. I maintain that the Government will not be doing its duty if it does not by public expenditure immediately find profitable work for the unemployed. The Premier has spoken rather hotly, and so has the Secretary for Railways. The hon. gentleman was anxious to ascribe political motives to the mover of this motion, though the acting leader of the Opposition pointed out distinctly that he had no idea of any such thing. This party, no more than any other party, are anxious to make the unemployed question a stalking-horse, but we have to deal with the matter. The unemployed are with us, and every representative in this Chamber is personally interested in the question. It is our duty to take the broad modern view that it is the duty of Governments to find work for the unemployed. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is that to apply to everyone?] The State is the biggest employer of labour. There is no class of private capitalist that gives employment to so many persons, and the finding of employment for those out of work is merely an extension of the

functions of government. The Government may say they have no money. Well, they have to find the money. They are kept in office because they are supposed to be able to find the money. Let them borrow it, or, if they cannot borrow it, let them approach the Federal Government and tell them that they are hard up, that they are in financial difficulties and want cash. I maintain, in conclusion, that it is the duty of the Government to find a way out of this difficulty, and if they cannot do so they should make room for another Government who will. If the Government is so weak that they cannot or will not do the work that the community expects of them, we can soon find a Government who will find the means of dealing with the unemployed question. It is no use going on in this hand-to-mouth fashion year after year, with these constant deputations and applications for employment, to say nothing of the time occupied in this Chamber in discussing the question. The Government know the difficulty that exists and they are trying to evade it, and every follower of theirs is trying to evade it. The hon. member for Burnett himself should feel just as much interested in this question as I feel, seeing that there are 200 or 300 unemployed in his own district. These men are looking forward to assistance from members sitting behind the Government and supporting them, and on such a question there should be no politics at all. We should do what we can for these unemployed men, and see that no man who is willing to work is without work. There is the Clermont-Blair Athol Railway line, which should have been undertaken long ago, but the Government will not construct it, although the money has been twice voted. The Government ought to be

worried by hon. members on both [5:30 p.m.] sides of the Chamber until they do their duty in this respect, and I guarantee that I will worry them for the next two or three months if they do not do something for the men in my district.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*): I am very sorry that the occasion has arisen for moving the adjournment of the House to discuss this question. We cannot get away from the fact that there are large numbers of unemployed in the State. The Secretary for Railways referred to a telegram which appeared in the *Evening Observer* with regard to the demand for labour on South Comongin and Dynevor Downs stations. The hon. gentleman knows that many of the stations are shearing at the present time, and that the men who are engaged in shearing will not have work for more than a month or five weeks. It is the employment of those men in shearing that has caused a scarcity of labour in the district. A number of men have also left those districts because there was no work for them to do, and that is another reason for the present temporary scarcity of labour. The Minister further stated that Mr. Hamilton, of Tambo, had taken men from Brisbane. The reason for that was that the men who were usually available in the district were then shearing on Landsdowne or Northampton stations, but it is probable that those stations have now cut out. The organiser of the Workers' Union, who travels round the State, and has an opportunity of getting accurate information in regard to labour matters, has told me that the reason why there is a scarcity of men in the Tambo and Blackall districts is because Northampton, Terrick Terrick, Malvern, Lorne, Isis Downs, and other stations in that district were shearing, and that within a few weeks' time, when the shearing is over, there will be a very large number of unemployed in those districts. They are removing sheep from some

of the runs, and men who have been employed as rouseabouts and in other capacities will be thrown out of work. Many of these men have had only five or six weeks' work this year, and they have not earned much, so that there is not a great deal between them and destitution. The Minister also referred to a case in which a stout lump of a young fellow, about 15 stone, who called on the police magistrate at Gladstone for rations, said he was in the habit of going round to different police magistrates for rations, and living upon them, and that he was not going to work. That is not my experience of the men in the West. When out West I have sometimes had to accompany men to interview the police magistrate for the purpose of getting rations, and I can assure hon. members that those men felt their position very keenly. The information that these men have to supply to some of the clerks of petty sessions is of a very inquisitorial character, and I would almost sooner starve than be subject to such an examination. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said that men who got rations at Blackall, and travelled down the Barcoo, would have to get rations again at Isis.] Many men who get rations at Blackall, and travel down the Barcoo, try to get to some station, and it is well known that some stations are very liberal in supplying rations to travellers. We who live in Brisbane have some idea of the calls made upon the Government by the unemployed, but if it was not for the distribution of rations by private persons in the State the Government would have very much greater calls made upon them. I thought the Minister would have given the House some information with regard to the starting of railways which have been sanctioned by Parliament, but he gave us very little information on that point. The hon. gentleman spoke of work at Ipswich, and said he thought he could get work for 100 men. That is only like a drop in a bucket, compared with the number of men who are out of work. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say I would find work for single men. The Premier said he would give them rations.] Yes, the Premier said he would give them rations to go prospecting. Many of these men know nothing about prospecting, and having been accustomed to town life could not make a damper or a johnny-cake, and what would be the use of sending such men into the country to go prospecting? What do they know about sinking a shaft? There are a number of men out West—bush-workers, shearers, rouseabouts, and others—single men out of work—who could go prospecting, for many of them have followed that up, and can look after themselves and cook for themselves. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Where could they prospect out West?] They could go to the opal-fields or to the Clermont and Springsure districts. We heard a great deal about the tin in the Springsure district at one time; but if the Government send town men out into the bush, they will be committing a sin. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: From their mothers.] Some of these men may be supporting parents or other relatives. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If they take up the position of parents, we will treat them as such.] I am very glad to hear the Minister say that. If the amount of money that has been spent on immigration had been stopped some little time ago, there would have been more than sufficient for the unemployed. I am sure that the Minister for Railways will allow that someone has to keep the people who come here; if the Government do not keep them, then the business people and charities will have to keep them. I know from experience what it is to go to employers asking for work, so that I can understand the feelings of these men. I know

there are many employers who feel sorry that they are unable to give men work. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A great many men will not take the work I offer them.] I know that, but some can't do the work. You can't expect a clerk or anyone unaccustomed to manual labour to take up the work the Minister offers. But such a man could make an attempt, and if he found that he could not do the work it would show that he was willing, and something might be found in another line of life in order to help such people. I believe that men who are out of work would feel more independent if they were earning what they were getting instead of rations being given to them. I never believed in rations being doled out to a man simply because he is out of work. I believe a man should earn what he gets, if possible, and that the State should endeavour to make some use of his labour as an equivalent for what he gets. I know the position the Government are in, and I am not going to say, like the hon. member for Clermont, that I am going to worry the Government until they do something for these men, and I believe the Government will have another worry in the applications made by another class outside. I trust that some work will be found for the unemployed, and I am certain that every hon. member would like to see a better state of things in this colony than now.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): Both the Premier and the Minister for Railways said they were doing all they possibly could in order to provide work for the unemployed. I admit that for the last two or three days they have started to see what could be done; but there have been unemployed for a good many months past. At the last general election, when I was out West, I saw some men waiting about for the Richmond to Hughenden Railway to start. We passed a lot of work here two years ago, and we passed a lot of syndicate railways, and we were told that these railways would find work for the unemployed. What work have the railways that have been passed given to the unemployed? [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They are employing 1,600 men.] I must say that the Government are going on in a very perfunctory manner with many of the public works that have been started. There have been enough works passed to give work to nearly all the unemployed in Queensland if those works were manned in the way they ought to be. Only about twenty or thirty men were engaged on the Warwick-Goondivindi extension a short time ago. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There are 130 men employed there.] What is 130 men on a line like that? Very few are being employed on the Nerang line, and the men are shifted about. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: 300 men have been employed ever since it started.] Though there may be a demand for men in the West and South-west, if there is such a demand it is only for a week or two. Shearing has started, and as soon as shearing is finished most of the men will be helping to swell the ranks of the unemployed. I am glad the Minister for Railways is giving work to men with wives and families, because it is for the sake of the women and children that the men should be provided with work by the Government. If a single man dies of starvation in Queensland he is a fool. If there is no work in Brisbane, he is a fool to stop in Brisbane and starve. There is a good deal made of men going about from one police magistrate to another asking for rations and not wanting to work. There may be one or two of that sort, but though I have had a good deal of experience in travelling about the country I never met many of that sort. The amount of rations given formerly was very small, and instructions have

been issued for only half that amount to be given now, and the man who chooses to travel from one township to another on the little bit of rations he gets from police magistrates must be very fond of walking. Several hon. members have criticised the reports of the Labour Bureau, but I say that even if the report was up to date it would be no criterion. There are hundreds of men in the country who do not go to a labour bureau looking for work or to a police magistrate looking for rations. It is generally the men brought over in 1891 and 1894 who have introduced that kind of thing. As far as the Western districts are concerned, there is going to be far more misery out there, even if rain came to-morrow, than there is at the present time. At the present time a lot of people are employed there in keeping stock alive, and if rain came to-morrow their services would be dispensed with. At the present time the coastal towns and other large towns are congested by reason of a great many men who have been travelling from the bush on free passes with the expectation of getting work on the railways. There is no work for the men to do apart from mining, or agriculture in the South. All the avenues of employment are pretty well suffering from the drought, so that the effort made by the Government at the present time is not enough to meet the case. As far as the Government works at present going on are concerned, I believe the Government could put on three times the number of men, and then there would not be too many to carry on those works. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They would have to get paid.] Have not the Government the money to pay them? [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not for long.] They are just about as hard up as the unemployed in that case. If the Government wish to relieve the distress, they will have to put a little more life into their public works policy.

Mr. COWAP (*Fitzroy*): I am very sorry for the condition of things which has led to this debate. The unemployed difficulty wants looking into in an impartial manner, without fear or favour from either side. I made a statement the other night in the House that in the Mount Morgan district, which was supposed to be one of the best districts in Queensland for employment, there were 300 men getting casual employment and 200 absolutely idle. In the words of my correspondent, it is a mystery how they live. That statement I had verified again by a letter I received yesterday. Just outside the Mount Morgan district there are the Mount Usher mines. Last year those mines employed on the average 175 men. I met a gentleman from that district in the street this morning, and he told me that instead of 175 men there were only twenty-four men employed there at present. The Premier mentioned this afternoon that there was work for fifty men at Mount Perry, and I ask him now if he will give passes to fifty men from the Mount Morgan district to Mount Perry, and guarantee them work? [Mr. KENT: I will guarantee that they will get work.] I will guarantee that the men will go on those conditions. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then the thing is settled.] The Premier has mentioned that he is willing to give rations to small parties of men

[7 p.m.] who wish to go out prospecting. I think that is a very good idea, and if the hon. gentleman would go a little further and get permission for some of the unemployed to enter upon certain station properties in the Fitzroy electorate, no doubt there are hundreds of men who could make a good living prospecting. I believe if proper representations were made to the owners of those properties, they would allow men to go upon them. I am very sorry to see the small amount of interest taken

in this momentous question when there are so many hundreds of men out of work, and so many thousands of children dependent upon them. The hon. member for Burnett said that the manager of a certain copper mine had offered work to a number of men. I would like to know how much reliance is to be placed on that statement, and how much work is to be found there. There are any number of good men round about Mount Perry at the present time, and it is no use taking men to that district if there is no prospect of employment, as there are any number of good miners out of work. I should like to know if the Secretary for Railways is prepared to grant free passes to men who wish to go from one mining centre to another. I am not a believer in granting rations as a matter of charity to those out of employment. I believe in men earning their living, and I am sure working men are always willing to do that if they are afforded an opportunity. Only in the last extremity would I dole out charity, and I hope this House in its wisdom will find some other remedy for this difficulty than doling out rations to the unemployed. I do not believe that Queensland is in such a bad state that it is necessary to give charity to her people. Numerous large public works have been authorised, and the money voted for them, and I would like to see the Government go on with those works, and thus relieve the congested state of the labour market for the present, and then when the rain comes the men would be required by private employers. There are numbers of private contractors who will require men as soon as good times come again, which I am sure are not far off. We have had a shower of rain to-day, and I hope we will have more soon. I hope the drop of rain we have had is but the forerunner of better times; and if the Government are going to borrow money to carry out public works, now is the time to borrow it. If they are going to borrow for the Gladstone-Rockhampton line, let them borrow now and ease the labour market. Things will improve again by and by; and I am a firm believer that this is the best colony of the lot.

Mr. KENT (*Burnett*): It is a sorrowful thing that we should have unemployed in this colony, but I am sure things will be very much worse, for when we get rain the trouble will not by any means be diminished. Those who know anything about the country know that the pastoral employer is not employing anything like the usual number of hands, but when we get rain the sheep that are now travelling, and those that are being hand-fed, will go back to their paddocks, and the number of hands employed will be reduced 75 per cent. That will mean a still larger number of men thrown on the labour market. Unfortunately, those men who follow pastoral occupations are not, as a rule, fitted for pick and shovel work at 6s. 6d. or 7s. a day. They are men who are used to working on horseback, and they will not be able to find work. With all the losses which the pastoral lessees have had, it will be very many years before the same number of men will be employed as were employed before the drought. I will not go very deeply into this question, but I want to refer to the remarks of the hon. member for Bowen. He is the only hon. member who has propounded any remedy for the existing trouble; in fact, he propounded four schemes. One was that land should be prepared and got ready for men like his South Australian farmer friend who could not get suitable land. Now, anyone who knows anything about getting land ready for the farmer and making it anything like the land on the Darling Downs, knows that it would cost from £2 to £3 an acre to do so, and I am certain that the hon. member's friend would not be willing to pay

that price for his land. Therefore, that proposition is of very little use. His next suggestion was to clear scrub land. I have had a little experience of that. I know the scrubs round Kilkivan and the Coolabunia Scrub, and, if you start clearing that land, the position it will be in three or four months' time will be worse than its original state on account of the rapid undergrowth. Another suggestion of the hon. member was that men should be put to work on the Government State farms. Well, the farmers are among the greatest sufferers at the present time. They can do absolutely no work on their farms, and farms are to be seen on all hands lying idle, but ploughed and ready for planting. I do not think, therefore, there is much labour to be employed in that direction. The hon. member then suggested that men should be employed in putting down bores for irrigation purposes, but people who are familiar with that class of work know that you cannot employ more than four men on a shift, so that there is nothing in that. I may say, with reference to the attitude of the Government towards the unemployed, that I introduced a large deputation of Degilbo farmers to the Secretary for Railways not long ago. I am pleased to say that the Minister was able to give them something, but unfortunately it was not sufficient. There is still a very large amount of labour there unemployed, and I am afraid that until the drought breaks up there is very little chance of its being fully employed. Even if the drought broke up now, we should have to wait until after Christmas before we could get a return from any crop. Some years ago a scheme was propounded by a Burnett friend of mine for finding work for the unemployed, and I am perfectly certain that there is something in the scheme. We all know that the ultimate use to which the country in Queensland—especially that within the area where there is a good rainfall—will be put is agriculture. If we clear the timber off that land, and prepare it for the plough, it will cost from £3 to £4 an acre, if not more. If, however, the timber is rung, and the land is allowed to lie for a number of years with the timber in that state, it will have an improved value for the pastoral tenant, and will also be of greater value to the farmer when he takes it up. You can clear timber which has been ringbarked for something like £1 10s. an acre, or possibly less. The proposal to which I have alluded was that the Government should put on men to ringbark the timber on pastoral holdings, and charge the lessees, whether grazing farmers or pastoral tenants, with interest on the cost of the work. I have let contracts for a very large amount of ringbarking, and know that the work can be done at a profit. One contractor I paid 8d. an acre, and he employed gangs of men to do the work, paying them £1 5s. a week with rations. I have also let a contract to Salvation Army men at 10d. an acre, and they made £3 3s. a week per man at that price. In another case each man made £2 2s. a week. The timber ringbarked was of different kinds, and the bulk of the country was river flats, with a certain amount of ridgy country. You can ringbark at any season of the year, provided the sap is up, and in a good season it is only a matter of taking off a thicker strip of bark. A considerable portion of the country between Jondaryan and Dalby was ringbarked in the middle of winter, and the ringbarking was a success. The Government would do well to put on men to ringbark tracts of country at from 8d. to 1s. an acre, charging the pastoral lessees 5 per cent. on the cost of the work. Whether this work is done by the pastoral lessee or the Government, the result will be the same, as incoming tenants will have to pay for it.

A very large number of men can be employed on such work. If the Government would survey a portion of country on the run which I hold at the present time, and send men out in gangs to ringbark the timber, I am prepared to pay 5 per cent. on the cost of the work, in addition to my ordinary rental. In the Port Curtis district there are large areas of very fine dairying and agricultural country; but unfortunately, owing to the presence of the plant known as "zamia," the land is not safe for stock. Zamia land can be cleared at a cost of about 1s. per acre. Would it not be a great advantage, then, if the Government would send out some unemployed to clear that country? Skilled labour is not required to do the work; even boys of sixteen or seventeen can do the work efficiently and earn a decent wage.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): I agree with a great deal of what has fallen from the hon. member for Burnett with regard to ringbarking. That is a way in which a great deal can be done to relieve the unemployed at the present time. Something like this was done at one time in New Zealand, though not exactly to improve the runs for the pastoral lessees. The Government sent a number of men on to the land to clear it, and after that was done they threw open the land as improved selections with a very great profit to the Government, and with very great advantage to the settlers. As far as ringbarking on pastoral holdings is concerned, I had a similar offer made to myself to that now made by the hon. member for Burnett. The lessees of certain runs told me that they were prepared to pay 5 per cent. on the cost of ringbarking the timber on their holdings, if the Government would employ men for that purpose; and I believe that is the feeling amongst a considerable number of pastoral lessees. I believe that ringbarking could be done successfully at the present time, seeing that the drought has almost killed the timber, without ringbarking. I was sorry to notice this afternoon the recriminatory tone which this debate has taken. I do not believe that will help us very much towards solving this unemployed difficulty. We ought not to discuss now the causes which have led to so many people being unemployed, or what the Government have not done, and what they should have done. What we should do is to really see what can be done for the unemployed. From the various reports I believe it is indisputable that there are a large number of unemployed throughout Queensland. The reports which have been read this afternoon may have been made eighteen months ago, but the drought has still been continuing, and it must be apparent to hon. members that the condition of things is really worse instead of better since that time. The Premier said it was not the province of the Government to find work for the unemployed, but I believe it is the duty of the Government to find work for our citizens. If a body of merchants were to come to this House asking for legislation or administration in consequence of the very bad state of trade, the Government would not say, "It is not our duty to find business for you." I think that would be a very wrong thing to say, and I think they would say, "We recognise the condition of trade is bad, and we will do what we can to remove that state of affairs." If pastoral lessees came to this House, as they have done, and asked for relief measures, the Government would not say, "It is not our business to remedy the state of depression complained of." They would say, "It is our duty to do so," and they would endeavour to do everything in their power to this end. We have just as much right to consider the unemployed citizens of the community as a body of

merchants, tradesmen, or factory-owners, or pastoral lessees. I admit a great deal of what has been said by the Premier and the Minister for Railways. I believe they have attempted to do something for the unemployed, and I must give the Minister for Railways a great deal of credit for the efforts he has made, whether they have been successful or not. Therefore, I do not think we have any room to complain of the Government for any lack of efforts during the last month or so; but I agree with the hon. member for Bowen that there has been no organised effort to really relieve the distress now in existence. I grant that the Government are very limited in their finances, but there are some things that could be done. First, I think the Government should push on with the works for which money has been voted. Another thing is improving the public estate for selection by ringbarking. Last year we issued Treasury bills or debentures for the repurchase of the Mount Russell and Gowrie Estates, and in exactly the same way we might issue Treasury bills for the purpose of improving some of the Crown lands, getting them surveyed, and throwing them open for selection at an increased price. Although we can't go to the London market, I think we can get a certain sum of money in our own and the other States, and I hold that it is our duty to find work, even if we have to pay interest on the money borrowed. I hope that this debate will continue without any recrimination, and that the Government will do their utmost to push on with works in order to relieve the distress that exists.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): After hearing one or two prominent members on either side, I thought the object of the motion would have been served. However, as a number of hon. members, particularly on the other side, think that the remarks made are insufficient, I think I am entitled, as one of those members representing a district where there are a large number of working men, to make a few remarks on the subject. I can thoroughly endorse the statement with regard to the large number of unemployed in the suburban districts in and around Brisbane, and the distress that exists in consequence. I was very glad to hear the sympathetic remarks made by the Premier and the Secretary for Railways with regard to finding work for these men. I know that a great deal has been done in this direction already, and I think the Minister for Railways is entitled to everything that has been said in his praise in this particular respect. I think it might be possible to commence some large work which would occupy a large number of men, and in connection with this matter I can endorse what was hinted at with regard to sending men who live in the suburbs far away from their homes. I know that men have been sent away from the suburbs of Brisbane to far parts of the colony in search of work, but it would have been more satisfactory if the men who, living in those parts, were employed there, and these suburban men were given work nearer home. I quite agree with the hon. member who has just spoken, that it is a pity that a subject of this kind should be taken in anything like a party spirit, or be the subject-matter of recrimination. The acting leader of the Opposition said he did not enter into the matter in a party spirit, and we must take it that the hon. member meant what he said, but I was under the impression that the hon. member was making use of this matter for party purposes. And I was very sorry to hear what I considered the gross attack he made on the Premier. I think every member will admit that if there is a kind-hearted man in this House, who will do his utmost to relieve distress, that man is the Premier. [Honourable members: Hear,

hear.] We all admit that he has shown sympathy in the past, not by talking, but by practical assistance, and we are sure that if he can he will do so again. I think in the interests of the working men it is a mistake for party leaders to introduce deputations, for it is better to interfere as little as possible between working men and their employers. I do not think the deputations that we have seen lately have been a real benefit to the working men; on the contrary, I think they have done harm, because they were led by men not really of the unemployed themselves; men imbued with fad-dist ideas, and not really in search of work themselves. Their conduct

[7:30 p.m.] savored more of pantomime, and thinking people are likely to be led to think that there is more of party politics and fireworks about it than anything else.

Mr. AIREY (*Flinders*): I was rather surprised to hear the hon. member talk of deputations of the unemployed as "pantomines." For my part, I have seen something very sad in them. With regard to the leaders of the deputations, I do not think anyone is here to deal with the question from the standpoint of the leaders of the employed; we are here to advocate the cause of the unemployed themselves. Allusion has been made to the number of unemployed in the Northern and Western districts, and the Premier referred to the Hughenden-Richmond Railway having provided work. According to the papers I saw last week, there are only something like fifty men employed on that line. The Premier alluded to the fact that there was a small strike up there lately. I think that strike was hasty and perhaps ill-advised; but I wish to mention that it arose from the fact that the cost of living there is very high—about 25 per cent. higher than in Brisbane. The Minister for Railways asked us whether we were prepared to formulate any schemes for the relief of the unemployed, but I am not aware that it is the function of the Opposition to formulate schemes. The Minister told us he did not believe there were hundreds of unemployed. I remember only a few months ago the Rockhampton papers—Government and Opposition—mentioned something like 500 empty houses in that town. In Mount Morgan there are unemployed by the hundred. In Bundaberg only a week ago it was estimated that there were 200 unemployed, and numbers of people have left in the last fortnight to go to New Zealand. The hon. member for Clermont referred to the meeting held there—a meeting in which clergymen and other leading men took part—and such a meeting would not have taken place unless the distress was very acute. The Premier said, "Why not go to the Federal Parliament?" Fancy the Premier of a colony like this talking like that! It is absolutely abject. Where is the spirit of the Premier who would tell us a thing like that? I hope we shall not go to the Federal Parliament, because we are able to pull ourselves out of our present difficulties if we have the proper spirit. We have the control of the land and the railways, and should be able to look after ourselves. The Premier also told us it was not the province of the Government to find work for the unemployed. I am not one who says it is the province of the Government to provide work for everyone on all occasions, but when there is deep and widespread distress it is the duty of the Government to try and remedy it. In the *Courier* a week ago there was a long article on the condition of the unemployed in Queensland. It said that there was great and genuine distress, and propounded a number of remedies, precisely of the nature given this evening by members of the Opposition. When I was in the West

lately, wherever I went I found unemployed, and even in the coast towns there is a great amount of distress, and as far as I can see there is a prospect of more distress in the future. Even if rain comes, the distress is bound to continue for a long time, and it is undoubtedly our duty to bestir ourselves to relieve the distress. The function of the Opposition is to point out the evil that exists, and the function of the Government is to find a remedy. If they cannot find a remedy, it is their duty to make way for those who can. I trust that the giving of doles will be avoided as much as possible, because it pauperises people; at the same time, I do not say that the Government should fix a wage and give that rate to every man. Allusion has been made to the fact that certain deputations have waited on the Premier and the Minister for Railways, and that an attempt has been made to find work for the leading men of those deputations. I do not agree with that at all. There is a body of men behind the deputations, and they are the men who should be considered in the matter of finding work. An attempt to give work to a few members of the deputation looks like shelving the matter or getting rid of it in a way that is not entirely honest. I think it would be a pity if the means taken for relieving distress should have the effect of centralising the unemployed in the city of Brisbane. I think a mistake has been made in New South Wales by Mr. O'Sullivan in offering a standard wage to people working about the city of Sydney, because it has had the effect of attracting people from the outside districts to that centre. I saw this evening a little extract from the *Courier* concerning some remarks made by the Minister for Railways on the attitude of the Labour party on the question of the unemployed. It is well worth the attention of this House. The other day, when the Minister was interviewed concerning the unemployed from Kilkivan, he said—

He was not carrying out relief works. The men given employment were allowed a week or a fortnight to get used to their work, and if they were then found to be unsuitable, their services were dispensed with. If they were found capable, they were retained. If he gave them 7s. a day he expected 7s. worth of work.

With all that I must say I agree. That is business-like. It may not be altogether what we would like, but I think it is all that is possible. The hon. gentleman went on to say—

The Labour members insisted that the Government should not go below a certain rate of wages, and that prevented many inferior men obtaining work. The statements made by the deputation came as a surprise to him, and it was the first he had heard of them.

That statement, with the deductions that are drawn from it, is not correct, to put it politely. Although the Labour party have advocated time and again the introduction of a minimum wage in Government contracts, they have never said, and never will say, I hope, that every man, no matter what his capabilities, is to have a fixed wage of 7s. a day. It would simply be an absurdity. It would be a bad thing for the unemployed themselves, and in the long run it would lead the country into financial ruin and disaster. I take the opportunity of denying the statements and saying that this party have never yet advocated so ridiculous a principle.

Mr. HAWTHORN (*Enoggera*): I recognise the fact that in this question the Government have had a hard matter to deal with, but I sympathise in a large measure with the unemployed, because I know that in the Enoggera electorate there are a very large number of men who have been turned out against their wills from factories and shops and other employment, who are only too anxious to get work if they can—men who are prepared to do a hard day's work

for a good day's wage. I must say I would like to see the Government, if possible, arrange for some means of providing employment for a larger number of men than they have done up to the present time. We know from the returns of labour bureaus and police magistrates that the unemployed are not confined to the city of Brisbane. I deprecate anything in the way of recriminations. I think we should approach this question from an unbiassed and temperate point of view, and attempt, as far as we can, to assist these unfortunate people out of the position in which they are in. For that reason I urge upon the Government to, if possible, set aside a sum of money so that employment may be found for those out of work, and particularly for the large number in and around Brisbane.

Mr. COOPER (*Mitchell*): As all the towns in my district have been mentioned by the hon. member for Bowen as being crowded with unemployed, I wish to say that I know myself that the residents are in a very bad way on account of the bad times and the absence of employment; but I deprecate very much the starting of relief works which are likely to prove unremunerative. Instead of wasting time in discussing this matter, it would be far better if the Government brought in a proper Land Bill—a Bill that would give a good tenure to the pastoral lessees and selectors throughout the colony. If they took action in that direction they would be likely to do the most good.

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): So much has been said on this question that anyone rising now to address the House runs the risk of repeating a great deal of what has already been said. I think this is a very proper motion to bring before the House, and I may compliment the acting leader of the Opposition upon having introduced it in a fair and impartial manner. No doubt he may have felt it necessary to speak somewhat strongly on particular points, but in dealing with what had already been done by the Government he gave them credit for having endeavoured to grapple with the question, as he says, somewhat late in the day. Though it may appear to some that the Government have only moved very recently, I think a little consideration will show that they have been thoroughly alive in this matter, and have been endeavouring for some considerable time to provide work for the people of this State. It is not a good thing to start relief works if they can possibly be avoided. It is very easy to aggregate a large number of persons in particular parts of the colony, but the difficulty is in stopping relief works. I think it is better to retain the unemployed in their own districts rather than concentrate them in large centres of population. I am of opinion that the Government have somewhat erred in this matter in not having adopted that policy earlier in the day. I have always maintained the position that it is the duty of the Government in times like these to carry on their public works policy. It has been the practice in the State of Queensland for various Governments in times of prosperity to proceed with the construction of public works and to spend large sums of money. We know that periodically we suffer, as all new communities suffer, from periods of depression, and at those times there is very little Government work carried on. If the Government would reserve their public works for such times as this, they would then be able to carry them out without instituting relief works. They have provided funds for the construction of public works. I am sure that one of the ways out of the present difficulty would be to pass at once that portion of the Estimates dealing with the money

necessary for the construction of public works. I quite understand that we have to get the money, but we have been assured by the Premier that it is his intention to float a loan for the purpose of carrying out authorised public works. I agree with the remarks which have fallen from some hon. members on both sides of the House with regard to the amount of recrimination that has taken place in this debate. This is not a matter in which there should be any recrimination. The position is exceedingly grave, and hon. members on both sides should approach it in as calm and unbiassed a frame of mind as possible, in order to bring about the result which we all desire. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If the Treasurer gives me the money, I will carry out the works.] I have not the slightest doubt that the hon. gentleman will carry out the works which have been authorised if the money is provided, because he has shown an accommodating spirit so far; but it is the duty of the Government to provide means for carrying on the business of the country. This Chamber has up to the present time materially assisted the Government in the legislation they have brought forward for providing funds for the Government, and we are prepared to assist them as far as we possibly can; but we must not lose sight of the fact that just now there is a great deal of distress in the State. The Premier and the Secretary for Railways have had prominently brought under their notice the distress which exists about the metropolis; and the same kind of thing is to be found in every part of the State; so that assistance is required in other places besides Brisbane. I rather deprecate some of the remarks which fell from the hon. member for Bowen. The hon. member said that there was no sincerity on the part of the Government in this matter. That is not the way to assist a matter of this kind, but, on the contrary, is likely to cause a certain amount of irritation. Neither do I agree with the methods he proposed for dealing with this difficulty. The hon. member drew attention to the fact that relief works were instituted in New South Wales. I hope the day is long distant when this State will have recourse to the methods adopted in New South Wales, where men have been employed on the unproductive work of shifting a body of sand from one place to another, or in clearing scrub land, on which, within twelve months, the scrub became as thick as it was before. We cannot afford to have such relief works as those carried out in Queensland. The hon. member mentioning the Burnett desired to solve the problem from his point of view, and advocated that the Government should ringbark the timber on the various runs in the State, on the understanding that the lessees should pay 5 per cent. on the cost of ringbarking. I do not think ringbarking could be carried on at the present time, because an undergrowth of suckers would spring up, and the last condition of the land would be worse than the first. Further than that, if ringbarking was carried on, we have no guarantee from the lessees that they would pay the additional rent. At present, if the Government raise the rents of the pastoral tenants by 1s., 2s., or 2s. 6d. a square mile, there is an immediate appeal to the appeal court. If we take the cost of ringbarking at 1s. an acre, as stated by the hon. member for Burnett, that would mean £32 per square mile, and that at 5 per cent. would entail an additional rental of £1 12s. per square mile. If the Government attempted to raise the rents of pastoral tenants, even in the most favoured localities, by £1 12s. per square mile, there would immediately be a deputation asking them to withdraw it. The Secretary for Railways made a remark with

regard to the plentifulness of work in the Western districts. He did not use those words exactly, but he quoted from a telegram appearing in the *Observer*, in which it is stated that in certain districts it is impossible to get men. From that it was desired that we should infer that work was plentiful and men were scarce. It is really because there is no work in the Western districts to tempt people to stay there that there has been such a scarcity of labour in that part of the State. At the present time a great portion of the Western districts are almost depopulated. Every train coming from the West brings whole families down to the coast. Coming down this morning I noticed two or three families who I am perfectly certain from their appearance were not travelling down to the coast for pleasure, but were coming here to try to better their condition. Men do not care to travel from the coast districts to the Western districts to engage in shearing, because the expense of getting there is so great; and if they do get a shed or two they would find when they had finished their work that they had not sufficient money to draw to pay their expenses back to the coast. Another aspect of the case which we must take into consideration is that when rain falls, instead of relief being afforded to the unemployed, the present difficulty will be accentuated. Even in the Western districts, as has been pointed out by one hon. member, the pastoral tenants at the present time are giving employment to more labour than they are likely to require when grass grows again. Scrubs must be cut, sheep are being taken from place to place, and drovers are employed; but when the rain comes the necessity for that work will have ceased, and for a considerable time there will be very little work in the coastal districts for those who will be unemployed. After the discussion which has taken place this afternoon I think the Government would do well if they will more seriously consider the condition of affairs now existing even than they have done for some time past. I know they are endeavouring, and must give them all credit for it, under the trying circumstances to work this State in such a way that at the end of the year they may make both ends meet. They want to carry out all the operations of the State on purely business principles.

[8 p.m.] There are times when it is a wise thing that business principles should prevail; but there are also times when humanitarian principles should prevail, and I think this is the time when humanitarian principles should also enter into the business. Not that I want to accuse the Government of any want of humanity at all; but I think, even if it is going to cost the State a little more, that some of the reproductive works which must be constructed in the near future should be now gone on with, and when good times come they will become paying concerns. I would, as much as possible, deprecate engaging in what are known as non-reproductive works. By that I mean works which afterwards prove non-remunerative.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*): The hon. gentleman who has just sat down commenced his speech by saying that the debate seemed to have exhausted itself, and that he did not think any more could be said on this question. This is one of the biggest social problems we have to deal with; it could not be exhausted in one night's debate, and it certainly should not be settled in an offhand manner. Inasmuch as some hon. members have propounded solutions of the problem, there is no doubt that the debate will not altogether have been a waste of time. The Premier told us that it was not the duty of the Government to find work for the unemployed; but in another breath he said that the Govern-

ment were doing all they possibly could to find work for the unemployed throughout the colony. The Government took great credit for carrying out the public works which Parliament has authorised to be carried out. I do not know that they are entitled to credit for that, although they may be entitled to some credit for adopting the day labour system, because, as pointed out by the Minister for Railways, if those works were made by contract, men from the other States might have been imported here, and the result might have been more unemployed than there are at the present time. But which party are deserving of credit for the adoption of the day-labour system? I do not think the advocacy came from members on the other side, but, as a matter of fact, this side is entitled to as much, if not more, credit with regard to that policy of building public works. It has been and will be, I suppose, again argued that the best way to settle the unemployed difficulty is to favour the introduction of capital into the colony. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is what you say.] I think both sides of the House agree that it is desirable to introduce capital, but we may not agree with the proposals of the Government. It always seemed to me a good thing to introduce money into a colony, for there must be competition for labour when money comes in, and in that case the labourer must be better off. There is no doubt that not only in the interests of the unemployed, or in the interests of the small shopkeepers, or in the interests of merchants—who are feeling, and will feel more, the fact that there is a considerable number of unemployed in the colony—but in the interests of the whole of the citizens of the State, it is the duty of the Government to face this question, and do the best they can for these men. I agree with the hon. member for Leichhardt when he differed from the Premier on the question as to whether it is the duty of the Government to find work for the unemployed. I think it is their duty. It follows logically on the fact that every person has a right to live. If we admit that, then every person has a right to work, because we don't believe in giving people rations without getting a *quid pro quo*. At all times, under our present industrial system, we will have a considerable number of unemployed. There is the nomadic population—bushmen and shearers—and when shearing is over they sometimes travel hundreds of miles looking for work. Take the meatworks: this is a very large industry in Queensland, but still the men are only a few months employed. Then take sugar plantations: we find at certain times there is a demand for labour. It is quite evident in a young country there must of necessity be a certain number of unemployed unless the Government steps in and endeavours to tide them over the bad times. I notice that there is a common argument that the majority of the unemployed are inefficient—men who are not capable of doing a fair day's work. I heard a very eloquent sermon last Sunday night in a church in Brisbane, and the minister said that 40 per cent. of the men coming to him asking for work or help were inefficient, and that if given an axe they would not know which end to use. That was a very strong statement, but I can show conclusively from the report of the inquiry held in Victoria, that out of 1,000 unemployed men who asked for work, 16 were unsatisfactory, 58 doubtful, 59 were guilty of some misrepresentation, 17 were employed elsewhere when they applied, but 850 were favourably reported on by the police as deserving and in need of employment. We have had no inquiry on the unemployed in Queensland, but I suppose that if we take 1,000

unemployed in any part of the world, the average would be very much the same. If time permitted, it would be interesting to quote from this report on the unemployed question. It goes exhaustively into the matter, and points out that the Government should deal with the question of the unemployed. I may mention that the board consisted of members of Parliament and gentlemen who were not members of Parliament. The principal remedy suggested is in the direction of improving Crown lands; and I think the Government should work on those lines, not only in settling the unemployed problem, but in settling the lands of the colony. It is admitted in the report that there is a certain proportion of inefficient amongst the unemployed, and the proposal is made that labour colonies should be established to deal with them; but with regard to able-bodied men who want work it is suggested that the Government should put them on—at a minimum wage, I take it, in the first place—to clear the timber from Crown lands, and that a certain amount of the wages should be kept back for a certain time. The idea is not to keep the men on at wages, but simply to allow them to clear the land in sections, and allow each man who desires to do so to take up a portion of the land after clearing. By a system of that sort no doubt many of the bushmen the hon. member for Burnett referred to during his advocacy of the ringbarking scheme would be willing to enter into that kind of employment, and ultimately become prosperous settlers. I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of the scheme put forward by the hon. member for Burnett. It could scarcely be made compulsory on the part of the squatters; it would have to be some kind of voluntary system; but it is worth trying. The Government might communicate with the pastoral lessees, and there would be very little harm done if a favourable response were not received. I think anything is worth trying in times like these, when the difficulty is so acute. It is thought by many that it will be more acute still, even if we get rain; but though that may be so, I think a really good rainfall would put so much heart into people and cause them to go in for improvements in so many cases that the labour market might not be any worse than it is now. I believe there are a considerable number of unemployed in my electorate, though as a rule goldfields do not suffer so much as the coastal towns from the unemployed difficulty. In connection with the question of giving assistance to prospectors, the report I have already mentioned points out that the experiment of assisting prospectors in Victoria has not been found successful; also that the experiment made in the direction of assisting people to engage in trapping rabbits was unsuccessful, a good many people getting rid of their traps and tools. Of course there is always a certain proportion of dishonest men amongst the unemployed. But what I wanted to point out was that men who have been accustomed to mining, and who are out of employment, might very well be supplied by the Government with rations so that they can go out prospecting. Although the Government are doing something, I do hope they will endeavour to do more to assist the unemployed. I recognise, of course, that money is running short and that it is necessary to go slow, but I think there is a way of getting out of the difficulty if it is only faced. Of course there are men who are not prepared to do heavy work such as navvying, who may be employed at country work such as ringbarking or clearing scrub. I do not claim that the Government can find work for every kind of tradesman—for carpenters, tinsmiths, and tailors—but they could at all events do a little more than they have done.

The SPEAKER: I would point out to the hon. member that he has already reached the limit of time allowed by the Standing Orders.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): It appears to me the only suggestion made by the other side for relief of the unemployed is that they shall be engaged in clearing scrub land, but, as pointed out by several hon. members, that means that in twelve months' time simply having to clear it again. It is like the work provided for the unemployed in New South Wales when they were engaged in shifting sand from one place to another. If the acting leader of the Opposition thought it his duty to bring this matter forward, it was his duty to have propounded a scheme to help them in their present difficulties. In looking over the Estimates, I find that in connection with the loan fund the Government this year have put down nearly double the amount of money they have been in the habit of putting on the Estimates. For many years our loan expenditure has been about £1,000,000 a year, but this year £2,000,000 is provided, and the expenditure of that money is not centralised in Brisbane. What I suggest is that instead of waiting till the end of the session the Loan Bill should be taken at an earlier date, and that we should try and float a loan as soon as possible and go on with public works for the assistance of the unemployed. That would be the most sensible way of getting out of the difficulty. It is said that we have borrowed too much already. But if there is a general consensus of opinion in the House that the Government should find work for the unemployed, then of course they must find the money. We cannot employ men without paying them, and if we want the money we must borrow it. I am certainly very much surprised that every hon. member who has spoken on the other side has given the Government scarcely any credit whatever. At the present time they are employing a number of men on the railways, and they will want a great many more men to carry out the scheme as laid down in the Loan Estimates. We know for loans to all local bodies £268,000 is on the Estimates, and that represents an enormous amount of work. Then, on railways, the amount put down for permanent way is £100,000, and the labour in connection with that will absorb a very large number of men, and anyone who looks at the Estimates will see that maintenance work is very heavy. Some hon. members have objected that the unemployed are being centralised in Brisbane. Well, if the majority come to Brisbane it is not the fault of the Government, and so far as centralising the work is concerned, I do not think the Government have done that. If you look at the Loan Estimates you will see that £638,000 is provided in the Southern division, £331,000 in the Central division, and in the Northern division £352,000, and in addition to that there is £240,000 for general expenditure. There is also £50,000 provided in connection with the new Lands Offices in Brisbane, and all that means work for the unemployed. I do not think this debate will have much effect. The Government have said that they are doing all they can, but there is some labour which the Government cannot assist. There are in Brisbane a number of persons who cannot do navvying work, and their cases are very much harder than the cases of labouring men. I only hope this discussion will have the effect of making the Government try still further to alleviate the present distress by finding work for those out of employment.

Mr. BURROWS (*Charters Towers*): What has struck me most in connection with the debate is that members on both sides have referred to recriminations, but I have not heard any. Indeed, I think this debate has been as

mild as milk. There can be no question about the existence of unemployed. The various clerks of petty sessions would not say there were unemployed if such was not the case, and it is no doubt a fact that the names have not been recorded of a good many who are out of employment. I may be permitted to refer to the case of the Premier's electorate of Townsville. The clerk of petty sessions there shows the difference between the number registered and the number actually out of work. In fact, his two statements appear somewhat inconsistent. First he says—

During the year the demand for labour here was in excess of supply, and still so continues.

Further down he says—

From the number of applicants appealing for relief I am sorry to say there appears to be a great number of unemployed going about.

A little further down he says—

The destitution amongst families is much in excess of former years. The heads of families being mostly unable to obtain employment, their wives and families have nothing to live on, and therefore they make application at this office for relief.

I understand the disparity in these paragraphs to occur in this way: In one paragraph [8:30 p.m.] he is speaking of his experience with regard to the applications made to his office, and in the other with reference to the relief granted. Let me give another instance. When the Secretary for Railways wired to the various labour bureau officers to send in a report as to the number of unemployed in their respective districts, the officer at Townsville stated that there were only twenty-six unemployed in that place. No less than a fortnight after that, at an unadvertised meeting of unemployed to protest against the action of the Secretary for Railways in sending men up there for work, there were 500 persons present. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I only recollect sending three or four.] I do not know how many men were sent, but there is the fact that the officer in charge of the local labour bureau could only find 5 per cent. of the unemployed in that town. What, then, are we to say about the 3,306 unemployed in the State? I was sorry to hear the Premier say that it was not the province of the Government to supply people with work. We are always deploring the fact that we have lost such a lot through the drought, and that our stock have been greatly reduced. Cannot any hon. member see that every hour that these men are out of work we are losing what they could have produced had they been employed? The Premier told us that our lands are the best assets we have. If they are our best assets, surely the scheme propounded by the hon. member for Burnett will meet with his approval. These unemployed persons have to be supplied with rations, and the money expended in that way might very well be utilised in increasing the value of our land assets. The Secretary for Railways told us that he had always given work to men when they came to him. [The PREMIER: All married men, he said.] I understand that the deputation which waited upon him the other day represented 150 married men, and that the Secretary for Railways offered to give work to thirty. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is not a man who has come to me within the last four months that I have not given work to, if he was able to do it.] There were 150 men in this case who wanted work, and they were told that thirty could get work, and that they would have to ballot for it. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say they would have to ballot for it.] Well, draw lots for it. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.] Well, that is what the

papers said. The remarks of the hon. member for Poowong show that he has no conception of the importance of this matter, for he said that a deputation of this sort was a "pantomime." I can tell him that it is no pantomime. I met one man in the sister State some years ago, a horny-handed man, who came to me asking me for work. I gave him 5s., and he cried and said, "I don't want your money, my son, I want work." That is one of the most painful experiences I have ever had, and for an hon. member to call this sort of thing a pantomime shows that he has not a just appreciation of the subject, and that he has never met these men and does not know their dire need and dark distress. The Premier said that he would give rations to men to go out prospecting. Will the hon. gentleman make this offer on the various goldfields of the State where there are unemployed? If he will, he will do a lot of good. [The PREMIER: We have done it for years.] On the goldfields there are to be found the men who are able to do prospecting, and who know gold, silver, lead, copper, tin, or any other metal, and understood the indications of the country, so that if they were allowed rations to go prospecting some good results might be expected. I think that something could be done in the way of relieving the unemployed by the Government purchasing crushing machinery, as there are many gold and mineral fields in the State where such machinery would do a lot of good. [The PREMIER: We have three idle now—one of which is in the Gulf, and another at Gympie.] If the Government would purchase two or three of these machines, that would assist to increase the output of gold, and to find employment for men who are out of work. There were several hundred men out of employment at Charters Towers, and if the Government want to give assistance to the people there they might start and build the new railway station that has been promised for years. Whatever scheme the Government adopt, it ought to be proceeded with immediately. I think that this debate has done some good, from the fact that it has forced the Government for some hours at a stretch to pay more attention to this question; and I hope that the mildness of the debate will be taken in a favourable light, and that the Government will give effect to the wishes expressed by various hon. members.

Mr. BELL (*Dalby*): I was glad to hear the junior member for Charters Towers say that he recognised the generally amicable character of this discussion, and I am glad to be able to say that his criticism is correct, for, since I have been present, it has been moderate in tone, and in that respect reflects great credit on the hon. member who moved the adjournment, and upon other hon. members on the other side who have carried the debate on. This proposal to find work for the unemployed in Queensland is no new matter. I remember seven or eight years ago that the question was actively brought under notice by the Opposition of that day; and to show that the difficulty of grappling with this question is as difficult as hon. members, in their fairness, have admitted during this discussion, I may mention that the chief measure of relief—the chief legislative result of the agitation which then existed—was a measure that in the years which have since elapsed has been conclusively proved to have been a failure. I refer to the Co-operative Communities Land Settlement Act, which was brought forward largely as a result of the unemployed agitation, and very largely as a result of the recommendations made by hon. members on the other side. I cannot help thinking of that measure when I hear the suggestions which have been made with regard

to remedial proposals for this crisis. There can be no doubt that that measure—benevolent as its conception was, and generous as I believe its administration was—was an absolute failure. That experiment cost the country thousands of pounds; and therefore it is necessary that we should look—if not with suspicion, at all events with a great deal of caution—on the recommendations which come from the Opposition of the day in order to solve the unemployed problem. We have had suggestions from more than one speaker as to whether the Government of the day are bound to find work for the unemployed, or, rather, whether it is the duty of the State to find work for every individual in the State. Now I am bound to say—and I say it with all respect to the capacity in this Chamber—that on the whole, the practical and immediate is a great deal more within the scope of its deliberations than the philosophical and the abstract. If you were to conduct an investigation of this kind on purely philosophical lines, I venture the opinion that probably the deliberations of this Chamber would not be of the highest importance. But if you find that there is a palpable state of depression, and the question arises as to how you are going to practically and immediately deal with the matter, then probably the decision that this body would come to would be as valuable as that arrived at anywhere else, and it is purely from the point of view of expediency that I make my observations on this subject. We have heard the Secretary for Railways give some explanation as to what he has been doing with regard to this difficulty. I am not going to say that his efforts are deserving of censure. His intention seems benevolent; but why should married men be given these singular privileges? I think this means the apotheosis of the married man. Everything is done for the married men, and very little for the men who are unfortunate enough not to be married. I should like to remind the Minister that, although a man may not be married, he may have as many domestic obligations as a married man. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If they are doing the duty of a parent, they will be treated as such.] I did not know you had said that. What I want to impress on the Secretary for Railways, and on the Premier, is that while they are undertaking works for remedying the condition of the unemployed at the present time, they might do even more, and in a more successful way. I admit that what the Secretary for Railways announced in regard to the construction of lines of railway for uniting coal lines, is commendable; but if you go further afield you will find districts where you have large areas of Crown lands not contiguous to a railway line, but from 15 to 25 miles distant. Though there is no fault to find with the quality of those lands, you cannot get people to take them up either as homesteads at 2s. 6d. an acre, or as agricultural farms at 10s. an acre—if they do, it is to a very small extent—but if you construct a line of railway to those districts I say, without fear of contradiction, that those lands will be taken up at from £1 to £1 5s. an acre, and in some instances £1 10s. an acre, and if you have in the vicinity of the line a sufficiently large area available for selection you will be able to more than pay for the construction of the branch line by the larger amount you will get for the unselected Crown lands. You cannot gauge the exact value of the existence of a railway by an inspection of the balance-sheet in the ledgers of the Railway Department, because there are a score of ways in which it can benefit the community. I have no doubt there are many localities to which my observations may apply, but I may mention Jondawaie, to which district a line of 18 miles might be constructed

from Warra Railway Station. I had a return prepared as to the Crown lands likely to become available in that locality during the next two or three years, and it showed an amount of 50,000 or 60,000 acres, but probably they went too far afield in the calculation, but I am within the mark for the purpose of my argument if I put it at 30,000 or 35,000 acres. The bulk of that land is not now being selected even at 10s. an acre as agricultural farms. It is a district with no engineering difficulties, and 18 miles of railway could be constructed at from £1,500 to £2,000 per mile, and almost every acre in the locality would be selected at a rate which would recoup the Government for their expenditure. It seems to me that it is on works of that kind that the unemployed in the Southern division of the colony ought to be engaged. The Secretary for Railways told us he had been to Ipswich to-day, and he had seen a great deal of earth that ought to be removed. It may be a good thing to remove it; but *prima facie*, my suggestion seems more valuable to the colony. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It has to be removed for the new workshops.] Then I think the two things might go very well together, and I think the hon. gentleman would be doing a good thing for the colony and for his reputation as Minister for Railways if he would go into the suggestion I have made. I may say that I desire to associate myself with those who, during this debate, have said it is worth while to clear some of the unselected Crown lands with unemployed labour. I know that in the vicinity of the district I spoke of, many thousands of acres are unselected, though close to a railway, because they are cumbered with brigalow and prickly pear, and I think it would be a good thing to send unemployed to clear a lot of those lands. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Clear them at £3 an acre and sell them at 10s.] I do not know whether the hon. gentleman's observation is made as the result of any minute calculation. I do not think anyone is in a position to say what it costs to clear prickly pear. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government tried some, and it cost £3 an acre.] I know something about the attempts made at Jondaryan and Westbrook, but no final official pronouncement of the cost of exterminating prickly pear has yet been made in this Chamber, even from the Treasury bench. I have had a communication from the Hawkesbury Agricultural College within the last few days as to what it costs under a new process; and they put the cost of clearing acres of land thickly covered with pear at something like 15s. to 18s. an acre. Every year we are learning more in reference to the best methods of clearing this

[9 p.m.] land, and the fact that it will cost more to clear it than you can get for it afterwards is merely one factor in the calculation. Probably the price paid for the land is, after all, the smallest part of the benefit we will derive, for there can be no doubt that the benefit derived from having that land occupied by human beings instead of by wallabies will be incalculable. I do hope that the Government will take into consideration what I have said, and remember that in the two directions that I have indicated they can find, I believe, a profitable avenue of employment for unemployed labour.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*): Representing a metropolitan electorate, I would not be doing my duty if I did not make a few remarks in respect to the position that we find this question is assuming in Brisbane. I know that Brisbane is not an exception—the unemployed difficulty is pretty well general all over the States—but in this State the question is assuming very serious aspects, and the prospects in the future

look very gloomy, so much so that I am afraid things will be very much worse than they are now. The prospects are so bad that any man out of employment who is able to pay his fare out of the colony has gone; but of course there are many men with families who are tied down here, and find it difficult to get anything in the nature of profitable employment. I am sure other hon. members have experienced what I have experienced—that is, numbers of people coming with distressing tales of want, both in connection with themselves and their families, and the difficulty they find in getting anything to do. I am quite satisfied that numbers of those men neither take part in any unemployed agitation nor register at the labour bureau, but hide their distress as far as possible. The question, no doubt, is a serious one, and speakers on the other side have taken up the position that this matter having been initiated by the acting leader of the Opposition, he should submit some solution of the difficulty. The hon. member for Dalby referred to the solution submitted nine years ago, in 1893, for dealing with this unemployed question. In that respect he was quite right. Members on this side eagerly accepted the promise of Sir Thomas McIlwraith that he would introduce legislation dealing with communal settlements, but it is a well-known fact that most of the land on which those people were placed was of an inferior nature. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They chose their own places.] That is exactly where the Minister is wrong. They were confined to certain districts, where they were allowed to select land within a certain area. I know a number of those men who went away in the various groups, and who spent £40 or £50 apiece of their hard-earned money. Those men worked as hard and as long as any men could work in their effort to eke out an existence. They spent the whole of their time in trying to make these communities a success, and, heart-broken, they had to leave, simply because the land they were settled on, some of which was in the Dalby electorate, was of such an inferior nature that they could not make a livelihood out of it. It is only fair in dealing with this question that the true facts should be known. I was very pleased to hear the last speaker advocate the construction of light lines of railway, and it is a matter of which the Government should take some notice. Some years ago we spent a considerable sum of money in sending Mr. Stanley, the late Chief Engineer, to America to gather as much information and experience on this matter as possible. He came back, and a report was submitted to the Government giving the result of his experience, and advocating the construction of these lines at a comparatively small cost. I have heard members representing agricultural districts advocating the construction of these light lines, and I believe, though the agricultural districts are in a bad way, there is no doubt the construction of such lines would, as the hon. member for Dalby says, increase the value of Crown lands and would facilitate in a large measure the operations of agricultural and other settlers. This, therefore, is an opportunity which the Government should grasp, because there is no doubt such lines would be an assured success. It is no use their saying that they have no money for reproductive public works. I heard the Secretary for Railways say that if the Treasurer would give him the money he would spend it. If they really desired to deal with this question in a serious manner they could very soon find the money. The credit of the colony is still good, and the money expended in the direction advocated would be well repaid in the near future. The hon. member for Carpentaria pointed out

that a large number of persons who are unemployed would not be accommodated by such works as the construction of railways. That is true to a certain extent, but if men who are fitted to work on railways or other works of that nature are given employment, then clerks and others will also find work, because the employment of men on railway construction and the like affords work to clerks. I am not going to enter into a discussion as to whether it is the duty of the Government to find employment for the people, but when a Government are face to face with such a problem as that which now confronts us, it is their bounden duty, in the interests of the State, to find these people employment of some sort. It has been done by Governments in other States of Australia. For years past the Government of New South Wales have found employment for the unemployed in clearing scrub land, and that work has been carried out with benefit to the Government, who have realised an increased price for the lands when they have been sold. [Mr. TOLMIE: The land has been overrun with scrub again.] Possibly that may be so in some cases, but as far as my information goes this system of dealing with the unemployed question has been a success in New South Wales. I noticed that when a deputation waited on the Secretary for Railways a few days ago, and asked him to assist them in getting work, it was pointed out that one difficulty experienced on some of the railways was that the men could not get rations. The men said they could not get credit, and that they had to leave the job on that account. I dare say that is a fact. The same thing was experienced in New South Wales, but the Minister for Works there showed an earnest desire to meet the difficulty, and erected stores where the Government directly sold supplies to the men, and credit notes of the department were accepted as payment for the goods sold. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no truth whatever in that statement. The engineer says that he went round personally, and saw what stuff was wanted, and guaranteed payment to the stores.] I do not know about that, but what I have said has appeared in the Press, and has not been contradicted. At any rate I have no doubt that it does not pay country storekeepers to carry their goods to many places where railways are being constructed, and men who have no money will find it difficult to get supplies, and I think it would be a very large benefit to the men if the Government carried out some such scheme as has been adopted in New South Wales. Mr. O'Sullivan has made an earnest effort for some years past to solve the unemployed problem, and to some extent has succeeded. I am sure that if the Government take up this matter seriously they would find some solution for this problem. In 1893, when we were in dire distress, and when the financial institutions were in a very shaky condition, the Government convened a special session of Parliament to pass legislation to help these institutions. I think this question deserves just such consideration from the Government as the matter of dealing with financial institutions, because it means the bread and butter and the life of very many people in this State. There are many public works which have been advocated from time to time—works of a reproductive nature—that may be carried on at the present juncture to afford work for those who are unemployed. This debate has been carried on in a very temperate manner, and I hope it will have some effect. As one who represents a Brisbane electorate, and as one who sees every day numbers of men who cannot find enough food to feed their families and who do not care to go to the immigration depot to get rations, but who

are desirous of working, I hope the Government will make some serious effort to enable these people to tide over the present depression.

Mr. LINDLEY (*Wide Bay*): I have heard a great deal to-night in connection with the unemployed, and I can bear out the statement that the number of unemployed in Queensland is abnormal. One thing very remarkable in connection with the matter is that the men out of employment are a different class to the men usually found loafing about the streets. You have only got to cast your eye on them to see that they are driven by stress of circumstances to the road. I must congratulate the hon. member for Dalby on the clever way in which he worked in his little railway, while at the same time I agree with him that the construction of light agricultural lines of railway will go a long way to solve the labour trouble. Many local centres are clamouring for railways, and those districts would be benefited if we could induce the Government to take this question in hand now. We do not ask them to run into a great amount of debt; but, if these light railways were constructed, large areas of Crown lands would be benefited. The land could be sold, and the money earmarked and placed towards the cost of construction. A number of members have spoken rather against ringbarking; and, while there is a very large area of land which ringbarking would render of less value than at present, there are large areas of fairly heavily timbered lands the lessees of which would be glad to pay 5 per cent. of the cost of work if they could induce the Government to employ the surplus labour in the work. The hon. member for Carpentaria mentioned that there is a great amount of money on the Estimates for local authorities, but my experience of local authorities is that they are trying to do without spending money. The selectors of this colony area class that no hon. member has mentioned, and yet I know many whose claims as unemployed deserve to be put forward just as much as any starving man in this town. I know numbers of selectors who in decent seasons were earning £20 to £30 a month from dairying, and during last month these men came to me and asked for work of any kind at £1 a week. They were absolutely stranded, and they had been going from bad to worse month after month. That is the class of person probably we do not hear much about, and their case is very much worse because they are away from towns. I know numbers of cases where it is very hard for them to get the bare necessities of life. I hope the claims of these men will receive the amount of consideration that is their due. Considerable interest was taken a few years ago in communal settlements as a means of solving the labour difficulty, and, though hon. members opposite say that those men were forced to take certain areas of land or leave it, I feel inclined to take the Minister for Lands' statement that they had their choice. What was the effect of this system? In one particular case they were receiving Government rations, and one of their first acts was to enter into the labour market and contract for sleepers at a lower price than any man outside the settlement could contract for. The effect of this was that the price of sleepers came down £2 per 100 for some time, and it took a great deal of coaxing to reach the higher prices again. These people were receiving rations, and they were in a position to reduce the market. If we can induce the Minister to take up the question of light agricultural lines, that will be one means of solving this problem. I am perfectly satisfied that there are many lines within a reasonable distance of the coast to first-class agricultural areas that could be advantageously built. I have every sympathy for the unemployed throughout

Queensland, but I hope that nothing will be done as has been done in New South Wales—where they have established relief works—where the establishment of relief works in a place like Sydney or Brisbane would tend to make population flock there. If they are to be established, let them be established as far away from the centres of population as possible, without inflicting any hardship on the men themselves. The consequence of establishing relief works in Sydney has been the congregation of men in that city who would otherwise be using their talents to better advantage.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): I think we are pretty unanimous that there are a large number of unemployed in Queensland, and that a large percentage of these men are willing to do suitable work. We know that the Minister for Railways has provided some suitable work; but he has also provided some men with work which is not suitable to them. It is right enough to give such work to navvies and pick-and-shovel men, but everyone is not a navvy. There are numbers of men who are notable to do such work, and something should be done for these men. I admit that the Minister for Railways has done something in this matter, but it is a

[9:30 p.m.] question of so little done and so much to do. He has just touched the fringe of it, and the great work has practically to be done yet. But I do not see why it should all fall upon the Minister for Railways. Why does not the Minister for Agriculture take a hand in this? Why does he not make provision for labour colonies under part III. of the Act dealing with co-operative societies? Labour colonies have been a partial success everywhere they have been established. They have been a partial success in New Zealand, also in Victoria. [The PREMIER: No.] I think they have been doing fairly well in Victoria, and they have been so elastic that a man could have a month's work or a week's work and go away again. I think also that the Minister for Mines should take a hand in this. He is prepared to assist prospectors, but there is a certain number of miners who are not capable of going out prospecting. There is a great deal of rich mineral country locked up in freehold property, and he ought to bring in a Mining or Private Property Bill so that prospectors may have a chance of getting the benefit of any discovery they may make on private land. I believe some valuable discoveries have already been made on private property, but are being held over till a Mining or Private Property Bill has been passed. On the Gympie Gold Field there is a large area where low grade ores exist, and where it will not pay for private enterprise to put up batteries. If the State erected a battery there it would provide work for 200 or 300 miners for eight or ten years. There are six or seven miles of country carrying from 6 dwt. to 14 dwt. to the ton, and I have heard a good many miners advocate the erection of a State battery. Even Mr. Reid, the Government candidate at the last election, advocated the same thing. There are three or four reefs in the locality of which I speak that could be worked with a windlass to a depth of 70 or 80 feet; and it would not require a great expenditure on the part of the Government to erect a battery. With regard to the action of the Minister for Railways in connection with some of the unemployed, I must condemn his action in simply trying to give work to those representing the unemployed, and ignoring those outside. It is like buying off those men. It looks like an attempt to do away with the agitators. I remember one time the Minister for Railways himself was an agitator in some things. He carried on an agitation against the rabbit pest; and when he was a member

of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, he carried on an agitation in connection with certain matters affecting Brisbane. I do not see why he should be bought off by getting a billet. The principle is bad, and I condemn it, and I hope when deputations wait upon the hon. gentleman he will have some consideration for the men who are behind the spokesman. We had an intimation in connection with this matter that at the Mount Perry Copper Mines about fifty miners were required, who could get employment at good wages. Well, those who want miners at Mount Perry will not have to go far for fifty of them, because I am quite certain there are between 400 and 500 good miners, well able to work, who can be got at Gympie at the present time to go to Mount Perry. It is not necessary to send unemployed from Brisbane to that place, and I do not think it would be a good idea to send men there who have never before had a hammer or pick in their hands, start them at work with which they are not familiar, and then because they do not make a success of it, say that they are not willing to do work when provided for them. We do not want anything like that. It is a most lamentable condition of things for anyone to be on the lookout for work. I know what it is myself—I have been able and willing to work, and have tried my best to get it, and been refused. It is about the hardest position for any man to be in—to be able and willing to work, and wanting the necessaries of life, and not be able to procure them. Burns put it as abject, mean, and vile to be begging “leave to toil from a fellow worm” and be refused. I think we ought to give the condition of the unemployed our deepest sympathy, and not cast any slur upon them. We are the people in authority, the people who have the lands of the country under our control, the people who have the national credit at our back, and it is a poor state of things if we cannot find reproductive labour for those who are in search of work. It is not long since General Booth was in Queensland, and going over the Downs and looking out of the carriage window, he exclaimed, “If I had the Darling Downs I could find work and employment for all the unemployed in London.” Here we are with a small percentage of unemployed compared with the numbers out of work in the older towns of England, and we cannot with all the lands we have in the colony, with all the acres we have yet in the hands of the State, find work for a comparatively few unemployed persons. This is the time to be up and doing. It grieved me very much to hear the hon. member for Toowong talk about this matter as being a pantomime. It is no pantomime to be hungry, and to have a hungry wife and children at home—it is a real thing and should not be mentioned or referred to as a pantomime. [Mr. P. J. LEAHY: He did not refer to it in that way.] If the hon. member for Warrego was hungry and out of work, he would not consider it a pantomime; it would be a very real thing to him, and the hand that would give him employment and find some way of earning his living would be the hand that he would be glad to grasp. I hope the Government will be able to find some work for the unemployed.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** Many members who have spoken have referred to the absence of recriminations and have patted themselves on the back on that account, but I cannot congratulate the hon. member who has last spoken for having grossly misrepresented the hon. member for Toowong. That hon. member said nothing which showed a want of sympathy for his fellow-man. Indeed, there is no more sympathetic man in the Chamber, but I have noticed that the hon. member for Gympie,

who is so ready in professing his sympathy, awaits the opportunity until an hon. member is out of the Chamber to misrepresent him. I say distinctly that the hon. member's remarks are a gross misrepresentation of what the hon. member for Toowong said, and I do not think the matter should be allowed to pass unnoticed. Now there is no doubt much sympathy to be expressed for the unemployed, and I believe what has been expressed is genuine. There are very few people so destitute of human feeling as not to be sorry for and sympathetic with men who are unable to find employment. But in connection with this sympathy for the unemployed I have noticed what seemed to me to be a little attempt to make political capital by the way. I have found hon. members who are strongly in favour of assisting the unemployed by having a railway built in their own immediate neighbourhood, and the hon. member who has spoken last has mixed up in a very business-like way his sympathy with a strong disposition to get something on the cheap for his electorate at the expense of the people. However, I presume that is merely a little political human nature. The hon. member who has spoken last has said—and it is true enough—that there are a great many people unemployed who are not fit for real navvying. I must admit that probably at that particular business I should myself be a most consummate failure. But it is one thing to deplore the fact that some people are not fitted for hard manual labour and another to suggest that all people unemployed, no matter whether they are ballet dancers, or organ-grinders, or clerks, or politicians, should be employed by the State. There are no people in the colony more deserving of heartfelt sympathy than disappointed politicians. At every election I venture to say that there are at least four unemployed politicians to every one who happens to get in. What would hon. members suggest to meet that case? Are we to have ten times the number of members, so that employment may be found for politicians? Would an hon. member who so strongly advocates that the Government should find work for the unemployed take pity on an undertaker and go off in order to oblige him, and to give the gravedigger a job? There must be some limit to this talk about the unemployed, and there are certainly limits with regard to the capacity of the State. Hon. members who read history must know that experiments on a large scale have been tried with the view of giving work to persons who require work. It is not fifty years since State workshops were tried on a large scale in Paris, and they failed most dismally. The question of the State finding work for the unemployed was brought before the citizens of the republic of Switzerland by way of a referendum, and the free citizens of that State declined to recognise that the principle was one which should be adopted by them. Some hon. members say that it is the duty of the State to find work for the unemployed. I do not know that it is the duty of anybody to find work as work for anybody else. This is an age of machinery for saving work. Work was inflicted, we are told, on Adam, not as a blessing, but quite the reverse. Why should we find work as work? We find work for people on the treadmill, and they are ungrateful. When we say that we ought to find work for men, we mean that we should find them food and raiment, something to eat and probably something to drink. That is what a man is looking for when he says he wants work. The functions of the few persons who are elected to form a Government are mainly to maintain law and order, but we are told that in addition to those functions they are to take upon themselves to

provide from some members of the community comforts and necessities for others, and not work, for work is only a means to an end. It is not because men are out of work that they are in trouble. What does anybody care for being out of work if it were not that certain consequences would fall upon him, that he would have to go short of something, that he would not have as good a coat, or as good a pair of boots, or some other comfort that he desired? That is exactly what we mean when we say a man is in want of work. We do not really mean that he is in want of work, but that he has certain wants which he cannot satisfy without work, and what is asked is that the community should save up boots, and clothes, and food for him. And whom are these to come from but from those who have already saved. When you say that the State should provide work for everybody, what you mean is that one class of people shall provide for their own wants, make provision for their own future, and in addition relieve other people of that obligation. I am not asserting that this is not right. I do not express any opinion one way or the other. I am only endeavouring to discover clearly what it really is that we are called upon to do. If labour can do all these things without capital, why should a man be found work? Why does he not go and employ himself? Why do not the people who get up those gigantic organisations with their tens of thousands of pounds, employ that money in reproductive enterprise? If all that it is necessary for a labouring man to get is a small amount of capital, why is not the capital which is expended in a good many purposes by certain unions and organisations applied to some such purpose? At all events, if labour is able to do this without capital there is not the slightest reason to go to the Government and ask them to provide work for the unemployed. But this is not true, because labour without capital must starve. Capital makes the provision while labour works. This Government, whether it be right or whether it be wrong, has done a great deal in the direction of providing labour. Whether it has gone too far or not is another matter. We owe £38,000,000 of money, the most of which has been spent in employing labour. We spent last year £1,000,000 in employing labour. We propose to spend this year £2,000,000. Is there no limit which members opposite are going to draw with regard to expenditure by which we put ourselves under the heel of the bloated capitalist? Hon. members who have suggested this evening that a railway should be built through their own district or that they should get a quartz-crushing machine—knowing that we have put on an income tax which they say is objectionable, that we have retrenched people, which is unfortunate, and who would say that the people cannot stand any more taxation—must know perfectly well that in asking us to borrow money to find work for the unemployed they are making a proposition of an equivocal character. They practically say that the £2,000,000 which it is proposed to spend on public works this year is not sufficient. We have to pay £750,000, or thereabouts, every half-year in the way of interest, and do hon. members maintain that that is a wise thing? Do they say that in order to give people employment we must borrow more money? Are we to go to the money-lenders of the world and say, "We not only cannot pay our way, but, in common with other States, we have had big deficits two years in succession, and there is not sufficient capital left in the country to find the people employment." Do hon. members imagine for one moment that any man who has any savings at all or who lends money is necessarily an idiot?

What would money-lenders say if a colony with a population of 500,000 and a debt of £40,000,000, and an annual interest payment bill of £1,500,000, went to them and said, "We want to borrow more money, not to construct reproductive works, but in order to find employment for our people"? Whether you look at the Sydney *Bulletin* or the *Financial News*, you will find that we are very heavily loaded with debt, and that there is a limit to the borrowing power of Australia. Yet hon. members say that in bad times £2,000,000 is not sufficient to expend on public works, but that we should go to the London capitalist for more money in order to find work for the unemployed. I say that if you go to the world to borrow money on that account you are not at all likely to get the money. One hon. member said he knew what it was to look for work. Well, I have had [10 p.m.] to look for work myself, but I never flew to the Government and expected them to find me work. Supposing people at that time were in good health, why make them sick in order that I might make pills for them. (Laughter.) I have as much sympathy for people out of work as any hon. member, but I also have sympathy for the people in work, and if you keep on imposing burdens on the people. [Mr. LESINA: Poll tax.] We had to put it on. The hon. member opposite abuses this party for the state of the public finances, and I heard him say that we were the most debt-ridden, burdened people in the universe—yet his party wants us to increase these burdens. The Government have as much sympathy for the unemployed as anybody, but by endeavouring to help them by attempting to borrow on the London market you run the risk of not helping the unemployed and ruining those who are employed by shattering the whole fabric of our credit.

Mr. DIBLEY (*Woolloomooloo*): There is a great deal of unanimity on the question that something should be done to help the unemployed, and no doubt the Government will be able to adopt some of the suggestions brought forward in order to bring about a better state of affairs. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley in speaking about communal settlements said that the land that those people were put upon was not good land. The Minister for Lands interjected that they had a free choice, but I know that they did not have a free choice. I happened to be living in South Brisbane when there was one group formed, and the men wanted to go on to land between Gympie and Noosa, and being well acquainted with that country they asked me where they could find good Government land. I told them where to go; four men went to view this land; and they liked it, and came back to the Lands Office and told the Minister the land they wanted. But he said the land was too valuable; they could not have it. The men then went to Mr. Tozer, who was then the member for Wide Bay, but he said the same thing. He said there was better land at Wyeeba, and they could have that. They asked me what it was like, and I told them that it was not worth fencing-in; but they were stuck in a corner, and they were obliged to take what the Government would let them have. The land I refer to was not fit for a blackfellow to live on. All the groups failed; not so much because they did not get good land as because, I think, there was no intention of making communal settlement a success. A great deal of discussion has taken place on the duty of the Government to find work for the unemployed. That matter will stand a great deal more debate than has taken place here to-night. At any rate it is a great loss to the country when people are idle, and something should be done to improve

the condition of the unemployed here I hope the Government will see their way clear to adopt some of the various suggestions made, such as those relating to ringbarking and prickly-pear, and other things.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY (*Warrego*): As so much time has been occupied in discussing this motion, and we have had so many pyrotechnic displays from the other side, I may add my contribution to the debate. A great deal has been said about clearing lands. I have some knowledge of what has been done in New South Wales with regard to this matter, and I know that what was done there was a complete failure. The men who took up the land afterwards found that the Government added to the price of the land such a sum as made it impossible for them to work the land profitably. In other words, the work carried out cost twice as much as if the selectors had carried it out themselves. It would have the effect here of preventing selectors taking up land unless the Government bore a considerable amount of the expenditure on the land. Reference was also made to agricultural railways as a means for providing work for the unemployed; but, if anything at all in the direction of railway construction is to be attempted, it should be in the direction of extending our trunk lines, because the reports of the Railway Department for years past prove that the trunk lines have paid a great deal better than the agricultural lines. In fact, the line from Warwick to Killarney, although it goes through some of the finest agricultural land in Queensland, does not pay working expenses. Reference was also made to co-operative settlements, and it was pointed out by the hon. member for Woolloongabba and others that the cause of the failure of those settlements lay in the fact that they did not get good land. Now, I have some knowledge of the Burnett, and the hon. member who represents that electorate will bear me out when I say that the Byrnestown group had really good land—a fact which is proved by the number of applications that have since been made for that land—and yet that group was as great a failure as the others. The fact is that the principle itself was wrong—not the land. The men disagreed among themselves, and, whether the land was good or whether it was indifferent, the result was the same in all cases. The men could not make 7s. a day at agriculture, and I sincerely trust that whatever may be done in the direction of finding work for the unemployed it will not take the shape of any more unfortunate experiments of that kind. The hon. member for Gympie told us a great deal about low-grade ores, but what guarantee have we that there is any considerable quantity of gold in them? If anything is to be done at all, it should be the duty of the Government to employ men in connection with works where they can at least earn a portion of the money paid to them. It might be a very fine thing for Gympie, and redound greatly to the credit of the hon. member, that a large number of men should be employed in this work; but, when the settlement came round, it might be found that the greater portion, if not the whole, of the money devoted to this work was completely wasted. Consequently, I contend that, if anything is to be done, it should be in connection with works that would be something approaching self-supporting. Attention has been directed to the fact that the Government have already found a considerable amount of work for the unemployed. They have put a large number of men on railways at day work, and I understand that, if the money is available, employment will be found for a large additional number. But I would like hon. members on the other side to remember that the men who talk most loudly now about the necessity of finding

work for the unemployed, were the very men who, when certain taxation measures were recently before us, did their utmost to defeat those proposals, although the object of the proposals was to provide work for the men whose cause the other side are championing to-night. There is one matter I would like to refer to, and that is an irrigation experiment in connection with artesian bores. I understand that in the desert country in Central Queensland irrigation has been carried on with very fair success. I know a portion of the Western country—particularly a portion of the Warrego district—I do not say this because it happens to be in the electorate I have the honour to represent—I have the authority of the hon. member for Gregory that the character of some portions of that country is very much the same as that of the country in the Central district where these experiments have been carried out; and if something of the kind was tried in connection with one of the bores in the neighbourhood of Charleville, where the use of a bore could be obtained at very small expense, it would have the effect of absorbing a considerable amount of labour, and be also a very valuable lesson. I do not think it would be a success on a very large scale, but it would at least prove whether it was possible to conduct any experiments of that kind in the Western country on a scale that would pay, and, though there might be some loss over it, any slight loss that might be incurred would probably be justified under the circumstances. I sincerely hope that, if anything is done in addition to the day labour work to find work for the unemployed, an experiment of that kind will be undertaken in the South-west. There is another matter I would like to refer to, which has already been touched on by one or two members on this side, but which cannot be emphasised too strongly. That is that, whatever work is given, it should be distributed as far as possible over the country. I strongly object to centralising anything of this kind in Brisbane, because it has a tendency to draw men towards Brisbane. It would be infinitely better if the work could be given in places near where the men reside—say at Rockhampton, Roma, and other centres. I think a great deal too much has been made out of this question. Under all the circumstances, I do not think it is the duty of the Government to find work for every person who wants it, or says he wants it. All that the Government can be expected to do is to give these people certain opportunities which will enable them to get some reasonable means of subsistence. The Government has not an artesian bore of wealth, or a mine like Mount Morgan behind them, no matter what their intentions may be. Speaking for myself, and, I think, for other hon. members on this side of the House, we are animated by just as sincere a desire to find work for the unemployed as hon. members on the other side, and in our own way outside this House—although we do not talk much about it—we do as much to find work and to relieve distress as hon. members opposite. I believe the Government have shown their *bona-fides* in the past, and that at the present time they will do what they can to successfully grapple with this question.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): When the motion for adjournment was moved this afternoon, I expected a considerable amount of sympathy would be expressed by members on both sides of the House with the very distressful position of a large number of unemployed in our State. My anticipations have been realised; but, with all the sympathy that has been showered upon the unemployed by members on the Government side, that sympathy will in no way tend to satisfy the immediate necessities of a number of people

who are practically in a more or less half-starving condition in various parts of the State. It is all very well to express sympathy, but I doubt whether any member on the other side realises the distress and hardship suffered by a large number of the people of Queensland to-day. I was told some time ago that the Minister for Agriculture looked upon life as a huge joke; and after listening to his speech to-night, and the cold-blooded philosophical tone in which it was delivered, I think that statement is about correct. The Secretary for Railways promised a deputation that he would provide work for about thirty men, and in doing so seemed to think he had solved the unemployed question. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said that I would put them on in a day or two; I did not say what I would do a week afterwards.] Granted that the hon. gentleman put them on to-day, what are the others to do? I am prepared to give the Government credit for all the attempts they have made, but no proper organised attempt has been made by the Government to find work for the number of deserving unemployed that exist in Queensland. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What do you call an organised attempt?] I consider it is the duty of any Government, when they know that people are in a half-starved condition, to try and remedy that state of things. The Government are continually decrying the efforts of this party to block the further immigration of people to this State; although so many who are already here cannot find work. I know of no more pathetic object than a man honestly looking for work. Some years ago I was in the ranks of the unemployed; and though I had done no hard work for eight or ten years I had to leave my wife and family and tackle the first job I could find. The first job I came across was wharf lumping, and from that I went to pick-and-shovel work, and I would do the same again. Although the Government are providing work for 1,500 people on lines of railway under construction, the question is: What are we to do with the number of people at present out of work? To avoid making any exaggerated statement on the floor of this House, some time ago I made an attempt to get an approximate idea of the number of *bonâ fide* unemployed in Bundaberg. We advertised in the local Press inviting any *bonâ fide* resident of the town who was unemployed to come to a certain part of the town on a Saturday night and put his name down. I have the return, and it shows about 200 men. I would like those who adopt a rather sympathetic tone on this question to go into the homes of some of our people to-night. When a man goes home at night, the first thing he hears is some of the little ones crying for bread. And he hears the same thing in the morning when he leaves home to look for a job. This condition of things is enough to drive many people to desperation. What I am saying is not mere sentiment, but actual facts as they exist at the present time. The Minister for Railways has said that he would give 7s. a day, but that if he gave 7s. a day he expected to get 7s. worth of labour. That is quite right. When coming to and from the House to-day, I saw from 100 to 150 men; from what I saw of them by running my eye over them, I would not be prepared, if I were an employer of labour, to give 7s. a day to more than 25 per cent. of them. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What would you do with the others?] I would find them work. [Mr. BOLES: What about the minimum wage?] Let me refer to a deputation that waited on the Secretary for Railways only the other day. He made reference there to the Labour party fixing a standard wage and advocating the principle that no one

should work for less. I want to say that, as far as I know the life and history of the Labour party, I never knew the party advocate any such absurd or ridiculous thing. I would not do it myself. There are exceptions to a minimum wage. I believe on [10:30 p.m.] the staff of the Railway Department we have capable and efficient officers able to find work for many of these men which will at least enable them to provide food for their families. I would give some of the less able-bodied of the unemployed clearing jobs, and pay them by results. The Premier has already admitted that the difficulty may become more acute, and I contend that now is the time for the Government to face the situation and deal with it in a practical manner. Some short time ago a series of articles appeared in the *Courier* in reference to the possibilities of the Blackall Range district. We have there a mill erected by State money and so far it has proved an almost absolute failure. People who know the country up therestate that there is an almost inexhaustible supply of good land that only wants tapping with a tramline, and if that were done it would enable an ample supply of cane to be grown for that mill. I think a number of the unemployed might be put to work in that district. It is useless taking too much notice of those who speak loudest in the interests of the unemployed, and no use Ministers throwing at us the at times exaggerated and absurd statements of the so-called leaders outside. It is not always the most deserving of the unemployed who make the loudest and most blatant speeches, and I guarantee that there are among the unemployed scores of men of a reserved disposition who are very dubious about pushing their way to the front, yet in nine cases out of ten they are the men who are suffering the greatest hardship and feel the pinch of the situation most. According to the *Courier*, the registry office keepers report that the number of unemployed, both male and female, is continually increasing, and they say that respectably dressed men come in asking if there is anything going, and on receiving an answer in the negative, go and hunt somewhere else. They do not sing their troubles and trials to everyone. I hope that the Government will take steps to deal with this very serious question. It is useless talking about the matter in a mere flimsy, flapdoodle way. There are people in Brisbane to-night actually starving. I know these statements are very unpalatable, and that we who sit here in our snug places in this Chamber cannot very well enter into the feelings of these people. It is all very well for the merchant outside to sympathise with them, but they would not care to entertain the thought that 100 yards up the street there were poor little children crying for bread. There are children in Brisbane clothed in little more than rags. Their fathers have been thrown out of work through no fault of their own, and they have pawned one thing after another until practically everything has gone, and they are at their wits' ends. What is the use of hon. members on the other side standing up and saying they sympathise with them. Such sympathy is not worth a snap of the finger. It is an insult to these people, and now that the attention of the Government has been drawn to the matter it is their duty to make some earnest attempt to see that these people are looked after, and if no work is forthcoming, that they should at least be supplied with food to keep life and soul in them.

Mr. BOLES (*Port Curtis*): This is a question which offers a great deal of scope for discussion. It is a big question, and one for which I have a vast amount of sympathy. We may expect to hear a great deal more of it, and the reasons are

obvious. The spending power of the people has been curtailed as the result of the terrible drought and of federation. There are a large number of people who are beginning to believe that it is the duty of the Government to find work for the people, and who look forward to the approach of the millenium when all who enter the field of labour may take a turn at the handle and grind out 7s. a day at the Government stroke. It is a very happy conception, but somehow it does not work out properly, because someone has to find the money. Who is this someone? According to the Trades Hall it is the Government. But who are the Government? The Government are the people, and it is they who have to find the money. The contention of hon. members opposite is that a certain section of people in this country should be penalised to find work for others. A few months ago I read a letter published in the Rockhampton *Bulletin*, and signed by a late member of this House, in which was set forth a splendid way by which the country might be got out of all its troubles. The scheme was that we should set the Government Printing Office to work printing paper money, and that this House should pass a Bill compelling people to hand over all the gold in the State for this paper money. Such a scheme is a burlesque, but it is no more a burlesque than the policy enunciated by hon. members opposite, that the Government should find work for the people. I admit that it is the province of the Government to give every facility to people who are looking for work, and also that they should carry out a fair amount of public works if possible. But it is also the duty of the Government to encourage foreign capital to come into the country and develop its manifold resources. Fully half of the money so expended goes into the pockets of the workers. But how is such a policy met by hon. members opposite who are barracking for the unemployed? This House has had ample proof that the policy of the Trades Hall is to block capital from coming into the country, and to stem the tide of progress and enterprise. The workers have plenty of time now to contemplate the situation. It is at times like the present, when these homely truths, like wandering chickens, come home to roost; and the workers have plenty of time now to judge of the policy of the Trades Hall in blocking capital from coming into the country, and so causing them to go with empty stomachs when they might have constant employment and full stomachs. Considering everything, I think the Government are doing the best they can at the present time, and it is absurd for hon. members opposite to make such a noise about this matter, seeing that they have done all they could to prevent capital from coming into the country. It is all very well to say that we should borrow money for public works in order to provide work for the unemployed. But we shall soon get to the end of our borrowing tether. Any course which the Government may propose to assist those people who are out of work will have my fullest support, whether it is building railways, sinking dams, or any other useful work. Hon. members will see the meaning of a minimum wage now. I believe there are men in this State who are willing to work for 5s., and even 4s. a day, and I know that I should be willing to work for bread rather than be without the necessaries of life. Whatever scheme the Government may propose, I trust that the work provided will not be concentrated in one place, but that it will be provided in the various districts where there are unemployed. I have the greatest sympathy with the men who are out of work.

Mr. GRANT (*Rockhampton*): This debate seems to have degenerated into a log-rolling competition, and I think Rockhampton could

put in a very fair claim for one or two things. Rockhampton has had an experience in this matter, and has shown so much sense that I think it is deserving of more consideration than it has got. With us, unfortunately, the unemployed question is one of long date. The municipal council has spent about £200 on relief works, the hospital about £300, and the municipal council on the north side about £50. Certainly the Secretary for Railways gave employment to about twenty men for a month; but we have not come whining to the Government for assistance in this matter. The Secretary for Railways seemed to doubt the truth of the statement as to the number of unemployed in Rockhampton. I know that when the municipal council advertised relief work at 5s. a day they were so rushed with men that they could only give them two days' work a week, and at last it was less than that. Men do not rush for hard pick-and-shovel work at 5s. a day for two days a week if they are not anxiously looking for work. It is said that there are 300 or 400 men out of work there. I do not know whether 400 is an accurate estimate, but there are certainly 300 out of work in Rockhampton. The money for the second section of the line from Gladstone to Rockhampton has been passed, and the present is a most opportune time to undertake that work. It has been said that this will not be brought forward until the Loan Bill is introduced, but it has taken a long time to bring that Bill before the House. I think that if a married man can look forward to work at 7s. a day, even if the meat and the diet is not quite to his taste, he has nothing to complain about. I would like to know if the Minister will extend the offer to Rockhampton—will he give employment to all the married men in Rockhampton at 7s. a day? Why should Brisbane be favoured in this way and not other towns? We have hundreds of unemployed in Rockhampton—married men, and they are just as hard up as men in Brisbane, who can go in deputations to the Minister. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will do something for them directly.] The Premier stated that he would give rations to men to enable them to go prospecting; but the present time is not opportune for prospecting; the want of water prevents it. When rain comes, will that offer be extended to men in Rockhampton? [THE PREMIER: Yes, certainly.] I am glad to hear that. This Government may be a bad one, but I don't think the unemployed are due to them. The people in Rockhampton have suffered from the drought more than the people in any other towns, but with good seasons we may be able to find work for our own unemployed, and not ask the Government to find it. There are, however, 300 or 400 unemployed in Rockhampton, and yet when only thirty men go on a deputation to the Minister in Brisbane, they are immediately assured that they will be found work. The same treatment should be extended to all.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*): Hon. members who were here when the unemployed question came before the House some years ago will be somewhat struck with the remarkable change that has taken place in the minds of some hon. members opposite, with the exception of those two crusty conservatives—the hon. member for Port Curtis and the Minister for Agriculture. It was stated by the Minister that it was not the duty of the Government to find work for the unemployed, but that the sole aim and end of good government was to maintain the liberty of the subject and the protection of property. Hon. members opposite still continue to preach that doctrine, but they practise something quite different. The Minister for Railways stated that it was not the duty of the

Government to find work for the unemployed, but nevertheless he is looking for means by which to provide that work. He is on the horns of a dilemma. Either he recognises that this is his duty and he fulfils that duty—[The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not all all]—because he is compelled to do so, or else he is doing something which is not his duty, merely for the sake of gaining public kudos. I give him credit for recognising it is his duty to find this work. What stand have the two members I have mentioned taken up? The song of their speech was that if you provide work for the unemployed you only do so at the cost of the community. That is entirely erroneous. If you allow the unemployed to remain unemployed, you do so at the cost of the community. The boot is on the other foot. It is better to provide men with reproductive work, for then they will produce more wealth than they receive in the shape of payment. So they will do good to the community as well as to themselves. We can't afford to have drones in the hive. We must find men work, if only for our own safety. I offer one suggestion to the Minister, which has not been touched upon yet. I think it would be wise to employ labour in making experiments in deep sea fishing. We have the "Lucinda" lying idle. Why not send her out to make some experiments. [The PREMIER: We made some experiments two years ago, and they were failures.] Yes, trawling; but the "Lucinda" could go along the coast and make experiments, and private enterprise would soon follow. This would be a means of finding an avenue for employment, and of providing the people with a good supply of fish, at a comparatively low price. Then the industry which is paying most is the mining industry. Let the Government afford every opportunity for the extension of this industry by the establishment of prospecting batteries in certain districts; by refusals to exempt—there has been too much wholesale exemptions. By having the unemployed in our midst, and permitting them to remain unemployed, we are doing an injury to the people, and I hope something will be done in addition to what has already been promised by the Minister.

Mr. MARTIN (*Burrum*): The Brisbane unemployed appear to have got a good deal of consideration to the exclusion of the country unemployed. The Government should try to find work for the unemployed in the [11 p.m.] country. Mention has been made of batteries, of which there are a number lying idle at the present time. There is a large belt of auriferous country in my electorate. We sent some stone down to the Government Geologist last year which went  $4\frac{1}{2}$  oz. to the ton. Of course, we could not get anything like that out of the stone. I am prepared, on behalf of the unemployed in my district, to accept the offer of the Premier, and take one of those batteries, and see that reliable men become responsible for it.

Mr. KIDSTON, in reply: I am glad to see the general recognition there has been from both sides of the House as to the necessity there exists of something being done with regard to this very vexed question. Practically there has been no difference of opinion. The Premier told us it would be a bad day for Queensland when the Government had to find work for all the unemployed. It will be a much worse day for Queensland when the Government does not attempt to deal with so serious a position of affairs. This is not a question that concerns the unemployed only, but the general welfare of the State. Capital can hold itself aloof until a more convenient season for its employment;

labour cannot. If the labour that is available to-day is not used to-day it is lost for good and all. The Government and the Parliament who have spent so much money in bringing people to the colony have a further duty flowing from that source alone. Two years ago I told the Premier what was likely to happen unless immigration was stopped altogether. Since then we have gone on spending money in that direction. It would have been much better to have spent the money on those who were already in the colony. I give the Government every credit for good intentions, but we want from them more than good intentions—we want good actions and good results. In my speech I purposely avoided suggesting any remedies. I confined myself to pointing out the real responsibilities of the Government. It is not for any private member to say what should be done, but for those charged with the administration of the affairs of the country. I am exceedingly pleased that the debate has been so unanimous, and that members who generally support the Government have concurred with members on this side in urging the Government to take some active steps in order to mitigate the evil which undoubtedly exists, and I trust that the debate will have the effect of causing the Government to take immediate steps with that object in view. I ask leave, Mr. Speaker, to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

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