

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 31 MAY 1904**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

TUESDAY, 31 MAY, 1904.

The SPEAKER (Hon. A. S. Cowley, *Herbert*)  
took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PETITIONS.

SUNDAY CLOSING OF PUBLIC-HOUSES.

Mr. GRANT (*Rockhampton*) presented a  
petition from 650 residents of Rockhampton,  
praying for an amendment of the provisions of  
the present licensing laws with respect to this  
matter.

Petition received.

Petitions of similar purport and prayer were presented by Mr. Martin (*Burrum*), the Premier (Hon. A. Morgan, *Warwick*), Mr. Plunkett (*Albert*), Mr. Moore (*Murilla*), Mr. Cooper (*Mitchell*), on behalf of residents in their respective electorates; and Mr. Plunkett also presented a petition, on behalf of Mr. Jenkinson, from certain residents in the electorate of Fassifern.

Petitions received.

### QUESTIONS.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICE INQUIRY BOARD.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*) asked the Premier—

1. Have the Government adopted the recommendations of the special board, as contained in their report and memorandum and Schedules A and B thereto, laid on the table on 17th instant, or is it the intention of the Government to give effect thereto?

2. If with exception or exceptions, with what exception or exceptions?

The PREMIER replied—

The intentions of the Government in regard to these recommendations will be fully disclosed on the Estimates, which will shortly be tabled.

#### APPOINTMENT OF Mr. F. JONES.

Mr. MACARTNEY asked the Premier, without notice—

When he will place the papers on the table relating to Mr. Jones, promised on Thursday last?

The PREMIER replied—

They are being typed now, and, if they come within the next hour, I will lay them on the table.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Too late for me, though.

### PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—Report of the Joint Committee for the Management and Superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings for the period from the 1st July, 1903, to 31st May, 1904.

#### PROPOSED RAILWAY TO ETHERIDGE GOLD FIELD.

On the motion of Mr. LYONS (*Cairns*), it was formally resolved—

That there be laid on the table of the House all correspondence between the Government or Ministers and other parties during the last three years, relating to any proposals for the construction of a railway or tramway between Chillagoe and the Etheridge Gold Field.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

#### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MACARTNEY, who was received with "Hear, hears!" said: I should like to endorse all that has been said in the Speech and by various members of this House in appreciation and in memory of the late Hon. W. H. Browne, and particularly would I like to endorse the very kind and manly remarks which were made by the hon. member for Maryborough, Dr. Garde. The Speech, in itself, is a most interesting document. If anything were necessary to prove the nature of the composition of the Government of Queensland to-day, I think the Speech itself would be sufficient to prove it. We have, as it were, two parts of the Speech. We have, first, an oration, practically subdivided into four parts. The first matter which is apparently

dealt with as the most important is our industries. The second—and probably the next most important, or what is regarded as the next most important—part of the Speech is the question of electoral reform. We find the finances are put third, and the unfortunate public service is included last. We have evidence that a strong majority in the Ministry insisted—as it ought to have insisted—upon having the prosperity of the country and our industries put first, and we have evidence that a minority in the Ministry insisted upon bringing forward the question of electoral reform at a time when we might well have looked for measures to bring about a state of things that we all desire. The finances are put down third in order in the Speech; but, when we come to the schedule of the Speech, which deals with the programme which the Government intend to submit to the House, we find an entirely different state of things. We find that the minority have succeeded in putting their measures, which form important planks in the Labour platform, in the forefront. We have some evidence that the minority in the Cabinet are in the ascendant and are able to force to the front important planks in the Labour platform. Turning then to the evidences we have had of the acts of administration on the part of the Cabinet during the recess, I think they speak more eloquently still of the dominant influence in the Cabinet. First we have the appointment of Jones; then we have the reprieve of the Macdonalds—another evidence of putting into force a plank of the Labour platform—about which so much strong feeling has been displayed, and we then come to the political execution of Mr. Francis, who at one time was at the head of the Electoral Department. These are strong evidences of the turn events have taken. [The PREMIER: Do you think it fair to allude to a civil servant by name?] There may be cases in which it is better not done, but this is such a prominent case that I do not think any exception can be taken to my alluding to the name. However, as I intend to refer to the subject later on, I do not need to apologise for mentioning it in passing. Taking the Speech, then, as a whole, it seems to me that it is a fair question to ask the Government if there is no danger of the best interests of Queensland being sacrificed to "pride of place." There are one or two matters to which I should like to refer before going any further, and the first is in reference to the Supreme Court bench. In looking back at the debate which took place last session it will be remembered that certain points were put very strongly before Ministers. At that time the Attorney-General said he would be in a position by March to come to a decision as to whether four or five judges were necessary. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He hoped to be in a position!] Quite so, and having in view the rights and privileges of Parliament in deciding how many judges should constitute the bench, I should have thought that some reference would have been made to the matter in the Speech. We find, however, that no mention is made of the matter. When the hon. member for Carnarvon was speaking, the hon. gentleman was asked the question whether the Attorney-General had any prescriptive right to a vacant position on the Supreme Court bench, and the hon. gentleman replied in the affirmative. The hon. gentleman had already said that a rumour was going abroad that the Attorney-General had some idea of appointing himself to the position, and that is one of the dangers which were pointed out last session. I confess that I have myself heard that rumour. I have heard that the hon. gentleman has been inquiring—perhaps jocosely—how he would fill the position, and it is no

secret that some hon. gentlemen on this side and a good many on the other side think that he would fill it very well. I think myself that this is a matter which should be understood. Laymen are unfamiliar with the circumstances which should surround appointments of this sort, and it is only legal men who have some special knowledge of the attainments necessary on the part of a gentleman who aspires to fill such a position. I think, therefore, it would be very satisfactory if the Attorney-General would give us some idea whether the principles which have been advocated by this side of the House last session are likely to be interfered with or not. [The PREMIER: What principles are those?] I think it is a matter we ought to be very careful about, and the hon. gentleman would do himself credit if he would give some explanation—whether the statements which have been made are jocose or serious, and whether there is any cause for alarm. It is rather an unpleasant thing to have to say; but I would not have spoken on the subject at all did I not think that the hon. gentleman was absolutely unfitted for the position, and that the appointment of the hon. gentleman would amount to a prostitution of the power which the Government hold in this respect. The hon. gentleman will admit that neither he nor the other legal gentleman sitting on the Treasury bench has special claim to fitness for the position. They have had very little experience, and I say emphatically that the only claim which one can have to a position of that sort is the claim of merit and experience. There was an occasion in the history of Queensland when the Attorney-General for the time being did not consider himself, by reason of his want of experience, fit to take up a position on the Supreme Court bench, and the result was that another gentleman was appointed. If the records speak for anything, the hon. member for Maranoa, who was at the time Attorney-General, did not appoint himself, and yet, if the rule laid down by the hon. member for Carnarvon is right, he had a prescriptive right to the position. If he had that right, I assume he would have been very foolish not to have taken advantage of it. But he recognised that he had only had seven or eight years' experience and that he was not fit for the position, and someone else was appointed. The hon. gentleman who at that time occupied the position of Attorney-General had certainly had more experience than the present Attorney-General. This is not a pleasant subject to refer to, but I do think the Attorney-General should put people's minds at rest as to what he intends to do, and whether he intends to restore to Parliament the privilege of deciding the number of judges of which the Supreme Court bench should consist. That privilege was taken away last session. The hon. gentleman who introduced the measure did not observe at first that he was depriving Parliament of that privilege, but having made a mistake he was bound to see it through. I had hoped that better counsels would prevail, and that the hon. gentleman would have put the matter right this session, and in view of the hope he expressed at that time I think he is bound to. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is only your opinion.] That is so, and I am at liberty to express my opinions. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Certainly; and no one envies you.] I do not think the hon. gentleman will either prevent me from expressing my opinions or make me alter them. While we are on the Supreme Court I may say that it seems to me a most extraordinary thing that something has not been done to relieve the congestion of business which exists at the present time—a congestion which could very well be

relieved by the transfer of Mr. Justice Power from Rockhampton. It seems to me that a Government which so much desires economy might have exercised it in that direction, and thus remove the congestion and disabilities under which litigants are suffering at the present time. I do not know whether the Attorney-General, who has been absent from Brisbane for some days, is aware that during the past ten days there has not been a judge available to deal with a single chamber application. I also observe that there is missing from the Speech any reference to the Special Retrenchment Act. The Act will expire some time towards the end of August, and one would have expected some reference to it. The Government servants at the present time do not know where they are. They are being knocked about from one place to another. They are being turned out of office, their salaries reduced, and some men are being given increases at the expense of others. I say it would merely have been a humane thing if some intimation of the intentions of the Government had been given in order that the public servants might be able to make their business arrangements like other people. I very strongly opposed the principle of the Special Retrenchment Act. I never thought it a fair thing to put a special tax on a particular section of the people. [An honourable member: You voted for it.] When it was introduced I spoke against it, and when it was in committee I occupied temporarily the position of Chairman, and could take no part in the discussion; but an amendment was moved on my behalf, showing the interest which I took in the matter. I made no secret of my opposition to the measure, and I adhere to those views at the present time. I think the measure cruel and unjust, and I do not understand hon. gentlemen on the other side, who are clamouring for the repeal of what they call a 10s. poll tax, willingly imposing on men drawing £105 and £108 a year a tax of £8 or £9. I know of men receiving small salaries who, on account of this tax, are unable to carry out their obligations; and one instance came to my knowledge of a lady teacher, receiving £108 a year, who joined with other members of the family in the purchase of a home, agreeing to contribute so much per month, and who, on account of this tax, is quite unable to carry out her engagement. Then retrenchment came along; she was docked £8 a year, and was absolutely unable to carry out her contract. This is only a single instance, but it can be multiplied, I believe, in the experience of many Government employees. I think that the Treasurer is called upon without delay—and it would be only a fair thing to do—to definitely state what he proposes to do in this regard. I would have liked to have seen, and expected to have seen, some reference in the Speech to a Bill to amend the Public Service Act, and a Bill to amend the Sugar Works Guarantee Act. During the recess the Government have entered into a new agreement with Dr. Maxwell, by which his term is extended for three years, and his services are to be given to the central sugar mills; he is to have a new bureau made for him, so that while retrenchment is going on we find the Government are going to very considerable expense in this direction. Under the Sugar Works Guarantee Act it was thought that sufficient protection had been provided for the Treasury, and if this protection was thought to be insufficient it was clearly the duty of the Ministry to come down to this House with amendments of the Act embracing what was thought to be necessary to protect the Treasury. But instead of that Ministers have taken on their own shoulders the responsibility of incurring further expense in

this matter and of providing further methods for protecting the Treasury, and I see very considerable danger in this. The Minister for Agriculture the other evening said that the people for whom this money had been spent would have to repay every penny of it; that not a penny would come out of the consolidated revenue. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman can make that good or not, but I say without hesitation that there is very considerable danger in interfering in such a way with these mills. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are confusing the two Acts. My remarks in that respect referred to the Sugar Experiment Stations Act.] I understand that a central sugar mills bureau is to be established; I have seen that referred to in *Hansard*. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are confusing terms.] I do not think there is any confusing of terms. However, I will put it in other language and then perhaps the hon. gentleman will be able to understand me. I understand that Dr. Maxwell is going to take in hand the control of the central mills and is to have a staff for that purpose—I will call it a staff, not a bureau—and I say unhesitatingly that any such interference with the central sugar mills system is bad; that the extra expenditure will afterwards be very difficult to recover; that the Government will be running the risk of endangering the securities they now hold, and I venture to say that there will be such a crop of litigation as will render the securities of the farmers inoperative. With regard to the industries referred to in the Speech, I think the country is to be congratulated on the change of seasons—it is to be congratulated on the advance in the dairying and general farming industries; but at the same time, I do not think that the present Government are entitled to any very great credit for that. Anything that was done to encourage the dairying industry was done by the late Government, and the end of this year it will be time enough to say what the present Government have done towards that end. It is also a matter for encouragement that the mining returns are keeping up so well; I do not think that hon. gentlemen opposite can claim any credit for that, but I say that it is a matter for regret that the system of refusing mining exemptions is likely to cause so much harm, especially with regard to the revenue from mining fields. I have the particulars of one case where exemptions were applied for by a company who had held land for seven years and who had spent £21,000—five-sixths of which was paid for wages. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: When was that?] It was before the hon. gentleman's term of office in the department. The exemptions were applied for on the ground of exhaustion of capital—for three months—and only £600 had been won out of the ground as a result of expending £21,000. It was an English company, and they found that reconstruction was necessary. The warden recommended three months' exemption, but this was arbitrarily cut down by the then Minister to one month, and the result is that the ground has been idle for some time. That is only one of the many cases which shows what the influence of the particular party which support the present Government is in connection with the mining industry. Now, I would like to have a few words to say about the appointment of Mr. Jones. I do not think it would have been necessary for me to have referred to this appointment, in the face of what has already fallen from the hon. members who have spoken, had it not been for what the Secretary for Agriculture said the other night—that if it was shown that the honour of Queensland would in any sense be endangered Mr. Jones would be recalled. Since that

statement was made the Premier, in answer to a question, stated Mr. Jones has not been recalled and that he will not be recalled. I take that to mean that no matter what Mr. Jones is—no matter what danger to the State there may be by reason of his appointment—the Government have no intention of recalling him. Now, it is a difficult thing to ascertain who is responsible for his appointment. Of course I know that, technically speaking, the whole of the Ministry are so responsible, and that, nominally speaking, the Minister for Agriculture is responsible, and probably to some extent the Premier; but I am convinced that the responsibility does not altogether lie with either of them. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] Mr. Jones has informed friends of mine that he obtained the appointment through the influence of the Treasurer in the first place, at the request of a gentleman named Mr. Reid, who was once a member of this House. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That statement is utterly untrue.] Well, from the facts that I am aware of and to which I will refer, I am inclined to think that it is absolutely true. [The PREMIER: Quite wrong.] The hon. gentleman has a very short way of replying: he says everyone is wrong, but he does not reduce himself to certainties, and I do not think I am wrong at all. [The PREMIER: I did not say you are wrong. I said the statement is quite wrong.] That may be; the hon. gentleman may be the innocent tool of other people without knowing it, and I think I will be able to show that he was in that position. We have to ask ourselves who Jones is, and where was he likely to get the influence necessary to secure this appointment? We find that this gentleman was a candidate for an election somewhere—and the Premier alluded to that fact before any other hon. member—and we find on inquiry that this is a fact. He was a candidate in the Labour interest in New South Wales, and he was associated with Mr. O'Sullivan and the Labour party in politics there. [An honourable member: That is not a crime.] No, I know that, but it is an important fact to consider when we come to inquire where he got his influence from and who his friends are. Then we also find according to the hon. member for the Balonne, who knows Cunnamulla well, that Mr. Jones was a prominent Labour man there—a raving agitator; we also find that he broke up a meeting held there by the late Mr. Dickson, when he was Premier, and also that his friend Mr. Reid, who was in that part of the country at that time, was interested in obtaining this appointment for him and was the only gentleman who visited him on the steamboat to wish him "God speed" on behalf of the Queensland Government. Mr. Jones has been informing people that he obtained this appointment through Mr. Kidston and his friend who pulled the strings and allowed the Secretary for Agriculture and the Premier to make the appointment. That is the connecting link. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is all imagination. There is no foundation for these statements.] Well, we have to go stage by stage. Mr. Jones informed responsible people in this State that first of all it was a question of his appointment to a position under the Federal Government. The correspondence endorses that statement. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where is the proof of that?] We have it that Mr. Jones told responsible people in this State that he had applied for an appointment in the Federal Service, and he was told that if Queensland gave him a start he would get it. He then came to Brisbane and started a system of applications to the Secretary for Agriculture and the Premier, and various

other people, with the result that he was appointed to a position here that no one else applied for—that no one else knew anything at all about—appointed contrary to the sentiment preached by the Labour party when they were on these benches for years, and I have no doubt that this appointment was given to him by his friends Mr. Reid and Mr. Kidston—that the hon. member and the Premier were made the tools of more ingenious and experienced men in some respects. A great deal has been said as to the character of Mr. Jones, and whether he is likely to be an effective agent for the State. We had heard on the authority of a gentleman on the other side that Mr. Jones was a welsher, and that has not been seriously contradicted. The hon. gentleman who leads the Labour party the other day said he did not know what a welsher was. I understand that a welsher is a man who goes to the racecourse with the money in his bag, shouts the odds, takes the deposits of clients, and when the races are over he is not to be found. We have it that Mr. Jones is a man of no character, and I am only too much afraid that there is every ground for that belief. The testimonials which were read by the Secretary for Agriculture the other evening, when you come to look into them closely, do not amount to any weight or consequence. If the Minister for Agriculture had been approached by any one who wished to purchase £20 or £30 worth of produce, he would have touched his telephone bell, and in a few minutes he would have had a full commercial report of the gentleman who wished to do business with him. I do not know why those formalities were not followed in this case, or why there should be so much secrecy about this appointment. The hon. gentleman who leads the Government suggested that he had made some inquiries from friends, but did not tell us what he heard from those friends, and although both hon. gentlemen say they have not heard officially about certain things—it is quite possible they have not heard officially—they have heard privately a great deal more than they are prepared to admit. Jones carried on business in Sydney as Summerfield and Co., and as far as his mercantile record there goes he failed badly. He came to Brisbane, then went to Cunnamulla, and left his creditors lamenting there. He then accepted employment in different places, and I know one place in Brisbane which has not been mentioned up to the present time. He entered into the employment of a large retail firm here, and before many weeks that firm found that his methods of doing business, while very profitable to the firm for the time being, would ultimately lead to open disaster. I do not know whether that is likely to recommend him in the employment which he has got at the present time. That is part of his commercial record, but unfortunately there is a worse side still. I understand that this Mr. Jones is a forger; that he appropriated a cheque belonging to an employer, endorsed his employer's name on the back of it, appropriated the proceeds, and unblushingly confessed that he had done so. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where was that?] I am rather surprised at the hon. member, because I have got a kind of feeling that he knows about it. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I can assure you that I know nothing about it.] That happened in Sydney, and if the hon. gentleman had made any inquiry from sources that he would have appealed to in the first instance in connection with his own business, he would have had the very facts which I have mentioned put before him in cold print. That is the character of the man who would do business for Queensland and

protect her honour in the East. I venture to say that before the history of Jones is completely written this State will be a large sufferer in her prestige abroad, and in her honour. I shall not be surprised if before very long the hon. gentleman will find drafts drawn on him by Mr. Jones. The hon. gentleman may say that he would not honour them—probably not, but I venture to say he would be compelled, in the interests of the State, to honour those drafts. I am surprised that the hon. gentlemen who are responsible should take the matter so lightly, and I am more than surprised, after having heard boldly stated in this House facts which can be verified, they have taken no steps to recall him. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] It is not as if there is any difficulty in obtaining qualified representatives to represent the Government. There are hundreds of men who would answer all the purposes required—men who are known to be men of honour, men who are trusted by the mercantile community, and men who are trusted by the people. What necessity was there to make a mysterious appointment of a man who was practically unknown here—[Mr. J. LEAHY: Question]—a man who was not known in the circle in which the Minister for Agriculture himself moves from day to day? I cannot understand why a mysterious appointment of this sort was made. I do not know whether it affects the matter or not, but the other day I asked the Premier what was the date of Jones' appointment, and the date of his departure. The hon. gentleman replied that all those details were supplied by the Minister for Agriculture when speaking the previous night. I have looked very carefully through the speech of the hon. gentleman, and I cannot find that these details are given. It transpires that this Jones went off as soon as he was appointed; time was an important factor with him. He told his friends how he got the appointment. He said, "I have got the commission in my pocket; I have got the sovereigns in my pocket. Now I am off, and the spoils to the victor. I know as soon as it comes out there will be a big row about it." I asked the Premier the other evening if he would put the papers in connection with Jones upon the table. The hon. gentleman replied he would. They were not put on the table that afternoon, as is usually the case in such instances, nor are they on the table this afternoon. [The PREMIER: Oh, no! That is not usual.] At any rate, the papers which I expected to have the use of for this debate I have not been able to get access to yet. Why, I cannot understand—probably the hon. gentleman will explain it after. I would like to say a word or two in relation to the finances; I do not propose to give figures—I leave that to the hon. member for Carpentaria and any other hon. members who are versed in figures. I would like, first of all, to refer to the proclamation which was made, over the signature of the Treasurer, increasing the fees paid under the Real Property Act. I understood that one of the great features of the present Government was that it came in on a no-taxation policy. Taxation was unnecessary. Apparently, what turned the late Government out was the submission of taxation proposals to Parliament. Now that they find that under the powers contained in the Real Property Act they can get taxation by proclamation, they have no hesitation whatever in doing it. I say that it is only right that the Government should come down and have a proposal of that sort endorsed by the House. I think the institution of taxation of this sort stultifies them in reference to the views they have expressed. I must point out

that the taxation they have imposed by proclamation has caused a great deal more hardship to many people in the State than the taxation which was proposed by the late Government when they retired from office. It falls on a small section of the people—on owners of small properties. The tax is a comparatively large one. They have increased the duty on registration of transfers from 7s. 6d. to 10s., an increase of 33 per cent.; they have increased the cost of certificates of title from 10s. to £1, an increase of 100 per cent.—and in instances where an unfortunate person has to apply to his or her mortgagee for consent to sell a portion of the mortgaged property, if it is only worth £5, they have to pay the large fee of 5s. I believe after making inquiries that that taxation would amount in all to something like from £3,000 to £5,000. In view of the first opinion of the hon. gentlemen, it is an astonishing thing to find them going in for taxation of that kind. The Real Property Office is well known as one that pays its way from start to finish—it is in fact to some extent a revenue producing office. It never was intended that it should be so; but the fees were instituted in order that the office might pay its way. Now we find hon. gentlemen opposite have converted it into a revenue producing machine. The next matter in the Speech is the subject of electoral reform. A referendum is included on the question of reduction of members. An hon. member suggested during the debate that a referendum might more properly be taken on the question of equal representation and the women's franchise, and I am inclined to think that there is a good deal in that. When we consider what is regarded to be one adult one vote from the point of view of hon. gentlemen opposite, we now find they do not want one adult one vote at all. The very foundation and principle of one adult one vote, as I understand it, is to prevent any danger of the minority ruling. It was pointed out by Sir George Grey during one of the conventions, that if the plural property vote was allowed the minority might perchance rule, and it was to obviate that that the idea of one adult one vote was suggested. I have pointed out before in this House that the plural vote which arises by the inequality or the difference in the number of electors in the various electorates amounts to a plural vote in comparison with which the property vote pales into insignificance. I do not think the property vote, in the present condition of things in this State, makes any appreciable difference one way or the other. I should be inclined to think that hon. gentlemen on the other side would get as much, if not more, support from the property vote than hon. members on this side. They are small property-owners who support that party, and consequently they are more numerous. But when we find that some places in this State with 700 or 800 voters return a member to this House as against 2,500, I think it is not necessary to stretch that point very far to come to a conclusion that perchance the minority may rule if that state of things continues. I am perhaps not right in referring to Bills which are mentioned, but, from what appear in the Speech, I think I am justified in saying that it is not intended to include the right of equal representation in the Bill which it is proposed to introduce, and if it is not that will be a defect. It is certainly not following the lines of the federal franchise, nor is it following the lines which have been adopted in other States in which one adult one vote has been introduced. I have no hesitation in saying that I will oppose the measure from start to finish. I do not think when we come to regard the views which hon. gentlemen have expressed

with reference to adult suffrage, that the question has ever been understood by the electors. I think it is a question which should be put before them. With regard to the question of the women's vote, I think it is fair to infer that the women of this State have not certainly desired a vote when we look at the returns in connection with the federal election. We find that something over 40 per cent. of the womankind of the State voted, and [4.30 p.m.] we find in other States, where woman suffrage has been in existence for some time, a very much lesser percentage. I think that in South Australia the percentage was only a little over 20. Those are very strong arguments to show that the great majority of women are not desirous of obtaining the franchise. If the woman suffrage goes on the lines on which it ought to go, I would have no hesitation in supporting it. I do not know whether it is intended afterwards to introduce some measure by which the percentage of voters will be increased—something which will compel people who are on the rolls to vote. If that is intended, it will be an exceedingly anomalous thing to give people votes who do not want them, and then punish them for not exercising them. With regard to the reduction of members, I cannot understand why the referendum has been suggested. The country has spoken out beyond a doubt as to their desire for a reduction of members, and it is a proper thing, when we are retrenching civil servants, that we should start retrenching ourselves. Why we cannot get on with forty-five or fifty members is beyond my comprehension, when we are perfectly satisfied with a representation in the Federal House of Representatives of nine with all the important matters that have to be dealt with there. Why Ministers should propose a referendum I am unable to appreciate. [Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Put it off.] A Redistribution of Seats Bill, yet to come, may have in it, for all I know, a provision in regard to equal representation. But why that should not come in at the same time as the other reforms is beyond my comprehension. I do not know whether there is anything in the suggestion which was made to me the other day—it was hardly serious in a way—but it was pointed out to me that, if a reduction of members took place, some of the double electorates would have only one member, and it was suggested that the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Grant, was a particularly popular man. (Laughter.) There is only one other matter that I wish particularly to refer to, and that is the public service. Some little time ago, after the present Government came into office, they went through the service, and apparently dismissed a number of civil servants. I do not know that we can find any fault with a reduction of the number of officers, inasmuch as that is contemplated by the Public Service Act; but I doubt very much whether the figures which were then published in the Press can be regarded as accurately representing the savings effected by the action of Ministers. Many men who were relieved of their functions were placed in other offices, and, when you come to take the one with the other, I venture to say that the figures are not in any sense reliable. Day after day we had the same figures dished up, and if ordinary readers of the newspapers believed that these things meant fresh retrenchment, then they must have thought that there was a time fast coming when we would have no public service at all. I do not know any time when retrenchment was so widely advertised as it was then. But what was done then pales into insignificance when compared with the events that followed the appointment of the Public

Service Inquiry Board. I can find no authority, I may say, for the appointment of such a board. We have a Public Service Act which expresses the conditions of the service, and under which the hon. members who occupy the position of the Executive are and represent the Public Service Board. The duty of administering the Act is vested in them, and the Act, in express terms, excludes, to my mind, the idea that it ever was intended that they should delegate their functions. Towards the latter end of the Act will be found a section which contains express power to appoint boards of inquiry for matters outside the city of Brisbane. [The PREMIER: Where do you find the principle that the board has ever delegated its functions?] [Hon. J. F. G. FOXTON: In the report.] The hon. gentleman may say, in the kind of language that he always uses, that the board has not delegated its functions, but the evidence that it has been done is supplied by the fact that for two months a board was sitting, which brought up recommendations which the Ministry have already adopted, and surely they will not say that those recommendations are the result of the cogitations of the Public Service Board of this State. I say unhesitatingly that the public service are entitled to be dealt with by the members of the Public Service Board, and not to be handed over to a fugitive board, as it has been called. The Public Service Act lays down the conditions of the service; it lays down that the board is to administer the Act, and it also lays down certain other things which I venture to say have had no regard paid to them by either the board which was appointed or by the Ministers themselves. The Act provides that public servants shall not be reduced in salary, and do we not find in the introduction of the last Special Retrenchment Act by the party which now sits on this side of the House that they regarded that point of view? Section 40 of the Act provides—

An officer shall not be dismissed or suffer any detriment in respect of his office except in the manner set forth in this Act; but nothing shall be taken to prevent the Governor in Council from reducing the number of officers in a department, or, upon such reduction, dispensing with the services of any officers, or from uniting two or more departments.

It was contemplated by that section that no officer should have his salary decreased or suffer any reduction in his office, nor was he to be dismissed except as provided by the Act. Special power was reserved to the Governor in Council to reduce the number of officers, and I do not say that the Government have not the power to reduce the number of officers, but I do say that they have not the power to reduce their salaries. Another section throws light upon that. The special board of inquiry were appointed to find out what work these men were doing, and if the pay was commensurate to the work, and we find that under section 23—

If at any time any classified officer is found to be in receipt of a greater salary than is reasonably sufficient for the work performed by him, he shall be transferred as soon as practicable to some other work in which he can be employed upon duties commensurate with the amount of his salary.

I think that points out that this House intended that no man should have his salary decreased, but that, if it was found that he was doing work which was of less value than the amount which he received, special means were provided whereby he should be transferred to an office where there was some sort of relation between the work and the pay. [The PREMIER: Don't you know that that has been done every year since the Act came into force?] [Hon. J. F. G. FOXTON: Reducing salaries?] [The PREMIER: Yes; and by the late Government, too.] [Hon. R. PHILP: At the suggestion of the civil servants themselves.]

[The PREMIER: No. I can cite a number of cases.] I have made inquiries, and I have been informed that one man had his salary reduced, and it was done as a matter of agreement. If it had not been done as a matter of agreement, the other provision which removed men from the service altogether would have been brought into operation. [The PREMIER: I can tell you of another case. The hon. member for Townsville knows it.] [Hon. R. PHILP: Tell me his name.] [The PREMIER: Mr. Macdonald, the late police magistrate at Warwick.] [Hon. J. F. G. FOXTON: At his own request.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: [Hon. R. PHILP: You know his age.] [The PREMIER: You wanted a case, and I gave you one.] [Hon. J. F. G. FOXTON: At his own request he was removed to Warwick at a reduced salary.] I think the less said about that case the better, because there are other aspects to which reference was made the other evening by the hon. member for Maryborough, Dr. Garde. Such cases are very few and far between. In this case, if you believe the Government, they appointed a board to go into the whole of the public service. That is not the case. Beyond question, if the Government thought that this Act did not provide for all the requirements in regard to the treatment of the civil service, it was their duty, before taking the steps which they have taken, to bring down a Bill to this House to amend the Act, and proceed in something like a constitutional manner. [Mr. MAXWELL: You had better hand over the whole of the revenue to the civil servants!] There is also another provision in the Act relating to increases, but I do not know that I am in a position to refer satisfactorily to the question of increases of salaries on the information supplied by the Government; but I say that I do not think, in this present time of retrenchment, that increases should be made. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!] But we have the report of this board, and we have got a general understanding outside that the report of this board has been given effect to. The Premier, in one of his answers to questions this afternoon, said that the recommendations of the board would be taken into consideration when the Estimates were being framed. It is well known outside that the report of the board, in many important particulars, has been acted upon. Men have been advised of decreases in their salaries—which, I say, are contrary to the provisions of the Act. Some men have been advised of new appointments; but, so far as increases are concerned, I am not in a position to make any definite statement. The Act contemplates that increases shall only be given upon the recommendation of the Public Service Board, and this function the members of the board have passed over to an outside board consisting of Messrs. Troup, Saunders, and Brennan. We have also another instance in which the provisions of the Act have not been observed. There is a new appointment—that of public service inspector. Section 33 says—

A new office shall not be created except on the recommendation of the permanent head of a department.

I do not know whether Ministers will suggest that they have the recommendation of the permanent head of the department for the appointment of Mr. Brennan as public service inspector. They certainly have his own recommendation, but not the recommendation of the permanent head of the department. [The PREMIER: They have not his own recommendation.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: The whole thing is a job.] [Mr.

JENKINSON: They have the recommendation of two men who knew him for two months—that is all.] I think it is fairly clear that what the Government ought to have done was to have brought down a Bill amending the Public Service Act, and proceeded in something like a proper way. It seems to me that the privileges of this House, and the privileges of Parliament generally, are being taken away gradually. We have had the instance of the Supreme Court Act; we have got what I consider is an instance in connection with the Sugar Works Guarantee Act; and we have this instance. The time is coming when there will be no necessity for Parliament at all if things go on the way they are doing; and it is only right that this House should protect its privileges. The Government ought to know, before they proceed with a matter of this sort, the proper way to go about it, and should act in a constitutional and methodical way. I think the constitution of this board deserves as much criticism as we can give it. I will not say anything about Mr. Saunders. I believe he is a respectable and reliable man, holding a good position in New South Wales, but whether he is sufficiently experienced to go into any department, other than the Lands Department, I very much doubt. I happened to be in New South Wales recently, and made some inquiries about Mr. Troup. I was told that he was an able accountant, who had been called in by several mercantile firms to rearrange their offices; that through the influence of directors or customers these offices had become flooded with men who were incompetent, or were otherwise objected to by their employers or superiors. Under such circumstances it has been found a very convenient thing to send for such a man to put the offices of these firms in order, but it must be remembered that in these cases he has done it at the instigation of the employer, and has given effect to the wishes and directions of the employer, acting as a sort of buffer between them and their customers or other friends through whose influence many of these appointments had been made. It is not unnatural, therefore, that the Government of Queensland, being anxious to do something of the same sort, should call Mr. Troup in, and I do not know that he was at all unfit for the work he undertook. I submit that this view is borne out by the facts, and that he occupied a similar position in regard to the civil servants of Queensland as he has done in other cases in which he has been employed. Unfortunately it was only to a limited portion of the service to which the attention of this board was turned—those residing in and about Brisbane. The Speech announces that the board was appointed to inquire into the public service. That is misleading, because whatever it was appointed to do it never inquired into the condition of the public service. It confined its attention to Brisbane, with the one exception of calling Mr. Mitchell to Brisbane from Rockhampton to see if he was fit for the promotion which it was proposed to give him. We find, for instance, that it was only the administrative portion of the Department of Agriculture which the board went into, while there are at least twenty men in that department into whose qualifications they did not go at all. The same thing applies to the Education Department, and possibly to other departments. It may be said that the men who were left severely alone were experts, and that the board was not competent to deal with them, but as against that I point out that Dr. Ham's department was gone through. One is at a loss therefore to understand where the business began and where it left off. In regard to the third member of the commission it is interesting to know who he is and to discuss whether the appoint-

ment was a wise one. Mr. Brennan is one of the juniors of the service. It is said that in some manner or other he is connected with the Treasurer. [The PREMIER: Surely you do not believe that?] [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is absolutely untrue.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: His father-in-law is one of the Treasurer's chief supporters.] [Mr. GRANT: It is not true.] I accept no responsibility for the statement. It comes from the other side that he is a relation of the Treasurer's, and seeing that it comes from there, I do not think I am called upon to accept any responsibility in regard to the statement. I was told to-day by a prominent civil servant that if Mr. Brennan is not a relative of the Treasurer's, he is married to a young lady who, if not an actual relation, is an adopted daughter or ward. [Mr. GRANT: There is no sort of truth in it.] [The PREMIER: It is a shame to circulate statements like that unless you are sure they are true.] [Hon. J. F. G. FOXTON: The statement came from the other side.] However, that is the statement which is going about. There is something very strange about the appointment of this Mr. Brennan, and something very strange about his action. He is a junior officer, who by reason of his position as an audit inspector came into conflict with many officers in the service. He knew a good deal about these men, and it was only natural that when he came to consider the claims of various officers he would have more regard for men he approved of, and less regard for those with whom he had come into conflict. Occupying the position which he did, that might have been expected, and I have information which shows that men with whom Mr. Brennan came into conflict have suffered by the recommendations put before the Government, and men with whom he was on good terms have received recommendations for increases. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am sure you know very well you ought not to say such a thing unless you are prepared to prove it.] I accept the responsibility for everything I say. I have had information of these things, and if I did not believe there was good ground for repeating what I have heard I would not repeat it. It was an unwise thing to appoint a junior, who had come into conflict with many officers of the service, to go through the departments and make recommendations, and I am afraid there is only too good ground for the statements which have been made. What particular qualifications had these three men for going through the various offices and reporting upon what qualifications various officers possessed and what amount of salary they were entitled to? You can go through this list from beginning to end, and you cannot find there are more than two or three departments these men had any special knowledge of. [Mr. J. LEAHY: They had instructions what to do.] That has been suggested; and referring to Mr. Troup, his experience has been gained in offices where he has held consultations with employers before taking action. This gentleman associated with very few people other than Ministers, and naturally these things must have been discussed. We were told by the hon. member for Maranoa that there was a serious rumour that these men could not agree upon a report, but that after consultations with members of the Cabinet the report which we now have was presented. The hon. gentleman asked if that was correct, but the Premier did not deign to answer. I infer, therefore, that the rumour is true, and that the report of the commission was largely influenced by consultations which the members had with Ministers. [The PREMIER: I can give a denial to that if you want one.] [Hon. J. F. G. FOXTON: Was there no consultation at all?]

Do I understand the hon. gentleman to give it a denial? [The PREMIER: You gave the statement of the hon. member for Maranoa from which you have drawn inferences. The statement is in error, and your inferences are erroneous.] I must say I am no wiser now than I was before. [Hon. J. F. G. FOXTON: No consultation at all?] It is difficult to understand what experience these gentlemen had to enable them to go through the departments and come to the conclusions which they did, and I venture to say that they were not competent for that work. That brings me down to the Electoral Registrar's Office, of which I promised to speak. I must say I cannot understand the meaning of the recommendation in regard to it. It is a coincidence that this independent board, two of whom are absolute strangers, should come to the conclusion that Mr. Francis was not a good officer for the position he held. We know that Mr. Francis has spent the best years of his life in Queensland, and has done excellent work in the West and North, and that now he is in the very heyday of his strength and ability; but we know also that that gentleman came into conflict with the Labour party at Cunnamulla. It is a most extraordinary thing that this independent board find it necessary to economise in Mr. Francis's case. Was it a question of incompetency? There is nothing to show it. No reasons are given in this case. It is a wise thing to abstain from giving reasons when you have not got very good ones to give. If economy was the object, one would have expected that Mr. Francis would have been left in his office at a reduced salary, or reduced by £200 as Mr. Henderson was, thus bringing him to the salary recommended for the new officer to be appointed. I could understand the action taken if inefficiency was alleged, but we are forced to look for some other reason, and that reason we can only supply in that the board in some inexplicable way knew that Mr. Francis was not a popular person with the party which controls the Government. I am afraid there is only too much evidence that the present Government have added to the system of retrenchment a political exploitation of the service for the purpose of raising political capital. I do not know what competency there was in the board to deal with the Department of Works. I know, of course, that there were a good many men in the department who were very badly paid, and I also know that it is probably the most economical department of its sort in Australia. I understand that an officer of the Commonwealth Government was here the other day, and informed them that it was the best department of its kind in Australia. One gentleman who has been retrenched in this department is Mr. Murdoch, and I know him to be a competent man; and I venture to say that he will be a very great loss to this

[5 p.m.] department. So well is he thought of that he has been asked by the Commonwealth Government to go down south and assist in the formation of a similar department in the Commonwealth service. On what grounds was Mr. Murdoch retrenched? Surely not on the ground of inefficiency. Now we come to the Department of Justice, which I say none of the gentlemen on the board were competent to inquire into and report upon. It was a perfect farce these men attempting to examine into this department and reporting on its working. This department comprises many technical branches. What competency had they to go into the Supreme Court and say what officers were necessary, or what their remuneration should be? The Registrar of the Supreme Court is a highly competent professional man, and practically all the officers under him are in the same category,

and yet we have this board recommending to the Government that the registrar's salary should be reduced by £50, although we find that this department is the most economically worked department of its kind in the whole of Australasia. We find that in South Australia the same officer receives a larger salary than Mr. Smyth receives here—and in connection with this, I would like to point out that his reduction in salary means his reduction from a high class to a lower class in the service. It puts him from his present position into a very much lower position, so it is a very severe reduction indeed; and the reduction is entirely unwarranted. Then we come to the Taxing Officer. What competency had this board to judge of the work done by this officer? No one but those concerned in work of that kind can realise the technical nature of the work he has to perform. I say no other man of his abilities in Brisbane or in Queensland would undertake the work of the Taxing Officer, even at a salary half as much again as he is getting. And yet this board recommends an arbitrary reduction in the registrar's salary of £50, and in the Taxing Officer's salary of £30. I know that the Attorney-General has said that this £30 would be returned to him on the grounds that he then stated. Then we come to the Insolvency, Insanity, and Intestacy Department, and I ask again what competency had this board to inquire into this department? This is a department which has been cut down from year to year, until the salaries were brought down to bedrock; but notwithstanding this, further reductions are recommended, which will mean that the head of this department will be brought back to the same salary he got twenty years ago for doing the work of one department, while he is now doing the work of this important department, with three branches in it. You may go through the District Court, the Friendly Societies Department, the Patent Office and the Stamp Office—the work in all these departments is very technical—and yet the gentlemen comprising this board of inquiry were appointed to inquire into them, while they had no idea of the work to be done there. I know that in the Stamp Office and in the Friendly Societies Office there are problems there which involve the study of the men there for hours, without putting a pen to paper, and then probably they do not know where they are. In the Friendly Societies Office, Mr. Rendle has been recommended a reduction of £30. Now, Mr. Rendle was appointed many years ago by Sir Samuel Griffith as a gentleman peculiarly fitted for the position, for he combines the experience of an actuary with a great deal of experience of the Friendly Societies Act, and he has done a great deal for the friendly societies. He was appointed at £100 a year, and has only got one rise of £30, and yet this special and competent board recommended that he should be reduced by £30. I think that if we lost Mr. Rendle's services, that would be a very great loss. [MR. MAXWELL: What if he died?] That interjection reminds me of this: not only was Mr. Rendle's salary reduced, but his only competent assistant—his chief clerk—who acted as his deputy when he was away in other parts of the State on public business, has been removed to another department, and a youngster at £100 from the Agricultural Department has been put in his place. I do not know what experience a young man from the Agricultural Department has for the work in Mr. Rendle's office, and his appointment does not display much competency on the part of this board. Now we come to the Registrar-General's appointment, and it seems to me that somebody has gone out of his way to suggest a man who was not in the public service in

Brisbane at the time these investigations were being made. We find that Mr. Mitchell was transferred from Rockhampton, where certain other people come from. He was sent for to see what billet he was fit for, and so Mr. Mitchell has been appointed to this position of Registrar-General, also the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Titles, Firms, and of the Stamp Office. Now, what particular fitness has Mr. Mitchell for the charge of the Stamp Office? He has probably some experience as a deputy in the Stamp Office in Rockhampton, and the same remark may be applied to the Titles Office, but practically he has had no experience with regard to joint stock companies, and this is very technical work. [The PREMIER: He has the reputation of being a most competent officer.] I have every belief in Mr. Mitchell being a most competent officer; but I say that he has been pitchforked from his position in Rockhampton for some purpose into the position of the head of a very important department, some branches of which he has had no experience in. I cannot see the rhyme or reason for this appointment, and I notice that he has been given an increase of £110 per annum. Now, I cannot understand on what principle the reductions have been recommended in the salaries of the female typists. How were their salaries adjusted? There are some at £100, some for £80, some for £70, some for £60, and some for £50. [The PREMIER: They have been graded.] The hon. gentleman says that they have been graded; but some of these ladies have been many years in the service, and they are doing good work. I cannot understand why the lady typist in the Insolvency Department has her salary reduced to £70, while the one in the Supreme Court is left at £80, for I think that if there is a great deal of correspondence to get through it is in the Insolvency Department. I do not understand the basis of these things at all. [The PREMIER: No, or you would not be speaking as you are.] I cannot understand how this board did not go into all the offices connected with the various departments. The investigations were very mysterious. They were a few minutes here and there—about twenty minutes in the Friendly Societies' Office, a couple of minutes in the Taxing Master's Office, five or ten minutes in the Registrar-General's Office, a few minutes in the Lands Office, and so on. That was the system of inquiry by this very competent board, and yet they were able to decide things better than Ministers. I understand that this ludicrous incident occurred during their inquiry. There are two officers in the survey branch of the Lands Office, and when this commission was going through a casual remark was made as to the work one officer did, and owing to this casual remark, the salary of the man referred to was increased by £40, and what happened to the other fellow who was on the same mark, and doing equally good work? His salary was reduced by £30 to pay it. I know the officer whose salary was reduced and he is a very good officer. He is not in my electorate, but I can say that there is no more competent officer in the service. I would like to call the attention of the Premier to that, and I am sure he will see the inconsistency of it. [Hon. R. PHILP: What are their names?] Mr. Eggar's salary was increased, and the officer whose salary was reduced is named Smith. [An honourable member: Parliament has not voted these increases yet.] I know that. [Hon. R. PHILP: You will all vote for them over there.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: Coming now to the Treasury, I find that with two or three exceptions, there have been increases all through.

[The PREMIER: You are quite wrong!] No; I am not. I have the printed report circulated by the Government Printer. The head of the Treasury is put down for an increase of £100. The next gentleman on that list is Mr. Bourne. He has been many years chief clerk of the department. He is subjected to a decrease of £30. [Mr. JENKINSON: The only one in the head office!] Yes; and second in command. His junior, Mr. Fowles, is increased by £50, and is made senior, although he occupies a junior position to his chief clerk; and then there are thirteen increases out of about twenty positions. I cannot understand that. [The PREMIER: No; I'm sure you don't!] [Hon. R. PHILP: Nor the Premier either!] Then we come to the Inland Revenue Department, which is a sub-department, and we find that four supernumerary revenue officers are retrenched, while a probationer is provided. I understand that this department collects a revenue of something like £14,000. The revenue officers who are retrenched are men who get the information upon which this revenue is collected, and I venture to say there is no reasonable economy about that. It shows that these reductions are purely of a temporary nature, and that later on the expenditure will be as large as ever, but in the meantime our friends on the other side will get credit, at the expense of the service, of a good deal of political economy. We come down to another case in connection with the Marine Department, showing the incompetence of this particular board. We find that they have dispensed with the services of the foreman of the dock, and with the superintendent of dredges and mechanical draftsman; and when one thinks of the work done at the docks and its responsibility, it is a question whether there is any economy. Large ships are taken into that dock, and they require experienced men to shore them and look after them while they are there—at least a foreman or some experienced shipwright is wanted. They have dispensed with the services of that man, and I understand it will be very hard indeed to replace him, and also that a simple accident in the dock might lead to damage, variously estimated at from £5,000 to £40,000. I cannot see that there is any economy about that, nor can I see any economy in doing away with the superintendent of dredges, when we know that the steam vessels belonging to the department amount in number to something like thirty-seven. It is only an apparent saving, and it is evident that the expenditure will be as great as ever. We come now to the Auditor-General's Department, where we find a vacancy. There is a chief inspector put down, while on the other side of the list there is a very large retrenchment. Mr. Mills, who, I think we can all say is a man at the very height of his profession as an accountant and has a very ripe experience, is something like sixty years of age, and he is retrenched. Mr. Dodds, the senior inspector, is retrenched; also Mr. Cash and one or two others. Yet we find that another billet is created, and the question arises: For whom is this particular billet created? I am told on very good authority—if the Premier gives a specific denial I will take his word—that this billet was created for Mr. Brennan, and it was only by the head of the department putting his foot down against the appointment of a junior officer into the position of chief inspector that Mr. Brennan's nomination was withdrawn and the recommendation which we now have before us—of public service inspector—was made, and one of the very best men of the Treasury Department is retrenched. We have in this office some cases to which I have referred at an earlier stage of my speech, where men who are friendly

with Mr. Brennan received recommendations for promotion, and men who were not friendly with him received the reverse. It is clear that these various figures of retrenchment are not reliable; but they have been made use of for all they are worth to show what the Government have done towards reducing the cost of government by £500,000—which was the vain boast of the Treasurer. We have instances of men whose salaries were included in the previous retrenchment put back into office again, and by this board retrenched again; so that we have the same figures twice over. And I anticipate that these men will go back in some capacity or other, and thus negative the results of this reduction, which is only made for political purposes. Then we have another extraordinary position. At least two or three people I know are included in this retrenchment who had either actually left the service or had intimated their intention to do so. Mr. Bourne, the Registrar of Titles, I believe intended to leave the service; he is put down as one of the savings of the Government. Mr. Bourne, whose pension will, of course, have to be paid to him, should come off these figures to make them anything like reliable. But we have a more extraordinary case still. A lady has been retrenched. I don't know whether people will believe it in the face of the report when I say that she was married actually and had left the service before this report was made. I cannot understand why this unfortunate lady should be told, after she had left the service and done good work, that she had been holding a sinecure for many years, unless it was that she happened to be a relation of the Home Secretary, and it was thought necessary to show the country how independent Ministers were when even persons in that position had to disappear under their retrenchment scheme. I do not wish to detain the House at any great length, but I do not think the programme or the administrative acts of the Government will cast any very creditable reflection upon them. Some of them are of a most discreditable nature, and it would be worthier of the Ministry if they would recall Jones, intimate their intentions with regard to the Special Retrenchment Act, and also boldly state that they do not intend to carry out the recommendations of the so-called independent board. In connection with that I would like to say that I think it is a discreditable thing that three men should be appointed by a Ministry which represent country districts to make a special attack on the city of Brisbane. (Government laughter.) [Honourable members: Brisbane is Queensland—the hub of the universe; you give the show away.] Brisbane is not Queensland. I have never thought it was; but we have a Ministry not one of whom represents a metropolitan district, with the exception of the Secretary for Agriculture, and I venture to say that that Minister is only anxious to do what he believes to be right, and that he lost sight of the effect of this monstrous recommendation and monstrous report. It is all very well for hon. gentlemen to say that I think Brisbane is the hub of the universe, but I say that the money which is being spent in other parts of the State in the public service exceeds by twice as much the expenditure which is made in Brisbane, and not one penny of that has been touched. Perhaps it may be considered unwise on the eve of an election to touch the country districts which those hon. gentlemen represent. It seems to me that some substantial reasons should be offered for the selection of a small portion of the public service for inquiry and retrenchment in this particular manner. [Opposition members: Hear, hear.]

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): Before addressing myself to the Governor's Speech I desire, in common with every hon. member of this House, to express my very great regret at the death of the Hon. W. H. Browne. As one of the few remaining members of the party to which he belonged who entered political life at the same time as himself—in 1893—I heard of his death with feelings of very deep regret. I desire to say that he himself was as true a political comrade as any member could wish to have. As a member of this party and as a member of this House he was particularly conscientious. He was absolutely loyal to principle in every respect. As a leader of the Labour party he was a very good man. Possessed of little physical strength yet he did a giant's work as leader of this party in this House and as leader of the Labour movement in the State; and when the history of the struggle for political and industrial reform in Queensland during the last fifteen years is written, there will shine out amongst the brightest names of that period, the name of the Hon. W. H. Browne. And although he is dead and in the grave he will live in the memory of his fellow workers, who gave him, while he lived, their greatest respect, and in the minds of the people of Queensland generally, from whom he merits the deepest respect in the State. The quality which endeared him to myself particularly was his sympathy with sickness and with poverty. I did not know him before he became a member of this House, but I had heard of his ardent and untiring work in connection with the hospitals at Croydon before he entered this House. I have noticed his unvarying sympathy with charitable institutions in discussion on the Estimates in this Assembly, and when he was Minister in control of the charity department and of allowances for the old age pension, he proved to be the most sympathetic Minister that ever we had. The only lines which more than anything appear to me to commemorate his death most fittingly are the words that have been uttered by a great poet upon the death of Thomas Hood—

Another star 'neath Time's horizon dropped,  
To gleam o'er unknown lands and seas;  
Another heart that beat for freedom stopped,  
What mournful words are these.  
Let laurelled marble weigh on other tombs,  
Let anthems peel for other dead.  
Rusting their bannered depth of Minister gloom,  
With their exulting spread.  
His epitaph shall mock the short lived stone,  
No lichen shall its lines efface;  
He needs these few and simple lines alone  
To mark his resting place.  
Here lies a man! Stranger, if to thee  
His claim to memory be obscure.  
If thou wouldst learn how truly great was he,  
Go ask it of the poor.

Whilst I am referring to his death I would also, if hon. members will permit me, just briefly refer to the death of another gentleman who at one time was a member of this House. I am referring now to the death of the Hon. C. B. Dutton, one time Minister for Lands in Queensland. He was member for the electorate which I now have the honour to represent, [5.30 p.m.] so that it is only fitting that I should refer to his death. The late Hon. C. B. Dutton was, I think it can be fairly stated, absolutely the greatest Minister for Lands that Queensland has ever possessed. He was known as the author of the famous Land Act of 1884, which, whatever modifications may have since been found necessary, has been the basis of all our subsequent Land Acts. More than that, it is also the basis of the land legislation of every other State of the Commonwealth. To my mind there are two names which will live in the history of land legislation in Australia.

One is the name of Torrens, who gave to our title deeds the name of "Torrens" titles; and the other, who, I think, will live equally as long, is the late C. B. Dutton. Coming now to the question of the Governor's Speech, I am of the same opinion as that expressed by the hon. member for Barcoo, the leader of this party, that, taking it on the whole, the programme of legislation embodied in the Governor's Speech is probably the most satisfactory that has been placed before the House for many years. On the whole, it is a fairly democratic and progressive programme, containing a number of good advanced measures, both politically and industrially. I am particularly pleased to see that the Premier has kept the promise which he made to this House and to the country last session and during the recess, that he would place in the forefront of the work of the session an Electoral Reform Bill. Hon. members on the other side will tell us that they have promised us this in previous years, but the difference is that they promised it in their programme, but that promise was never performed. They have gone on the principle of the old couplet—

Promise, pause, prepare, postpone,  
And end by letting things alone.

The great mass of the people of Queensland will never rest satisfied until they have upon the statute-book a measure of electoral reform which will give equality of voting power to all. The principle of an electoral law should be to make every citizen equal in the making of the laws, just in the same way as they are supposed to be equal in the eye of the law. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You propose to make one vote worth five others.] What I would like to see is one man politically worth exactly the same as every other man. I know very well that the hon. gentleman is now referring to the question of one vote one value, and I will deal with that when I come to the question of the reduction of members. I may say that I am absolutely in favour of the proposal that the vote of every person should have the same political value, no more and no less, but the whole question of giving that value is a question of machinery—of administration and detail. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Not at all.] Some members have said that the Franchise Bill conferring on every citizen in Queensland an equal electoral right is of no importance, and that it will not put bread into the mouths of the working classes. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] Well, it is a very strange thing, if it is of so little importance, that the people are so strongly determined with respect to its introduction. I am of opinion that, if the privileged classes of Queensland value the present unequal franchise they possess, on the face of it it must be of equal importance to those who have not got an equal franchise that they should possess the same rights as those privileged classes. It is because I believe that it will directly or indirectly put bread into the mouths of the people of this State that I place so much importance upon the equality of the franchise. Unless we have an equal electoral law in Queensland we shall, as a logical result, inevitably have unequal laws. We shall have privileges for some classes of the community at the expense of other classes which have not the same political power. History tells us that the Reform Bill of 1832 did away with a large number of the evils under which the people of Great Britain were suffering at the hands of the privileged classes. [Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Was that the only cause?] It was nine-tenths of the cause; and when the cause disappeared the evils disappeared also. To show the tremendous importance of electoral reform, Mr. Mackenzie, author of the "History of the Nineteenth Century," says that the

Reform Bill of 1832 was one of the most beneficial measures that was ever passed into law in Great Britain, and he gives a description of the state of political parties at that time, and the injustices which people laboured under. He says—

Before 1832 legislation occupied itself with the creation of special advantages for the benefit of favoured classes at the expense of those who were less favoured. After 1832 legislation occupied itself with the overthrow of all those iniquitous preferences.

The reformed Parliament entered promptly and with vigour upon the undoing of wrongs which the ignorance and selfishness of ages had heaped upon a suffering land. Its very first session is rich with the story of abolished evils.

And what have been its fruits? The ruling idea of legislation before 1832 was special privilege bestowed upon some special class or interest at the expense of other classes. All were raised upon the pedestal of some special privilege except the working man, who, having no voice in Parliament, was regarded as the common prey of those who had.

The ruling idea of legislation since 1832 has been that legislation has no favourites.

Then he goes on to give a number of the beneficial results which immediately followed the passing of the Act. It abolished the West India slave trade; it shortened the hours of women and children in factories; it widened education in national schools; it lessened pauperism and poverty; it abolished the iniquitous press gang which tore the breadwinner from his family; it lessened taxation on corn; it abolished the employment of women and children in mines. [Mr. P. J. LEAHY: That is ancient history.] It is ancient history, but it is a very modern example. Whilst I admit that the people are not so oppressed in Queensland as they were in Great Britain in 1832, there are still many wrongs to be found in Queensland to-day, and they are the direct result of the system of class government which we have had in the past, resting on a class electoral law, which the Premier, I am glad to see, is determined to abolish. I must congratulate the hon. gentleman upon his determination to have this question settled at last. The next item on the programme is the referendum. I will say at once that I entirely agree with the principle of the referendum, with this qualification: that it should be resorted to with regard to great questions which have been discussed by and agitated for by the people, but I do not think it is a proper principle to adopt for the purpose of settling matters of detail. It is absolutely impossible for the people to settle details of which they are entirely ignorant. [Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Would you let the people settle the salaries of members of Parliament?] No. Now, the question of the number of members of the Assembly is a matter of detail. It is a matter of which the people know but little, and it therefore appears to me to be a matter which should not be submitted to a referendum. It is a matter for the members of this Chamber. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] What do the people of Brisbane know, for instance, of the conditions and the difficulties of representing a large electorate comprising 24,000 square miles, like the electorate which I represent? Absolutely nothing at all. And, in like manner, the people in the country districts have not got the information necessary to enable them to come to a wise conclusion with reference to the representation of the town. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] The electors have not the knowledge to enable them to judge. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Neither have they of anything else.] Yes, they have in regard to great questions concerning which there has been a public agitation. If we are to submit a question like this to the people, it should only be after a long course of agitation and demand for it. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Where is the agitation?] There is absolutely no

general agitation in Queensland for a reduction of members outside Brisbane, and Brisbane knows nothing of the conditions of the representation of country districts. And even if the question was settled by the people, a number of other questions would arise: Are the reductions to take place in the country districts, or are they to take place in the towns? Again, what amount of reduction should there be? [Mr. MAXWELL: They would settle that.] We might just as well ask the people to settle the details of the income tax by a referendum as to settle whether this House shall consist of seventy-two or fifty members. [Mr. FORSYTH: Your arguments are absolutely sound.] There is one other aspect of the question, and that is, even if we agree to the principle of the referendum, it is unfair to ask the people to decide upon a reduction in one Chamber only. If you are going to submit the question to the people on the grounds of economy, you should at the same time ask them to decide the question of the reduction of the numbers of the Legislative Council, or its abolition. [Mr. FORSYTH: That is stuffed for life.] Anyway, I am certain that there has been no demand for this legislation in the country districts. I do not believe there has been much demand in the towns, except by the conservative Press, whose only desire is to attack the representative Chamber, and who are following the lead set in Victoria and New South Wales, which, even if it was correct there, is not applicable to Queensland. When the Bill comes before us, the first thing I should do is to endeavour to amend the order of leave so as to insert the word "Parliament" instead of "Legislative Assembly," in order that we may have discussed the question of a reduction in the numbers of the other Chamber. There are some matters in the Governor's Speech about which I am at a loss to know what they mean. For example, there is a proposal to amend the Land Act. At first I thought that referred to legislation assenting to some of the demands recently made by the pastoralists who asked for certain modifications of the Act of 1902, but since the Premier's reply to the pastoralists' requests, which was, generally speaking, in the negative, I am at a loss to know what the Bill refers to. It seems to me that the Premier rather too strongly and too definitely said "No" to everything they asked. [Mr. STORR: Hear, hear!] To my mind, it is the duty of every member of this House to say "No" when anything wrong is asked for, and to say "Yes" when legitimate demands are made. I must say that I think some of the requests could have been granted to some extent without any disadvantage to the State. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I hope you will specify them.] In the first place, fixing the rents for the first period after coming under the new lease—fixing it before they go on the land. The reply to the Premier to that was that it was entirely outside the scheme of things so far as our Land Court was concerned. He said the Land Court was a judicial body which settled the rents, and that to grant the request would be to violate the principle of fixing the rents. It does not appear to me that it would be any violation of that principle to adopt the suggestion which has been made. [Mr. W. HAMILTON: And do away with the court.] We might easily amend the Act by fixing the rents for the first period of ten years, irrespective of the Land Court. It is not violating the principle of assessment, because it is exactly what we do with regard to all grazing farms and agricultural land. We always proclaim the rent of grazing farms and agricultural selections before the selector takes them up. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was not so under the 1884 Act. They came in without knowing what their rent was.] I quite admit that, but the Land Act of 1902

was a relieving Act. In some respects I think it was far too generous, and I fought it all I knew; but, at the same time, while that Act was passing this Chamber, while I fought it in some respects, in others I gave all the generous help I could when reasonable requests were made. Therefore, I do not know why members should rail at me because I consider some requests which are made now are reasonable. I think the Government might very fairly fix the rents for the first period of ten years, and it certainly would do no harm to the Treasury to do so. I think the Lands Department ought to be extremely thankful if they get the rents, under existing conditions, from the pastoral lessees. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you apply that statement to the whole of the pastoral rents?] To the whole of the pastoral lessees who are coming under the Act of 1902 with the exception of the coast lands. The deputation was not speaking for the coastal lands but for the Western districts, and if the rent for the first period were fixed it would give them some sort of security. The next request made was one which was conceded by the Premier—the hon. gentleman consenting to a maximum reassessment of 50 per cent. for the second period. Another matter dealt with by the deputation was the question of indicating areas that would be resumed at a later date. I recognise many of the disadvantages that would accrue if that was done, and at the same time I think even the pastoralists themselves recognise that it would involve considerable danger in many parts of Queensland. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course they do. They are not sincere in making the request.] But I think even in that matter something could be done. There are holdings in Queensland in regard to which we could safely specify areas to be resumed at a later date without the slightest danger of blocking settlement, because in those cases the land would not be taken up in any case within forty years. It seems to me it is a matter for the Lands Department to ascertain what runs could be safely dealt with in that manner without any danger of blocking settlement. [Mr. W. HAMILTON: Could you definitely say that a railway would not go to a certain place within twenty years.] I think you could safely say that a railway would not reach Birdsville in twenty years. There are some parts of the State, such as the Burnett watershed, in regard to which we could not do anything, because we know that the land will be wanted for closer settlement. [Dr. GARDE: The Land Court has locked that up for twenty years.] Take, for instance, the case of the Dawson coal measures. A few years ago nothing at all was known of those deposits of coal, and if we had specified the area to be resumed some years ago we would to-day be in the difficulty of having locked up that land which would support a very large population; but, at the same time, there are other parts of Queensland where I maintain something could be done. There is one very important matter that the pastoralists request. They desire that they should be relieved of the legal obligation to pay rent for the full term of forty years, whether they occupy the land or not. The request was that they should be allowed to abandon it after twelve months' notice, I think that was an unreasonable request. [Mr. J. LEAHY: They said they would throw up their improvements.] I think it is unreasonable, because in many cases there are no improvements at all, and what I fear would happen if they were allowed to give twelve months' notice is that they would take advantage of the particular circumstances to throw up temporarily certain blocks, holding other blocks, and escaping rent for a number of years. [THE SECRETARY

FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This demand was for large consolidated holdings.] But one man can hold more than one holding. A holder of a consolidated block can hold other blocks. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This demand applies to consolidated blocks.] I think it would be reasonable to allow the men that I refer to to forfeit their holdings after five years.

That would be a considerable relief of their legal obligations, which, in some cases, extend up to forty years: it would give the Crown five years' payment of rent, and the five years' interval would enable the Crown to get other selectors to take up their holdings. Amongst the measures promised in the Speech is one which the people in my district are very much concerned about, that is the foreshadowing of a Bill to amend the Land Agricultural Bank Act. This is a matter which I have very long wished to see brought about, as it is of the very first importance to country districts, where, after the recent drought, in many cases stocks have been entirely swept away. In some cases 75 per cent., in others 90 per cent., have been swept away, and in other cases everything in the way of stock has been swept away. Now, the Agricultural Bank Act only permits selectors to borrow for the purpose of erecting improvements, but in many country districts the selectors do not want to borrow for improvements; they have ample improvements, but they have no stock, and if an amending Bill in the direction of allowing them to borrow to replenish their stock is introduced, it will meet with my hearty approval. I am sorry to see that this particular promised Bill has been placed at the bottom of the programme, and I sincerely hope that this order will not be adhered to. [THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.] I am glad to hear that, for I was afraid that Ministers were not fully aware of the precarious condition of many of our settlers, or of the great importance of such an amending measure, and I hope that it will be brought on at an early stage of this session, in order to get it passed as soon as possible. One other thing indicated in the Speech is the construction of light lines of railway to agricultural districts, and whilst there are some places in Queensland where a lighter system of rails would be more advantageous than the heavier system that is general in Queensland, after all I do not think that there are more than four or five places where such light lines could be built with advantage; but the policy in this direction deserves some consideration by way of experiment. I do not know whether this policy will include light lines to what may be termed combined agricultural and mining districts; but I do not see, if there are going to be light lines to some agricultural districts, why there should not be light lines also to ascertained rich mineral fields, and I might venture to suggest a place where it would be very advantageous to build a light line of railway—along the Dawson River, where, I believe, there is excellent agricultural land in a very good rainfall belt, and at the same time there is an enormously rich coal area, which, if developed, will mean a great deal towards the prosperity of that part of Queensland. It would give me great pleasure if the Government could see their way, under cover of this Bill, to do something for that locality. [MR. MAXWELL: Is it in your district?] It is very close to my district, and my district has as much right to demand such a railway—if it will pay—as other districts; but I certainly would not advocate a light line there, unless there were great possibilities of it paying. [HON. R. PHILP: No one ever does.] I am not advocating that. [AN honourable member: Just a gentle hint.] Yes; because, so far as reports go, I think this district is one of the

best to build a line of light railway in; but if the reports were unfavourable I would not advocate it. I see also that in the Speech mention is made of proceeding with caution with regard to the repurchase of estates, and I may say that I am in accord with that caution. I have always been in accord with this policy; but I believe the fault made with regard to the repurchase of estates a year or two ago was that too high a price was paid for them, and the result has been that the high price the selectors were called upon to pay for some portions of these estates only crippled them in their operations. I think that great caution is needed in carrying out this policy, and I am more in favour of developing our own Crown lands. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!] That seems to be a much wiser way in which to proceed. We have lots of good Crown lands, and if this course were adopted a lot of the money that now goes into the hands of financial institutions will go into the hands of the workers of Queensland, and it will help in developing our own resources. However, the Government have made this new departure in their programme; they have followed to some extent the system which existed in New Zealand, and I think they might adopt the New Zealand system a little more closely. Some time ago in New Zealand there was a system of throwing open Crown lands in alternate blocks, giving the selectors who were successful in obtaining selections, the right to improve the adjoining Crown block in order to enable them to make a livelihood, and afterwards throwing open the Crown lands in blocks as improved selections. There has been some dissatisfaction expressed with the wages able to be earned in the Rockhampton district and elsewhere—wages paid for the work of clearing land, and I think it would be a better method if instead of employing the unemployed to clear the Crown lands at certain rates of wages, to throw these lands open as selections and then give some allowance in the way of loans, or assistance towards rations, or an allowance of time, and let the selectors clear their own selections. (Hear, hear!) By that means the selectors would put much more heart into their work, and there would be less dissatisfaction. [MR. JENKINSON: What would you do with the unemployed?] If I had my way I would carry out that system to such an extent that there would be very few unemployed. There are lots of lands alongside railway lines which could be improved and settled in this way. I am rather disappointed in one particular. I thought, after we had heard so much last year and the year before about irrigation, particularly from the Treasurer, that we would have seen some announcement with regard to irrigation policy in the Government's programme. I do not see why, just in the same way as the Government is now entering on the development of our Crown lands, they should not also spend some money for the purpose of conserving and utilising water in the way of irrigation. It seems to me a much to be desired policy in increasing settlement on the land. [MR. J. LEAHY: Where will you get the money from?] I do not think this State is so far bankrupt that it cannot borrow money for a purpose of that kind. I wish also to say something with regard to the policy of selling our Crown lands, announced by the leader of the Opposition at Townsville. [MR. J. LEAHY: The Government sold some of the best land in Queensland.] I am entirely opposed to the policy of selling our Crown lands. It is objectionable on two grounds: First of all it is an entirely wrong financial principle to sell land and put into the annual revenue of the State what is not revenue at all, but what is really our capital. From a financial point of view you might just as well

sell our Treasury and call the proceeds revenue, as to sell some of our estate and call that revenue also. Another objection is that it is entirely opposed to the best interests of land settlement. There is no assurance or safeguard whatever, when we sell Crown lands without conditions, as proposed by the leader of the Opposition, that the land would be put to its best occupation. [Mr. J. LEAHY: That is just what the Government are doing.] I am speaking not of what the Government are doing, but of what the leader of the Opposition would do if he got the chance. We have found from experience that it has been necessary to pass Land Acts with various kinds of conditions—residence, improvements, and other conditions—in order to secure that the land, when parted with, shall be utilised and occupied. When we sell land without any conditions whatever there is nothing at all to assure us that it will be occupied, and the proposal to sell land without conditions, even of taxation, is practically to abolish our Crown Lands Acts. If we look at the result in other parts of the world and in Australia of the policy of selling land without conditions, we shall see that instead of resulting in settlement it has led enormously to the locking up of the best lands for settlement from the people of the various States. [Mr. FORSYTH: Aggregation.] To aggregation when you sell land in large areas, and even if you sell it in small areas the result is the same. If you look around Brisbane, where you have comparatively small areas, you will find that in suburban districts land is not utilised, it is held idle for speculative purposes. [Hon. R. PHILP: Because no one wants it.] Because nobody wants it at the price the landowners are asking for it. But there is another objection from a settlement point of view—that is to ask people to pay the capital price for land at the commencement of their settlement. It really burdens them with worse financial conditions than it would be to let them have the land at a low rent. It makes dear land instead of cheap land. I am in favour of cheap land. [An honourable member: Freehold is better security than leasehold.] Freehold is better security to the man who occupies it; but it is not security to the State that he will occupy and improve it. To my mind, the question of land settlement is one of the very greatest importance to Queensland. It not only affects the conditions of the unemployed in Queensland, but it also determines the degree of prosperity of all the rest of the community, even those who do not like to take up selections; because if we make the country districts prosperous, then we shall also make prosperous those parts of Queensland where the people themselves do not wish to go upon the land. In connection with this, I would like to ask how it is that the Government only yesterday sold an area of 50,000 acres along the railway line, and put the money into the Treasury as part of this year's revenue, instead of keeping that land for settlement. That land, I am told, which is magnificent land, so far as the soil is concerned, is approximate to one of our principal inland townships, and alongside the railway. It was thrown open in 5,000-acre blocks—the total area being 50,000 acres—under such circumstances as made it absolutely certain that it would be taken up, not by small holders, but by the lessee of the particular holding. [An honourable member: At whose request was it put up?] I do not know, but it was put up under conditions which rendered it inevitable that it would be taken up by the lessee himself. The price is not cash, but it is significant that it was one-tenth cash, and the balance had to be paid in one month—one month after it was thrown open on the 30th May—and this would bring it to the 30th

June. The conditions are made so that the money will go into the revenue for this year. We have had the announcement to-day that the whole of the 50,000 acres has actually been purchased by the lessees, who are in New South Wales. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Yes; and the railway ran through it.] I, for one, do not think that is a good policy. [Mr. FORSYTH: That is the policy of the Government.] I only go so far as to say that although I am opposed to the sale of Crown lands as a general principle—I have opposed it always—yet I will not go so far as to say that under no circumstances whatever should land be sold. I believe times may come in the history of a State or in the life of a person when he has to sacrifice his home even to get out of financial difficulties. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You are justifying your own side.] I am quite certain that I should not sell land under any circumstances if I were Minister for Lands. [Mr. FORSYTH: You are not very certain about it.] I am not uncertain about it, and never have been. When I was Minister for Lands a paper came before me asking for certain lands to be sold, and my minute on that was "No." There should be some better means of raising revenue than sacrificing our estate. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You will all have to sell it.] I do not object to it to this extent, if they gradually lessen the land sales until ultimately they dispense with them altogether, but if they are going to carry them on to the same extent as the late Government did, then I cannot support it. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I thought you would swallow it.] I am not swallowing it; I am protesting against it being done. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You are smoothing it away.] I am saying distinctly that the present policy does not suit me; I am saying exactly what I have always said before. I want now to refer to what particularly concerns my district and some other districts in Queensland, and that is the way in which the selectors at the present time are being harassed in respect to the payment of their arrears of rent. The conditions of the selectors in many parts of the Central districts, and I believe in other parts of Queensland, is, perhaps, as deplorable as ever they were in the history of this State. They have passed through the biggest drought on record, which has swept away in most cases nine-tenths of their stock, and now if the administration of the Lands Department is to be pursued as it has been since the drought—at any rate, the last twelve months—it means that the selectors are going to be driven from their holdings. [Mr. J. LEAHY: A good season does not compensate for bad government.] The good season is no advantage to them. There is good grass in my district, but what is the good of luxuriant grass if there is nothing to eat it. The men can scarcely live to-day, apart altogether from being called on to pay rent until they have had time to get stock. I have placed this matter before the Secretary for Lands before this, and I think there should be some recognition of their condition. [7:30 p.m.] tion, and they ought to get exactly the same consideration that the late Government gave them during the time of drought. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. J. LEAHY: Instead of putting the bailiff in!] A remark was made by a member sitting on this side of the House last session that I cordially agree with. He said that if any selection was forfeited he would take a back seat, and I say so will I if any single selection is forfeited. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why are you crying out before they are forfeited?] I am crying out because the department is going to forfeit them. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have a list here of the selections forfeited, and there is not one of those

in your district forfeited, and not one of them will be forfeited unless we cannot possibly avoid it.] Then I will give some cases. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have the whole of the cases here.] I shall read two letters. There is one selector in my district who lost all the stock he possessed during the drought, with the exception of two head, which he managed to save with a great deal of effort. Since then he has lived almost on the charity of his neighbours. He is one of the most respected selectors in the district. He is an old man who has lived for many years in that district, and for some ten years on this selection. During the last week in March, for fear that he would have his selection forfeited, he was compelled to sell the two head of stock he saved from the drought in order to pay his rent. [MR. FORSYTH: Shame!] And now he is without a single penny that he can call his own. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is his name?] Isaac Swales. [THE TREASURER: Who compelled him?] A circular sent by the Lands Department, and the refusal of the Secretary for Public Lands last year to accept a motion which was brought forward in this House to give selectors some relief. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] I shall read an extract from a circular sent out by the Lands Department to the land officers throughout Queensland in February, 1904—

Under separate cover is forwarded a list of selections in your district showing the amount to be paid on account thereof, on or before the 31st proximo.

The rent must not be accepted where selectors are being called upon to show cause against forfeiture, notwithstanding that it appears in the rent list.

Instead of the prescribed penalty for late payment, interest at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum has been inserted in the rent list with respect to arrears of rent and survey fee. Such interest is to be accepted, provided the arrears are paid by 31st proximo; but in all cases where arrears or the dues for the current year are not paid by that date, the prescribed penalty is to be charged. The prescribed penalty for late payment of rent and survey fees, whether the selections are under the Act of 1884 or the Act of 1897, is 5, 7½, and 10 per cent. for thirty, sixty, and ninety days respectively.

When you have occasion to refuse any rents tendered, report the circumstances to this office, giving your reasons for refusing.

Separate instructions with regard to interest and penalty on selections under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Acts are being issued to land agents who have to deal with those selections.

[THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the date of that?] [HON. R. PHILP: This year. Don't blame the last Government.] In other words, this circular states that, where selectors have been called upon to show cause why their selections should not be forfeited, even the officials of the Lands Department are not to be allowed to accept the rent offered. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Give me an instance where they have refused to take it.] I will. Besides that, the department has sent out a circular stating that if they do not pay up the arrears of rent by the 31st March, and this year's rent in addition, they will be compelled to pay the interest penalty of 5 per cent., 7½ per cent., or 10 per cent. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is the law, but I am going to use my discretion.] I will give the Minister a case where a man actually has had his selection forfeited—

District Land Office,  
Land Commissioner's Office.  
Rockhampton, 5th April, 1904.

I have the honour to inform you that agricultural farm No. 246, Springsure district, will be forfeited, and reopened for selection, since there are some unsatisfied claims against the selector on the part of the Crown. The Crown has a lien on the improvements, and you are only entitled to the surplus, if any, after the claims of the Crown have been satisfied. You are, therefore, herewith cautioned not to remove any improvements from said holding.

[THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is his name?] His selection is No. 246. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Are you talking of Rooney?] Yes. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why, he has sold the place!] He had not sold it at that time. He may have been compelled to sell it since. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have the note here.] I saw a selector who, I know of my own knowledge, has lived about twelve years on his selection. He has carved a selection out of a dense forest. Owing to misfortunes due to the drought, he has been unable to pay his rent since 1902, or it may be 1901. He applied for an extension of time to pay his arrears, which was granted to him. He wrote down again about the end of March, asking for further time to pay his arrears, and he received a reply that the number of his selection was not on the rent list at all. When I came to inquire why it was not on the rent list, I found that it was taken off for purposes of forfeiture. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is his name?] I can give the hon. gentleman his name. [MR. JENKINSON: It is not fair to give his name.] THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why not? It is Henry Iles, one of the most deserving selectors in the district. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why, Henry Iles asked for forfeiture so that he might have a chance of recovering the value of his improvements.] Because that was absolutely the only thing left to him to do in order to secure his improvements. I advised selectors not to incur any more obligations with regard to rent for fear they could not meet them. I shall now quote two cases where, if the same kind of administration is carried out, the selections will be forfeited. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have not shown a genuine case of forfeiture yet.] I have. Do I not know the condition of the selectors in my own district? I know their circumstances personally. When I was at Springsure they explained the whole of the circumstances to me. I have here two letters which have been sent to the Minister, and nothing has been done with regard to them. Here is the case of a woman who has recently been bereaved of her husband, and she has been left in financial difficulties, with a number of children to keep. She writes to me—

Once more I am going to trouble you to do me a kindness. . . . You got my rent extended until the 31st March, but I am sorry to say I am in a worse state now than I was at that time. You know I had a few fat cattle for sale. I sold them, and of course I paid all I owe except the rent, and if I had paid that my poor little darlings would have had to have gone without food. I got a telegram from Mr. Melville, land agent of Barcardine, saying that if I did not pay my rent at once there will be a penalty. Do, please, do all you can for me, as I am in very great trouble just now. My struggle will only be for a couple of years. I have thirty milking cows, and if I can only stick to them they will breed up in that time, and I will be set up again, but if not, and I have to sell them, I will have nothing, and my poor little dear ones will have to drift away from me. Oh! my friend, just fancy your dear little ones left fatherless, and no one but a mother to struggle for them, and not know how to do so. You know I am not afraid to work. I have a few friends that would help me, but why should I take their few pounds, and not know if I can repay it back, when I know they can't have much after the terrible drought they have gone through. No; it wouldn't be fair to do so, knowing they want it themselves. So, please do all you can, and I hope there will come a day when I can repay you back for all your kindness.

Here is the case of another selector, who wrote in these terms to the Minister—

In reference to rent *re* my selection, 241 Clermont district, I am quite unable to pay any rent at present. I received word from the land agent, Clermont, that I will be granted extension of time till the end of March, provided I paid 4 per cent. interest, but I am quite unable to pay either rent or interest. I have been about twenty years in the colony. It would be very hard

after living here this last four and a-half years, through all the drought, to be turned off this place now through being unable to pay my rent.

[The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Who is going to turn him off?] The Minister is turning them off. What is the use of holding over their heads the fear of forfeiture if they are not going to turn them off? Why not make it clear to them that they will not be turned off? [Mr. FORSYTH: And the relentless Government sit stolidly there.] I believe that this Government has as much sympathy for selectors as any previous Government had—

I have three parts of it fenced in, besides other improvements. It is surely much better to let me live on the land, and give me a chance to pay my rent when the seasons improve, than turn me off, after going through all the hardships that myself, wife, and family have had to suffer. Most of the time we have had to live on black bread. My wife and I have often carried home bottle-tree on our backs for over a mile, and then sat up till 1 and 2 o'clock in the morning cutting it up, to try and save a few head of stock. I think it would be more satisfactory if the department were to send around some capable person to see the poverty amongst some of us. There is so much poverty in the district that there is really very little sale for any produce.

That selector has had to sell his stock in order to pay his rent and avoid forfeiture. How does he know that the Minister is not going to forfeit? He knows that he has been threatened that, if he does not pay his arrears his selection will be forfeited, and he knows that if he does not pay his rent within one, two, or three months after 31st March, he will be charged an interest penalty of 5, 7½, or 10 per cent. As a matter of fact, one selector came into Emerald for the purpose of paying his rent, under fear of forfeiture. He told me that, when he paid the money, he would not have a single penny left to keep his wife and children, and he did not know how he was going to avoid starving. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Didn't you advise him not to pay?] That is exactly what I did. I advised him to keep his money, and told him that, if the Crown forfeited his selection, I certainly would have something more to say about it. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did the Crown forfeit?] I say the Crown is doing it. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Crown is not doing it.] [The PREMIER: Did the Crown forfeit in this case?] I do not know what they did. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We never forfeit if we can possibly avoid it.] I have given a case where they have forfeited. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I challenge you to bring up a *bond fide* instance of forfeiture where any other course was open. I have the list here of all the forfeitures that have taken place.] What does the Minister mean in regard to this selector? Then what does the Minister mean by the circular he issued? [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Never mind the circular. Give me one case.] The circular says—"I have the honour to inform you that the agricultural farm — will be forfeited." The Minister says that in the case I refer to the farm was sold by order of the trustee, but it was not sold when the Minister sent that notice. [Mr. J. LEAHY: It frightened him to death.] I have given the Minister any amount of time before I brought this matter forward, and so far he has taken no action whatever. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Not a bit of sympathy.] [Mr. MULCAHY: The Government had better make the member for Leichhardt assistant Minister for Lands.] I have written, as requested, a letter in the interests of my constituents. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You sent me a letter of ten sheets, and I sent you a reply. I said I was going to make no forfeitures in the district, and you could tell them so.] The hon. gentleman said I could tell the selectors he would give them every reasonable opportunity

of paying. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But that there was no intention of forfeiting.] That is not in the telegram. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Oh yes, it is.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: It is not a matter to be laughed at any way.] No, it is not. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not a matter to make capital out of.] It is not a laughing matter for the selectors in my district. It is a matter of life or death to them. In any case it is no policy to hang over them the fear of forfeiture. How do they know that the Minister is not going to forfeit? [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He says so.] They do not know what the Minister is going to do, but if he is not going to forfeit he should announce it publicly and amend the Land Act to give them breathing-time in which to get over their difficulties. All I want is that the selectors should be freed from the fear of forfeiture at the present time, and I will say this, that the Minister will hear something about it the first selection that is forfeited. To forfeit a selection in the case of some of these men would be worse than an Irish landlord evicting his tenants. There is one other matter I am by no means satisfied with, and that is the retrenchment that is being pursued by the present Government—a policy of dismissing men wholesale, and reducing their wages. [Mr. MAXWELL: What about these poor selectors who have not the money to pay these men?] Well, a democratic Government that is so bankrupt in statesmanship as to find no other way of improving the finances of the State than by dismissing men from the service, is in a poor state indeed. I always associated a retrenchment policy with the fine old crusted torism of Irvine and Bent, of Victoria, and not with such a progressive Government as I believe we have now. It is a policy I have no sympathy with. I never supported it when practiced by the late Government, and I do not support it now. [Mr. MAXWELL: Why do you not cross over?] If the hon. member for Burke wants to compare my loyalty to the Labour party with his, all I can say is that I have shown my loyalty by twelve years' work for the cause of Labour. [Mr. MAXWELL: You did, and got well paid for it.] And I have done a lot of self-sacrificing work for it. [Mr. MAXWELL: You sacrificed yourself to the extent of taking a good billet.] [An honourable member: How these Christians do love one another.] If ever I got into that position it was through my self-sacrificing labours long before I got into power. [Mr. MAXWELL: You ask the Labour party down here about that.] I have not much approval to bestow upon the civil service board of inquiry, but this much can be said for it: that it was an endeavour to get an impartial report on which to make retrenchments, but at the same time I do not think the result has been very successful, or that the appointment of an ephemeral commission of that kind could be successful. They certainly did not know much about the condition of the State. [The PREMIER: What does the hon. member mean by successful?] I mean not satisfactory. I mean that they recommended the cutting down of wages in some cases, which I do not think is a fair thing to do; and in other cases they recommended the dismissal of men who, I believe, were doing very good work for the departments. In one particular case that I know of dismissal has meant absolute ruin; an old and faithful servant of forty years' standing, who has been doing good work, and who has been unfortunate in his investments, has been dismissed with six weeks' notice; and it is absolute ruin to himself and family. [The PREMIER: Suppose his services were not required.] As far as I know his services were required, and

he had done extremely good work. Mr. FORSYTH: What do the Government care? At any rate, I do not think that the board knew whether his services were required or not. Two of them knew nothing about the condition of the State, and they simply scamped through the departments. In some departments they did not speak to officers for more than two minutes; and if I say one thing about one of them it is that he was to be seen very much more frequently about the Treasury Buildings than at his work. [An honourable member: Not about the Treasury Hotel.] [The PREMIER: No men worked harder than those three men.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: What is the good of that if they blundered the whole time? You could not have made a bigger mess of it yourself.] On the face of it those men could not have done satisfactory work. They knew they had to cut down somewhere, and of course they cut down; but if there had been any real desire to regrade fairly, it should have applied to the outside districts as well as to Brisbane, and if they had gone there they would have found that the civil servants are miserably underpaid. I say the Queensland civil service is the worst paid service in the whole of Australia, although, no doubt, there are some exceptions, as there are amongst every body of men. In regard to the retrenchment recommended by the board, they do not include merely the higher-paid civil servants. In some cases they went as low as the typewriting girls receiving £62 a year, and in one instance they recommended a reduction of £2. [Mr. J. LEAHY: The Treasurer is a heaven-born financier.] I have here a whole list of the civil servants receiving under £200 who have been reduced, and I am informed on very good authority that there is in the hands of some Minister a list of women, some of them widows, who are engaged in cleaning out the public offices, and that list is to be considered for the purpose of dismissal. I think it is shocking for any Ministry supported by a Labour party to cut down wages, and especially the wages of women, for the purpose of saving a couple of pounds. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] [The TREASURER: Where did you get your information?] That is the information I have got on good authority. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is the gossip of the street.] No, it is not the gossip of the street. It is given to me on excellent authority. I cannot give the name of my informant because it might lead to trouble. [The TREASURER: Whoever gave you the information, it is utterly untrue.] It refers to the Railway Department. [The TREASURER: In no department.] I do not think the hon. gentleman knows anything about the Railway Department. [The PREMIER: It is not true in regard to the Railway Department.] I may tell the Minister that it came from a person who told a friend in whom I have absolute confidence that he had seen the list himself. [Mr. NORMAN: Is it not usual to accept a member's denial?] [Mr. J. LEAHY: If you do not know him it is.] I accept the denial, but my information comes from good authority, and I feel myself entirely warranted in making the statement. I am extremely glad to hear it is not true, but if the Treasurer wishes to know, I will say that during the last six months there have been men on the Central line who have been compelled to pull their homes down and take them up to their lengths for reasons of public economy. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Where is this?] It does not matter, but taking it altogether

[8 p.m.] the retrenchment policy is one of which I do not approve. I look upon myself as a man who has a right to speak his mind here, and if I was dissatisfied when on the other side of the House, am I now to sink my principles and be inconsistent on this side? [Mr.

MULCAHY: Go over to the other side.] I will go over to the other side when I think I am justified in doing so. [Opposition members: Hear, hear! Where you know you will be safe.]

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. HARDACRE: I can tell hon. members that if the policy of this Government does not satisfy me, it will not take me long to go over to the other side. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] The only good recommendation this commission made may be summed up by quoting the two paragraphs in their report. The first is—

After earnest consideration, we have formed the opinion that the public service is not overmanned to any serious extent and that the standard of remuneration is not excessive

and, second—

The board urges the Government, in view of the recommendations being adopted, to consider the propriety of making some provision in the nature of a retiring allowance for some of these officers in consideration of their long service.

I think that in cases like one I mentioned, where an officer had been over forty years in the service was retrenched with a fortnight's notice, some retiring allowance should be given. [The TREASURER: Who will have to pay?] Our Labour platform gives two methods of raising revenue without people paying anything. The first is an absentee tax, and the other a tax on land values. [An honourable member: Don't the owners of land pay that now?] No. Many of the owners of land are letting it lie idle. [The PREMIER: Where is the applause from the other side now?] (Laughter.) That only shows that I am not catering to the other side. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] And, further, I think the Government might pursue a better policy—a bold and vigorous policy of land settlement—try and settle people on the land. [The TREASURER: And not ask any rents of those who are in debt.] If I had my way I would permit a man to take up land without any payment of rent in order to tide over his initial difficulties and get some return from his land. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You would have to make up the revenue from some other source.] They would pay in an indirect way. [An honourable member: I thought you wanted a land tax?] Certainly; but a land tax is not a tax on selectors; it is a tax on land values. Land is taxed according to its value, and where the value of the land is very little the selectors do not pay much. A tax on land according to its value falls chiefly on those in the centres of population, and especially on landowners in the metropolitan district, who very often let their land remain idle; and instead of it being a tax on the poor selectors, it would lessen the price of land and be the means of throwing it open for settlement. I say there are better methods of rectifying the finances of the State—by a vigorous policy of land settlement, by assistance to farmers in the way of seed wheat, means for restocking, and by giving them rations, and so forth—which would avoid this drastic system of retrenchment that we are going in for now. I would not mind if this was to be the end of it; but I am afraid that it is not going to be the end of it. I say it is a policy of cruel and unnecessary retrenchment in many cases. I can understand economy in times of depression, and also in times of prosperity, but to have this kind of economy for the pure purpose of rectifying the finances of the State appears to me to be a wrong policy—a policy which will increase the unemployed and generally be of disadvantage to the State. These are my honest opinions, and I can assure the Premier and hon. members of this

House that it has caused me many hours of mental worry before I came to the decision that I would express these views in this Chamber. In conclusion, I may say that I have expressed my opinion—my honest opinion—with regard to some matters of administration that I am dissatisfied with—for instance, with regard to the retrenchment policy and the way the selectors have been treated; but I again say that the general programme of legislation as foreshadowed is one of the most progressive I have ever seen, and if that policy is carried out by the Government they will have my hearty support. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!]

Mr. SUMMERVILLE (*Stanley*): I have a few observations to make regarding the policy of the Government, as disclosed in the Speech of His Excellency, and perhaps no better time can be taken by me than to follow the hon. member for Leichhardt, who has spoken from this side, and, like him, I will launch a few criticisms at the Government. This is the time for criticism, and I think, after listening to the speech of the member for Leichhardt and other speeches, that the junior member for Maryborough should withdraw a certain statement he made. I believe he stated that members on this side were tied up, or had not the temerity to express their honest convictions on the policy of the Government. Well, at least the hon. member for Leichhardt has expressed his honest convictions, and there is no earthly reason why he should not have expressed his convictions so solemnly. [Mr. NORMAN: He had very scanty evidence.] Well, if he had, I will try and supply that deficiency on a few little points. Of course, on land matters I bow to the hon. member for Leichhardt, as he has made a study of that question, and he represents a constituency where a large amount of land is held on lease and otherwise, so he should be *au fait* with that question, and I take it that I can safely leave it in his hands. [An honourable member: Do you favour a land tax?] No, I do not, because I do not think it is possible, and if it were possible I do not think it would be judicious. An observation has been made that we on this side were sitting on a barrel of gunpowder, and if hon. gentlemen on the other side would supply the match the business would be done. (Laughter.) That appears to be the situation, but I do not think that the Government is in any greater danger because hon. members express their honest opinions. I think there is less danger in that than to have a hidden smouldering fire. It is a safety-valve, and I am glad that certain members of the Labour party have expressed their honest convictions. I for some time past have been identified with their policy; I have supported it in more ways than one, and I am only sorry that in some respects this policy, which is really the policy of a Labour Government, is not quite consistent with what they have preached for years, and so far as it is not consistent to that extent will I attack it. Probably I would have passed over the appointment of a new judge had it not been referred to by the hon. member for Toowong. I certainly deprecate the action of the Government in arrogating to themselves a power which they may or may not use without the sanction of the people. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] I say that the appointment of such a high official as a judge should not be in the power of the Government to dangle before either friends or opponents. It is a degradation of the position itself, and it is a power that no previous Government has ever arrogated to themselves. I cannot conceive of a man like Sir Samuel Griffith, when he led the Government in this House asking for such a power, knowing as he

must the traditions which surround the Supreme Court bench. I have had occasion to mention this before, and I believe that these positions should be held as sacred as possible. I do not say this in any disrespectful way to the Attorney-General; but I have read in the papers—and it is almost sickening to read it, week by week and month after month—as it represents that hon. gentleman in the contemplation mood struggling with the question as to whether there should be another judge appointed. I say either there should be another judge appointed or there should not, and let the matter be decided at once; but this matter cannot be decided on the congestion or not of work in the Supreme Court for the time being. [Mr. NORMAN: They have plenty of time to do the work.] I am prepared to believe that. Let us know definitely what the number of judges is to be. Now, the Government have been singularly unfortunate in their appointments—in their appointments to the Upper Chamber and in the appointment of this unknown—or, rather, too well-known—man Jones, and unfortunate in the appointment of this commission of inquiry into the civil service. [Mr. NORMAN: And, perhaps, in their appointment of an Attorney-General.] If some hon. members were as strong in debate as they are in nasty insinuations, we would have a splendid sample of representatives here. (Hear, hear!) It appears to me that some hon. members always carry pistols with them, with which they wish to shoot their next-door neighbour if need be. (Laughter.) They always remember something that has passed; the antecedents of their best friends they best remember. What earthly reason is there for the hon. member to make an observation like that? What has the appointment of members to the Council Chamber got to do with the appointment of the Attorney-General? I suppose they were appointed by the Premier, and I am not prepared to say that each appointment to the Upper Chamber is not an excellent one. When I say that the Government have been singularly unfortunate with regard to the appointments to the Upper House, I am not saying anything against the appointees. The Labour party, and I in common with the Labour party, have discussed this question for years past. I believe it has been constantly asserted by this party for fifteen years that the only qualification for a seat in that House was special dulness, tempered with a kind of conservatism, and now they have made a record of the appointments to the House which over and over again have been declared on the public platform to be both useless and dangerous. (Hear, hear!) If it was very dangerous to democracy to have a House that you admit is a House of privileges, then it is dangerous to have appointed your best democrats to a seat there. I do not say it is highly useless and dangerous, I only say that this is the policy that ought to have the support of the Labour party, who for years preached it. On this unfortunate appointment of Mr. Jones I have very little to say. I was told to-day by a leading business man in Brisbane that Mr. Jones is really, after all, a linen-draper. [An honourable member: That is no reflection.] I did not say it was a reflection. I was trying to make a point of my own, but you spoilt it by supposing that this is a reflection. In fact, it seems to me a strong point in his case. He is the second most remarkable draper I ever heard of—the other one was John Gilpin. [Mr. McMASTER: I was told he was a tailor.] It makes no difference what he is—I simply mentioned the fact; and the only observation I wish to make on the gentleman is this: Either he is well known to the Government or he isn't known to the Government. If he was

known to the Government, his character must have been known; and it appears that his character, which has been thrown across the floor of the House, is not a good one. [Mr. FORSYTH: He is well known now to the Government.] Well, I believe it was the best that could be said in favour of the Government—that they did not know him better, but I cannot believe that so shrewd a business man as the Hon. Minister for Agriculture would make such an appointment without knowing the appointee better. It may be that the man was recommended to him by other Ministers, and that he took their recommendation; but I do not think he would have made it in his own business, and I certainly think he would have been more careful in making an appointment when he was making it to a place of trust and a representative of this State in a foreign land. It is an unfortunate affair, and certainly unfortunate for the Government. With regard to the commission of inquiry, I feel quite as strongly as the hon. member for Leichhardt. I do not believe that any three men in Queensland, or outside of it, were capable of doing what those three men undertook. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] What did they undertake to do? To walk casually through several hundred employees, and say to one gentleman, you are getting £50 a year too much, and to another, you are getting £50 too little, and in a casual way to discriminate on the merits of each one, all of whom were absolute strangers to them. I say it is an utter impossibility for any three men to have accomplished the task set them. Now I draw a distinction, and I think this is where the Government have blundered, if they will excuse me for saying so. If you want to establish a system, you may do it with outside men of ability; if you want to reform a system already established, it can only be done from inside. That, I think, is patent. I can understand the Esher Committee at home establishing a new system for the army and navy; but I could not understand the Esher Committee going through the different departments and reducing the salary of any junior and senior clerk. Some of the alterations that have been made in salaries have been found by the heads of the departments to be incorrect. Some appointments they have made are absolutely impossible, and I will refer to them a little later on. Some of the observations which they made when they were going through the departments were absolutely absurd, and I have them from men to whom the observations were made. Some of the largest departments they took fifteen minutes to go through, and yet they came away and drew up a report which, in some instances, threw men who had given valuable services to the country for twenty years absolutely out of employment. Let us remember one man who has given good service, who has risen from the day he entered it, without a stop almost. He has an unblemished record. He is looked upon as an able servant, and only in January last was raised by this Government to the top of the tree because of his services. He has now been declared to be worthless to the civil service—in fact, his office is not required. But what have the Government done? They have declared his office vacant, and they have appointed a man who, whatever his qualifications may be, can only have about one qualification if he wishes to excel in that particular office, and they have made him Registrar-General and Registrar of Titles, and Registrar of Joint Stock Companies. I ask anyone who has had any practice in the Real Property Office what does the average man know about the hundreds of questions which will arise in the Real Property Office touching titles? It will take a man years to become competent in that office,

or even to fill a secondary office there. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: To whom are you referring?] Mr. Mitchell. I am reading from the report of the commission of inquiry. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He is the Deputy Registrar.] That would not entitle him to fill the office which has been vacated by Mr. Bourne. Years of experience have rendered Mr. Bourne a most efficient officer. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Mr. Mitchell held different offices.] I will show the different offices he has got to fill, and I say it is absolutely impossible for him to fill all those offices. Unless he has been Registrar of Titles for a considerable time he must be deficient in the qualifications required for that position. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He has been!] Well, for a considerable time he cannot take the place of the man who has departed from that office. It must be remembered that when Mr. Bourne leaves he will receive a salary within £2 a week of what he is now getting. The Government are losing the services of this man, who has saved the country thousands of pounds by reason of his being able to give a decision on the spur of the moment, because he is an efficient officer. This man has been found to be one of the most efficient officers in the whole service, and for the sake of £2 a week his services have been lost to the State. If Mr. Mitchell is going to fill all these offices he is a most extraordinary man. As Registrar of Joint Stock Companies he will often have to give decisions regarding the status of foreign companies in this State, and is he capable of doing all these things? If he is capable, how is it that he has been buried so long? How is it that he has not been heard of before? [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He has been heard of, and he has been recognised now.] He must have been recognised by the Government, because the Government have acceded to the recommendations of this commission of inquiry. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Mr. Mitchell needs no words of mine to recommend him; his merit is conspicuous.] I am not asking for any such words; I am prepared to believe it. [The PREMIER: It is only a question of competency.] It is a question of competency on the part of any ordinary man to fill all those offices—not the competency of this particular man only, but the competency of almost any man, except a man of long standing and experience, to fill these three offices. [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He does all that work in Rockhampton now.] As a matter of fact I do not suppose that any questions such as will come before him here to be settled would come before him at Rockhampton, without reference to Brisbane. The chances are that very few intricate questions would come before him there. I have little more to say on this particular matter, but I think it is a part of the policy of the Government on which every hon. member on this side ought to have something to say. I do not believe, as the hon. member for Leichhardt said, in this class of retrenchment. I do not believe the Government can save the country by tinkering with the salaries of men who are not now getting too much. I believe the board of inquiry has found that the service is not overmanned and that it is not overpaid, but that it was necessary to make some alterations. The men whose salaries have been raised say that it is one of the best things that has taken place, while those who have been reduced say the reverse. I heard an observation made the other night by way of interjection to the effect that the civil servants were satisfied. We know that the civil servants are not satisfied. How could civil servants be satisfied? If any person was appointed to an office in a firm of reasonable standing, and he worked well for that firm, and received promotion from time to time, he would not expect.

after he had served twenty years, to be dismissed at a month's notice without any reason. I can give you an instance of a firm in Queensland, and I suppose it is only one of many, who during the drought were losing hundreds of pounds, but they refused to sack even a junior clerk. They had served them well in the past; they knew things would right themselves in time, and there was no panic legislation or administration in that firm. How much rather should that be in the case of a State like Queensland, when at every after-dinner speech every hon. member will tell you that the future of the country is secure. [The TREASURER: Is it right to retrench or not?] It might be right if you have any means of discovering the position, but it is not right to walk indiscriminately in a crowd and say you are getting too much or you are getting too little, when you know perfectly well there is no standard by which you can judge the merits of the men. That is what I find fault with, because justice is utterly impossible, except by the merest accident, and I do not think accident has contributed much justice in this particular case. [Mr. J. LEAHY: What about Dr. Maxwell?] I do not intend to say much about Dr. Maxwell. I do not know his qualifications. I believe in the capacity in which he was first employed he was an expert; but there you are again; you suppose that because a man has administered one office he is capable of administering every other office. It is simply the case of Mr. Mitchell over again. Because Dr. Maxwell is capable of doing the work allotted to him by the late Government, you cannot say that he is therefore capable of fulfilling all the offices to which he might be appointed. He might be. It is only the interjection which brought his name forward. I am not prepared to condemn the action of the Government in this respect. They may have made an excellent appointment. I was glad to hear from an hon. member representing a Western constituency something touching the rabbit question. We are not troubled with rabbits in my constituency, but we have sufficient interest in the welfare of the State to at least take this matter into consideration. I have heard so much in a casual way concerning the rabbits that I am satisfied of two things mentioned by the hon. member referred to. The first is that you cannot fence the rabbits out. The second is that they are going to be a national question. It is a matter of killing them where you have got them. Whether the money expended in rabbit fences has been thrown away or not I am not prepared to say; but if they can be fenced in in groups that should be done, and they should be killed in the way in which the hon. member for Balonne mentioned, and the sooner the Government take the matter in hand the easier it will be for them to accomplish a task which seems to be getting greater every day. [The PREMIER: Governments have been working at the matter for eighteen years.] In a precarious way. [The PREMIER: No; they have spent £1,250,000 upon it.] And all that money will be thrown away unless the work is gone on with now. There is one great matter that is not referred to in the Speech, but which every hon. member and every constituency is interested in—that is the cotton question. I am sorry that not even a casual reference is made to it in the Speech. Experts have told us that the zone in which this great product is grown is from thirty-five to forty degrees on either side of the equator. As the whole of this continent lies within those latitudes, we are absolutely within the zone in which cotton can be grown. For the past fifteen or twenty years we have had experts coming here, and they have asserted that

we have acreage sufficient to grow all the raw material of this product that is required by the British Empire. The amount of raw material that is required is £27,000,000 worth a year, and I believe at this moment that the cotton manufacturers of England are holding out their arms to Australia, imploring us to consider this matter, and it is not considered even worth our consideration. If Australia has decided not to do anything under 6s. a day, it has decided not to touch this product, and it has decided not to touch a great portion of the world's products unfortunately; and, if we have decided not to touch the great portion of the world's work, where is the future of the State, in competition with Canada, with the United States, with the Argentina, and with many other parts of the world? Where are we if we have decided that we will do absolutely nothing under 6s. a day? Why should even Labour men allow the labour question to stop the production of such a splendid product as this? This country cannot afford to throw away the opportunity of supplying £27,000,000 worth of raw material. The melancholy result will be that instead of 6s. a day the working man will soon be looking for employment at 3s. a day. [Mr. KENNA: Do you believe in black labour?] I do not. I have said as much against black labour as almost any man here; but I say that this great question ought to exercise the mind of every hon. member. It is a question which, if we cast it aside, then all these grand speeches as to the future of Australia go for nothing. Unless we are so absolutely secure that Providence himself cannot alter our destiny we cannot afford to throw away such a product as this, and it is only one of many. [The HOME SECRETARY: What do you think is a fair wage?] It depends on the work on which people are employed. But I am not going into the question of what I consider a fair wage. It cannot be explained in a word or in a sentence, and one would have to go into a dissertation to properly answer that question. I quite agree with the hon. member for Leichhardt, again, on the question of the redistribution of seats. When I heard the Governor read that passage from the Speech, I certainly reiterated a remark made by a Labour man that it was weakness on the part of the Government to shirk that duty. In the first place, we all know that this State is in favour of a reduction of members and a redistribution of seats. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] [The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We do not know anything of the sort.] It is wonderful how members of the Government can answer in one word, "You are wrong." I believe I have stood on more platforms in Queensland than the hon. gentleman. I have stood on platforms for more years than he has. I have had a better opportunity of finding out the feeling of the people on the matter, for I have had a policy of my own for a number of years. (Laughter.) And that was in common with the Labour party. I think that party will acknowledge my labours on their behalf in various parts of Southern Queensland at all events, and it is only their inconsistency that I am condemning to-night—I am not condemning their policy. But, of course, the Labour party cannot stand even their inconsistencies being condemned. On the question of the redistribution of seats and the referendum, I say that we know as well as we ever can know that the people of the State want a reduction of members. The question of how many can be better decided by hon. members of this House than by the people outside. The people outside cannot decide the question intelligently, and for this reason: Take each individual person outside the House, and he is as capable of deciding the question as we are, if he will study it

sufficiently. He will have to study the size of the State, the number of electors, the number of members, the particular industries in which those people are engaged for the time being. There will have to be such a comparison that it will take him at least a few months before he could go to the poll, and say, "Not only do I believe in a reduction of members, but in a reduction by so many, and I know I am correct." I have no hesitation in saying that, if you make an alternative number, and submit it to the people, they will vote for the greatest reduction. There are thousands of people who would vote for the abolition of Parliament without a second thought. They have had that much government, and that much parliament, and that much federation, that they are so absolutely tired of it that they are prepared to believe it could be done without. There are scores of people who believe we could do with one-third of the members. There are some who believe that about one-half would be sufficient. Some there are who do not believe in a reduction at all; but the reason they do not believe in any reduction is, because their own members have explained it to them on the platform. If the matter is referred to the people, there will have to be a campaign in which every member will go to his own constituency and to as many other constituencies as possible and try to influence votes. Is that a referendum? It certainly is not, and it will resolve itself into an indiscriminate fight, all the members in the House seeking to sway the greatest number of people to vote their way. We know that the people want a reduction of members, and a reduction of a few members would be a good thing in my opinion, and I am prepared to give my vote for that reduction. I am prepared to face the question, and so are many members on both sides. [Hon. members: Hear, hear!] We have already talked of the subject long enough. If we refer it to the people we will either rush it on them, or we will have to postpone the question for another four years; if we desire to get a reasonable vote one way or the other, it will mean a postponement. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that North Brisbane is represented by one member. The few thousand people who are represented by that one member know that they can see their member any day they like; they know that he can speak to them at any time in one or two halls in the town. Those people, judging the whole of the State by themselves, will come to the conclusion that representation is easy, and they will say that one-fourth of the members can represent the country, knowing that their member can represent the whole of North Brisbane and Toowong, and so on, and they are judging by the facilities they have for reaching their member and hearing him speak. Do they know that in the Gregory, in the Carpentaria, and in other electorates, the people cannot see their member once in three years? They will vote "in the bulk," while in the Gregory the few hundreds of people who think that territory has a claim as well as population will not be heard in the matter. Will that be a fair position? For that reason it is unwise to take a referendum at the present time without the people being educated, so to speak, so that their decision will not be a waste of time, and they may not have to regret it as much as their decision on federation. We talked federation to the people. I take credit for having spoken everywhere I could against it, but in the face of the waving of flags and the cheering, and the talk of the British Empire, and the future of the State, we went down. We have got federation now, and what is it worth? [An hon. member: Nothing.] One observation made by the Premier before we went into recess has been troubling me ever since.

When asked what the policy of the Government was he said, "To save a shilling where we can." I think that was an unfortunate observation, and I would rather that he had not made it. To save a shilling where you can is a bad policy. No Government ever will succeed by such a policy; in fact no man ever succeeded by such a policy. A miser may, in the course of a lifetime, save £10,000, but many a business man has made £40,000,000 in the same time. Business is better than saving, and saving must come out of the pockets of the people who very often are the least able to pay. I take it that the saving in this respect is worse even than the poll tax. It means in many cases people absolutely thrown out of employment—people who have been employed for so many years in that particular class of work that they are not fit to go out and look for employment at anything else, and there is nothing else of the kind to be found in the State. If a man serves the State for twenty years—[The PREMIER: He is to serve the State for all his life?] As long as he is capable of filling that office, and the fact that he has been in it for twenty years is sufficient proof that the office is necessary. [The PREMIER: It is no such thing!] [Mr. GRANT: Supposing the State has not got the money to pay him?] We come back to the old policy. If the future of the State is secure, what is the use of talking about not having the money to pay? [Mr. GRANT: We have a deficit every year. Do you want that to continue?] Are you going to materially alter the deficit by sacking a few score of men? Just imagine trying to rid the country of a deficit of hundreds of thousands of pounds by sacking men who draw, at the most, only a few thousands. The heart-burnings, the misery caused by these dismissals is not compensated by the amount of money you have been able to save. There are other parts of the Speech which might be referred to, though I have no great desire to speak upon them. As the policy of the Government is not always the expressed portion of it, I take it that a great deal of the policy of the present Government is understood. I find in this Speech many things which I have noticed in other Speeches. I find in it Bills that might be introduced with advantage, and Bills that are going to be spoilt by being introduced. There is no Bill that is more necessary to all business men in the State than a Bills of Sale Bill. One clause in a Bills of Sale Bill would have abolished distress for rent, and that is most necessary. [The PREMIER: It is not proposed to abolish distress for rent.] I thought it was, but I see it is not. The relief which the proposed Bill will give will not be one case in twenty years. It is not a Bill to abolish distress for rent. There are many minor Bills which may be useful, but it is not by passing a number of minor Bills in a time of distress such as the present, when the State wants righting, that we will get out of our difficulties. I would have thought that the Government would have come down with a bold financial policy—something which would really have helped the State. [An honourable member: Give us a suggestion.] It is the easiest matter in the world to ask an hon. member, who stands up on the spur of the moment to criticise the Speech, to make a suggestion for improving the policy of the Government, which they are supposed to have been twelve months in framing. I did not intend to say as much as I have said, but I have taken advantage of what every young member should take advantage of—the Address in Reply—to say a few words on the policy of the Government. I claim, like the junior member for Maryborough, that when I do speak I speak my honest convictions and fearlessly state my views, and I am

independent enough to say that I shall support that policy which will be of the most benefit to my constituents and the State. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!]

Mr. CAMERON (*Brisbane North*): During the course of this debate, very feeling references have been made to the death of the late Hon. W. H. Browne by the Premier and leader of the Opposition. I can add nothing further to what has been said, beyond expressing my sincere regret at the death of the hon. gentleman. Although not agreeing with his politics, I always had the greatest respect for the late hon. gentleman as a man. Reference has been made in the Governor's Speech to the prosperous state of the agricultural industry, and to its rapid development. I earnestly wish that that development may continue, because I hold that no country can become great unless it has good sound agricultural development. The pastoral industry or the mining industry alone will not keep the country in a state of prosperity. If you have the best pastoral country, it is only equal to carrying a definite number of stock; you cannot make it carry more than it is intended for. Everyone, therefore, must wish that the agricultural industry may go ahead and prosper. With regard to the dairying industry, that also I believe is receiving every encouragement from the Government. It is an industry worthy of all the help that can be given to it. I do not see why the butter exportation should not assume as large proportions in this country as it has assumed in other States, or why the butter we export should not be equal to any butter manufactured or exported from other countries of the world. A great deal of the butter we hear spoken of as Danish butter has really never come from Denmark at all. Much of it is manufactured and exported from Siberia, and there is no reason in the world why we cannot make and export as good butter as is made in Siberia. With regard to the sugar industry, it is also pleasing to note that its prospects are good, although at one time it seemed that there was a likelihood of the crop in the Southern portion of the State being a partial failure. I trust, however, that the recent bountiful rains have removed that danger, and that the crop in the South will be as good as it is likely to be in the North. As to the central sugar-mills and the steps taken with regard to the appointment of Dr. Maxwell, I will not say anything on that matter, because it is a question I am not too well qualified to speak upon. I therefore leave it to my hon. colleague, Mr. Forrest, and others who follow me. Now I come to the pastoral industry, and that is a matter I do profess to know a little about. I must say I was rather disappointed to see such a very passing reference to the industry in the Governor's Speech. We are told that the Government intend to introduce an amending Land Bill. I have here a letter from the Premier in response to a communication from a number of pastoralists, and, for the information of hon. members, I will read both the pastoralists' communication and the reply. But it seems to me, judging from the reply, that if the Government really mean all they say in their letter they might as well leave an amending Land Bill out of the question. This is a letter addressed by a number of pastoralists to the Premier of Queensland—

Courier Buildings, Queen street,  
Brisbane, 31st March, 1904.

Sir.—We, the undersigned, being the owners, registered lessees, and others interested in pastoral holdings in Queensland, desire to bring under your notice certain amendments which we consider are absolutely necessary to the Land Acts of 1897 and amending Act of 1902 before we can with confidence avail ourselves of the provisions contained in those Acts. The amendments which we desire are—

1st. That a provision be inserted in the Acts above referred to by which the maximum rental for

the first period of the new lease proposed to be given under the Amending Act of 1902 shall be fixed before election.

2nd. That the maximum percentage of increase at each succeeding reappraisement be defined in a manner similar to the provision contained in section 8 of the Land Act of 1897.

In support of this proposal, we desire to point out that it is contrary to all the recognised principles of the relations between a landlord and his tenants that the tenant should be entirely in the dark as to what his rental is to be during the currency of his lease; and the effect of such a position of uncertainty is to lower the value of the security which lessees have to offer in order to obtain the necessary capital wherewith to carry on the industry.

3rd. That the areas to be resumed during the currency of the extended lease offered under the provisions of the amending Act of 1902 should be defined before election.

Our reason for asking for this amendment is that it would be of material benefit to the state as landlord, and the lessee as tenant, inasmuch as it would encourage the latter to proceed with improvements of a more permanent character than would be possible where there is a doubt as to what portion of the holding is likely to be taken away at each period of resumption. Moreover, it would assist to provide work for a number of deserving men who are at present unable to obtain it owing to the depression which exists.

4th. That section 13 of the amending Act of 1902 be amended in such a manner as to absolve the lessee from the obligation of maintaining rabbit netting fences on areas resumed from his leasehold.

We submit that it is not reasonable to expect a lessee to maintain a fence upon land of which he has ceased to be the beneficial occupier.

5th. That a provision be inserted whereby the lessee shall have the right to surrender his lease on giving, say, twelve months' notice of his intention so to do, and forfeiting the whole of his improvements.

We desire to point out that this provision is already conceded to lessees in the leases under the western division Land Act of New South Wales. Your predecessor in office, the Hon. Robert Philip, M.L.A., wrote, promising to give the same right to the lessees of Queensland, and the present Minister for Lands also stated in the House that he would make good the undertaking of the previous Government. We are, however, given to understand that the existing Land Acts do not permit of such a clause being inserted in the leases. The absence of such a provision is causing very grave concern to a large number of lessees and owners, more especially the holders of the third and fourth classes of country, and is preventing them from accepting the increased tenures which have been granted under the provisions of the amending Act of 1902. To those lessees who are acting as trustees for others and to many mortgagees who are the registered lessees it is proving an absolute bar to coming under that Act.

For these and other reasons which could be adduced in support of the above proposals we trust you will be pleased to bring in during the forthcoming session of Parliament an amending Land Bill embodying the suggestions made herein. If, however, the business to be submitted to Parliament will not allow of such a Bill being introduced during the forthcoming session, we respectfully beg that you will pass a measure extending the time in which lessees may avail themselves of the amending Act of 1902 to such a period as will enable a Bill to be introduced remedying the disabilities herein brought under your notice.

In conclusion, we desire to impress upon you the importance of the proposals herein submitted for your consideration. Now that the drought has broken, it is necessary that every encouragement should be given to lessees and owners of pastoral holdings to obtain further capital for the prosecution of their industry, which is admittedly of the greatest importance to the State of Queensland. If this encouragement is forthcoming, then the recovery of the industry from the effects of the recent drought will be much more rapid, and consequently ensure a corresponding benefit to the whole of the community.

Trusting that you will be pleased to give the suggestions contained herein your early and favourable consideration.

That communication was signed by some 400 lessees, and a great many more would have

signed it had there been time to obtain their signatures before the presentation of the letter. I presented the memorial myself to the Premier, and received from him, in due course, the following reply—

John Cameron, Esq., M.L.A., Brisbane.

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, forwarding additional signatures to be attached to the pastoralists' memorial which was recently presented to me and which sets forth certain amendments that are considered absolutely necessary to the Land Acts of 1897 and 1902 before the signatories can, with confidence, avail themselves of the provisions thereof.

While anxious to make every reasonable concession to a large class of producers who have been contending against great difficulties, the Government cannot accede to the first proposal, which is as follows:—

That a provision be inserted in the Acts above referred to, by which the rental for the first period of the new lease proposed to be given under the amending Act of 1902 shall be fixed before election.

The argument which the pastoralists employ in support of this proposal seems to be based on the assumption that there is an exact analogy between the State as a landlord and the individual as a landlord, and that consequently the Crown tenant, like any other tenant, should know before he signs his lease the amount of rent he will be called upon to pay. But this reasoning ignores the fact that the Crown has no more voice than the lessee in fixing such rent, and that the determination is made by an admittedly capable tribunal, independent of the Crown, and with no conceivable motive for making an award unjust to the tenants. Were the request acceded to, the notice of election would, in many cases, be postponed for some years, since rents must be determined in open court, and the Crown must be in a position to offer sufficient evidence of rental value, which evidence can be obtained only by close inspection of the holding. I may remind you that under the Act of 1884 rents were not fixed until after election, and that this procedure was continued by the Act of 1897, without any suggestion that it had in the past been found to operate unjustly to the lessees.

[9 p.m.] If the pastoralists are willing to accept 50 per cent. as the maximum increase, the Government has no objection to offer to the second proposal, which runs as follows:—

That the maximum percentage of increase at each succeeding reappraisal be defined in a manner similar to the provision contained in section 8 of the Land Act of 1886.

The Government, however, is not disposed to accept the third suggestion, which reads—

That the areas to be resumed during the currency of the extended lease offered under the provisions of the amending Act of 1902 should be defined before election.

Obviously it is impossible to state definitely many years in advance the particular part of a holding which the public interest will require to be made available for closer occupation. The resumption, moreover, is not arbitrarily effected by the Minister, for the part to be taken is decided by the Land Court after hearing the lessee, and it may be confidently asserted that, since the first resumptions were made, the Land Court has in every case evinced so full a measure of sympathy with and appreciation of the representations of the lessees that the pastoralists can have no reasonable ground for any apprehension as to their interests in the matter not receiving the fullest consideration. Furthermore, it is not at all clear that earlier knowledge of the part to be resumed would lead to greater improvements being effected by the lessee, as, in any event, his right of ownership in improvements is maintained, and, indeed, in many cases improvements have been made after resumption on land remaining in the occupation of the lessee.

The fourth proposal is as follows:—

That section 13 of the amending Act of 1902 be amended in such a manner as to absolve the lessee from the obligation of maintaining rabbit netting fences on areas resumed from his leasehold.

In regard to this proposal, I admit that with respect to the maintenance of fencing, Crown tenants coming under the provisions of the Act of 1902 will incur obligations which may not be fully compensated by the

advantages derived, and the Government, in view of this possibility, is considering whether some means cannot be devised whereby, in such event, obligations and advantages will be brought more into correspondence.

The fifth proposal is as follows:—

That a provision be inserted whereby the lessee shall have the right to surrender his lease on giving, say, twelve months' notice of his intention so to do, and forfeiting the whole of his improvements.

This proposal is, as it stands, hardly equitable, for it does not give the Crown the option of determining a lease on giving twelve months' notice of its intention to do so, and on compensating the lessee for his improvements; it proceeds, I understand, mainly from mortgages and financial institutions, and would not, perhaps, have been put forward if lessees were fully aware of the effect of the statutory provisions relating to mortgages contained in the Land Act of 1897. Apart from that, no person or corporation assigning good reasons why the State should sanction the surrender of a particular lease would be likely to find the Minister standing in the way of such action, though there are sufficient grounds why the law should not be so altered as to compel the Minister in any instance to approve the surrender, irrespective of the special features of the case, and without reference to the circumstances and motives of the lessee. When a lessee has paid up all arrears of rent, and undertakes to forfeit his improvements, it has never been the practice, nor is it now in contemplation by the Department of Lands, to withhold assent to the surrender of his lease.

In conclusion, I should like those you represent to understand that it is not probable that at any future time the Crown tenants will get more liberal treatment than is offered to them by the Land Act of 1902, and the Government is anxious that the pastoralists in their own interests should take advantage of a statute which was passed for their relief at a time when the disasters they had experienced had excited generous sympathy for them in both Houses of Parliament.—I have, etc.,

ARTHUR MORGAN.

Now, I say myself that this pastoralists' memorial is a courteous one, setting forth the needs of a great industry, but the same cannot be said for the Premier's reply, for in it the pastoralists are accused of being ignorant of the land laws, and it winds up with a threat. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.] No other construction can be put upon it. Besides, this reply absolutely refuses to carry out the promise made by the Minister for Lands in this House. I have the hon. gentleman's promise here, and I do not believe he was insincere when he made the promise, or that he wanted to equivocate in any way. It will be found on page 748 of vol. xci. of *Hansard*, as follows:—

He wanted to know from the hon. member for North Brisbane whether this promise was in writing, or a verbal one. However, he understood that the hon. member's leader (Mr. Philp) said that it was in writing. He (the Secretary for Lands) had not seen that promise, but if the promise had been given as the hon. member had narrated it, he was thoroughly in accord with its being fulfilled and he would have no hesitation in carrying it out.

That was the hon. gentleman's reply to me, which I regarded as good enough for anything. Mr. Philp's promise above referred to was conveyed in a letter to me dated the 27th August, 1903, and a copy of it was sent to the present Minister for Lands on 19th October, 1903. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Was it with regard to the surrender of leases?] Yes. There is another matter in connection with the pastoralists' letter which I would like to refer to, and which I mentioned to the Premier when I presented it to him. I am thoroughly in accord with the request that there should be a definition of the areas to be resumed before election, and I think that might be applied to fully nine-tenths of the country now held under pastoral lease. But at the same time there are certain areas and districts which I do not think it would be a wise thing to interfere with, but it might be applied, as I have said, to nine-tenths

of the pastoral lands in the State. [Mr. P. J. LEAHY: To the Western lands.] There is no doubt that if the pastoral industry is to be aided to recover in the way we hope it will recover, and good seasons are to be made the most of, Parliament will have to help the industry ahead. A great deal has been said about the need for closer settlement, and, where the areas are suitable for closer settlement, I am as great a believer in that as anyone; but some of the Western lands are not suitable for people to settle on in small areas. I am a grazing farmer, and unfortunately a trustee for other grazing farmers, and I say that as a whole the grazing farming industry up to this time has been a failure. This is a bad thing to have to say; but I do say it, and therefore I contend that every possible inducement should be given to these people to make their undertaking a success. Some remarks were made by the hon. member for Leichhardt about the manner in which they have treated the grazing farmers in his district, and I do not doubt that his remarks are true; but I know that during the tenure of office of both the past and the present Minister for Public Lands much consideration has been extended to these people. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I thank you for saying so. I can assure you that the remarks of the hon. member for Leichhardt are absolutely misleading.] I don't know about that. Now I come to the rabbit question, and I think that a very small percentage of hon. members in this House and a very few people outside understand thoroughly the serious menace the rabbits are to Queensland. They say, "This is the same old cry of the pastoralists—they are crying out for something more than they ought to get." If hon. members believe that, they will endorse what has fallen from the hon. member for Barcoo, who has a keen ability for showing his dislike and hatred for this class; but I would remind him that there are pastoralists in the Barcoo, and although they may not have assisted in getting him into this House, still they are his constituents all the same, and he is as much under an obligation to assist them as anyone else. [The TREASURER: And he would not do an injustice to anyone.] The hon. member said that the pastoralists had not kept their obligations, and the result was that many of those fences were in a state of shameful neglect. If that is so, he should have reported the matter to the Minister for Public Lands, in whose department it is. But more than that, instead of it being a reflection on the pastoral tenants, as he intended it, it was a grave indictment of the Government rabbit inspector for that district. I know the Government rabbit inspector for that district, and I do not believe there is a more capable, conscientious man to be found in Queensland. I know he is no respecter of persons. [Mr. KERR: Who is it?] Mr. Avery is the inspector. [Mr. KERR: No, he is not.] I am a member of the Mitchell Rabbit Board, and I ought to know. [Mr. KERR: I know he is not the inspector.] Mr. Avery is the inspector for that district—I happen to know. [Mr. KERR: No, he is not.]

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. CAMERON: That does not alter my argument at all. The duty of the rabbit inspector is to see that those fences, which lessees have undertaken to maintain in return for extension of leases, are maintained in a proper way; and the hon. gentleman knows as well as I do, or any other man who has had experience in the Western country, that occasionally these fences will get broken down.

They are over a large area of country, and it is absolutely impossible to repair them at a moment's notice. I hope that the Government, although they may not approve of the resolutions which were submitted to the Premier by a deputation the other day, will take adequate steps to relieve us from the great danger which is now facing us. It ought to be dealt with at once, and the sooner it is dealt with the better for Queensland. People may say, What is the use of the money that has been spent already? The Hon. the Minister for Lands gave the deputation some figures regarding the expenditure upon rabbits up to December, 1902. The actual figures, according to the report of the Department of Public Lands dated 30th June, 1903, I believe, are as follows:—The expenditure then had been £1,182,481, of which runholders had paid £714,174 for the cost of erection of rabbit fences, leaving £475,317 to be borne by the Government. In addition to that sum of £714,174, a very large sum has been spent by the pastoralists for the internal fences, poisoning, and other means of keeping down the pest. That is the position. With the deputation, I have been for a long time an advocate of the nationalisation of this question. It may be argued with considerable correctness that the question of fighting the rabbit has been made a national question—[Mr. RYLAND: Are you a socialist?—to the extent of one-third, and I say it ought to be made much more a national question, because it not only affects the West, but the whole national estate of Queensland. The rabbits are known to be at Braeside, near Warwick, and Cunnamulla, and round the south and the north-western corner of the Gregory fence, and unless steps are taken you will very soon have the best of the pastoral country in Queensland ruined. I can only repeat my remarks and say that, if the Government fail to take up the matter promptly, they will be betraying the trust reposed in them by the people of this State. There has been a good deal said by previous members—especially the hon. member for Leichhardt—in regard to the sale of lands, and I do not wish to be at all ambiguous about it myself. I have often advocated the sale of land, and I do so now. If you cannot sell land at 10s. an acre, sell it for half the price if you can get it, or half a crown even. You will never get the country developed until you get people, and you will never get it protected from vermin and noxious weeds until people have a bigger interest than they have in the leasehold. [Mr. KERR: We have an evidence of that in North Rockhampton—the freehold land there is covered with prickly pear.] That land is no good for anything. There is any amount of prickly pear around Brisbane, as far as that goes. There is another matter for gratification, and that is the continued increase of mineral production, which I trust will not only be maintained, but increased. As regards the repurchase of estates, I consider that in the past and up to the present that policy has been successful, but the time has come when we should go a little slower. I think it can be overdone, and now that there is an evident disposition on the part of private owners to cut up and sell their own estates, the Government should proceed with caution. As to light lines of railway, my opinion is that they might be very good as far as they open up country and make it profitable to occupy, but where those lines are built there should be a guarantee from the local authorities, or the proceeds of the land should be devoted to the same purpose. Except on those lines I shall be no party to the scheme. With regard to immigration, also referred to in the Speech, I am a thorough believer in it. W-

should have more population, and this country will never be good until we get it. If you get people with money, so much the better, but you want population in any event. I cannot avoid making some reference to Mr. Jones. A good deal has been said about him already. I myself always feel a great reluctance to say anything which would be detrimental to any individual under cover of parliamentary privilege. At the same time, I cannot forget that I am here as one of the representatives of the people, and in a sense a custodian of the public probity. That is a duty we all have. I do not know Mr. Jones, and never saw him, but from what one can hear, he is not in any way suitable for the position he has been appointed to. My own belief is that for one man who is less fitted for the position than Mr. Jones fifty could be easily obtained who are better. The position of representative of this Government in the East, or anywhere else is a very responsible one, and the man appointed should be socially and morally above any reproach. I can speak with some slight authority in this matter, because for the last six or seven years I have been largely instrumental in the appointment of commercial agents pretty well all over the commercial world, as far as it is known. In making those appointments with those who were associated with me, we have always had regard, first, to the credit of the State to which we belonged, and also to the credit of the institution for which we were acting, and we have made the appointments after the most exhaustive inquiry, satisfying ourselves up to the very hilt that the people we were sending to represent us and this State were men who would in no way disgrace us. If I was engaging a bookkeeper or a storekeeper for a station I should not be satisfied with the references which were read out by the Premier the other night. We all know the casual way in which references are given by people. At the same time I do not wish to discredit the persons who gave them in any way whatever. Jones had been with some of them for a year or two—in one case for three years; and to refuse to give a man a reasonable character who has been with you for three years when appealed to, amounts to reflection upon an employer for keeping him so long, besides you have no right to refuse it. [The TREASURER: You have no right to mislead people by giving a reference which is not a true one.] I would not do it. I would not on any account give a reference to a man unless I was absolutely certain, the reference was true. I can only state my own opinion, which is that the appointment of this man as the representative of Queensland is a discredit to the State and to the Government. With regard to the proposed measure of electoral reform, I shall support it if I consider it beneficial. It is like talking in the dark to talk of it now. I have always advocated a reduction of members, and a reduction in payment. When I was returned at the last election, it was on the distinct understanding that when the opportunity arose, I would support such a measure. With regard to the financial proposals, when the income tax was passed by the late Government, I was one of the few who voted against it. I understood that the Act was only to remain in force for two years, but I shall vote against its re-enactment with all my strength. [Mr. P. J. LEAHY: It has come to stay.] It may be so, but I shall vote against it all the same.

Now a word about public service [9.30 p.m.] retrenchments. It seems to me that the manner in which this thing has been carried out is absolutely cruel, and in my opinion there was no occasion for it. The Secretary for Agriculture in his

speech the other evening referred to the cultivation of sisal hemp. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I made no reference to sisal hemp on the Address in Reply.] I think the hon. gentleman did in a speech that he delivered some time ago. Now I hold in my hand a communication which I have received from a man who is a prominent agriculturist in Mauritius, and he writes as follows:—

In the *Daily Mail* of yesterday there is a letter about sisal hemp. A planter from the North objects to the giving of these seeds to anyone making application, and states that if this policy is followed for long sisal hemp will be a greater nuisance than prickly pear. This planter is perfectly right, and I would suggest that you call the attention of Mr. Cameron, he being a pastoralist, to the matter. If sisal hemp seeds are distributed indiscriminately, the place will soon be overrun and pastoral ground ruined. Complete districts in Mauritius which had been planted with sugar-cane, but which had been abandoned on account of the drought and turned into pastures for cattle, had been so completely covered with this pest that factories had been established there for manufacturing fibre. It would appear that the Minister for Agriculture wishes to plant sisal hemp everywhere, and advises the farmers that the profit is very great. But sisal hemp can pay only in places where there is an abundance of fuel, either coal or wood, for the boilers, and plenty of water for washing the fibre.

[The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Sisal hemp is not distributed by means of seeds. He does not want to develop any industries.] I would not say that, because it is not the case. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well look at the evening journal to-day and see the report from Hawaii.] As a matter of fact, this gentleman is engaged, in connection with others, in endeavouring to develop two industries in Queensland now. There is one other matter I wish to refer to. I understand that it is the intention of the Government to reduce the salary of the Curator of the Brisbane Museum. As a trustee, I wish to enter my earnest protest against that, and I wish to show the way in which similar officers are treated in other States. The salary of the Curator of the Government Museum, New South Wales, is £650 and house rent; the salary of the Director of the Government Museum, New Zealand, is £750 and house rent; the salary of the Curator of the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, is £1,000 and house rent; the salaries of the staff of the Government Museum, New South Wales, is £4,787; those of the staff of the South Australian Museum, amount to £1,312; and the expenditure on the West Australian Museum, is £4,000. Mr. De Vis was appointed on probation in March, 1882, at a salary of £200 per annum, and permanently in October in the same year at a salary of £400. In addition to that, Sunday services were subsequently imposed at a remuneration of a day's pay per week, amounting to £66 13s. 4d. per annum, making a total salary of £466 13s. 4d. In 1893 he was reduced to a salary of £300 and £50 for Sunday services. He was increased in 1901 to a salary of £330 and £55 for Sunday services, and I believe it is now proposed to reduce his salary to £300 per annum, and to make him no allowance at all for Sunday services. I believe that there is no more cultured or capable man in Australia in his particular line, and it is a pity that his services should be so badly remunerated, and that his salary, which was not a big one to begin with in comparison with the other States, should be decreased to such an extent. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!]

Mr. WHITE (*Musgrave*): I had no intention of speaking at all on the Address in Reply until I saw the speech which had been made by the Secretary for Agriculture last week, and I then considered it my duty to my constituency that I should make some reply to those remarks. Before doing so, I would like

to compliment the mover of the Address in Reply on the extraordinary new-born zeal he shows for the Cabinet; but, like all converts, I think he carried his remarks a little too far. He attributed everything to the present Government, from the break-up of the drought to the export of butter. I think it is rather a two-edged sword, because if the hon. member had considered for a moment, he would have remembered that the export of butter and the increased output of that commodity is due, not to the present Government, but to the Dairy Produce Encouragement Act and to the extraordinary splendid agreement made by the late Premier with the Aberdeen line of steamers. [THE PREMIER: What was so extraordinary about that?] There was an extraordinary amount of sagacity about it. I think it was a splendid thing, and it was only through this agreement that producers were enabled to export butter profitably and in such quantities. With regard to the appointment of Mr. Jones, I have only to say that if one-half, or even one-fourth, of what has been said is true, the Government ought to be impeached. In appointing any man to represent us in a foreign country, the Government should have seen that his credentials were of the very highest character. The excuses and the testimonials which were read by the Premier only aggravate the position, and it is another case of the old saying, "like master like man," and probably Jones more truly represents the Government than their followers would care to admit. In connection with the public service commission, I am not one of those who always find fault. I believe the Premier endeavoured to appoint a commission which would be free from personal or political bias, but the fact that these gentlemen were not unanimous in their opinion, and the action of the Government since have brought the whole question within the sphere of political influence. [THE PREMIER: You are quite wrong.] Well, it has been openly stated in this House. In any case, I consider that instead of the Cabinet deciding questions with regard to the transfer of departments, a committee from both sides of the House should have been appointed to review the whole position. I know that the Premier has stated in this House that he would not think of appointing anyone from this side of the House to transact any business of that kind. [THE PREMIER: I did not say that.] The hon. gentleman stated that when he wanted to appoint a man to do anything he would not come to this side of the House for him. It would have been more constitutional, and at the same time would not have laid the Government open to a charge of political bias, if a committee from both sides of the House had been appointed. The recording angel himself could not have done the work in the time that this commission did. I know of one department where there is a tremendous amount of actuarial work done, and the whole time the commission spent in that department was under seven minutes. Naturally, the gentleman at the head of the department was under the impression that they were entirely satisfied, but when the report went in he found that his salary had been reduced, his principal clerk had been transferred to another department, and he had been saddled with two juniors. I do not think that any men, whatever their capabilities, could have grasped the work of that department in the time occupied. The gentleman at the head of the department is worshipped by those whom he serves. I do not know that I am right in referring to him, but I refer to the Registrar of Friendly Societies. [MR. KERR: Do you not think you could leave it alone until the friendly societies take it up?] The friendly societies have asked me to take it

up. All I know is that the hon. member who interjects refused to be one of a deputation to interview the Attorney-General, and if he had not so refused I would not have brought the matter forward. [MR. KERR: I refused to introduce a deputation.] The hon. member was never asked by me to introduce the deputation, so he did not refuse me. [MR. GRANT: If the friendly societies think so much of his work, are they willing to pay him?] I believe if the Government are not prepared to find the money the friendly societies will. I have taken the latest statistics I could find in connection with friendly societies in the different States, and I find that New South Wales, with a population of 1,480,000, has 80,000 members of friendly societies. The actuary receives £550, the registrar £500, and there are five assistant clerks at £200, or a total cost of £2,500. In Victoria, the members of friendly societies number 103,000. The actuary receives £600, the registrar £250 for local work only, and has private practice, and there are eight clerks at a total cost of £2,500. In South Australia, there are 43,000 members of friendly societies; there is a registrar and actuary at £500, and the cost, without counting the registrar, is £850. The actuary's report is only issued once in five years. In West Australia there are 12,000 members of friendly societies; the registrar receives £500, and there are four clerks, the cost being £1,400. I want members to well consider the position which Mr. Rendle is in. It is well known that the present financial position of the friendly societies in this State is in a great measure owing to the good advice given by Mr. Rendle. In comparing the reports of the various registrars I do not see any to equal that of Mr. Rendle, especially on the financial position of the societies. This gentleman has been a period of twenty years in the service, and I sincerely trust the head of his department will take his case into serious consideration. It would be a great loss, not only to the State, but to the friendly societies, if Mr. Rendle's services were withdrawn. [MR. KERR: What would they do if he died?] That is a very different thing. If all the members of this House died, it would not be such a loss to the State as the loss of Mr. Rendle's services. [MR. BARBER: Do you think the work is worth £400 a year?] I do, and I believe the first thing this gentleman will do will be to look for employment elsewhere. I am astonished to hear Labour members advocating such a method of retrenching people who are doing good work for their own societies. I do not think Queensland could get a man in any of the States to do the work Mr. Rendle is doing. [MR. BARBER: We recognise the value of his work.] If they recognise the value of his work, do they think it is a fair thing to reduce him by £30 a year? Is the financial position of the State going to be saved by £30 reduction in Mr. Rendle's salary? I do not consider the reduction, but if you reduce a man's salary you depreciate his services. If I had an employee in my service, instead of reducing his salary I would rather say I had no further use for him. In Queensland there are 32,000 members of friendly societies, and the registrar actually received £430 less 12½ per cent. He had two clerks—one at £200 and one at £130. His chief clerk is transferred to another department, and he has now two inexperienced assistants at £130 and £100. I draw attention to the fact that Mr. Rendle does the whole of the valuations for nothing, whereas in other States the valuations are performed by a separate department, and the societies pay for them. If Mr. Rendle was paid for the valuations, or if the State charged for them, it would cost £881; or, if they were charged for at the recognised English rate,

they would cost £1,500. I have the whole of the figures here in relation to various societies—

	At late local rates.	At English rates.
	£	£
M.U.I.O.F. ... ..	292	455
A.O.F. ... ..	155	275
G.U. ... ..	51	95
P.A. ... ..	133	210
H.A.C. ... ..	94	170
I.O.R. ... ..	61	115
A.O.D. ... ..	48	80
Others ... ..	45	100
	£881	£1,500

The whole cost would have been incurred by the societies, but Mr. Rendle does the whole thing for nothing. I sincerely hope the Attorney-General will reconsider the position of Mr. Rendle, because, in my opinion, it would be a serious loss to the State if his services were not available. I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Leichhardt speak his mind as freely as he did about the selectors and people who are paying rents in various parts of the State. There are a good many in my district, and I have had many letters from them, but I must say that previous to the present Government taking office I had no difficulty in always getting some consideration. I hope the same consideration will in future be extended to these people. I am glad to see the hon. member is not prepared to sacrifice his principles as the seconder of the Address said he would. He told the House that he would willingly sacrifice his principles for the exigencies of party politics. [Mr. BARBER: He did not say that.] He said he did not believe in certain things, but considering the exigencies of the case, and the discipline of the party, he would sacrifice his principles. I now come to a question which affects my district more than anything else, and that is the appointment of Dr. Maxwell. The Minister for Agriculture a few nights ago made some very great reflections on the manufacturers' union of Bundaberg. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I made statements, not reflections.] That is a matter of opinion. They were taken as reflections. He said they had done a good deal to prevent Dr. Maxwell successfully accomplishing his work. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In Melbourne.] I can give the hon. gentleman information upon that subject. [Mr. BARBER: Do not the people of Bundaberg view with great suspicion anything emanating from the Chamber of Manufacturers?] I am not addressing the member for Bundaberg, but the House. I do not value the hon. member's opinion very much. The hon. member's district is not connected with the sugar industry, but mine is, or rather, I should say, his district is concerned in it, although he does not recognise it. In 1897-8, for the first time, the sugar manufacturers made up their minds to get some man to do the chemical work with regard to the soils, and at that time they thought it would be a good thing to appoint

[10 p.m.] Dr. Maxwell, not for the benefit of the Government, but for their own benefit. As a matter of fact, the Manufacturers' Union were the first people to mention Dr. Maxwell to the Government. Then the growers at Mackay came in, and ultimately it was decided that it would be a good thing to secure his services for the whole State, and this was the origination of Dr. Maxwell coming to Queensland. At that time the sugar industry was very prosperous, and they thought it would be a splendid thing if they had someone to advise them with regard to the chemical value of soils and on irrigation. Dr. Maxwell was brought to this State under an agreement by which the growers were to pay half of the

whole expenditure. They were quite prepared to do this, but at the very start Dr. Maxwell was taken away for political purposes to Melbourne, and during the time he was there, he got a lot of information from the Manufacturers' Union and the Council of Agriculture, as I can prove that by letters; but I will not detain the House by reading them. Dr. Maxwell was in Melbourne for a considerable time, and the manufacturers and growers got no benefit through him during that period. I know that there were experimental plots on various plantations, where the people were waiting for his advice for months, and ultimately they grew their cane without his advice. Now, Dr. Maxwell had no knowledge of politics. [An honourable member: He is not a politician.] No; but he is a very smart man, and the very fact of his agreement being extended, while the people concerned are against it, shows that he is a very smart man. Now, the Minister for Agriculture has stated that Dr. Maxwell has done a lot for the sugar industry in Bundaberg. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I gave you the figures.] I have the figures here. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are they correct?] I don't know what 551 means, and I don't know one single man in the Bundaberg district who has got one analysis from Dr. Maxwell. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He has made analyses typical of the district.] No single man in the Bundaberg district has got one analysis of soil from him, and he has never given one definite opinion on anything. He has always said—"Do certain things and you may get certain results," and so on. The Secretary for Agriculture also stated that when Dr. Maxwell went to the Bundaberg district there was no irrigation there at all, and that now there are 4,000 acres under irrigation. Well, in 1884 and in 1886, they talked about irrigation there, and at Bingera they had irrigation long before Dr. Maxwell came here. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Refer to Mr. Boyd's report.] I think I know as much about irrigation in this district as anyone. No man has taken a greater interest in irrigation in this district than I have, and I can assure the Minister for Agriculture that if Dr. Maxwell's advice had been taken there would not have been 300 acres under irrigation in the Bundaberg district. This is a fact that cannot be disputed, even by the doctor himself. At Fairymead, there is probably the largest amount of cane grown by irrigation, but Dr. Maxwell was never on that plantation until after the irrigation scheme was completed, and they irrigated there without his advice. At Bingera, the only advice he gave was—"Go slow." That's the only advice he gave anywhere. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Don't you think it is just as well to go slow in these matters? What about the Elliot River?] I am very glad of that interjection from the Minister, for I can tell him that there are 3,000 acres of the finest lands in the State there, which would have been irrigated but for the "go slow" advice of Dr. Maxwell, and I guarantee that there is sufficient water there to irrigate very much larger areas. I can quite understand that the Minister takes all his instructions and information from the doctor. The doctor has not only got the control of the sugar-mills, but the whole control of the Agricultural Department, and every man in the department knows it. I think it was about two years ago when the Department of Works handed over to the Department of Agriculture £2,500 for experiments in irrigation. Now, did ever anyone hear of experiments in irrigation? Why, irrigation ceased to be experimental 2,000 years ago. Dr. Maxwell, after taking the matter of experiments in irri-

gation into his serious consideration for twelve months, decided to widen an old well at Clarke's mill. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All he did was to indicate the locality suitable for irrigation.] He went to this old well—[The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When?] About eight months ago. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Before I had anything to do with the department.] No, since the hon. gentleman has been in office. He simply got this well widened and a pump put in it, and it was the laughing-stock of the whole district. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Dr. Maxwell had nothing to do with this.] It was entirely under his supervision. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It was not.] It was.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WHITE: This was done, and I thought it was a pity to see the money of the country wasted so injudiciously, so I asked the secretary for the Woongarra irrigation scheme to send in the list of the thirty-six wells in that district—varying in depth from 80 to 192 feet. I gave the depth of the water and its nature and quantity; but no notice was taken of this. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This came under the Works Department.] No; I say emphatically that the Department of Agriculture had only to do with it. The well was sunk and widened, and I think the man in charge of the work was even against it. Now a contract has been let to a deep-well boring company by the Department of Agriculture to sink the well another 50 feet, at a cost of £275. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You might tell the truth.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WHITE: I am telling the truth, as far as I know. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Ah!] Well, the pump was put in and the whole of the water was exhausted in two hours. I can tell the Minister for Agriculture that it was the laughing-stock of the whole district, and I have been asked why I have not brought this matter before the House sooner. Of course the doctor has nobbled the Press and the Ministry; but I can say that he never gave any definite advice with regard to this industry. I may here mention that, in reply to a telegram from the Isis farmers in regard to the grasshopper plague, Dr. Maxwell informed them that if they put hot water on the grasshoppers it would kill them. It reminds me of a bit of advice that was once given with regard to catching birds: "Put a bit of salt on their tails." As far as the Woongarra scheme is concerned, private capital might have put it through, but I do not think that such work should be in the hands of a private company. I think that these water-rights should be the property of the land-owners in the several districts; but some forty out of eighty-four of the land-owners signed a petition in connection with the matter, and they said that Dr. Maxwell had advised them to "go slow," and wait further advice from him. That is the only advice he has given. I think there are only one or two farmers in the whole district who can say they have received any advantage from Dr. Maxwell. [The TREASURER: Then it was very unwise on the part of the late Government to appoint him.] The late Government were forced into the position of appointing him, and the people of the Bundaberg district had a good deal to do with it. If they had been able to keep Dr. Maxwell to themselves, he would have been a splendid man. I believe he is a scientific expert, and if his whole attention had been devoted to this question, he would have done

good work for the growers in the sugar business, and it would have been an object lesson for the whole of the State of Queensland. But unfortunately the appointment was under the Government, and his services were taken away for other purposes, and during the whole of his time here his services have not been at the disposal of those who were paying part of his salary and half the expenses of the bureau. As far as agriculture is concerned, the country would have got a very good investment, if it had been entirely in the hands of the people of that district. Coming to Dr. Maxwell as comptroller of central mills, I should like to know what qualifications Dr. Maxwell has for that appointment. Has he ever managed a central sugar-mill? Has he had any experience in buying cane or selling sugar? If the Government had appointed Dr. Maxwell to see to the growing of cane the department to which he was appointed originally—[The TREASURER: And where he did no good!] No, he did no good, because he was taken away too much. He states in his own report, which I have here, that on the sugar experiment stations in Mackay he has been able to make a clear profit of £25 per acre on non-irrigated cane, with deep cultivation. If the Government had really wanted to assist sugarcane growers out of the financial difficulties they are in, why do they not appoint Dr. Maxwell to supervise and take over the whole system of growing cane for the central sugar-mills. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are thirteen experiment stations.] But this would be a better way than experimental stations, if he could experiment with large areas. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Experiment stations are experimenting with land.] There are about 30,000 acres of land connected with the sugar-mills. He summarises the practical results for the year. If he could make 25s. an acre on 30,000 acres, he would clear off the whole of the debt of the mills in one year, and the whole debt of the State in about ten years. Therefore, I think the Government have made a very serious blunder in appointing Dr. Maxwell as comptroller of sugar-mills when he could have done so much in the position to which he was originally appointed—the growing of sugar-cane. I have heard it stated that the value of the wool on a sheep's back went down the sheep's throat; and to a certain extent this is applicable to the sugar industry. The sugar is to a great extent made in the field. Good and deep cultivation makes good cane, and if you have good cane you will get good results in the mill. There is no difficulty after the cane has gone to the mill in checking the results, as to whether so many tons of cane make so many tons of sugar. When the central mills were originally started, it was for a twofold object—to settle the people on the land to get the best results out of that land, and to give the people on the land a market for their products. The central mills were a splendid thing for the people, and the State should take into consideration what the mills are doing. In an ordinary season they ought at least to produce 60,000 tons of sugar—taking a very low estimate. That is £600,000, and if the State is £600,000 richer in a year, we should do all we can for the central mills. They are not all behind; after all, it is only the mills in the Southern parts of the State which are behind. [The PREMIER: That is not so.] With the exception of the Proserpine. It is all right for the doctor to tell the Minister for Agriculture that if you appoint him to control these sugar-mills you will have good financial results. The coming season will give each of the mills a good return, especially the mill in my district, which will show a clear profit of at least £4,000 after paying expenses [Mr. KENNA: Is that Gin Gin?] Yes. I think

Dr. Maxwell, when he was laying that report before the Minister for Agriculture, ought to have explained that when central mills were first organised the price of sugar was about £12, and at the present time it has gone down to about £8 a ton. No one could have known that sugar was going to go down to that price. No one could have told that we were going to have a protracted drought in the sugar districts of Queensland. I drove in last night from an irrigation meeting with a gentleman who was largely interested in sugar, and he told me that it cost him £28,000 during the last few years, without receiving a penny, and without taking any interest on the money invested in the mills, to pay working expenses and keep the thing going and keep the people on the land. The Government are in the same position. Practically, the appointment of Dr. Maxwell is actually putting in the bailiff to those who are behind with their payments. If any financial institution was to treat the sugar-mills in the same way, it would be very disastrous to Queensland. The Secretary for Agriculture and the Treasurer have seen that these mills have got into a bad position. They are perfectly justified in looking after their own interests, but they are not justified in increasing the expenditure in connection with those mills by putting a bailiff in. I presume the cost in connection with the comptroller will not be less than £6,000. [THE TREASURER: Why would not the Government be justified in doing that, if it is the only way they can get their money?] I maintain it is not the only way. The better way would have been to let Dr. Maxwell take entire charge of the growing of sugar. If you can grow sugar-cane at a profit of £25 an acre, that is a practical result which should be followed up. Some of the sugar-mills in Queensland have got as good a directorate of management as it is possible to get. In his first report when he came to Queensland the doctor said that both the central mills and private mills were macerating too much. That was the only fault he had to find, but not one of the sugar-mills altered their system of maceration at the instance of Dr. Maxwell; and if he takes any steps to interfere with the maceration process as adopted in Queensland sugar-mills, they will show a greater loss than ever they did before; but I do not think he will attempt to carry out what he advocated in that respect. Even the "Ewa," in Honolulu, which is held up as a model mill, they have altered their process, and are macerating since Dr. Maxwell left, which shows that the system in Queensland is fairly good, and that the doctor either made a mistake in advising them to change their system of maceration or admits his error now. As far as the sugar industry is concerned, the doctor knew perfectly well what he was doing when he got the present Government to appoint him as comptroller for another three years. As I said when the sugar-mills were first instituted, the price of sugar, 88 per cent. standard, was about £12 a ton. The German beet sugar industry, which really controls the market of the world, in 1892 was £6 a ton; in 1903, £8 5s. per ton; and in 1904, £8 12s. 6d.; and to-day the actual price is £9 per ton for beet sugar. The present price being offered for Queensland sugar is not quite so high, but there is no doubt that the price of our sugars will increase and the bonus this year, with the price that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has put forward, will be better than in any previous year. [10.30 p.m.] The prices for granulated white sugars for the same years that I have already referred to were—£7 9s., £9 15s., £10 10s., and £11 6s. 8d.

respectively, so that the doctor has just taken possession of these mills at the end of the drought, when the sugar is increasing in price and the mills are bound to be a success under any circumstances, and I consider the money is absolutely wasted in appointing him to take charge of these mills. As a rule, scientific men have no special forte for dealing with men. The man to take charge of these mills should be a man who knows all about advances and liens on crops, cost of firing, and any quantity of things that, with all due deference to Dr. Maxwell, I do not think he knows much about. I have just jotted down a few things here. The first thing required is an ample supply of cane for the mill—and that has been the whole trouble in the Southern part of the State, and, if either the Treasurer or the comptroller attempts to reduce the price of cane, down will come the supply of cane to the mills. The sugar-growers will not grow cane unless it pays them to do so. I think that, in the future, they will be able to get a reasonable price for their cane, and, as far as the Gin Gin mill is concerned, there are probably 1,000 acres more under cane this year than ever there were before, and that was planted before the doctor was appointed comptroller at all. [MR. MARTIN: It might be due to Federal legislation.] No: it was the price of maize that did it. [MR. KENNA: What proportion of these 1,000 acres will get the bonus?] A good deal of it. The next thing to consider is that the cane must be sound, sweet, and of good quality, so that the fewest number of tons will make a certain quantity of sugar. Then the cane must be produced at a profit to the grower. In these respects I think the doctor is well suited to take charge of these mills, and I believe that, if the Government had appointed him to look after these things, he would have done good service, not only to the State, but to the farmers. The Government should instruct Dr. Maxwell to devote more attention to the land than to the mills, and, if they do that, I am quite sure that the results will be good. Since the Secretary for Agriculture made his speech last week, I have received four letters—one of them was handed to me just as I was leaving Bundaberg last night. The writers of these letters state distinctly that, if they had followed the advice given by Dr. Maxwell, irrigation would not have taken place, so far as that district is concerned. They were sinking in the red soil, and he said: "It is no use sinking there. You will never get water there. You must go back to the forest land near the coast, and you will get water there," and he indicated the place where they were likely to get water. They sank there without getting water, and, as a consequence, they lost a whole season. They then came back and sank on the red soil, where they had originally intended sinking, and got sufficient water to irrigate 250 acres. I do not wish to mention the names of these gentlemen in the House, but I can show the letters to the Secretary for Agriculture, and he will see that Dr. Maxwell had absolutely nothing to do with the success of the irrigation in those cases. The first of the progressive measures which are foreshadowed in the Speech are a Franchise Bill and an Elections Bill. In seconding the Address in Reply last session I stated that I was disappointed with the measures which were to be brought before the House. This year I am considerably more disappointed. The present Government took nine months to consider what they would bring forward, and they now bring forward these measures. How will a Franchise Bill or an Elections Bill give one man employment, and we are told there are

lots of unemployed? Will these Bills help the Treasurer to balance expenditure and income? [Mr. BURROWS: They will give a lot of men work.] Remunerative work? [Mr. BURROWS: Certainly. The Bills will have to be printed, and they will find work for men in the Government Printing Office.] The money for printing these Bills will have to come out of the pockets of the people I represent. There is not a Bill mentioned here that will not simply increase expenditure. The next Bill mentioned is a Bill for a referendum on the question of the number of members in this House. The Premier was good enough to say, in reply to an interjection made by me the other night, that I had not considered the matter twenty-four hours, and he had considered it. Now, last year I mentioned the matter when speaking on the Address in Reply. I stated that the matter had been decided by a majority of the electors in 1902, and that the majority of members in this House were pledged to support a reduction of members, and, that if the House absolutely refused to deal with the question, and with a Redistribution of Seats Bill, it should be submitted to a referendum. But I only suggested that in the event of this House declining to deal with the matter itself. I am still of the opinion that this House has a mandate from the people in favour of a substantial reduction of the number of members. If the Government succeed in carrying their Bill remitting the question to the electors, it will not only be a referendum, but it will be a revelation to the Government, if the Press and hon. members refrain from interfering in the matter, but leave the people to act entirely on their own account, leaving them to say whether there shall be fifty members or forty members, or any other number. I believe that we might get on if we had a commissioner to rule the whole State and carry out the existing laws, giving us a rest for a time from experimental legislation. If hon. members opposite want to follow the model of the Federal Parliament, why do they not have nine members, the same as in the Federal Parliament? I think nine members could control this State just as well as this Parliament. [Mr. BURROWS: How do you know they are not going to do that?] I shall certainly vote against the referendum proposal unless the matter is first submitted to this House. There is one matter that I forgot to mention in connection with Dr. Maxwell's appointment. With reference to the claim put forward by the sugar-growers, I can only say that the growers are not averse to paying their share of the indebtedness up to the time that Dr. Maxwell was appointed Comptroller of the Central Mills, but the Government ought to relieve them from paying any further assessments, and, even if that is done, the experimental stations and the sugar bureau should be handed over to the planters, otherwise it is useless. But there is a constitutional point that has not been touched on. In the reply sent to the planters the Treasurer stated that he did not see what they had to complain of, as in future, Dr. Maxwell's salary would be paid out of the consolidated revenue. Now, I am of opinion that the Government are not justified in doing that, because section 90 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act provides:—

On the imposition of uniform duties of Customs, the power of the Parliament to impose duties of Customs and excise, and to grant bounties on the production or export of goods, shall become exclusive.

[The PREMIER: How does that apply?] In this way: that Dr. Maxwell's salary is equal to a

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bonus to the central sugar-mills, if his services are of any value at all, that is not enjoyed by the other mills or the other growers of the State. They say that the value of this man's services is £3,000 a year, and that is undoubtedly a bonus to the central mill sugar-growers. I think the whole body of the people have just cause of complaint that this salary is to be paid out of the consolidated revenue. This is a question that will be brought up later on, and I leave it now to those who have more knowledge of legal matters than I have. In any case I think it is a fair thing that the assessment should be discontinued. I know of one man in the Bundaberg district who shortly after Dr. Maxwell was appointed was assessed at £400, and he never saw Dr. Maxwell. After a great deal of trouble he made an appointment with him to go out to the plantation, and before they had got half way Dr. Maxwell remarked upon the great distance the plantation was from town, and that he had to be back by 6 o'clock. He stayed there an hour and a-half and gave the planter some advice as to whether he should irrigate or not, and he ultimately told him to do nothing further until he heard from him again. The planter never heard from him, and that advice not only prevented him from irrigating but cost him £400. All the other industries of the State have their experts, but the sugar industry is the only one which is called upon to pay for its expert. I should like before closing to mention the Secretary for Agriculture's reference to a member of another House, whom he accused of going there to represent the Manufacturers' Union. I think that was a most unfair assertion. No man in the State has done more for it and for the sugar industry. He has spent no less than £40,000 in irrigation, and he has been patriotic enough to have all his machinery manufactured in the State, although he could have got it for £2,000 less from Glasgow. I think the hon. gentleman's reference to that gentleman was unjust and uncalled for, and I regret that such an effort should be made to discredit a man who has done so much for Queensland.

Mr. FOX: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

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