

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 13 JULY 1904

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 13 JULY, 1904.

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

SUPPLY.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending the appropriation of £350,000 from consolidated revenue account; £30,000 from trust and special funds, and £100,000 from loan fund account.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. A. Morgan, *Warwick*), the message was ordered to be printed and referred to Committee of Supply when constituted.

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed:—

- (1) Report of the Official Trustee in Insolvency, Townsville, for the year 1903.
- (2) Report of the Government Statistician on agricultural and pastoral statistics for 1903.
- (3) Return to an Order, relative to names of persons who left the public service and of persons admitted between the 15th September, 1903, and 17th May, 1904, made by the House, on motion of Mr. Macartney, on the 2nd June last.
- (4) Report of the Public Service Board for the year 1903.
- (5) Report of the Agent-General for Queensland for the year 1903.

Hon. A. Morgan.]

QUESTION.

LETTERS *re* STORAGE OF BARLEY.

Mr. WATSON (*Cunningham*) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. Will he lay on the table of the House copy of letter received by him from Mr. R. Alexander, of Emu Vale, in connection with barley stored by him in the Warwick grain-shed?

2. Also copy of letter received by him from Mr. Stockwell in answer to Mr. R. Alexander's complaint?

The PREMIER replied—

The answer to both questions is—Yes. I lay the papers on the table.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER, in moving—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended, for the remainder of the session, as would otherwise prevent the immediate constitution of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means the receiving of resolutions on the same day on which they shall have passed in those committees, and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day—

said: The purpose and object of this motion have been made clear, I take it, by recent events in the House. It is a step necessary for the conclusion of the present session. I do not know what object the hon. member who leads the Opposition had in calling "Not formal," and I do not know that it is necessary for me, in submitting the motion, to offer any further explanation or justification for it. [Government members: Hear, hear.] I think it is quite clear to the hon. gentleman and to the House. I submit the motion, Sir. [Government members: Hear, hear!]

* HON. SIR A. RUTLEDGE (*Maranoa*): The Hon. the Premier affects surprise that I should have called "Not formal" to this motion, but I think he might have anticipated or supposed that I should have been failing in my duty if I had not done so, so as to afford him an opportunity of giving a little information to the House. This is not an ordinary occasion, the circumstances are not of a usual character, and I think the House was entitled to hear from the hon. gentleman something as to what the intentions of the Government are with respect to the dissolution. I refer particularly to the time when the dissolution is expected to be proclaimed, and also the time when the elections are to take place. These are matters of very great importance to hon. members, and I do not think that we are called upon to take on trust, without the smallest communication of any kind, either privately or publicly, what the intentions are with regard to these important matters. [The PREMIER: I am prepared to inform the House.] Well, I think the hon. gentleman should have availed himself of the opportunity I afforded him by calling "Not formal." [The PREMIER: That is the only difference between the hon. gentleman and myself.] We are entitled to the courtesy, at all events, of such a statement. If the hon. gentleman had been courteous enough to have given me some indication privately of what his intentions are I might have allowed the motion to go as formal, but I have had no sort of communication from him—good, bad, or indifferent; and when he comes down as the Premier and makes a motion of this sort without giving us the smallest particle of information, I think I have every reason to feel, on behalf of the Opposition sitting here, very much dissatisfaction. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] [Government laughter.] I might go on and say that there have been occasions when under

circumstances like these the Opposition have felt fully justified in resisting at every stage a motion for the granting of Supply. I could adduce, if it were necessary, or if I thought it proper, a great many reasons why the House should move very slowly indeed in the direction of giving Supply on this occasion. I do not know that there is any intention on the part of the Opposition—I myself have no intention of resisting in any very contentious way the granting of such Supplies as may be necessary for the giving effect to the intention of the Government with regard to the dissolution which is shortly about to take place; but I do think that we have a right to know these things. I shall have something to say with regard to the series of proposals which will be contained in subsequent resolutions to be submitted to the House when those resolutions have been tabled; but at this stage I can say that I am very glad the Premier has signified his willingness to give us this information; and, if it is given fully and frankly at the present time, I do not suppose there will be very much discussion on the motion which is now before the House. Of course, with regard to the other resolutions which will come later on, I suppose hon. members will take the opportunity of expressing any opinions they may have with regard to the amount that will be asked for to enable the Government to carry on; but at this stage I think we should receive explicitly the information that I have suggested ought to be conveyed to the House—first, when the dissolution is to take place, the day or days on which it is proposed the elections should be held, and also when we may expect the House will be called together after the elections have taken place.

The PREMIER: I shall avail myself at this early stage of the right of reply which I enjoy in order to assure the hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition that I intended no discourtesy to him or to hon. members opposite in refraining from giving, in moving the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders, the information which he very properly desires on the part of his party in the House. The only difference between the hon. gentleman and myself is as to the time at which that information should be given. I thought that a later stage would be a more convenient opportunity of furnishing it to the House, while the hon. gentleman thinks now is the right time, and prefers the request that I should supply it. I am quite prepared to furnish the information to the hon. gentleman now. We propose to dissolve Parliament as soon as that step can be conveniently taken. The exact date is a matter that is not entirely within my control, as the hon. gentleman must understand. It depends to some extent upon the action of Parliament. Assuming, however, that the Supply Bill necessary to cover the interregnum occasioned by the elections is passed with reasonable despatch, it is contemplated to dissolve Parliament during the ensuing week, in order that the writs may be got out at latest during next week, as early as possible during the week, I hope; and hon. members might have gathered, from the nature of His Excellency's message read by Mr. Speaker at the beginning of this sitting, information which would have guided them to the conclusion that the period during which the elections will take place will be as brief as it is possible to make it, having regard, of course, to the requirements of the law in respect of sufficient notice being given for even the remoter constituencies. We propose to ask for two months' Supply. [Mr. J. LEAHY: That is reasonable enough.] That will carry us over the months of July and August, and it will impose upon the new Parliament the duty of obtaining

[*Mr. Watson.*

further Supply before the end of September. That is cutting it as close as it is safe to cut it. Indeed, I think that we are taking some little risk in being content with a request for two months' Supply. It has always appeared to me that it would have been an act of greater consideration to hon. gentlemen opposite if we had ventured to ask for three months' Supply, because, assuming the possibility of a new Government being the result of the coming general election—the opportunity of forming a Ministry and meeting the House—the length of time at the disposal of the new Premier will be extremely limited. That argument will not apply so much in the case of the present Government, assuming the result of the elections should be no alteration in the position of parties in the House. The advantage, therefore, of granting three months' Supplies would be with the party opposite. However, taking the experience of the last general election as a guide, we find that it will be possible to poll the constituencies and to have the writs returned and the new Parliament summoned in time to get the necessary Supplies passed before the end of September. That is the course we propose to recommend to the House. Now, what happened at the last general election was this: The writs were issued on 5th February, the nominations took place on dates ranging from 15th February to 7th March, and the polling took place on 11th March, all the electorates being polled on the same day. The writs were ordered for return by 10th April. Those dates covered a period of two months and five days. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: The House was not sitting then, and men were able to go to their constituencies two months before February.] The hon. member for Cook will see that I am not dealing with reasons now. I am simply dealing with facts. We propose, if possible—as I have already intimated to the House—to have the writs ready for issue next week. The dates of the nominations have not yet been fixed, but they will probably be in groups, following the course of the last general election. The present proposal is to take the polls on 27th August, and allow until 17th September for the return of the writs: That will occupy rather less than two months—one week less than was occupied during the preceding general election; and, remembering that under the law we can expedite the return of certain writs, if it is necessary to do so, by telegraph, it will admit of the new Parliament being called together by the middle of September, and afford a new Government sufficient time to form, meet the House, and obtain Supplies before the end of September. I think hon. members will see that, while we are endeavouring to give sufficient time even for the remotest constituencies, we are also endeavouring to circumscribe the interregnum as much as possible; and I think the House generally will agree that the proposed arrangements are probably the best that can be suggested under the circumstances. At any rate, that is the view that Ministers take of the dates I have mentioned, and I think they will commend themselves to hon. members on both sides of the House. [Government members: Hear, hear!] However, if there are reasons for altering any of the suggested dates, I am quite prepared to listen to them and to meet them if possible. It will be recognised, of course, that the cases of such remote electorates as Cook, Carpentaria, Gregory, and Bulloo govern the situation to a large extent. It is desirable to remember, as the member for Cook has pointed out, that the circumstances in the present case are somewhat different to the circumstances connected with an ordinary general election. In the case of an

ordinary general election the House is in recess, and hon. members, anticipating a dissolution, have already got to their constituencies, and are ready for the fray. In the present case, hon. members are assembled in the discharge of their duties, and it will be necessary for them to get back to their constituencies—some of them in remote parts of the country—carry on their campaign, and get back to the House when it is called together. The situation, therefore, is not altogether analogous to the case of a dissolution following the expiry of Parliament by effluxion of time. I think the dates I have suggested will be admitted to be probably the best that could be suggested in view of the fact that we propose to ask the House for only two months' Supplies. If the dates suggested are not sufficiently long—if the time allowed is not sufficiently long, it will be necessary to ask for a larger vote. I think, however, the House may accept the assurance that the matter having been considered, there is no reason to anticipate any difficulty in polling the constituencies within the time named, and calling the new Parliament together sufficiently early in September to allow the new Government, which may be the outcome of the elections, to obtain the necessary Supplies before the money is actually required. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!]

Mr. J. LEAHY (*Bulloo*): I was very pleased to hear the Premier make the remarks he did just now when he assured the House he would be guided to a large extent, if not entirely, by any further evidence that could be put before him as to anything that would be beneficial in the conduct of the elections. I think that was a very proper stand to take. I agree in the main with what he has said on this question, but I think there is one feature of it which requires some explanation, and which he should reconsider, and that is the time which is given between the date of the election and the return of the writs. If I followed him rightly, the date of the nomination is to be 7th August, and the date of polling 27th of August, and the return of the writ 17th September. That is three weeks for the return of the writ. There is no part of this State that requires three weeks for the return of a writ. A fortnight would be ample for that. [The TREASURER: It requires time for the returning officer to get the ballot-papers in from distant polling-places.] If necessary, the returning officer can forward the writ by telegram. [The PREMIER: But time is required to get the voting-papers from outlying polling-places to the central polling-place.] [Mr. FORSYTH: That can be done in a fortnight.] [The PREMIER: We have to provide for a maximum period.] I think it desirable that a reasonable time should be given after the nominations for members to go among their constituents and canvas the electorates, giving them an opportunity of explaining their views, but I see no reason why two or three weeks should be wasted before the nomination takes place. Every district is pretty well organised. They know exactly who the candidates will be; and if there is time to be given at all, it should be after the candidates are chosen. The time should be given there, and about three weeks is proposed. I think that is a fair time. [The PREMIER: Some of the candidates are on the spot now, and some are in the House.] Well, I do not know that a candidate does not gain by being in this House rather than on the spot. I think, in the interests of fair electioneering, in the interests of politics generally, and in the interests of the country, there should be as little interference by members before an election as possible. It is no use going before the electors if they have not already made up their

Mr. J. Leahy.]

minds, and when they have made up their minds some members go along and tell them a one-sided story. I notice the hon. member for Clermont looking at me, and although I was not thinking of him at the time, I have no hesitation in saying that he is a master at that sort of business. I do not think because members are in this House now that is any reason why such a long period should be allowed before the nominations. Last session was an absolutely barren session. This session is going to be barren also. If we are going to do any work at all this year we must get back to this House as soon as possible. I am anxious that the country should get every reasonable opportunity, and as long a time as is necessary, to give a chance of selecting candidates; but no time should be wasted. At the last general election only about three weeks were given for the nominations and the elections, although there was certainly about a month given for the return of the writs. But that was because the Government did not intend to meet the House before July, which has been about the ordinary time of meeting, until lately. The elections were held in March, and there was no reason why returning officers should not be given until May for the return of the writs. I contend that the writs on this occasion should be returned as quickly as possible. I think they should be returned by the 10th. [THE PREMIER: We have cut down the time from thirty to twenty days.] But what was done at the last general election is no criterion. Time is an object now. We want to get to business, and the sooner we get back the better. With the exception of two or three, all the writs can get back in ten days, and there is a provision in the statute for enabling the result of the elections to be wired down. Every time this House meets it costs about £400. Surely, therefore, 2s. or 3s. might be spent in the return of the writs. I hope the Premier will take into consideration the urgent necessity—the absolute necessity—of having the writs returned as soon as possible, and if we can only reduce the time by one day, then let us reduce it. I think the hon. gentleman might very fairly consider whether the time for the return of the writs could not be cut down to the 10th September. That will allow a fortnight, and I am quite certain that every one can be returned in a fortnight; and if they cannot, then there is a provision made by which the returns can be wired down. As I said before, it costs £400 a day every time this House meets; when we sit three days a week that amounts to £1,200, and I do not think that the work done during the

[4 p.m.] present session warrants that expense. I would ask the Premier to make the return of the writs as early as possible, and I trust that he will accept the assurance of the leader on this side that he will be afforded every legitimate assistance, and that there will be no long debate during the first stages of this Supply Bill. I do not think that this should be made a question of party politics at all, and I again suggest that the 10th September should be made the date for the return of the writs.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*): If the election takes place on the 27th August, that would not allow many members representing outside constituencies time to visit their constituents. I think it would be far better to postpone the election for an additional week—to be held on the 2nd September, and the writs returned on the 17th September. Then the returns of writs for outside electorates could be sent by wire.

HON. R. PHILIP: I have no wish to protract the debate, but I think a certain section of the people object to the proposition of holding the election on a Saturday. The same objection has

been taken in New South Wales, and I think some consideration should be shown to those who take that view. However, the matter is entirely in the hands of the Ministry, and if they wish to ride rough-shod over the electors, they can do so. [Government members: Oh, oh!] (Laughter.) I contend that they should consider the feelings of everyone in this matter. [An honourable member: Have it on Sunday.] If there was an election on a Sunday, I would not vote, and I appeal to the Premier to consider the feelings of the smallest as well as the biggest portions of the community. There is nothing to prevent people voting on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. It does not take a whole afternoon to vote. A man can record his vote in five minutes, but some people like to congregate round the booths and howl at those who go to vote. I have seen numbers of people gather round the booths at 5 o'clock and afterwards; their feelings have overcome them, and evil results often occur from holding elections on a Saturday, especially in large towns. In Charters Towers the half-holiday is on Thursday, not Saturday, and why could not the election be held on that day? [MR. DUNSFORD: Saturday is the miners' half-holiday, and that is the most suitable for them to vote.] I hope the Premier will reconsider the matter, and not have the election held on a Saturday.

Question put and passed.

JOINT COMMITTEES.

COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council inviting the concurrence of the Assembly in a resolution to the effect that the Buildings, Refreshment-rooms, and Library Committees should continue their functions during the recess.

The PREMIER moved that a message be returned to the Legislative Council intimating the concurrence of the Assembly in their resolution.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*): I beg to move that you, Sir, do now leave the chair, and that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

* HON. SIR A. RUTLEDGE: I do not know that very much time will be taken up by members on this side of the House in discussing the various motions to be submitted, exclusive of the present one, for the purpose of enabling the Government to obtain Supply, but there are two or three matters that I intend to refer to. I think we have a right to question the sincerity of the Government with regard to the proposition to reduce the number of members of this House. There is something amounting very nearly to unanimity in the constituencies as to the desirableness of reducing the burden which is at present borne by the taxpayer, imposed by the very large amount of representation which various constituencies enjoy in this House. [MR. KERR: Are you speaking for your own constituency?] I am expressing an opinion which is held in the constituency I represent. [MR. KERR: No, you don't.] I say that, although the hon. member and his friend sitting on his right have been there quite recently, engaged in the propagandist business which causes him so much delight, and in which, I regret to say, he does not take care to adhere to strict accuracy in the statements he makes,

[*Mr. J. Leahy.*]

when he undertakes his peregrinations, for the purpose of persuading the people that their political saviour is the Labour party. I have no objection to himself and his friends carrying on their operations if they would at all times adhere to facts, and not indulge in so much romancing, as characterised those two gentlemen in particular. I say the country has a right to expect something from the Government which is definite in connection with the reduction of the number of members of this House. Of course, when we were in an isolated condition, as the other States also were before federation was established, there was a justification for the number being retained at seventy-two, but since the establishment of federation it has been felt throughout all Australia that the strength of the Parliaments which existed before the establishment of federation is no longer necessary, and several important States have taken care to effect a substantial reduction of the amount of taxation on the people by reducing the membership of their respective Legislative Assemblies. This thing has been done in South Australia. It has been done without any roundabout proceedings which can be instituted if a Government desires to shelve the question, or to put off the evil day by postponing it to some indefinite time in the future. South Australia did this in a very brief time indeed, and without the clumsy, cumbersome, and unsatisfactory process of a referendum. [The TREASURER: They did it by accident.] They have often done things apparently by accident in South Australia, but the accident in this case, as in others, was the product of deliberate intention. Just to mention one instance of how they do things by accident in that State, I think some hon. members of the Legislature of South Australia, who were visiting Queensland not long ago, expressed surprise at our roundabout way of moving motions of censure. They said, "We have a much more expeditious way of doing this sort of thing. As, for example, when the Government propose that this House do now adjourn, or some other innocent motion of that sort is submitted, we simply negative the proposal, thereby taking the business of the Government out of their hands, and the Government retire and their successors are called upon to assume office." That is what they do in South Australia. If the hon. member says the number of members in the Assembly of South Australia was reduced by accident, I say it was done as much by design as by accident. The only accident in the matter was probably that the favourable opportunity occurred sooner than it was expected. Victoria also reduced very materially the membership of her Legislative Assembly. The same thing is about to take place in New South Wales. We know that there was a referendum there, but that, we all know, was due to peculiar circumstances, which also obtain to a large extent in this House at the present time. The Government of New South Wales held office by the toleration of a large section of politicians who had a powerful representation in the Assembly, and the Government there adopted the roundabout process of a referendum under the same pressure as is being experienced by the present Government in Queensland. I regard this method of arriving at the decision of the constituencies on this question as being a clever method of evading the real question itself. We were returned to this House, many of us, pledged to support a motion for the reduction of members. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] That was a cardinal feature of the policy of my hon. friend, the member for Townsville, who was leader of the Government when we went to the country nearly two and a-half years ago. He declared, as part of the policy which he then put before the country, that there should be, as

soon as possible, a reduction in the number of members of the Assembly, and the hon. member was returned to power by a very large majority of the people of the country. Why, then, should there be a necessity for going through the stupendous farce—for I can designate it by no milder term—of appealing to the people by way of a referendum to know whether there shall be a reduction in the number of members of this Chamber? The fallacy of the arguments that are being used in support of this proposal is absolutely so conspicuous that a schoolboy could see through it and expose it. What is to prevent the Government, if they are really in earnest in this matter—what is to prevent the Government now, as they have delayed so long dealing with this question, before the close of the present session, from passing a Bill providing for a referendum—[The PREMIER: That comes very nicely from you.]—which they could pass in this House in half an hour? We should be quite willing to give them the same facilities for passing that Bill as we are affording them for passing the Supply which is asked for in this emergency. We could pass the Bill in half an hour in this Chamber, and I am satisfied that the other Chamber would not delay its passage. Now, they could pass a Bill of that sort, and make the question one to be submitted to the electors at the forthcoming election. Why could they not do that? But no; that is not what they propose to do. What they propose to do is to have a general election as if the question of a reduction in the number of members of the Assembly had never been mentioned by anybody—to let it drop into oblivion, to keep it in the dark, and then by and by, when the new House assembles, if the present Government should still keep in power, pass a Bill to refer the matter to the people some time at the end of the new Parliament, and then some six or seven years afterwards there may be a chance of a reduction in the number of members. I spoke a while ago of two hon. members who had been to my electorate, like the busybodies they are, always intruding into other men's domains. I do not blame them for doing so; it is a free country, and they have a right to go where they like. But what did those hon. members tell the people they addressed at Roma a few weeks ago? They used all sorts of arguments to show that under no circumstances whatever should there be a reduction in the number of members of this Chamber. They addressed specious arguments to the people up there, as if they were a lot of country bumpkins who did not understand what the necessities of the country were. They said, "Oh, if you have a reduction in the number of members, it means that the country constituencies will suffer—[Opposition members: Hear, hear!]-and that Brisbane will get the benefit," thus raising the cry of the metropolis *versus* the country, and practically ignoring all their past professions with regard to the equality of man. I always thought that those persons believed in the representation of human beings; but when they go into the country they talk about the representation of territory—of sheep and cattle. What has become of the arguments used by those hon. members with regard to the equality of man? They have no hesitation in declaring that a man living in Brisbane who has thousands of pounds' worth of property, and who employs hundreds of persons who are dependent upon him for a livelihood—they have no hesitation in proclaiming with a loud voice at every street corner that this man is no better than the loafer who begs a sixpence from him—[Government members: No, no!]-and that the one man has the right to an equal share in the government of the country with the other man

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They say that all men are equal. That is their doctrine here, but when they go down to the country districts and want to throw dust in the eyes of the people—they pay them the doubtful compliment of supposing that they are so simple-minded as that they cannot see through their specious arguments—they virtually claim that human beings are not to be represented, but territory, sheep, and cattle are also to be represented. [Mr. DUNSFORD: Another booby.] These hon. members do not like to have their inconsistencies exposed in this way. I say that we have a right to have from the Government something more than a mere empty promise that some day or other they will bring in a Bill for referring the question of the reduction of members to the people. We have a right to have had a Bill passed fixing the number of members that there should be representing the people in this Chamber. Or, if they were afraid of that, here is a convenient opportunity provided for them by the circumstances that have unexpectedly arisen in this Chamber, to pass a Bill and have the thing decided by the electors straight away. They say we are opposed to their policy. I say we are entirely opposed to a policy which savours so much of—I say it without any personal disrespect to hon. members sitting opposite—what I should call a policy of shuffle. (Government laughter.) They are in a different position. I dare say if we knew what the private opinions of some hon. members of the Government are—and we should not be long in arriving at the private opinions entertained by them—we should find that they believe there ought to be a reduction in the number of members. But they are in the hands of their Labour masters. (Government laughter.) They dare not. [Mr. COWAP: And your masters, too.] This is just like a deal more we shall have by and by. I am not condemning hon. members of the Labour party for holding their views. They are perfectly entitled to hold them, as I have a right to hold mine; but I have a supreme objection to see an hon. gentleman sitting there at the head of the Government who is not the master of his position. (Government laughter.) He is like a toy figure, obliged to dance as other people pull the strings, and that is the position he is in with regard to this matter. Why has he not the courage of his opinions? We know what his opinions are upon this subject. If there was a sincere desire to promote the best interests of the country in this way, we should have something like a Bill to refer this question to the electors straight away. The hon. gentleman made a great ado some short time ago when he was speaking in this Chamber upon the subject of the amendment to the Address in Reply. He said that the opposition shown in the amendment on the Address in Reply was not because the Opposition disbelieved in the administration of the Government during the recess, but because they wanted to evade the question with regard to what he euphemistically calls in scnorous tones “electoral reform.” We may have our own ideas as to whether all the electoral proposals that are promised to be submitted by the Premier partake of anything in the nature of reform. We know that they imply a good deal of electoral change in one sense or another, but whether they are all actually reform in the highest and best sense I, for one, take leave to seriously doubt. The hon. gentleman knows very well that if the Opposition had been so opposed to this question of electoral reform they could have postponed their opposition, which took the form of an amendment, to a few weeks later on. The electoral reform so called was the first thing placed upon the paper—was the first thing to be forced down the throats of members of this Assembly by the majority which the hon. gentleman then had—and if we had resisted the

electoral reform which would be submitted in due course, we should only have had to wait a few weeks longer, and the same result would have followed as followed in the case of the amendment which was moved, and in the division which was so disastrous to the prestige of the Government. We could then have expressed our opinions upon that, and we should have been just probably where we are to-day, so that there is not much ground for a grievance on the part of the hon. gentleman, or justification for his saying that we took the opportunity of expressing our opposition to his electoral reform measure so called, by moving an amendment which was moved, censuring them for their administration. There is nothing at all in that contention. We were quite prepared to deal with electoral reform when it came up. We should have had to wait only a few weeks longer before being called upon to deal with it, so that the matter was as broad as it was long. But now what do we find? That the Government are now going to the constituencies after having been virtually censured for their administration during the recess—to appeal to the people to be returned, not because they were good boys in the past in the matter of the administration, but because the Opposition are naughty boys, who do not want anything in the shape of electoral reform. I say that we do want electoral reform. We want electoral reform to take this shape first and foremost—that the number of members of this House shall be reduced, and that the people of this country shall be saved from a burden of taxation to the extent of £5,000 to £7,000 per annum. We are in a position to make a saving of that amount in the expenditure of the revenue of this country by an immediate reduction in the number of members of this House. [The PREMIER: Even the Opposition bench is not agreed upon that point.] I do not suppose you will find absolute agreement on any subject whatever. [Dr. GARDE: The majority are agreed.] There has not been a formal expression of opinion on the part of hon. members constituting the Opposition; but if I am in a position to speak for them, I can only repeat what was so well said by my hon. friend, the member for Townsville, when he declared that as a body we were in favour of it. He himself as the leader of the party was strongly in favour of it, and the Bills were actually in print to give effect to his views, and would have been carried without difficulty had the situation remained as it was before September last. Had we been allowed to go on with our reform, which was genuine reform—(Government laughter)—and not assumed reform. Had we been allowed to go on with this, we should have had a very different state of things in Queensland from what we have at the present time. [Mr. KERR: Stage thunder.] There is no one who is such an adept at stage thunder as the hon. member for Barcoo, only there is no lightning associated with his thunder. I like to have a little lightning associated with mine. I do not wish to discuss the financial questions, which I am hardly competent to discuss in the way they ought to be treated. My hon. friends who sit over here—the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Cribb, who was formerly Treasurer, and my hon. friend, the member for Townsville—will no doubt have something to say with regard to the financial condition of Queensland, and what the duty of the Government is in connection with that financial condition. What is the fact? I say, in all seriousness, that the Government, in adopting the course they have followed in retiring from the position which they held as the controllers of the business of this House—they retired from the position they occupied, and could have continued without challenge to occupy if they were determined to use that position for the benefit of the people of the

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country in providing for them those facilities which are necessary in order to enable them to secure the greatest advantages from their occupation of the land, and so forth—they have shown a disposition to subordinate the best interests of the people of the country to the political necessities and prejudices of hon. gentlemen who sit behind them, and with whom they are temporarily associated. It is a very poor kind of policy indeed. As has been so eloquently said by the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Dalrymple, the people did not want votes, they wanted victuals.

[4.30 p.m.] When they were asking for bread, the hon. gentleman was offering them a stone. "Never mind the fact that you are not able to get your produce to market! Never mind the fact that there are difficulties in connection with securing an adequate return for your labours on the land! We are going to give you votes, and that will compensate for everything." I read a paragraph in either yesterday's or this morning's *Courier*. I think it was a telegram which came from Rockhampton, and anything that comes from Rockhampton, I suppose, is to be received with profound respect. We are not supposed to challenge anything that comes from Rockhampton, and I think this piece of news came from Rockhampton. It said that Mr. Thomson, the butter expert, had been there and had expressed the deliberate view that no less than £30,000 had been lost last year by reason of the defective condition of the butter that was shipped from want of proper facilities enabling those who get their living by raising cream and supplying creameries to obtain an adequate return from their labour. [THE PREMIER: What about the very large sum which was lost because people would not brand their cattle in the right place?] This expert, who was going to accomplish such wonders—as we all hoped and believed he would—and who, I see, is now leaving us in absolute disgust, says that £30,000 was lost last year; and what do we find? I hoped that the Secretary for Agriculture would see, above all things, before going into this miserable business of meddling with the electoral system of the country at the present time, that he would have endeavoured to do away with every impediment in the way of our dairymen securing the best return for their toil; and that that would have been assured to them before a single step forward in any other direction was taken. [THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You will get that before the New Year.] We will get it "in the sweet by and by." [THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In the near by and by.] But we are asked to waste all this precious time while twice £30,000 may soon be wasted. [THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is all problematical.] I have the statement of the expert with regard to what has been lost. [THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have the newspaper report.] Here is legislation waiting, and that ought to have been passed by this House to help these unfortunate people in their trouble, and everything is to go by the board that a certain section of the people may secure political ascendancy. [THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That Bill will be on the statute-book just as early.] If the contemplation of that kind of thing pleases the Government it does not please me, and it does not please a great many others of those who are the best friends of the people of this country, whether they are working people or any other kind of people. [MR. DUNSFORD: It would have been through this session if you had not been on a rat-catching expedition.] I do not propose to take up any more time at this stage of the proceedings. I think, however, that the Government have a right to give us some information

before the vote is passed upon several important subjects. They have a right to give us information as to how they propose to deal with certain losses that have been and are likely to be incurred. We know that the Land Court has given several decisions lately, the result of which will be a loss of, I suppose, from £15,000 to £20,000 a year in our land revenue. That has to be made up somehow. Then there will be the loss occasioned by the expiration of the Special Retrenchment Act. I do not know what the intentions of the Government are on that subject. I suppose we will get some light upon it in the course of the discussion from the Treasurer as to whether the Government propose to put a period to the operations of that Act, which was only passed for two years, and was not intended by the previous Government to last a day beyond that. (Government laughter.) And I do not know whether the Government propose to do anything in the matter of the Income Tax Act. What are they going to do about that? [THE PREMIER: Has not the hon. gentleman read the Governor's Speech?] Yes; I have read the Governor's Speech, which indicated that the tax was to be reimposed with an alteration by which there should be certain exemption. That exemption means a loss, and I want to know how they are going to make up these several deficiencies. [THE PREMIER: The hon. gentleman might himself be charged with that duty.] It is very kind of the hon. gentleman to suggest the possibility of that; but, while he says it, I think he does not, in his heart, believe anything of the sort. [THE PREMIER: I am not sure. The House is going to the country, and the hon. gentleman might be the head of the new Government.] We all know that. We know all the possibilities that exist. [MR. TURNER: You know the probabilities, too.] [HON. R. PHILIP: They do not mean to do anything in regard to the Special Retrenchment Act.] I think I saw some indication the other day in the Press which led me to believe that the Government, after all, were going to try to dish the Opposition by forestalling them in the matter of the Special Retrenchment Act. They knew very well that it was the intention of the late Government not to renew the Act after it expired by effluxion of time. They think now that, because they are about to go to the country, it would be a good thing to anticipate the Opposition and try to make believe that "Codlin is the friend of the civil servant, not Short"—that they are the benefactors who are prepared to do such good things to the people who were reduced by from 10 to 15 per cent. two years ago. But I do not think those gentlemen, who have real grounds for grievance against the present Government, are going to be placated by any such hollow pretence as this. But, whatever may be the motive which actuated the Government in attempting to do this thing, it will become them to tell us how they propose to make good the deficiency which will be created of £30,000 or £90,000 per annum by permitting this Act to expire. How do they propose to make up this deficiency? How do they propose to make up the deficiency of £15,000 or £20,000 in the land revenue? How do they propose to make good the loss that will ensue from their proposed alteration in the income tax, and what are they going to do in other respects? All these things that will happen during the present year, will make up, together with the deficit of £25,000 which existed at the end of the financial year, a deficit of between £200,000 and £300,000. Not to speak of what may be lost by the amendment of the Income Tax Act, and I do not know how they are going to make provision for that. But this is all a secondary consideration now.

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"Let the finances take care of themselves; we are going to give the people votes," say the Government. [Mr. LESINA: Both votes and victuals.] I do not know where the victuals are to come from. It is appalling at the present time to contemplate the state of things existing in this city and elsewhere by reason of the withdrawal of capital which used to flow in regularly here for purposes of investment. Walk up and down Queen street and you will see thirty or forty shops, that used always to be let and doing good business, empty. Go to South Brisbane, and in the principal street it is melancholy to contemplate the existence of an even worse state of things. People are now pressed for £1 who formerly were always in possession of sufficient money for their reasonable requirements. It is only those who come in contact with business men, and who look beneath the surface, who are aware of the actual appalling state of affairs. I ask, To what are we to attribute it? To the same set of facts which is influencing capitalists in Great Britain and elsewhere from investing their money. One of the first things with which we are threatened by the Labour party is a land tax. [Mr. LESINA: They have it in other States.] It is the fact of the existence of socialistic legislation which is driving away those men who are in possession of capital, and whom hon. members opposite refer to by the opprobrious term of "boulders," the meaning of which I do not understand. This is not a matter for amusement. It is a matter for very serious consideration on the part of every man who has the welfare of this State of Queensland at heart. Until confidence is restored, until something is attempted by the Government beyond the plan of increasing the number of adherents of that policy which believes in hunting capital out of the country—until we have an entirely different condition of things we shall never have a contented and prosperous people in Queensland. I know what is going on. Every day I pass by groups of men at the street corners idle and unemployed. When hon. members sitting on this front bench constituted the Government of the country, these same men were harangued every day opposite the Treasury Buildings by interested parties put up to the job, who told them that the then Government were bringing about a condition of things which resulted in their want of employment and consequent starvation. Now these same men are discreetly kept silent. They are under the whip also, and instead of deputations now gathering at the Treasury Buildings and marching up to Parliament House to cheer somebody on the balcony who goes out to receive their homage, and who is supposed to be their true friend, these people are now told to be quiet. The Government are trying in this way to prevent the idea getting abroad, which ought to be made as public as possible, that there are large numbers of unemployed in the city of Brisbane and elsewhere whose want of employment is due to the fatuous policy pursued by the present Government. [The PREMIER: They are being absorbed.] They cannot be absorbed if the only method with that object in view is the method adopted by the Government. What is their method of absorption? What is the method of the Treasurer—the gentleman who is so conspicuous in his efforts in the Cabinet, who takes such an important part in controlling the affairs of the country, and who generally contrives to have the Premier agreeing with him in his proposals whether that hon. gentleman finds them palatable or not? The Treasurer at Rockhampton marshalled the unemployed and sent them into the interior to do some kind of work which is of absolutely no use, and paid them at the munificent rate of 11s. a week. [The

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TRASURER: And you kept them in idleness.] Let the unemployed take note of this: The present Treasurer, who professes to believe that every man is entitled to a minimum wage, is the author of a system by which these unfortunate men are obliged to go out and do work, which is of no benefit to the country, at the remunerative rate of 11s. a week. These are the gentlemen who believe in the voice of the people. [Mr. LESINA: You spent £28,000 in five years on your legal pals.] I am glad the hon. gentleman has mentioned that matter, which I will refer to before I sit down. The Treasurer is a man who believes that every man is entitled to a minimum wage, and yet he is content to send these men to earn 11s. a week; and when they remonstrate with him and give reasons why better treatment should be meted out to them, he tells them that he is not going to be "bounced." I could understand that in a great capitalist—a man who did not believe in Demos—but I cannot understand it in a gentleman with the pretensions of the Treasurer. Now, with reference to the remark made concerning myself by the hon. member for Clermont. The hon. gentleman has industriously circulated statements with regard to me which he pretended to base upon a return laid on the table of the House at the instance of the hon. member for Burke. How he could promulgate such astonishing statements as he has made I am at a loss to understand. The hon. member has repeated these assertions here, and I am thankful to him for giving me an opportunity of dealing with them. He says I gave £28,000 away while Attorney-General to my needy legal friends. He has circulated that in the country, and he has also said in this House that I myself pocketed fees during five years to the extent of £11,000. Well, the statement was so monstrous that I could hardly credit the hon. member with being serious when I first heard it. What are the facts? I want these facts circulated as widely as the hon. gentleman's statements, which are not facts. [Mr. LESINA: I count your salary, you know.] The hon. gentleman has no more right to count my salary than his own. The hon. gentleman follows a profession outside this House, and would I be guilty of saying that besides the £300 a year which he receives here, he had taken from the country the amount of the income which he receives from his profession? Would I be justified in saying anything of that sort? It would be monstrous perversion if I were to make such a statement. Now, the hon. member for Burke got a return laid on the table of this House, which showed this: that in the seven financial years mentioned—not five years, as the hon. member for Clermont said—but in those seven financial years I received £4,255 in fees; but he took care not to tell the House, and he did not tell the people of the country, in the publication in which that statement was made, that out of those seven years there were two years during which I was not a member of this House at all; and that for those two years alone, when I was not a member of the Assembly, I received more than half of the whole amount I received in those seven years. The return shows that I received during the period of five years after I became Attorney-General less than I received in two years previously, when I was not a member of Parliament at all. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. LESINA: I said you had received it for some time. I can give the exact words.] I heard the hon. member say it twice myself: and if I had the opportunity to quote from previous *Hansards*, I could quote the hon. member's own words; but I am relying on the statements he has circulated all over the country, and I have heard the hon. member repeat on several occasions that I

received £11,000 in fees in five years. [Mr. LESINA: I said fees and salary.] That was the statement that was made—the statement contained in a document which circulates by thousands throughout the country—that I had received £11,000 in fees in five years—the actual fact being that I received altogether in seven years some £4,000, more than half of which was paid to me for work done when I was not a member of this House at all. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] So much for that. Now, with regard to the £28,000 which the hon. member referred to as having been given by me to my needy legal friends, it is true that in seven years there was a total of £28,000 spent; but what is the fact? The fact is, as the return shows, which the hon. member could have seen if he had looked at it, that the £28,000 was not money distributed amongst my needy legal friends, to whom the hon. member made sneering reference; but it was distributed for work done by fifty-five different barristers and eighty different firms of solicitors, practising in all parts of Queensland—Northern, Central, and Southern Queensland. He also omitted to say that a great part of that £28,000 was returned to the Government in the shape of costs. Not a word about that from the hon. member. I am under an obligation to him for having given me this opportunity of refuting the statements he so industriously circulated throughout the country. I think I have said all that I intended to say, and I shall content myself with expressing the hope that during the forthcoming election the people upon whom the responsibility will devolve of selecting their representatives will not be led away by any false sentiment, but that they will look at the facts exactly as they are, and in view of that responsibility they will consider the best interests of the country and act accordingly. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. KERR: A good electioneering speech.]

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cool*): An hon. member has just remarked that the speech of the leader of this side was a good electioneering speech, and I agree with him. Every statement made by the hon. gentleman has evidently been considered by the other side, and not one of them has risen to reply. We know that the whole refrain of the present Government has been: "We have not had time." Ten months ago, one of their chief objects in getting into power—as they so asserted—was to introduce legislation which would put bread into the mouths of the unemployed, and that they were going to introduce progressive legislation. But directly they got into power, they at once said they would have no time, and that all they could do would be to pass two unimportant Bills introduced by their predecessors. To say that they had no time was utterly absurd, seeing that other Ministers before them came into power under similar circumstances, and brought down a policy, delivered Financial Statements, and brought down a number of Bills which were of the greatest public importance. The present Government promised that they would do a lot of things during the recess. They said they desired to reorganise the service; but instead of doing so, they employed a board of inquiry to do the work—a board which cost the country about £1,200, and the work of which board has been criticised very unfavourably indeed. It was a perfect farce. The Ministers simply sheltered themselves behind this board of inquiry, and there was a general system of re-trenchment and dismissals carried out. The Premier, before he got into office, said that he was in favour of a reduction of members, and he thought in the interests of economy that a Bill dealing with this matter should be passed. And yet,

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when we met this year, what did the hon. gentleman propose? A referendum, in order to carry on the matter for another year, and it has been calculated that that referendum would have cost twice as much as the salaries of members saved for one year. The Government had no intention of passing any progressive legislation. It was bruited about on platforms and elsewhere that the first thing they intended to do was to pass a one-man-one-vote Bill, on the same principle as the Commonwealth Act; but they believed it would not pass, and that they would go to the country. That showed that they had not the slightest intention of passing any measures of progressive legislation this year, and now they have the opportunity of going to the country without passing these measures, and therefore, if they are logical, they will come back again, and the first measure they will introduce will be the one-man-one-vote Bill, and if it does not pass, they will again go to the country. It is only logical to suppose that if they do this sort of thing once, they will do it again, and the result will be that there will be no more legislation for another year. It is perfectly true that capitalists have been deterred from coming to this country—wherever I have been I have heard that statement. Not long since I was told by Captain Robinson—a man well known on the Croydon mining field—that some English capitalists who had been keeping a mine going at Croydon, wired that on account of the socialistic tendencies and actions of the Labour party, they refused to pay any more calls, and the result is that the mine is now closed down and the miners are going about looking for work. [Mr. KERR: What is the name of the mine?] If the hon. member wants to know, it is the Golden Gate, and my authority is Captain

[5 p.m.] Robinson; and an hon. member alongside me heard the statement made, and can confirm it. That is an instance where our credit has been damaged in the money market, although the mine is still there, and as good as ever. We have another instance in the refusal by the Government of those conditions which were proposed by the capitalists on Chillagoe to make a line from there to Georgetown. They made a remarkably fair proposal which you would have thought any Government imbued with a desire to find employment for working men would have jumped at. They proposed to expend between £400,000 and £500,000 on the work, which would have employed 500 working men within a few months, and another £150,000 in developing the works. The Government knew perfectly well that not only would that give increased employment, but it would enable the smelters at Chillagoe to keep going, and induce the company, which had earned no dividends, and had spent from £150,000 to £500,000 in wages during the last few years, to keep going. What did they do? They rejected the offer, and the Treasurer simply laughed at it the other day, and made a very contemptuous remark implying that the Government would have nothing to do with it. The company were wiring at the time that if that were not done—if some encouragement were not given to them by enabling them to make a railway in order to get those ores from Georgetown to their smelters—they would have to close down the mine, which would result in from 600 to 800 men now getting 8s. to 10s. a day being thrown out of employment. To that the Government paid no attention, and the result will be that within the next month or two those men will be humping their swags all over the country looking for work, and it will be caused by the action of the present Government. Not only will those people suffer, but at least five times as many who are dependent upon them; for I recollect some months ago the secretary for the Broken Hill

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Company telling me that although only 3,000 or 4,000 men were actually engaged in mining, there were 30,000 men, women, and children living at Broken Hill. But, in addition to those, it will affect everybody living in the district, the sailors who are engaged in carrying the ore, and even the farmers in South Queensland, who supply the place with their produce. As the introduction of a Supply Bill is the time to make complaints, I will take the opportunity of doing so. I may premise by saying that some time ago I made certain statements in this House regarding Dr. Roth, the Northern Protector of Aborigines. I have never had any ill-feeling against that gentleman; in fact, I was prepossessed in his favour. But when I found my constituents, north, south, east, and west, making complaints about him, and when I investigated those complaints and found them correct, I thought that in the interests of my constituents it was my duty to protect them when I saw that they were unjustly treated. I consequently wrote a letter to the then official head of the department. Dr. Roth replied to the effect that my statements were untrue, and another letter was written by a subordinate of his also to the effect that those statements were untrue. But although those statements had been made for a long time—

[THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You must distinguish between representations made to me while I have been in office, and those made to my predecessor.] I am stating that although those letters had been a long time in existence, yet within a week or so after that hon. gentleman came into office, he placed those letters on the table imputing falsehood to myself. I then replied showing that I was justified in every statement, and showing that the allegations which Dr. Roth had made were utterly untrue, and that my statements were perfectly correct. I then asked the hon. gentleman would he table my letter. He refused. So here we have the spectacle of a member, in pursuance of his duty, making certain complaints against an officer; that officer replying untruthfully to those statements and charges; and a Minister opposed to that member placing that officer's letters on the table and having them printed and circulated in the Press, and then refusing to put that member's reply, in which he proved up to the hilt every statement he had made. To show that my letter rebuts every statement made by Dr. Roth, and justifies and exonerates me from his statements, I will read it to the House—

Brisbane, 13th June, 1904.

The Hon. the Minister for Lands, Brisbane.

Sir,—In a letter to you by Dr. Roth of 27th February, 1903, but only laid on the table of the House last Friday, he complains that I unjustly vilified his character in a parliamentary speech in October, 1902, accusing him of abusing his position as Protector of Aborigines by taking grossly indecent photographs of such a character as to render his retention in the service a disgrace to his chief.

Attached to his letter is one to him from Mr. Mobsby, Agricultural Photographer, accusing me of obtaining one of Dr. Roth's photographs from him, and not returning it according to promise. The letters of Dr. Roth and Mr. Mobsby are remarkable for their grotesque inconsistency and astounding disregard of logic and facts. It seems cruelly unnecessary for me to refute two letters which so effectively refute one another. How Dr. Roth came to write his letter with that of Mr. Mobsby before him is a conundrum that will severely strain the puzzle-solving capacity of Parliament and the public. Mr. Mobsby says that I obtained the photographs on the condition that I would return them; whereas he merely requested me not to mention where I got them, which request I observed. His earnest solicitude for their return can be appreciated in view of the fact that he voluntarily presented at least one well-known Queenslander with identical copies before I had ever heard of them. His explanation is also discounted by his subsequent statement that his reason for giving me the photographs placed in his charge by Dr. Roth was because I had told him the Under Secre-

tary for Agriculture had directed that he should—an excuse equally as absurd as his first, as the Under Secretary for Agriculture had no power to order him to dispose of Dr. Roth's property, and had no connection with Dr. Roth's department. Upon Dr. Roth's return to Brisbane, rumours were current of my intention to ask for an inquiry concerning him. Only then did Mr. Mobsby ask me to return the photographs, and promised duplicates in their stead, explaining that if he put the duplicates in Dr. Roth's collection Dr. Roth would detect it, as he had marks on those which were in my possession. A few days later, he again asked for the photographs, but on stating that I first wanted the duplicates promised, he replied that he could not find the negatives. This caused me to suspect the Dr. and himself of conspiring to regain the photographs for the purpose of destroying all evidence of their existence, and then swearing they had never been taken, and I refused to see him again. Mr. Mobsby says his reason for desiring the return of the photographs—he gave me two, not one—was that, in the language of his own letter, "they were not such as should get about." He also says their non-return caused him "great worry." He is here in an unusually unpleasant position. Dr. Roth in his letter says that identical copies of these pictures appeared in his book of "Ethnological Studies" published by the Government. That book appeared in 1897, and 400 copies were distributed, the book being for public sale at a guinea, so that Mr. Mobsby, in December, 1902, is in an hysterical state of alarm about the need of great secrecy with a picture of which Dr. Roth says copies had been in public circulation for five years. Dr. Roth steps at this stage into a worse position than Mr. Mobsby, whose case is sufficiently embarrassing. Dr. Roth asserts that these photographs appeared in his book of 1897, although the pictures in question were not taken until years after the book was published.

What is his position in face of the startling fact that no such photographs or anything resembling them ever appeared in his book, and are not likely to appear, as no lithographer or printer outside of a penal establishment would dare to either reproduce or print or describe them? Any Queensland judge would reward such an offence with imprisonment in St. Helena. And what becomes of Dr. Roth's anxiety about the secrecy and custody of these two pictures, of which, according to his own statement, 400 copies have been in circulation for five years? As Dr. Roth is forced to admit that he took the photographs shown by me, he says he is not ashamed of them. In that case, probably the nature of the picture that would cause Dr. Roth any feeling of shame is beyond the worst imagination in Port Said. He says they appeared in his book in 1897, in cool defiance of the fact that the statement is a deliberate fabrication. There certainly were indecent pictures in that book, but the worst of them were modest compared to those I am discussing. He states that the Prince of Wales was pleased to accept a copy. He forgets to mention that the indecent pictures were omitted from that particular number. In any case, the Prince probably never saw or heard of it, and, for the sake of Queensland, it is to be hoped he never will. Dr. Roth claims that his obscene pictures were taken in the interests of ethnological science, though knowing well that no ethnological society, and no respectable ethnologist in the world, deals in pictorial filth, a mere glance at which would be a cause of shame and disgust to any respectable man, leaving all types of womanhood out of the question. Knowing this to be his sole excuse, it was deemed well to submit the pictures to three absolutely impartial ethnologists for their private opinions.

The opinion of No. 1.—"Those pictures haunt me. They are terrible! Terrible!"

The opinion of No. 2.—"They are the most disgusting things I ever saw."

The opinion of No. 3.—"What manner of man took these? He ought to be in gaol."

And these would be the verdicts of the Queensland people and Press if the character of these pictures was proclaimed.

I have shown that Dr. Roth's own letter covers him with confusion, and that my statements in the House had a solid foundation. In conclusion, I repeat, with even more emphasis, that the man who deliberately grouped the subjects of those pictures and photographed them, is a disgrace to the Government service and to the State, and an inquiry, such as I have called for, will supply ample proof.

That a man, specially appointed to protect the helpless aboriginals, and guard both men and women from injustice and insult, has deliberately, for years, at Government expense, grossly abused his official powers in repeatedly violating the sense of shame and modesty of the women, and outraging the feelings of the men by specially arranged disgraceful photographs, is some

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thing so abhorrent that no nation, which values its own reputation and the fair fame of its civil service, can afford to pass it over without a full inquiry and stern justice to all concerned. There need be no wonder that aboriginals who know Dr. Roth dislike him, and that few of the Northern squatters will allow him inside their homes. The opinions of the police are unfit for publication.

Dr. Roth alludes to Queensland as "his adopted country." It seems specially unfortunate that some other country has not the doubtful honour of acting as his foster-mother, but to Queenslanders it will be some consolation to know that Hungary is responsible for his existence, and that Britain is mercifully free from any liability in the transaction.—I have, etc.,

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We are asked to vote a certain sum of money, but before doing so we should be perfectly satisfied that the money if going to be expended honestly in the interest of the State. If there is any doubt on that point, then the matter should be explained before any hon. member gives his vote in favour of granting Supply. In connection with the Glengallan Estate, we had from a member of the Ministry the other day a statement which the most simple-minded individual could not swallow. We were told that Queensland had saved £65,000 by the transaction, whereas it was abundantly clear to anyone who looked into the matter that instead of Queensland saving any money the State lost from £6,000 to £7,000. The Government were entitled to issue agricultural land debentures at par on their face value at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in payment for the land. Had they done that they could have used the money in the Treasury in buying Government loan debentures, which were at $9\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. We all know that Government debentures are far more valuable than agricultural land debentures, because the latter have only a local sale, and interest is only payable here, whereas interest on the former and principal as well are payable by the Bank of England in London as well as in Brisbane. We want to know who got that £6,000 or £7,000 which was lost to the State by the Glengallan Estate transaction. The other side have not been particular in making charges against this party in the past; but now, since they have had the opportunity of rifling the pigeon-holes in the public offices, they have not been able to bring forward one scintilla of justification for their charges. This thing gives me cause to refer to the purchase of an estate which was made previously. I have frequently heard remarks regarding the purchase of the North Toolburra Estate many years ago, but never could believe that they were true. [Hon. Sir A. RUTLEDGE: I object to this. What is the use of raking up ancient history?] I never attach any weight to a statement, such as I have heard, unless I have got some proof. Only last Friday some evidence was submitted to me, which I think it is my duty as a member to submit to this House, because it will justify me in refusing to vote for the granting of Supply, unless some explanation is offered. Probably an explanation can be offered, and probably some members may not look at it in the same light as I do. It was explained to me that the North Toolburra Estate was owned by a Mr. Coutts, and that the Joint Stock Bank had a lien on the property. I am informed that an arrangement was made between the bank manager and the hon. member for Warwick that the hon. member should receive 1 per cent. commission, provided he induced the Government to purchase that property. [Hon. Sir A. RUTLEDGE: I object to your making statements that can have no other effect than to stir up ill-feeling.] I am not consulting the hon. gentleman. There may be nothing in what I say—I may be mistaken in my information. If the statement made to me is untrue it can be contradicted, and I shall be glad to hear that it is untrue. At any rate, the

hon. member took action, he wrote about the matter, and asked questions in the House about it, and the Government bought the property, and the bank gave him a cheque for £219 as commission for having got the Government to buy the property. When the money was paid the residue was sent to Mr. Coutts, less £219, which had been paid to the hon. member; it was debited to Mr. Coutts, and he objected to pay it. I saw a letter from Mr. Morgan, which was also shown to me, where he wrote to Coutts, stating that it was a fair thing, and he was entitled to it. I have read a letter, which I am told is the hon. gentleman's. [Government members: Oh, oh!] [Mr. COWAP: Is this about Lizzie Johnson?] [Mr. LESINA: Lizzie Johnson wrote that letter.] I was shown a letter, which I am told is the letter which Mr. Morgan wrote to Mr. Coutts, stating that he considered he was entitled to 1 per cent. commission for having got the Government to buy that property. [The PREMIER: Do you state that you saw any such letter from me?] I was told that it was your letter—[Government members: Oh, oh!—and, moreover, several other hon. members saw it in this House at the same time. I had been told by several hon. members previously that they had seen the letter, but I would not believe it until I saw it. [Mr. COWAP: That was a collect telegram that you saw.] [Mr. COOPER: What Coutts was it?] Are you trying to forbid me expressing myself?

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member for Mitchell to refrain from interjecting while the hon. member for Cook is speaking.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: At any rate, Mr. Coutts then threatened to take action against the bank if that money was not returned to him, and I am informed by a man, whose name I shall bring forward if it is necessary, that the money was returned—that the manager of the bank saw Mr. Coutts, and that Mr. Morgan returned the money to Mr. Coutts. I think it is far better for me to make that statement in this House, so as to give the hon. gentleman an opportunity of contradicting it, rather than to let the statement go uncontradicted if it is not true. I think that is perfectly right and the proper way to do, instead of saying anything behind the hon. gentleman's back; and until two months ago, when I came back to the House, I said I would not believe it until the evidence was shown to me. [Mr. McDONNELL: You are a poor dirty tool.] There is not a dirtier tool in the House or in Queensland than the hon. member.

The SPEAKER: Order, order! I must ask the hon. member not to use such expressions, which are entirely unparliamentary.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: The hon. gentleman is known as the scavenger of the House.

The SPEAKER: I must tell the hon. members that such expressions as "dirty tool" and "scavenger" are unparliamentary, and must not be used.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: He ought to withdraw them.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I quite agree with you, Sir, but remarks like that cause similar remarks to be offered. I was not the aggressor. Similar matters have come up before in this House. For instance, I recollect that in Supply Mr. Griffith brought up this matter. He said—

Then it was said that other influence was brought to bear on the Minister for Lands; that, in fact, the offering of the land by auction was brought about by the intervention of a well-known firm in town of which a leading member of the Government was a member, and that by the intervention of that firm the land was offered at 10s. per acre.

[The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What year is this?] I am stating this. [The SECRETARY

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FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You ought to let us understand what year it is.] I will give it in my own time—

Where the scandal came in, if true, was the statement that that firm did not give their services gratuitously in the matter, but charged a brokerage of 2½ per cent. on the 10s. per acre, and that some of the purchasers declined to pay it. That was a scandal which should not go uncontradicted if it could be contradicted. It was said to be a singular thing that a Minister should be influenced by a brother Minister, and that the brother Minister should receive a brokerage for his services. He should be glad to hear the statement authoritatively contradicted.

Later on he said—

If the hon. gentleman could assure them, without declamation and without bad words, that a brokerage of 2½ per cent., or a smaller sum, was not charged or claimed for such services, it would go a great deal further than all the noise he had made. He only wished there was a good opportunity of investigating the matter, because it ought to be investigated. A statement of that kind ought to be ventilated, and he should be only too delighted to find that it had no foundation. He had not made the statement hurriedly, but he had exhausted every means in his power to ascertain if the statement was accurate.

Then there was a Select Committee formed. I have not used any hard words now. I have simply made a statement which I have heard fifty times during the last week, and it was my intention at the first opportunity to mention it in the House, and give the hon. gentleman an opportunity to contradict it. If he can contradict it, so much the better, and I shall be very pleased. Now, the hon. member for Rockhampton, who is so fond of attacking hon. members, who cannot let us speak without using some insulting language—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in using those words.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: At any rate, I should like to let the hon. member know as a further reason for my opposing this vote—unless something is done—I should like to let him know what the Ministerial organ thinks of him. It states—

You are little better than a confidence man who has obtained money or its equivalent from his fellow-citizens by methods certainly not more, probably less, moral than those resorted to by turf spiliers, such as three-card-trick, thimble-and-pea, and monte-men. I denounce you as dishonourable because, as I am prepared to prove, you have been guilty of commercial conspiracy or false pretences, or both, for which other men have been sent to jail, and for which, if you had your deserts, you would have done, and, perhaps, would still be doing time. . . . I will formulate this criminal charge against you in the following precise terms:—

1. You, Kidston, sold the Native Cat mine to a Brisbane company or syndicate.
2. One of the main conditions under which you sold the mine was that you should hand over to the purchasers *all* the reports on the mine in your possession.
3. This condition you deliberately evaded by suppressing or withholding the report of Government Geologist Gibbs Maitland on the Native Cat mine, made about a year before.
4. When the purchasers discovered that this Government Geologist's report had been suppressed they called on you for an explanation.
5. You admitted having suppressed the report, which, you further admitted, was condemnatory of the mine you had sold.
6. You, under threat of legal proceedings, admitted this much in two documents, respectively dated 6th December, 1895, and 2nd March, 1896.
7. That by the aforesaid suppression, amounting to false pretences, you got £5,000 in scrip, which you had to disgorge.

Part of your "plant" for "plucking" the public was a false plan submitted at the sale of the Native Cat mine, whereon it is made to appear that the reef struck in one shaft along the line of reef (real or fictitious)

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ran out, was struck again, which the Government Geologist's report—deliberately suppressed by you—shows to be a lie. Then, again, your reported returns of past crushings, submitted for the purpose of promoting the sale of the mine, are shown to have been false, on the strength of the Government Geologist's report, so dishonestly suppressed by you. To give you your due, you admitted, in writing, that you were virtually a liar, suppressing the truth in a commercial transaction with your fellow-citizens in order to overreach them, as you actually did for the time being.

Do you think that one in 10,000 of the taxpayers of Queensland know of your dishonest Native Cat doings? You know they do not. Therefore, I say that you occupy your present position under false pretences.

[Mr. TURNER: What is the date of that paper?]

[Mr. COWAP: Is that the *Hodgkinson Mining News* of 1878?] The date is 18th October of last year. If that had appeared in any [5.30 p.m.] other paper except the Government organ, I have no doubt—

[Mr. KERR: Now read the *Hodgkinson Miner*.] I am very glad the hon. member has given me this opportunity, because there is one man here, and that man has made references regarding myself during the last three or four years—regarding something that appeared in the *Hodgkinson Miner*. Therefore, I will now squelch that statement, and then I will make some comments on the gentleman who has commented on that. Some twenty-five years ago I flogged a man for traducing a lady, and I subsequently, as medical resident at the hospital, refused to allow his woman to enter the hospital. The visiting committee requested me to do it, and I said, "I will resign my position as hospital surgeon and give my reasons." I said that my objection was based on principle and not on personal grounds; but I would gratuitously attend her outside professionally. The honorary treasurer has made a declaration to that effect, and also that the man stated, "Never mind, I will square with him by and by." This man, and another man I had turned out for robbing me, induced a girl to make statements against my character—made, I may state, behind my back. But directly I was confronted by this girl, she admitted the statements were false, and she subsequently made a sworn affidavit before an enemy of mine, a magistrate, that she had been bribed to make those statements, and because this bribe was not paid, she admitted the truth. The Chief Secretary examined into the affair, and he stated that my honour as a gentleman and a man was clear, and there was no reason why I should not remain on the magistracy. I again wrote him and said, "I want a further inquiry." He said, "Your character is clear, you do not require any more, there is no imputation against your honour; I am satisfied there is not a particle of truth in the assertion," and I have got those letters. Now I say I think it is a creditable thing to me when I find that the only refuge any scoundrel has in attacking me, as he has attacked me, is because twenty-five years ago I flogged a man for traducing a lady, and he then bribed a girl to make a statement against me which she confessed on oath was false, and which the Chief Secretary stated he was satisfied was untrue, and that he thought I ought to remain on the magistracy. If I had kept my mother in a charitable asylum; if my mother had had to go to the police and beg for 5s. a week, and say I had kicked her out— [A Government member: Is that in order?—] because I had refused to keep her, then I would not be worthy of a position in the House. If my mother had made a worse charge against me—a charge I do not like to mention on account of the presence of people in the House—but a charge which should not be made against a man, then I would not be fit to hold a position in this

House. If I had made charges against member after member; if I had stated that one member had been guilty of keeping houses of ill-fame, and after that member denied it, if the reply was, "Well, I said so because he annoyed me," and if I repeated it again the next year, I would be looked upon as a miserable skunk. If I had been caught fossicking round another member's waste-paper basket, putting pieces of letters together, then I would have been considered a miserable skunk. If my whole life, during the time I had been here, was simply devoted to trying to drag members down to my abject level, then I would have been considered a skunk. But I am not the man who has done this, but I point to the hon. member for Clermont. He is the man.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is grossly out of order, and I must ask him to withdraw the statement.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: Unreservedly.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I withdraw the statement, but at the same time I am ready to put those depositions on the table.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw the statement unreservedly.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Since you, as Speaker, have requested me to withdraw the statements as they are unparliamentary, I beg to withdraw them.

The PREMIER: I desire to say a word by way of personal explanation. But first let me express my regret that a speech of the character of that which we have just listened to should ever have been delivered in the Queen-land Legislative Assembly. [Government members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. J. HAMILTON: Oh, oh!] It is a degradation, not only to the hon. member who has delivered it—[Mr. J. HAMILTON: Oh, oh!] [A Government member: That is impossible.]—but it is a matter that after all does not concern the hon. member alone. It is a speech which has been a degradation to the Assembly which has been compelled to listen to it. [Government members: Hear, hear!] I should say that there is probably only one member of this House who could be found to deliver such a speech, and that is the hon. member for Cook. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: Oh, oh!] [Mr. LESINA: John Hamilton Dunwoodie. Why don't you go under your right name?]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I shall not descend to the depths to which the hon. member has descended in his attack upon me, upon my colleague, and upon other members of this House. I think hon. members generally must have felt that, however much the hon. members assailed by the hon. member for Cook may or may not have been guilty of the offences charged against them by the hon. member, the worst of them was immeasurably his superior. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: Oh, oh!] [Government members: Hear, hear!] Now, Sir, the hon. member has made a charge against me, and I want to tell the hon. member that my hands are absolutely clean, and that they have ever been clean in my public life in this House. [Government members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. KERR: Can he say that?] And I want to tell the hon. member, and hon. members who have been encouraging the hon. member—[Mr. J. HAMILTON: No members have been encouraging me.]—to do the thing that he has done this afternoon—[Mr. J. HAMILTON: I will read Mr. Coutts's letter to-morrow.] The

hon. member has made a charge against me. The purport of that charge—it was not expressed—clearly was that I had asked for a bribe, or that I had received a bribe. Am I not putting the case clearly? [Mr. J. HAMILTON: Did you not write a letter asking for a commission?] Will the hon. member say "Yes" or "No" to my question as to whether I am not putting the case correctly—[Mr. J. HAMILTON: No; you are not.]—when I say that the only conclusion to be drawn from the hon. member's statement to this House was that I, as a member of Parliament, had asked for a bribe, or that I had received a bribe. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: Is that letter you wrote a forgery, or is it not?] Now, is that or is that not the position? I ask the hon. member again to say. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: No.] I ask the hon. member to say "Yea" or "Nay." [Mr. J. HAMILTON: Is that letter a forgery or not? Did you write to Coutts for a commission? Reply to that.] The hon. member does not reply. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: You will not reply.] I can only say that that is the only conclusion I can come to. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: Did you write that letter or not?]

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member for Cook to refrain from interjections. The hon. member has made grave charges against the Prime Minister, and he is replying to those charges.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: The hon. gentleman asked me a question, and I replied. He will not answer.

The PREMIER: I will answer the hon. gentleman. He need make no mistake about that. But I was trying to proceed by steps, and first to pin the hon. gentleman down to an expression of his meaning. He is not game to pledge himself to a statement whether or not the case as I have put it is a fair statement. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: There is my statement in *Hansard*.] I listened to the hon. gentleman silently; I beg him to try and restrain himself while I am answering him. The hon. gentleman's zeal for the honour and virtue of Parliament is particularly keen. Having delivered his charge, he might hold his peace while the accused person is making answer to the charge. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. J. HAMILTON: I asked a question.] The case stated to this House by the hon. member is perfectly clear, and I think hon. members will agree with me that the inference I draw from it is the only inference that can be drawn from the statement made. Now, I utterly repudiate the statement or suggestion that I asked for, have ever asked for, or ever received a bribe in any shape or form for any services I have ever rendered to anybody as a public man in this State. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: You received a commission. I did not call it a bribe. Answer that.] I am prepared to take my time, and prepared to answer the hon. member. It is perfectly true that when the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act was passed in this Parliament some years ago, I took an interest in its application on the Darling Downs. It is perfectly true that I wrote recommending the purchase of a number of estates in the vicinity of Warwick. It is perfectly true that North Toolburra was one of those estates, but it is absolutely untrue to suggest that the purchase of North Toolburra was due in any sense to any act on my part. When the members of the Land Board, as they were then called, came to Warwick to make an inspection of a number of estates that had been offered to the Government for sale under the Act, they called upon me and asked me for information with respect to three estates

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that were then under offer—Glengallan, North Toolburra, and Canning Downs. They desired to have my opinion. I said to the members of the board—I think it was Mr. Sword and Mr. Tully who were members at that time, speaking from memory, but it is ten years ago—I said to them that in my judgment the decision as to the estate with which experiment should first be made should be determined by the answers to the questions—first, as to the price; second, as to quality; third, as to the permanency of the water supply; and, fourth, as to the contiguity of the land to railway communication; and that in my judgment the estate which answered most of those questions in the affirmative should be the estate with which the experiment should be started. I had no hesitation in adding that in my opinion Canning Downs Estate was the best situated of all the estates in the vicinity of Warwick for close settlement. The Land Board, however, for reasons of their own, suggested the purchase of Glengallan and North Toolburra. It is perfectly true that I wrote a letter to Mr. Coutts, though not in the terms that the hon. member has endeavoured to convey to the House. The hon. member will not find in it anything of the kind that he intended to convey. I am perfectly certain. Now, for some time prior to the passage of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, probably for a year or two, the North Toolburra Estate was under an obligation to the Joint Stock Bank, and the manager at Warwick, being my oldest, and, perhaps, my dearest personal friend, had written me or spoken to me—I have forgotten which—telling me that if I found a purchaser for North Toolburra the bank would pay me a commission on the sale. This was two or three years or perhaps a little less, but it was certainly a year or two before the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act was passed by Parliament. He had said to me that if I found a purchaser for North Toolburra Estate the bank, the mortgagees, would pay me a commission on the sale of that estate. I may say that land values were pretty low on the Darling Downs then, and it was a very difficult matter to find a purchaser, and though I had never in my capacity up to that time, and indeed have never since, taken any part as a commission agent, I told Mr. Ross that, if I saw or heard of a purchaser in Brisbane, I would refer the prospective purchaser to him. It will be necessary for me to say, in order that the House may follow me closely, that Mr. Ross was the brother-in-law of Mr. Coutts, the owner of North Toolburra, and as far as I was aware at that time, they were on the closest terms of personal friendship. Later—a year or two or three later—the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act became law, and after it became law the Australian Joint Stock Bank wrote to me a letter, saying that, if I succeeded in getting the Government to purchase North Toolburra property, they would pay me a commission of 1 per cent. on its sale. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: That is what I say.] That is what the hon. gentleman said, but that is not all. [Mr. HAMILTON: You put words into my mouth.] I received such a letter from the bank, and the action I took upon that letter was to immediately inform Mr. Ross that I would consent to accept no commission on any sale to the Government of the State. [Mr. MAXWELL: Is that what the hon. member said?] That is not what the hon. member said, nor is it what he intended to convey. I informed Mr. Ross, personally, that under no circumstances could I consent to receive a commission upon the sale of that or any other estate to the Government of Queensland. With

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that it seemed to me that the matter was at rest. At any rate, it was at rest so far as any action I could take seemed necessary to put it at rest. A year or eighteen months later, the North Toolburra Estate, or a block of it, was purchased by the Government, and the next communication I had on the subject was a letter from the Joint Stock Bank enclosing me a cheque for something over £200 by way of payment of commission. With that cheque I immediately took this action: I cancelled the cheque at once, and but for circumstances of which I was not aware, I would have had the cheque here to confront the hon. member for Cook with. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: I explained that and the circumstances.] The hon. member's explanation! [Mr. J. HAMILTON: Yes.] I say I cancelled the cheque at once, and I would have had it here to confront the hon. member for Cook with, but for circumstances of which I was not aware at the time. But I am going a little ahead of my story, and I was induced to do so by the interjections of the hon. member for Cook. Before the letter containing the cheque reached me from the bank, I had an interview again with my friend, Mr. Ross, who called upon me and told me that part of the Toolburra Estate had been purchased by the Government, and the money that the bank promised me was available. I told him again that I could not consent to accept any money from the bank in respect to the sale of property to the Government; but Mr. Ross was particularly persistent in his view that I should accept the money, and he could see no wrong in making the suggestion he did make, and let me say this—[Mr. COOPER: Is he like the hon. member?] No: Mr. Ross was an entirely different man. Mr. Ross was a man whose integrity no man who knew him would have the slightest doubt about; but he took an extraordinary view of the position with regard to this matter, and could see nothing improper in urging me to accept payment of commission with regard to the sale of property to the Government, even although I was a member of Parliament. He persistently pressed me to accept the money, and so persistently did he press me, that I had repeatedly to tell him that I could not think of doing anything of the kind, and that I was surprised that he should make such a proposal. However, he pressed me persistently, and asked me to write to Mr. Coutts to come and see me about the matter. I could not understand his persistency at the time. I was extremely busy at the time in my office, and I wrote a note to Mr. Coutts, who was also a personal friend, and, as far as I can recollect, the note was couched in these terms:—"Dear Coutts,—Ross tells me that it was arranged that I was to receive commission at the rate of 1 per cent. on the sale of Toolburra. Will you come and see me about it?" That is my recollection of the note I wrote. [Mr. J. HAMILTON: The last words are not correct.] Perhaps not. I have not seen the note for ten years or thereabouts, and possibly my recollection with regard to the exact words may be defective, but I think it was, in substance, what I have indicated to the House. Now, I assumed, when I wrote that note asking Mr. Coutts to call upon me, that he would do so in a day or two, when I intended to tell him exactly what I had already told Mr. Ross, and that this matter would be ended. I thought that the matter was absolutely closed, but as a matter of fact what happened was this: Mr. Coutts did not come to see me, for some reason or other that I was not aware

of, but I must say that he used my note in an unjustifiable way. He gave it to someone who passed it on to the hon. member for Cook. It has got into the hands of the hon. member for Cook—[Mr. J. HAMILTON: There is another letter.]—that hon. member who is so concerned for the honour and purity of members of this House, and he has made use of it, as hon. members have heard this afternoon. The facts are as I have stated up to this point. I want hon. members to recollect, as a matter of simple justice to me, that when Mr. Ross made these proposals to me, when I had told him I could not accept this money, I thought the matter was closed; but subsequently Mr. Ross came to me, and pressed me so much to take it, that I wrote to Mr. Coutts in the terms I have stated. I was under the impression that Mr. Coutts, my personal friend, and Mr. Ross, my oldest and dearest friend, were on terms of personal friendship, but it subsequently turned out that, so far from being on terms of friendship, for some reason which I do not know, they had become bitter enemies for the time being; and Mr. Coutts, having got my letter—a perfectly innocent letter, written under the circumstances I have told the House—a letter perfectly compatible with the absolute freedom from the charge such as the hon. member for Cook attempts to impute to me. [Government members: Hear, hear!] I say that Mr. Coutts and Mr. Ross at that time were on terms of personal enmity, and I can only conclude that Mr. Coutts must have come to the conclusion that I was in league with his enemy, Mr. Ross, to rob him. Now, that was a perfectly unwarranted conclusion, that I would have removed in a moment had Mr. Coutts come to see me in response to my letter. He did not come, probably for the reason that he was under the impression that I was in league with Mr. Ross to rob him of the £200. But, as a matter of fact, there was absolutely no justification for any such conclusion on Mr. Coutts's part, and this explains two things. It explains his action in making use of that letter, and why it has led to its production here this afternoon by the hon. member for Cook; and it also explains why I have not the cancelled cheque here today. That cheque was subsequently made the subject of an action at law, and I gave it up for evidence purposes, and for evidence purposes only; and that fact probably explains why the cheque was sent to me in the first instance. Apparently the bank, having written a letter saying they were prepared to make a payment of commission to me, held themselves under a legal obligation to deduct that money from the payment to be made finally to Mr. Coutts in the adjustment of the account; and it explains why Mr. Ross, who, I believe, would be the last man in the world to do me a wrong, persisted so much in the matter, and suggested that I should ask Mr. Coutts to see me. When the House rose for dinner I was explaining, as far as I could deduce [7 p.m.] from the facts which subsequently came to my knowledge, that the reason why a cheque was sent to me was because a letter which had been written to me by the bank was probably regarded by their legal advisers as an obligation on their part to make such a payment, and that they were in duty bound to make it or hold themselves responsible for any claim which I might subsequently set up against them. That, I assume, is the reason, and the only reason I can assume, why the cheque was sent to me. I have already said that when that cheque reached me I immediately cancelled it. That

is the simple fact of the matter—I cancelled it—and I would, as I have already told the House, have had the cheque here to confront the hon. member who brings forward this matter, but for the fact that it was required for evidence purposes in an action which I believe was subsequently raised against the bank. I am sorry I am obliged to devote rather more time to this matter than hon. members may seem to regard as reasonable, still I trust they will bear with me when I make this statement, and make my position in connection with the matter clear to them, as I hope I have succeeded in doing. And that must be my apology for continuing even to this length, otherwise I would not have done it. I am told by my friends that this matter has been spoken of among members for some time past. So far as I am aware, it has not reached my ears. Had it done so, I would probably have put myself in a position to have dealt more effectively with it than perhaps I have done. But I think I have made it clear to hon. members that I am not unprepared to meet the charge, even when it is sprung suddenly upon me as it has been to-night. (Hear, hear!) Now, Sir, I want to say that this matter was raised against me at an election for Warwick a good many years ago, and it then reached my ears. I took the course of putting the facts to my friends and stating them in writing; and my statement in writing was submitted to the only man who was in a position to confirm or to deny anything I have said. And the statement I made in writing to him was as near as possible in strict agreement with the statement I have just made to the House—that is, Mr. J. R. Ross, the manager of the bank, who made this offer to me, and who acted for the bank in all its proceedings. And I have in my possession Mr. Ross's written statement confirming the statement I have now made to the House. (Hear, hear!) I make that statement because I think it is important to be able to assure the House that I possess the corroborative statement of the only man who knew the facts as well as myself. I possess Mr. Ross's written statement corroborating and certifying to the substantial truth of the statement I have now made to the House. Moreover, I possess a statement bearing the signature of a gentleman who acted as chairman of that meeting expressive of the opinion that my association with the matter left my honour absolutely untarnished. (Hear, hear!) I feel myself absolutely clean in respect to this matter. I admit that the letter the hon. member for Cook refers to was a letter which placed me in an equivocal position. But with the circumstances as I have related them to the House, as they actually exist, and as I have them in remembrance, I say the writing of that letter is quite compatible with what I claim to retain—an absolutely untarnished reputation in connection with this matter. (Hear, hear!) I would just say, in conclusion, that the hon. member who has advanced this matter—I very much regret having to continually refer to him, because I would rather treat him with the contempt I think men of his type deserve—I would just say, in conclusion, that this matter has been ostensibly raised against me by the hon. member for Cook for the purpose of showing that I, as Premier of this State, am not a man to whom the House should grant Supplies, even to enable me to carry on the government over a general election. Well, Sir, I have no hesitation in asking the House to grant me Supplies—in asking the House to trust me with the administration of those

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Supplies. And I would just add this: the hon. member is a member of a party which was quite prepared to receive me as Premier—which was quite prepared to offer me any position in its gift—if I would commit the sin of basely betraying the members of this House with whom I was and am associated. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I do not think that is correct.] Does any hon. member challenge that statement? [Mr. J. LEAHY: I never heard you were offered the Premiership.] (Government laughter.) Since this incident happened ten years ago—an incident of which I am in no sense ashamed—my constituency, well knowing the facts, has twice elected me, each time with an augmented majority. I have been twice called upon to preside in the chair which you, Sir, occupy. I have been called upon by a majority of this House to fill the position of Premier on one side, and I have been offered the position of Premier by the other side—[Mr. STORY: By whom?] [Mr. J. LEAHY: Nobody had any authority to offer it to you.]—if I committed the added sins of treachery and ingratitude. [Government members: Hear, hear!] That I was not prepared to do. I am not prepared to do that, but I am prepared to face the country. I regret having had to occupy the time of the House so long on this matter. Perhaps it would have been more in keeping with what hon. members consider right and proper if I had contented myself with a brief statement in rebuttal of the accusation made against me; but I thought that, under the circumstances, it was wise to make the statement as fully as I have done, and I hope and believe that hon. members will be impressed with the conviction that the statement I have made to this House is a statement strictly in keeping with the facts of the case. [Government members: Hear, hear!] I have only to repeat that I feel myself, notwithstanding what the hon. member for Cook has said, as a man still possessing clean hands in the public life of this State, and entitled to retain the confidence of his friends. [Government members: Hear, hear!]

HON. SIR A. RUTLEDGE: May I be allowed, by indulgence, to say a word?

THE SPEAKER: If the hon. member wishes to make a personal explanation, he may do so by the indulgence of the House. Does the hon. member wish to explain?

HON. SIR A. RUTLEDGE: Yes. I just wish to say that it is suggested by interjections from the other side and by the use of the plural "they," that there was some design or action on the part of the Opposition as such, to have something brought forward in this House for the purpose of damaging the Premier. I simply wish to give that an absolute denial. Whatever was said by the hon. member for Cook—I did not hear his speech—was said entirely on his own responsibility, and in opposition to the wishes of his leader. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!]

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. T. Bell, *Dalby*), who was received with Government cheers, said: I should like to say, in response to what the leader on the other side has said, that I, for one, and I believe every member on this front bench, thoroughly appreciates his remarks. I think that every member on the front Opposition bench, or nearly every member—[Mr. J. LEAHY: I certainly had nothing to do with it.] I accept the statement of the hon. member for Bulloo. He was the one exception I had heard mentioned. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I heard it, too.] I, for one, dissociate the whole of the members on the front Opposition bench—[Mr. PAGET: The whole party.]—and almost the whole of the party opposite, from the unlamented

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exhibition we have had from the hon. member for Cook to-night. I wish to make only one general reference to that hon. member. I think the first recollection I have of him in connection with the purloiners of this building was when I was a schoolboy, somewhere about the year 1879. I used to see something of the party that in 1879 was returned at the head of affairs, and I remember extremely well as a boy meeting the hon. member in this Chamber. I think he is the only one now about this place who was a member of the party which was returned to power in the beginning of 1879, and I wish to make this general reference to him: that he seems to me to be a remarkable instance of the survival of the unfittest. If hon. members will cast their minds back to the 29th of October, 1902, they will remember that there was then a debate on the Estimates in regard to certain charges which the hon. member for Cook brought against the then Northern Protector of Aborigines, Dr. Roth. The then Home Secretary, in whose department the aborigines were at that time, made a valiant and effective rebuttal of the charges brought forward by the hon. member for Cook. From that day to this, however, the hon. member for Cook has not ceased his attacks upon Dr. Roth. On the 29th of October, after making a number of other charges against Dr. Roth, towards the end of his several speeches he said that he and another hon. member had been requested to make another charge against Dr. Roth, which charge was that Dr. Roth had been guilty of taking photographs of male and female aborigines in the most indecent positions. From that day to this, with very little intermission, the hon. member has reiterated those charges. I regret that I consider it my undoubted duty to refer to these matters—I know the embarrassing nature of my audience, but I have to do it, because the hon. member for Cook to-night read out in a way that was not audible to the House a certain letter. He read it out in order that he might go through the formal performance of making a statement in this Chamber that would be reproduced in *Hansard*, copies of which would be assiduously disseminated in his own electorate and in the part of the State where Dr. Roth comes from. Therefore it is my duty, as the Minister under whom Dr. Roth is, that I should also read out certain documents in order that they, too, should get into *Hansard*. The hon. member for Cook found fault with me for not including a letter of his in certain papers that I laid on the table of this House recently. I laid those papers on the table of this House in response to a request of the Protector of Aborigines, who had placed before me the fact that these reports regarding him were still being assiduously disseminated, and that, beyond the statement in his defence that had been made in this House nearly two years ago by the then Home Secretary, there had been no other statement of defence on his part put forward. In the beginning of last month Dr. Roth had actually proof that these statements were still being assiduously circulated, and he, therefore, asked that these papers should be placed upon the table. I placed them upon the table, and they have been printed, and are now in the possession of hon. members. The hon. member for Cook, after I laid those papers on the table, came and asked that that letter which he read out should be included. I deliberately declined to include that letter in the papers, because the hon. member has stated his charges on the floor of this House and outside the House, and what I wanted to put into parliamentary papers was the defence of Dr. Roth. The hon. member for Cook has got his assertions in another way, and I am going to read out two other letters that I wish, in the same way, to get into *Hansard*.

The one is the letter that prompted Dr. Roth to come to ask me to lay on the table of the House the letters that I duly placed there. It is a letter from a man who is very well respected in the North, and who occupies a public position. The letter will speak for itself. It is from the Bishop of Carpentaria, and was written on the 3rd June last—

Diocese of Carpentaria,
Rectory, Cooktown,
3rd June, 1904.

Dear Dr. Roth,—I must apologise to you for not writing before. It is my fault, and I have little excuse. I arrived here the day before yesterday, and hear of fresh attempts to be made to injure you. There is only one matter on which I feel it necessary to say anything. I have always, whenever you have been referred to, stated my full confidence in you and in your relations with the blacks. Through the influence of certain persons who have undoubtedly a personal animus against you, two photographs were laid before me, said to have been taken by you, with the charge not only that the photographs, said to represent sexual acts, were grossly indecent, but that there was strong reason to believe that the blacks would never have consented to photographs being taken under such circumstances had they not been forced into it by intimidation from you. It was represented to me that in the interests of religion and morality I ought to take part against you.

I replied (1) that I had no evidence that the photographs were your work; (2) that, supposing they were, I had no evidence that you had intended to publish or make them known in any way, and that there was no evidence that the copies of the photographs were obtained either by legitimate means or through carelessness on your part; (3) that, whatever my own personal views as to the propriety of taking such photographs for scientific or medical purposes, I did not think it my business to sit in judgment on such matters so long as they were confined absolutely to strictly scientific and medical work, and that, further, I thought a great responsibility rested on those who took such things from their context and made them public for their own purposes; (4) that with regard to the last and most serious charge, that it was not my custom to attach any weight to attacks on a man until I had an opportunity of hearing his side of the question.

After making this reply I at once made up my mind to write to you.

Though very repellant to my own ideas, I can imagine a right-minded man with other ideas and training to my own, considering himself justified in photographing for special medical, or genuinely scientific, purposes every natural action of the blacks, but to force them to the indecency of an unnatural publicity: in order to photograph them under such circumstances would to my mind be a betrayal of trust on the part of a protector, and an act of which I cannot believe you capable. I write to you both for your own sake that you may know what you are charged with, and for my own sake that I may be put in a position to continue that advocacy of your sincerity and integrity which I have always maintained both in public and in private. A reply by return will find me here till 17th June.

Yours most sincerely,
GILBERT,
Bishop of Carpentaria.

This is the reply that was sent by Dr. Roth on the 19th July last—

Brisbane, 19th June, 1904.

Dear Bishop White,—I was so pleased to hear from you as per your letter of the 3rd instant, because it determined me upon taking certain action which culminated in my demanding that certain correspondence be laid upon the table of the House and so made public. I knew from various sources during the past few months (a) that certain extra gross charges were being circulated in that I had forced an aboriginal to commit rape on a young girl, and then photographed the couple in the act; (b) that the photograph stolen from its legal custodian had been reproduced and shown broadcast. On receipt of your letter, I went direct to my Minister (Mr. Bell) and told him that if he considered me guilty of committing such an outrage I wished to place my resignation in his hands. At the same time and since I told him the full circumstances as follows:—

(1) There is an identical illustration in my ethnological studies—fig. 433—published by the Queensland Government. The description and illustration of the pos-

ture assumed in the sexual act was of the highest anthropological interest in that it in large measure defended my thesis that the mutilation known as Sturt's terrible rite, or sub-incision (by Professor Stirling), or introcision (by myself) did not act as had hitherto been supposed as a preventive to procreation. My views on this matter are now generally accepted amongst workers in this line of research. Furthermore, when Professor Klaatsch returns home from Queensland, the photograph (both back and side view) will be published by the Berlin Anthropological Society: the sexual mutilations (in the male) have been illustrated already in many scientific journals (including those of the Linnean or Royal Society of New South Wales). The photograph was taken for purely scientific purposes only, and is one of a series (defecation, micturition, tree-climbing, sitting, standing) of natural postures which every anthropologist makes inquiry about, with a view to ascertaining connections (if any) between the highest apes and the lowest types of man.

(2) I first saw this peculiar method of copulation while camping out westward of Bonlita some time in 1894; but knowing the natural modesty of the untutored savage, which I have invariably admired and respected, and knowing that I should lose their respect were I to attempt to put any of these uncivilised blacks in the position necessary to take the required photograph, I made a sketch (which as I have already stated was subsequently published) and put the matter out of my mind.

(3) After my "Ethnological Studies" was published, I received several communications, written and verbal, throwing a little doubt on the possibility of such a posture being naturally carried out owing to physical conformation. In the meantime I had already made further investigations throughout other districts of Queensland (where no sexual mutilation was practised) and found that the same posture was prevalent everywhere. I thereupon informed my scientific friends of the very interesting corollary that the sexual mutilation now met with in the far Western districts, throughout Central Australia, and in Western Australia, was probably originally practised throughout the entire continent. To cut a long story short, I was accordingly very anxious to secure photographs confirmatory of my published description.

(4) An opportunity occurred, either in 1900 or 1901, on the — River, where, in the presence of their employer, Mr. — (bred and born there, who speaks the language fluently, and who has invariably given me every assistance in my scientific investigations), an aged married couple agreed to posture for me. (The woman at the time had children.) Although half civilised, they were a bit afraid of the camera at first, but could hardly refrain from laughing at the idea of my wanting to see them in the position asked for. However, Mr. — promised them that I would give them money and tobacco, etc. (I think flour), which I did; they were both contented. Considering the scandal which certain individuals have been trying to sow, I am indeed thankful that, if called upon I can thus bring forward a European witness who was with me at the time in question. So far, Hamilton does not know where or when, or under what circumstances, the photograph was taken.

(5) During the last three or four months the head of one of the Government departments told me that Hamilton had shown him the photograph, leading the former to believe that the woman in question was a young girl being assaulted against her will. I satisfied him of his error, however, when I brought him the negative.

(6) Your letter was thus the second occasion on which I learnt that such a blackguardly charge was laid against me. If the photograph which is now being handed round behind my back does in any way present such an appearance, there must either have been some wilful manipulation about it, or else it must be due to the fact of its being reprinted so far. The original negative, which was thrown upon a screen with some 200 others at a meeting of the Johnsonian Club about six weeks ago, ought to be sufficient proof that there is not the slightest shadow of doubt in my contention.

(7) Since the receipt of your letter I have been informed that Hamilton has two photographs in his possession. I took two views—from the back and from the side. Mr. Mobsy tells me that if such is the case, Hamilton must have taken the same opportunity of stealing the second one unbeknown to him.

(8) You may use the above information just as you deem fit (except Mr. —'s name or the — River until I receive this gentleman's statement that I have asked him for). I have nothing to add to it. My only trust is that, with this explanation before you, you will

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be in a position to convince my detractors that I have been guilty of no conduct unworthy of a gentleman and a man of honour.

Always yours sincerely,
WALTER E. ROTH.

I may say that Dr. Roth has left the name of the locality blank, and also the name of the man until he receives permission to publish his name and confirm his statement, and the reply has not yet been received. It was only some days ago that the letter was sent. In reply to the above letter the Bishop of Carpentaria wired—

Letter received. Am satisfied explanation. Use letter if you wish.—Bishop Carpentaria.

I feel it to be my duty to my officer to put that in, and I can only say that it is to me inconceivable that any member of Parliament should take the course that the hon. member for Cook has, with such extraordinary pertinacity, of persecuting a public official. [Government members: Hear, hear!]

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toooyong*): Before the question is put, I would like to say a few words. I suppose it would be im-

[7.30 p.m.] possible to obtain some statement in regard to the intentions of the Government so far as they relate to the Special Retrenchment Act; but I think it is a fair thing to ask, before this motion is agreed to, that some statement should be made in regard to the report which was obtained from the board appointed to inquire into—and alleged to have inquired into—the organisation, or reorganisation, as you may call it—of the civil service. As matters stand, the 30th June has gone by, the Special Retrenchment Act remains in force until the 30th September next, and those officers whose salaries have been decreased will suffer further retrenchment. I think it is a fair thing to say that the Government will not be justified in putting the recommendations contained in that report into effect, having regard to the discussion which has taken place in this House and the vote that was taken as the result of that discussion. I think they should, in justice to the civil service, stay their hand. I do not wish to go very deeply into the matter, or to prolong the discussion, but I think they have since found, in many departments of the service, that the recommendations which were made by that board were utterly useless, and such as could not be followed. I know, as a matter of fact, some of the recommendations were put into effect; and I know that they have since been altered back to the old state of things. Those circumstances are in themselves a condemnation of that report. I asked for a return during the earlier days of the session which I thought would throw some light upon the allegations which have been made in regard to the savings effected by retrenchment. I regret that that return was not forthcoming during the recent discussion, when the matter might have been gone into more fully. It came forward this afternoon, and, in the ordinary course of events, perhaps, I would not have been able to quote the few figures which I have been able to extract from that return; but I have used the few moments that were given me since the return was placed on the table, and I have brought out certain results. It will be remembered that an allegation was made to the effect that prior to the appointment of that board the Government had succeeded in making a saving of £20,000 per annum by retrenchment. The return which I asked for, and which I will shortly describe, was intended really to check that statement. The return I asked for was—

A return showing the names of all persons (including supernumeraries employed for a greater period than six months), subject to the Public Service Act, who left the

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service owing to death, resignation, dismissal, or retrenchment, between the 15th day of September, 1903—

That was the date upon which the present Government assumed the reins of office— and the 17th day of May, 1904—

which was the date upon which Parliament met—and the positions held by them respectively; together with the names of all persons admitted to the service between the same dates, including supernumeraries, and the duties for which they were respectively employed, salaries paid, etc.

That was the return I asked for at the opening of the session, before any of the recommendations which were made by the board which I have mentioned could have come into effect. If they did come into effect, they would have made the figures I have totted up worse against the Government than they really are. Taking the figures which have been supplied in this return, I find that twenty-two officers resigned during that period, carrying salaries amounting in all to £4,272 per annum; three officers died, carrying salaries amounting to £880; three officers were dismissed, carrying salaries amounting to £769; thirty-six were retrenched, carrying salaries amounting to £9,614; and twenty-nine supernumeraries were retrenched, carrying salaries amounting to £4,279—making a total reduction in expenditure of £19,814. Against that I find that thirty-four officers—including twelve of the retrenched officers I have mentioned, whose total annual salaries amounted to £3,025—were appointed, at total salaries per annum amounting to £6,981; fifty-one supernumeraries—including three only of the supernumeraries who had been retrenched, and whose salaries amounted to £650—were appointed at total annual salaries amounting to £7,378, making a total of appointments to the civil service proper and of supernumeraries amounting to £14,359, which reduces that supposed saving of £19,814 to the small sum of £5,455. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I thought it was about £4,000.] And, when you come to look at the fact that the salaries of those officers who had resigned, died, and were dismissed, amounted to £5,821 per annum, it will be found that there was a sum of about £400 on the wrong side, or in favour of extra expenditure as against actual retrenchment. There was, practically, an increase of something like £400 in expenditure, taking the whole thing roughly, as against an alleged saving of £19,814 per annum. I made the statement during the last discussion that, in my opinion, the civil service of this State had been exploited by the Government for the purpose of making political capital, and, in the face of this return, I do not think there can be any doubt whatever about it. I do not know what the answer of the Treasurer will be. The return is there, it speaks for itself; the columns are not added up, but I venture to say that the figures I have given are absolutely correct. A certain rumour has been assiduously circulated in the district which I have the honour to represent, to the effect that I, in this Chamber, have made a vicious statement in regard to a lady, the wife of Mr. Brennan, who was appointed as a member of that board of inquiry. I deprecate very much the circulation of statements of that sort; but inasmuch as the Premier, the Secretary for Lands, and the Treasurer, and certain other gentlemen, in making answer to the speech I made on a previous occasion, made reference only to the point in which I was alleged to have stated that the wife of Mr. Brennan was a relation of Mr. Kidston, I think it is a fair thing to make reference to that matter now.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hardly follow the hon. member, but he will be distinctly out of order if he refers to a previous debate in this session.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I might possibly have referred to that debate if you, Sir, had not pointed out to me that I would not be in order; but, as the statements that were made by me were made by me outside the House as well as inside the House, I shall only refer to matters outside the House; and I would like to say that in all I said I was actuated by the want of candour on the part of hon. gentlemen opposite, who failed to state where Mr. Brennan's recommendations came from. We have been unable up to the present time to ascertain how Mr. Brennan's appointment was made. No one has come forward to say that he was recommended by the head of his department or that the head of any department brought him under the notice of any member of the Government. [The PREMIER: His recommendation was the reputation he bears in the service. That was his only recommendation.] That is a very general statement, but it conveys nothing. [The PREMIER: A high recommendation.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: Bunkum!] If the hon. gentleman had got up in his place and told us that he had made inquiries amongst the various heads of departments, and that they had pointed Mr. Brennan out as the officer most fitted to fill the position, I would have accepted his assurance, but the hon. gentleman has at no time explained how Mr. Brennan came to be selected. [The TREASURER: What is your explanation?] The only explanation which I have had at any time was the interjection made by the hon. member for Clermont. [An honourable member: And you fathered it.] No, I did not father it. I said the hon. member for Clermont made the statement by interjection. That was the only authority I had, and I found it was absolutely untrue. I have the authority of the hon. senior member for Rockhampton that the only relationship is that Mrs. Brennan is the daughter of one who was a next door neighbour of the Treasurer's for many years. [The TREASURER: Ten years ago.] Quite so. At all events, I should be very sorry to make any statement which would convey a false impression, and I think the hon. gentleman knows that very well, but I cannot say that what I said is any justification for the rumour which has been circulated. [The TREASURER: What is the rumour which has been circulated?] The fact remains that we have had no explanation of Mr. Brennan's appointment. I made certain remarks with regard to Mr. Brennan's recommendations, and no reply has been offered to what I then said. Hon. gentlemen opposite have simply made certain references to an untrue statement made by the hon. member for Clermont. I do not wish to refer to the matter at any greater length, but I do think, in justice to a number of gentlemen in the civil service, some statement should be made as to whether they are to be made the victims of retrenchment upon retrenchment.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): I must confess I never felt more embarrassed on rising to speak than I do to-night. It was said by the Premier that the member for Cook and those behind him had made an attack on him. I can assure this House that I do not believe a single member on this side encouraged the member for Cook to make that attack. [Mr. LESINA: The members for Stanley and Fassifern cheered him.] I did not hear them cheer him. [An honourable member: It is not true.] I do not wish to enter into the matter at all. It is a painful thing to talk about, and I would be the very last to make a personal attack upon any man. I have never done so, though many attacks have been made upon me, especially by the Treasurer. [The TREASURER: I am sure I never attacked you.] Yes; the hon. gentleman has called me corrupt fifty times. I hate these

charges being brought into the House. It makes public life detestable to any man. I cannot commend the Premier for the last words he made use of in his defence. He said he had been offered the Premiership by this side of the House. I remember going with Sir Arthur Rutledge to Mr. Morgan, the Premier, and trying to induce him to come back to his own party again, but there was no offer of Premiership that I heard. He has said that he would have been guilty of treachery if he had consented. Was he not guilty of treachery when he left this side? [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] However, I do not wish to go into that matter at all. Everybody knew that something occurred in Warwick some years ago, but the people of Warwick forgave him if he made a mistake, but he says he made no mistake. [The TREASURER: He said more than that.] I do not wish to go into the matter. I would rather not refer to it, because it embarrasses me very much, but I wish to inform the House that there is not a single man on this side who encouraged the hon. member for Cook. [Mr. LESINA: And you disassociate yourself entirely from the charge?] Yes. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. J. HAMILTON: I did it "on my own," on evidence that I had.] The member for Clermont should be the last man to ask me that, because he does nothing else but make charges. [Mr. LESINA: I have been attacked every night for weeks, and I had to defend myself.] However, we have drifted away from the subject. The Ministry have asked for two months' Supply. I think that is a fair thing, either two or three months' Supply, but I think they ought to tell us and the country whether they are going to do anything to reduce the number of members of this House. The leader of the Opposition enlarged upon that. It was well known at the last election that the majority of members of this House were pledged to reduce the number of members, and the late Government had a Bill drafted for that purpose. They had the districts mapped out, and a Bill to reduce the number of members to fifty-six must be in the Home Secretary's office. I remember well the present Premier saying last session he would not go in for such a drastic scheme of reduction as I would, but he was going to reduce the number of members. I understand he had a scheme prepared to reduce all the double electorates and make them single electorates, but that his party would not consent to that. [The TREASURER: Why do you understand that?] [The PREMIER: That information is not correct.] Well, I have heard so. If it is not correct, I accept the hon. gentleman's statement. Why has he not the courage to come down to the House with this question? He has waited for a referendum on the subject, but he cannot get that now, and it will be three years before there is any reduction in the number of members of the House. Well, I do not think the country will stand it. I would heartily support, even at this stage, a Bill brought in for the purpose of reducing the number of members. It will get a great deal of support from this side. I know some of his Labour friends do not want to reduce the number, but I think the country wants it, and it need not be a party question. Let him do that, and he will have done something. But what has he done for the last two years? [The PREMIER: For how long?] Last session was wasted, and this session is wasted. We have sat about two months, and according to the figures, which, I understand, are in print and supplied by the Speaker, members on the other side have spoken for forty hours and members on this side for forty-one hours. Nobody knows better than the Premier that we were ready to divide a fortnight before he consented to divide. He was waiting

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for Mr. Murphy. [The PREMIER: That is not correct.] I say distinctly that I told the Premier we were quite ready to divide one Thursday night. [The PREMIER: Not a fortnight.] Well, thirteen days after the debate started. Is that not nearly a fortnight? [The PREMIER: No; the hon. member is not correct.] It is thirteen-fourteenths of a fortnight. [The PREMIER: The amendment was only discussed for six sittings.] At the Premier's request I went to his room, and he asked when I thought the House could divide. I said, "We can divide to-night," and yet after that he comes down and blames us for wasting time. [Mr. TURNER: Quite right.] It is not true. [The TREASURER: Perfectly true.] I say it is not true, because it is in print under the Speaker's hand that Government members spoke forty hours and the Opposition forty-one hours. A fortnight before the division was taken this side was prepared to take a division, and I repeat that it is no fault of this side that so much time has been wasted. Of course hon. members opposite will make this a cry when they go to the country—that the Opposition have wasted the time of the House, and would not allow them to do any business. [The PREMIER: Your statement is not true, because the amendment was only discussed for six sittings.] I remember going one Thursday evening to the Premier's room, and I told him that I was ready to divide that night, but we did not divide then; we took the division a fortnight later but one day. By referring to *Hansard* hon. members can see that I said I was ready to divide a good while before the division was taken. There is one other little matter I would like to refer to. When the Address in Reply was on I said that I was very pleased that the Government did not intend to re-enact the Special Retrenchment Act, and the Treasurer, in his mild and gentle tone, said, "Who told you that?" (Laughter.) No doubt the Premier may have had the intention of repealing this Act, but the Treasurer did not. Now we are coming to an election, and I think the Premier would do the right thing in repealing this Act, and I am sure that the civil servants will be very pleased if this Act is not reimposed. I think they have suffered enough already. [The TREASURER: From whom?] From the Special Retrenchment Act and the acts of the present Ministry, and particularly the acts of the Treasurer in dismissing so many unfortunate people and making other appointments. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] Why, only to-night it has been stated that the Treasurer has dismissed fifty-nine supernumeraries, and has taken on forty-eight others who have never been in the public service before. [The TREASURER: Who told you that?] The hon. member for Toowong has stated that. [The TREASURER: He said what he knew nothing at all about.] He said that fifty-nine supernumeraries had been dismissed and forty-eight new men taken on. [The TREASURER: He knows nothing about the matter.] Now, it was given out through the country that the service had been made available for Ministers' relatives and friends when we on this side were in power; but I am proud to be able to point out that I have not a single relative in the public service—(Hear, hear!)—and I am sure that I have as many relatives as any man in this House, and I hope that none of my relatives will ever get into the public service. [Mr. DUNSFORD: That stands to your credit.] The hon. member for Charters Towers says that, but the very next time he gets up, he will abuse me like a pickpocket. (Laughter.) That is the sort of kindness we get from the Labour party! I have seen thirty or forty of their howlers prevent us

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from addressing meetings, and I have had plenty of that experience. [The TREASURER: Are you making that as a charge against the Government?] Yes, because it is a Labour Government. (Laughter.) The Labour party think it is a splendid thing to bid for fair play; but they never give fair play. I care not if I never come back to this House. I have been a member of this Assembly for a number of years, and I am like the Premier when he said that he is not dependent on his Ministerial or member's salary for his living. I did better before I came into this House, and no doubt I could do much better if I left it; but I want to leave this House with a clean reputation, and I defy any man in this House, or any man outside, to say that I have ever done anything that I am ashamed of. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. LESINA: No one ever said so.] You said so yourself. (Laughter.) Only this session you charged me with all the sins of continuous Governments for the last thirteen years—with regard to the tank engines, the Lindon Bates dredges, and other things. [Mr. LESINA: I did not make any personal charge against you.] I would point out that when Sir Hugh Nelson had a surplus I was Treasurer; when Mr. Byrnes was Premier and there was a surplus, I was Treasurer; and when Mr. Dickson had a surplus I was also Treasurer; but according to the hon. member for Clermont, Philp should have been killed and buried long ago. (Laughter.) I can always say that I tried to do equal justice to Labour and other members—[Opposition members: Hear, hear!—and no one on the other side has had the gratitude to say so. The big, burly member for Gregory, Mr. W. Hamilton, went about blowing that he got what he wanted for his electorate in spite of the Government. [Mr. W. HAMILTON: You did not assist me.] You did it, and the public life of Queensland must be getting to a very low grade when these things are resorted to, and the sooner every decent man is out of politics the better. [Mr. TURNER: Things have been very low this afternoon.] Now, we are soon going to the country, and I hope that on the platforms the Labour party will make a new departure—that they will only speak of public men with regard to their public actions. I know that there are some vicious men on that side—

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. R. PHILP: I hope that hon. members opposite will bear in mind that sometimes two can play the same game. I have no wish to do so, and have never done so. I would rather leave the House than make personal attacks on any hon. member; but on many occasions the Labour party have attacked me personally on platforms. [Mr. COWAP: You ought to go to the *Courier* for that sort of thing.] I am prepared to defend myself against the *Courier* or any of the Press. I do not see the Labour papers, but friends of mine have told me that their papers often attacked me personally. [Mr. LESINA: Look at what the *Daily Mail* said about Mr. Rutledge!] Labour members in this House must have descended to a very low level when they have to rake up every trivial, pettifogging mistake in a man's past life. But, I would ask, is there a man in this House who can hold up his hand and say he has never sinned? No, not a single man. [Mr. LESINA: The hon. member for Cook can.] The hon. member for Clermont can't. [Mr. LESINA: I have always cheerfully admitted that. I am not a saint, like the hon. member for Cook.]

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

HON. R. PHILP: The Premier has given his assurance that he does not wish to reimpose the Special Retrenchment Act, and I would like to

get the same assurance from the Treasurer. [The TREASURER: Do you think we are as bad as you are?] I am not as bad as you are. I want to see the 15 per cent. taken off, and I hope they will take off the income tax, too. The present Government may not come back.

[8 p.m.] There may be another Government come in, and the Premier has made no provision for another Government at all. If the present Government come back, they have ample Supplies. Another Government will want another month's Supplies. I presume the Premier is quite satisfied he will come back with a large majority. I have no wish to protract the debate. It has not been a very profitable one—(hear, hear!)—for anyone in the House, and the sooner these personal attacks are dropped the better it will be for the House and the better for the country. If we thought more of the country and less of ourselves, we should do better. Many hon. members seem to think of themselves first and the country afterwards.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY (*Warrego*): I think there are some strong reasons why Supply should not be granted at the present time. I am one of those who have always consistently believed in reducing the number of members of this House, and there can be no doubt that a very large majority of the electors of the country desire that there should be a reduction of members. I take it that a Bill for that purpose would be among those uncontentious measures which the leader of the Opposition referred to a few days ago. I see no reason why a Bill of that kind should not be put through in twenty-four hours, and why, after the next election, we should not come back from the country with a very much reduced number of members. The late Premier last year proposed to reduce the number to 56. I go even further, and say that the number might very well be cut down to 40. In New South Wales the Government, which was retained in power by the Labour party, kept back the reduction of members as long as possible, and it was only as a last resource that they submitted the matter to the country by way of referendum. They gave the country the choice of three numbers, the lowest being 90, and the country voted for the lowest by an overwhelming majority. In all probability if they could have voted for a lower number than 90 they would have done so. The population of New South Wales is, roughly speaking, two and a-half times that of Queensland. Prior to the reduction of members they had 125 members; we here have 72. If we were to have the same number in proportion to population as New South Wales, we should have 38 members instead of the 72 we have at the present time. It may be said by hon. members opposite that Queensland is less thickly populated than New South Wales, and, therefore, requires a larger proportionate number of members. But we must remember that in New South Wales, outside the municipalities, there is no system of local government, whereas in Queensland we have a remarkably fine system of local government which relieves members of this Assembly of a very large amount of work which is performed by the New South Wales Assembly. And if we set off one fact against the other, I am convinced that if 90 members are sufficient for New South Wales, 40 would be ample for Queensland. If it is contended that 40 is too small a number, I would have no objection to have the number fixed at 50. If it is assumed that it is impossible to bring in a Bill to reduce the number of members to 40 or 50, at this stage I see a way out of the difficulty. We are told, until we are almost tired of hearing it,

that the party opposite believe in trusting the people. As a democrat, I believe in trusting the people, too, and I have no hesitation in saying that, if actions are to be the test, there are better and more genuine democrats on this side of the House than on the other, although they do not say so much about it. If it is a good thing to trust the people—and I believe the people ought to be trusted—we have a golden opportunity of referring to the people not only the question of the number of members but also the salary which members shall receive. What is to prevent the Premier from bringing in a Bill submitting those questions to a referendum? It could be done almost without cost at present, whereas if the matter is deferred a few months it will probably cost several thousands of pounds, and if it is not done until the election—after the coming one—three years will probably have gone, and we shall have the present number of members for that time. The whole thing could be done in less than forty-eight hours. There is not one hon. member on this side who would not help to carry such a Bill through. The electors would then be able to say, at the general election, what shall be the number of members and what their salary shall be. [The PREMIER: The Government believe the present salary is little enough.] I only mention the question of salary incidentally. The more urgent question is that of the reduction of members. The Government have already told us they are not equal to the task of deciding what number of members we ought to have, and they have told us it was their intention to submit the question to a referendum. If the members of the Government are sincere, and if they believe in trusting the people, I appeal to them not to throw away this golden opportunity, an opportunity which they may not have again for several years, except at a cost, as I said, of thousands of pounds. As to salary, if the Government think the present salary is not too much, they are perfectly justified in not submitting it to a referendum. But what are we to say of hon. members who at one time tell us they believe in trusting the people, and at another act in quite an opposite direction? I say that if the people are to be trusted at all—and I think they should be trusted—they should be trusted absolutely. But hon. members opposite do not like to trust the people. The country demands a reduction in the number of members, and I think it also demands a reduction in the salaries of members. If ever there were questions upon which the will of the people should be taken they are these two matters. What is the country to think of men who believe in reducing everybody except themselves? The civil service has been retrenched—almost harshly retrenched. I do not believe in any privileged or pampered class, and I do not believe that civil servants are entitled to more than men outside the service; but I am of opinion that many civil servants have been most unjustly and harshly treated. It comes with a very bad grace from hon. members to reduce the salaries of civil servants, and at the same time to keep the full number of members of this House and to retain the present salaries. I believe that is the opinion held by a very large number of people outside the House, and that when members go before the country they will probably get a surprise. They need not go to the country with the idea that the people outside are dying to record their votes for them, because there are a considerable number who do not look upon their actions with approval. I have been in the country two or three times during the last six months, and I have heard men whose political views are opposed to mine strongly

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expressing the opinion that the number of members of the Assembly should be reduced, and some who are equally as strong in the opinion that the salaries of members should be reduced. Some supporters of the Labour party have told me that they were under the impression at one time that many members of the Labour party were in favour of a reduction in the number of members, but that they are now convinced that the whole question is a question of billets: and that is largely the opinion of people outside. I appeal to the Hon. the Premier not to allow this opportunity to pass without obtaining the opinion of the public on these two questions. It can be done now at absolutely no cost. In addition to the question as to the number of members he might also put the questions, "Are you in favour of the present salary? If not, are you in favour of £250, £200, £150 per annum, or of no salary?" Is the hon. gentleman afraid to trust the people? I am not afraid to trust the public on either of these questions, or any other question, and, speaking generally, I do not think any hon. member on this side is afraid to trust the public. There are a large number of hon. members on this side who are just as truly representatives of labour as any hon. members opposite, and who are just as anxious to serve the public interest, and I believe that as time advances the recognition of this fact will have a larger hold on the public mind. Why should the Premier rush to the country when he had that magnanimous offer from the leader of the Opposition with regard to non-contentious measures? [An honourable member: What are non-contentious measures?] The reduction of the number of members is non-contentious as far as this side is concerned. Of course, when we remember the declaration made by the leader of the Labour party, to the effect that he does not believe in a reduction in the number of members—I suppose that declaration was inspired by what took place at a caucus—it is not surprising that the Premier is not prepared to submit this matter to the country. Probably, if he were allowed to have his own way, he would be willing to do it, but we know that the real masters of the Government do not want a reduction in the number of members. That is the only explanation I can offer for the Premier not being prepared to submit this matter to the country. The offer of the leader of the Opposition was a most magnanimous offer, and the elaborate defence of the action of the Government in urging an immediate dissolution which the Premier subsequently made was entirely beside the point; and by rushing on an election he is putting the country to considerable inconvenience. While I am quite prepared to give the Premier credit for patriotic motives, I hold that the House need not be dissolved for another month, and that in the meantime non-contentious and absolutely necessary measures could be passed. There has been a great deal of unnecessary haste in this matter. It appears to me that the reason why the Government desire to go to the country is that this question of a reduction of members should not be put before the country. If the hon. gentleman wished to put this matter before the country he has an opportunity of doing so now, and if he declines that opportunity then the whole responsibility must rest upon him and those associated with him, and it will be impossible for them later on to say that they, and they only, believe in trusting the people. If they were sincere in their desire for

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economy, about which we have heard so much, they would not delay dealing with this question of a reduction in the number of members. But apparently they do not believe in economy the moment it touches their own pockets. We know that all over Australia the number of members in the Assembly has been reduced. With the exception of Queensland there is not a single State in the Commonwealth that has not made a reduction in the number of its members. Are we to be told that public sentiment in Queensland is so different from public sentiment in New South Wales that the people here do not favour a reduction? [The Premier: Did they reduce the salaries of members?] I am dealing with the question of a reduction in the number of members. If the hon. gentleman does not wish to reduce the salaries, I should be prepared to confine the referendum to the question as to whether the number of members should be reduced. Half a loaf is better than no bread. But I would prefer to see the two questions included in the referendum. There are a number of other matters that I should like to refer to, but I shall do so very briefly. I was not present when the Premier spoke at an earlier stage this afternoon, but I understand he stated that the elections are to take place on one day. If he said that, I think it is an eminently proper thing. During the last few days I have heard certain Labour members saying that they did not think the elections should take place on one day, but if the Premier is of opinion that they should take place on one day I cordially agree with him. I also think that it would be a fair thing to hold the elections about the end of August. Of course, if the hon. gentleman chooses to bring in a Bill in order to submit the question of the reduction of members and a reduction in the salaries of members to the electors, that may render it necessary to slightly postpone the date of the elections. With regard to the most desirable day for holding the elections, we are told there is only one day that is at all suitable, and that is Saturday. I know that in many of the Western towns—Toowoomba, Roma, Charleville, and many other towns—the storekeepers keep open on Saturday, and most of them have their half-holiday during the week. While Saturday might be fairly suitable for Brisbane and other places, I do not think it would be so suitable for the country. However, that is not a very vital matter, and if the Government have made up their minds to hold the elections on a Saturday, I do not suppose there is very much to be said on the point. There is one thing that I would like to have seen touched upon more fully during this debate. We have been told something about the unemployed. All over the Western country there are a very large number of unemployed. I am reliably informed by persons in the Western country that a large number of honest and willing workers are looking for work. Work could be found for them in connection with rabbit destruction. The Government have done very little in the matter of keeping down the rabbits or keeping up fences, though I am pleased to see that some kind of attempt has been made in that direction lately. I do not wish for one moment to blame the Minister for Lands for that, for of course he has a Treasurer who may not give him the money; but I should like to bring under the notice of the Government that the unemployed question is a very serious thing at the present moment, and it is a much larger evil than many people imagine. I have reason to think that the Labour members are bringing pressure to bear on the unemployed

to keep quiet until after the election; but the fact remains that the unemployed are there, and that, though puny and ill-directed efforts have been made to find work on the coast, nothing has been done to find work for the unemployed west of Dalby. It will be two or three months before members will have an opportunity under the most favourable circumstances of speaking in this Chamber again, and I would suggest to the Government that, if they can see their way to do anything in the way of relief works at all, these Western people should be considered in a matter of that kind. They deserve relief just as much as the people along the coast. Many of them have families, and we know that in no part of Queensland has the distress been felt so keenly as in the Western country, for the simple reason that the mainstay of the Western country were the stations and selections. It is so well known to everybody that I need not press the point home, that practically four-fifths of the stock in the Western country were destroyed by drought. The result is that there is not the amount of labour that there was a few years ago, and we have a vast number of men going from one station to another, and they can get absolutely no work. If anything can be done to find work for these men, the Government will be doing a most commendable act, and I repeat that there is quite as much necessity to provide work for these men as for the people nearer the coast. A statement has been made on several occasions that members on this side are afraid of the franchise. The Premier on one occasion told us that we were fighting in the last ditch of conservatism. I for my part utterly repudiate anything of that kind. I am not in the least afraid of making the franchise more liberal than it is now. If the hon. member wishes to do away with the property vote, I am not opposed to doing away with it. I am quite sure that a large number of members on this side are in favour of liberalising the franchise.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would remind the hon. member that the second reading of the Franchise Bill is on the business-paper, and he cannot anticipate discussion upon it.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: That is merely by way of illustration. I do not intend to pursue and elaborate the argument at all, but what I do object to at this moment is any attempt to go before the country under false colours. There can be no question that a great deal of electioneering has been attempted in this House, and in the case I referred to the Premier endeavoured to convey a false impression. There was nothing further from the truth than an impression of that kind. I say for myself, and many hon. members on this side whose opinions I know, that we are not opposed to an alteration in the franchise, but I do not believe in certain portions of the machinery Bill adopted by the Federal Parliament, and I venture to say that the Premier's attempt to delude the country by misrepresenting our attitude on this question will fail as it deserves. I can only say, in conclusion, that I think the Premier ought to bring in a Bill, either to reduce the number of members, or to submit the matter to a referendum; and if he does not do it, the only conclusion I can come to is that the Premier and those who are associated with him are afraid to trust the people.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): I certainly thought that before this the Treasurer would have got up and placed his views before the House, because I should like to hear the views of the Government on several matters which have been referred to. The question of the Special Retrenchment Act has just been mentioned, and as far as we have gone there is no information as

to what the Government are going to do. All we know is that people have the idea that the Government are simply filling in the Estimates the net amount the civil servants are receiving now, and, therefore, there is no occasion for a Special Retrenchment Bill being introduced. I think we are entitled to some information from the Treasurer in regard to this point before we grant Supply. There are a large number of items in connection with the finances which are not likely to come in next year the same as they came in this year. There is one item which stands out boldly, and that is the question of the extra money received from the stamps. We received a large amount last year—something like £55,000 more than the year before—and as far as one can possibly judge we are not likely to attain the figures this present year as we did up to the 30th June last, and that is an amount which must necessarily be considered in connection with the Estimates. I have no doubt the hon. gentleman must have considered that question. [Hon. R. PHILP: He may not be the Treasurer when the House meets.] It does not matter to me whether he will be Treasurer or not. I think before we go to the country we should have some idea where we are with respect to the civil servants. We know that the Special Retrenchment Bill brings in, roughly speaking, something like £100,000 a year. I think that the amount down in the Estimates last year was something like £94,000. Whether that was the actual amount or not I cannot say. [The TREASURER: Rather more.] I said £100,000, roughly speaking. Well, I have not got the figures, but it does not affect my argument whether it is £1,000 more or less. We have tried our level best in speaking before—I do not wish to refer to debates which are now closed—but we have endeavoured, both outside and in this House, to try and get some information from the Government with regard to their action in connection with the Special Retrenchment Act. We have received no information whatever. The other day a statement appeared in the papers to the effect that the Government hoped to be able to do without the Special Retrenchment Act this year. [Hon. R. PHILP: They won't reimpose it now.] I do not know whether they intend to reimpose it or not, but there is one thing quite evident to me—that they mean to try and get the civil service people to believe that they are not going to reimpose it. We have to try and get information which, I think, is most important information, because it is information which refers to a very large sum of money, and which may put the Treasurer's Estimates out or in, as the case may be; and if it is the case that the Special Retrenchment Act is not going to be imposed again, and that the civil servants are to get the salaries they had prior to that special Act, then I say the people of the country before the election should get to know exactly where we are. I can assure the Treasurer that if it is intended to do away with the Special Retrenchment Act, no one will be better pleased than I; and, if it is intended to give the civil servants [8.30 p.m.] the salaries they had prior to the introduction of that Act, the hon. gentleman will have no stronger supporter of the measure than myself. But, while that may be so, we have to consider the question from a purely financial point of view, and I would ask, in the event of the hon. gentleman being willing to dispense with the Special Retrenchment Act, how he is going to raise the revenue which he will thereby lose. During the few minutes I have had to look over the revenue for the year in connection with the various departments, I find that the hon. gentleman received £20,000 more from the Federal Government than he anticipated. As a business man, I

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can conscientiously say that this year probably is the worst year, so far as business is concerned, that we have had in Queensland during the last ten or fifteen years. I may be wrong, but I do not anticipate that the revenue to be derived from the Customs and Excise this year is likely to be as much as it was last year. [The TREASURER: It is likely to be more.] The firm of which I am a member has branches in almost every one of the principal towns in Queensland, and we get a return from each of them every month, and I can assure the hon. gentleman that not only ourselves, but a large number of the big firms in Queensland find that business is steadily decreasing. [The TREASURER: Would you say that the prospects are worse in Queensland to-day than they were last year?] The actual business done is less to-day than it was twelve months ago. [The TREASURER: That is so, but what about the prospects?] The prospects, so far as they have gone, are really no better than they were twelve months ago. As a matter of fact, the actual turnover is a great deal less.

Mr. TURNER called attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. FORSYTH: The general consensus of opinion amongst business men is that this will be one of the worst years we have had in Queensland for many years past. Business is going down; sales are a great deal less. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The southern merchants are collaring the business.] The business is not being done—I don't care whether it is being done from Victoria, from New South Wales, or from home. [The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The values are less.] The value is not there, and the actual volume of business is not as good. It appears to me, therefore, that the Minister will receive a great deal less revenue from Customs and Excise than he got last year, owing to the decrease in the dutiable goods that will be consumed. I have not seen the details with regard to the federal revenue and expenditure, but it appears to me that the reason the hon. gentleman received £20,000 more last year than he anticipated from the Commonwealth was not so much because the revenue increased, but because a very large amount of money that was passed upon the Federal Estimates last year was not spent. Then we got from taxation something like £60,000 more than we anticipated; from lands we got £27,000 more than last year, and, as we are told that the Government intend to take off the poll tax, that represents another sum of about £27,000; while, if the special retrenchment is taken off the civil service, that represents another sum of about £80,000. These amounts total over £200,000, which has got to be made up somehow, if we are to square the finances at the end of the year; and I hope the Treasurer will get up and give the House some information with regard to those items, and more especially in connection with the Special Retrenchment Act. I think it is unfair that the civil servants should be kept upon tenterhooks, and that they should not know exactly how they are going to be treated—as to whether they are simply to pay the income tax, the same as everybody else, or if the special retrenchment is to be continued. The hon. gentleman knows very well what he intends to do, and yet in such an important matter, and which represents such a large amount of money, he carefully conceals all the time what is his intention. I believe he is somewhat frightened to make a statement to this House, otherwise we should have had it long ago. I mentioned a little while ago that I saw the statement in the

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papers that the Government “hope” to be able to do without the Special Retrenchment Act, and I gathered from that that the civil servants were to have the same salaries as they had prior to the passage of the measure, but I would like to get something different to that from the hon. gentleman. I would like to get from him an authoritative statement to the effect that it is the intention of the Government to give the civil servants the salaries they had prior to 1902. Anyone can say, “We hope to do so-and-so,” for the purpose of trying to blind the civil servants, and, of course, prior to an election, it is only natural to suppose that hon. gentlemen opposite will try to blind the public as to their intentions; but I trust the Treasurer will get up and tell us exactly what the Government intend to do, and how he intends to make up the deficiency of over £200,000 in the revenue for this year to which I have referred. Is he going to make it up by means of a land tax? Of course, we know that he proposes to impose a graduated income tax; and, while that may help him to a certain extent, I venture to predict that no graduated income tax is likely to bring in the large amount of money that he will be short. I may be out £20,000 in my figures; but these are very important matters, and no doubt will have the attention of the Treasurer in connection with his estimate of Ways and Means. I did not intend to speak at all to-night, but I hope that my remarks will lead the Treasurer to have the courtesy to give the House some information in regard to these matters. The referendum has been referred to in this House, and I think that, if the Government are sincere in their wish to give the people a chance to say whether we should have a referendum or not, a Bill could be passed through this House in half an hour. When the people are appealed to on the 27th August, do the Government intend at the same time to appeal with regard to the Referendum Bill? I hope the hon. gentleman will consider this question, because it is the general feeling throughout the country that the Government have shelved the question with regard to the reduction of members. I can assure the Government that if they introduce a Bill for a referendum they will get my hearty support. Another point which has been raised both outside and inside the House is in regard to the reason why the Opposition moved a vote of want of confidence in the Government. The general consensus of opinion among Labour and some other papers is that the Opposition were afraid that the Franchise Bill would be introduced and passed. Now, there is not a single word of truth in that statement, and I am prepared to say that I believe the Government will get as hearty support for the measure from members sitting in opposition as they will get from those sitting behind them. The Franchise Bill is a measure that would have been introduced by the late Government last year if they had had an opportunity, and it is a Bill to which we are to a large extent pledged.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in referring during a debate of this character to the Franchise Bill.

Mr. FORSYTH: I merely wanted to give one reason why the want of confidence motion was introduced, and to contradict the statement that it had anything to do with the Franchise Bill. I hope the Treasurer will get up and give us some information with regard to the points I have raised, so far as the finances are concerned, and also with regard to the statement of the hon. member for Toowong in connection with the various alterations that have taken place in the public service. Personally, I had not seen the report to which the hon. member alluded, other-

wise I would have gone carefully through it; but I have not the slightest doubt that the hon. member for Toowong studied it carefully, and has correctly concluded that there has really been no saving at all. The number of appointments, including supernumeraries and new officers, comes to eighty-five from the 15th September, 1903, to 17th May, 1904, and the total number of resignations, dismissals, and retrenchments is ninety-three. The number is therefore much about the same, and the difference in money paid out only amounts to about £4,000. These are matters which require some explanation, and I sincerely hope the Treasurer will tell us exactly what he thinks about them. Another matter to which I should like to allude is the miscellaneous receipts, from which the hon. gentleman received something like £70,000 this last year. Although I have not got the figures at my disposal, I do not think he is likely to receive the same amount of money from miscellaneous receipts this year, and there will be another £30,000 or £40,000 to be made up. I should particularly like to know whether it is the intention of the Government to take off the special retrenchment of the civil servants at the end of September and pay the salaries paid prior to 1902. If that is their intention, they will receive my hearty support, and I believe the hearty support of most members on this side.

* Mr. T. B. CRIBB (*Ipswich*): The question is that we go into Committee of Supply for the purpose of granting the Ministry a sum of money to carry on the necessary expenditure of the country during the time of the proposed general election. I am not disposed to make any objection to the amount that I understand the Treasurer intends to ask for, but I do protest against the action of the Ministry in wasting the time of the country as they have done. [The TREASURER: Are you posing as a humorist?] When they came into office they pleaded for time to consider the finances of the State, and to prepare their measures, and we offered to allow them two months to enable them to look over their measures, and also to prepare their Estimates, and give the House some indication as to what they intended to do. Had they accepted our offer there would have been plenty of time for them to have prepared all the necessary measures, and to have given the House some definite idea of what they intended to do, and some very important business would have been transacted by the Chamber before the House adjourned for the recess. In spite of the solid majority they had at their backs at that time they did not feel inclined to accept what I consider was a very reasonable proposition on the part of the Opposition. They have now met the House, and what do we find? While practically their administration has been condemned, even by members who support them in other respects, they take the opportunity of further postponing all necessary legislative reform under the plea that the House is not in a condition to give them a reasonable trial. A certain vote recently taken in this House, which affected their reputation for administration, did not in any way affect their policy, and I think they should have brought some of their measures forward, which are of extreme urgency, before they appealed to the country. I do not wish to say too much about the referendum proposed by the Ministry for the reduction of members. We consider that the proposal of the Government to substitute the referendum instead of a Bill dealing with the matter was merely putting off the question in response to the request of the ruling body who supports them. It is very well known that many hon. members opposite are entirely opposed to any reduction

in their salaries and to any reduction in the number of members, though there are one or two members opposite, like the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Grant, who promised to support a reduction of members. But the majority of the Labour members are strongly opposed to any reduction of members, and I think they are very glad indeed to have this opportunity afforded them—by an appeal to the country—of avoiding any settlement of this matter. They know perfectly well that the country is in favour of this reduction, and I think the Ministry are just as desirous as the Labour party are of avoiding this issue under cover of an appeal to the country. Now, if there is to be a referendum at all, there are many matters which are more worthy of laying before the electors in this way than the question of the reduction of members. There is one matter which very strongly affects the Treasurer: that is, the question of whether we should sell our railways or not. We lose between £300,000 and £600,000 a year through our railways. I know it is the settled policy of the country that the railways here should be controlled by the State, and I am not prepared to advocate now any alteration in that system till the electors have had an opportunity of expressing their approval; but I think there are very grave reasons why this matter should be laid before the electors for their opinion and decision. I should like the hon. gentleman to have arranged, in this appeal to the country, that the question of a referendum as to whether we should sell our railways or not should be included. I am perfectly sure that if the results of that referendum were in favour of selling our railways the present Treasurer would find himself in a very comfortable position indeed with regard to our finances. It is questionable whether we can afford to bear the loss which is accruing every year on our railways. There may be no desire on the part of any Treasurer or Minister for Railways to make the returns from our railways more or less than is right or proper, but it must be kept in mind that in times of adversity the railways being a large spending department necessary expenditure may be deferred, and thus apparently show a better net return from railways that year. Sir Hugh Nelson found it necessary to adopt this plan, but the reduction made by deferring expenditure was no indication of the real economy, for it necessitated increasing expenditure in subsequent years. The economies effected through such deferred expenditure by Sir Hugh Nelson—whom I think everyone will admit was an able and careful Treasurer—could not be continued, and rendered necessary a far greater expenditure during the time of the Ministry in which Mr. Philp was Premier. I think there were some hon. members on the other side who then sat on this side who said that the money saved through Sir Hugh Nelson's economies would have to be spent later on. When I came down with my first deficit of £528,000, the hon. member for Leichhardt said that he did not find so much fault with the Government on account of their expenditure, for he considered the expenses incurred were necessary and were the result of economies of previous years. Now, the people of the country should have an opportunity of saying whether they think the time is ripe for our railways to be handed over to private enterprise or not, and when the opportunity offers I will give the electors reasons why I think in the interests of the State our railways should be handed over to private control. This could be made a question for a referendum which would be of a much more legitimate character than a referendum on the reduction

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of members, on which the country has already spoken. I am sorry that this House has not had some understanding from the Ministry with regard to their intentions in connection with the recommendations of the Public Service Inquiry Board. It has been pointed out that the suggested reductions in the salaries of civil servants are not only contrary to the spirit but to the actual letter of the Public Service Act. I know there are several cases where very grave injustice has been done; and I would be very sorry to see the Ministry perpetuate the injustices recommended by this board. I will mention one case within my own knowledge. In the Treasury Department there was a very able accountant—Mr. Fowles—and he was not receiving a commensurate salary for the work he did, and nothing like what accountants in the other departments received, and during my time as Treasurer his salary was raised by £100, notwithstanding the retrenchment that was necessary then. There was over him the chief clerk, Mr. Bourne. The board recommended Mr. Fowles for an increase of £50, and also recommend a reduction in Mr. Bourne's salary. I say that the Public Service Inquiry Board were not competent to deal with the qualifications of that officer. They may

[9 p.m.] get some idea of the amount of bookkeeping and correspondence.

but they could not possibly form any idea, in the short time they had to do their work, of the administrative capacity of the various officers. The Act says that an officer's salary shall not be interfered with because some particular work he is doing is not worth the amount he is receiving; he is to be removed to another position where he will earn the value of his salary. It is a cruel shame that these officers should have been reduced at this rate, contrary to the Public Service Act, and without any opportunity being given to this House to say whether they approved of the alteration or not. I trust that under the circumstances the Minister will not give effect to these alterations, which are against the law, without giving the House an opportunity of expressing its opinion. [The TREASURER: What is the opinion of the House?] [Hon. R. PHILL: As expressed during the debate, it was that the public service inquiry was no good.] With regard to the elections, it will be necessary for the Premier to endorse candidates who support him, but he will be unable to endorse any candidate until he has consulted the leader of the Labour party or the Trades Hall. I know of an intending candidate who wishes to support the Morgan Government. He has been introduced to the Premier, and the Premier was unable to give him an answer. We can quite understand why. The endorsement must be first approved by the authorities I have mentioned. Are we to hand over the Government of this State to the Trades Hall? [Mr. TURNER: What ridiculous nonsense you are talking.] It is not long ago that the Treasurer fell out with the Trades Hall, and I dare say his independent character will not submit to Trades Hall dictation. The Labour party are altering their planks according to the exigencies of the situation. At one time they held a meeting at which it was decided that there should be no private railways constructed in Queensland, and they consistently voted against them. What do we find now? The people are crying out for railways, and, under the declared policy of the present Government, if railways are to be constructed at all they must be constructed by private enterprise. The Labour party, fearing they will be

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defeated at the polls, have declared that they will not vote against the wishes of the people—have withdrawn that particular plank, and declared themselves in favour of private enterprise. Then, again, with regard to the alienation of land, for years past the Labour party have been bitterly opposed to it. Now, when in office, we find that they have quite recently sold a large amount of land by public auction, one lot realising as much as £25,000. If we live long enough we shall see them abandon a good many more of their planks, not for the sake of the development of the country, but to keep their party in power. There is no member in this Chamber who has a greater sympathy with labour than I have. I have been identified with labour ever since I entered political life, now many years ago, and I care a great deal more for the prosperity of the people at large than I do for the prosperity of the few. But while I say that, I recognise that the great thing the country needs and the working man needs is capital—capital which will find employment for labour, and give opportunities to those who have now no opportunities. Notwithstanding what may be proposed by the Treasurer in the way of redeeming prickly-pear country, and in this way finding work for the unemployed, I think something different is required. There are many people at the present time who are not able to obtain employment, many persons who have families dependent upon them, but who are not fit for the work of eradicating prickly pear. There are other kinds of work they could do if the opportunity were offered to them, and I think we are beginning to recognise that if we are to find work for those persons it must be work in which they can be profitably employed. To do this we want capital. Where is that capital to come from? I quite agree with what the Treasurer has said from time to time in regard to the inadvisability of increasing the public debt in order to find work for the unemployed. We must, therefore, by every means in our power encourage those people who have money to come to Queensland for investments. To do that we must show them capital will be protected in Queensland, and that it can be invested here with safety, and with a prospect of profit. But I do not think we can expect capital to come to the State while the Labour party and the Treasurer maintain their present attitude towards capital. I know of many thousands of pounds that would have come to this State for investment and have afforded remunerative employment to men who are now walking about the streets and the country, were it not for the policy of the Labour party. I feel very deeply when I know of cases of hardship where people who are willing to work are unable to obtain employment because the money that would have helped to find them work has been driven out of the State. The other day the Treasurer, in speaking on the annual statement of accounts, indulged in a little self-glorification. I congratulate him on the improved state of our finances, and for anything that he has done towards bringing about that improvement I am willing to accord him every credit, but I think that in this instance he has glorified himself at the expense of others, and has not given credit where credit was due. The hon. gentleman, when making his Financial Statement in October last, and comparing the actual revenue received during the three months ended 30th September, 1903, with the actual expenditure for the same period, stated that there was a nominal deficit of £162,000. The hon. gentleman further stated that the revenue for those three months ought to get full credit for a due proportion of certain periodic payments of revenue which were

not received in the first quarter, but were likely to come in before the end of the financial year, and that the allowance which should be made for such periodic payments of revenue amounted to £93,550, which reduced the deficit for the three months to £68,724. The hon. gentleman did not, however, as he said he would, give full credit for the periodic payments of revenue. When I brought in my Estimates in August last year, he said that in his opinion we were over-estimating the revenue very considerably. Amongst other items he mentioned the receipts from the railways. I forget what the amount was, but he said we had over-estimated the revenue from the railways to a very large extent—I think to about £70,000 or £80,000. [The TREASURER: That is with reference to the first three months' expenditure, and that is absolutely correct.] That is what the hon. gentleman said—

Now, take the hon. gentleman's estimate from railways of £1,350,000. That is £109,000 more than last year, and it is even £33,000 more than was received the year before. [Mr. HARBAGE: The largest in the history of the colony, except one.] [Hon. A. S. COWLEY: One of the most vulnerable points.] As a matter of fact, the only hope the Treasurer can have in this matter is the promised flourishing condition of the farming districts round about Brisbane.

[The TREASURER: What are you quoting from?] From *Hansard* of 18th August, 1903—from your speech on the Financial Statement. [The TREASURER: Before the change of Government?] [Mr. J. LEAHY: Yes.] He goes on further to say that these figures I gave were altogether unreliable. Now, after the hon. member had gone to the Treasury himself and occupied the position of Treasurer, what do we find? He reduced it by £20,000. He makes it £1,330,000 instead of £1,350,000. [The TREASURER: And he did not reduce it enough.] In October last year he under-estimated the proportionate periodic payments on his own basis by £20,000 on the railways, which would have made the supposed deficit £48,000 instead of £68,000. I also pointed out at the time, and repeat it again, that you cannot estimate the year's expenditure on the result of any quarter's expenditure. There was one department under my control in respect to which I will give a little illustration to show how unreliable his figures were. That was the Government Printing Office. In that September quarter we had to pay the expense of printing the federal rolls, also the cost of two large linotype machines costing nearly £2,000, and the supply of paper for the whole year. It cannot be just to assume that the quarter including these payments on account of the Government Printing Office would be a fair basis for the expenditure of the whole year. The whole thing is perfectly absurd. The hon. member knows perfectly well that there were certain economies arranged for by the Ministry during the year which would not show in the first quarter. I showed last October the figures given by the Treasurer were absolutely erroneous. The hon. member for *Carpentaria* referred to the matter also, and gave a complete refutation. The Treasurer simply repeats the errors he made then, and takes credit for having done so well. He is rather given to quoting masses of figures not really bearing upon the point, though he endeavours to make them do so. I will just quote another statement. He says that in 1901 and 1902 the late Government spent £1,000,000 more than was spent five years previously. I have already stated that the policy of deferred expenditure adopted at the earlier period he names necessitated increased expenditure later on. I will give the hon.

member another illustration, which will help to prove the fallacious character of the Treasurer's figures in a very marked way. If we take the expenditure for the year 1899-1900 instead of 1901-2, we will find that the expenses of that year, instead of being £1,000,000 was £1,200,000 more than it was five years previously, and yet notwithstanding this enormous increase in expenditure what did we have that year? We had a surplus of £47,788. The Treasurer can make figures prove anything. If he takes figures in the way he has done, he can prove anything he likes. We know perfectly well from the table I am now quoting from he can prove quite contradictory things. He is misleading in his figures, and does not use them in a fair way.

In another place he said that in [9.30 p.m.] the year 1899 the Philp Government had a surplus at the end of December of £341,000, but by the end of the financial year that surplus had decreased to £47,000. He attempted to prove from that that the Philp Government during the last six months of the year had created a deficit of £294,000. That is to say, he took the surplus of £47,000 which existed at the end of June from the surplus of £341,000 at the end of December, and stated that that made a deficit of £294,000 for the six months. The hon. gentleman ought to have known, if he did not know, that the best part of the revenue comes in during the first six months of the year, principally on account of the pastoral rents. We always expect to have a large surplus in December, and—unless prior to the passing of the Income Tax Act, we had a fairly large surplus at that time—we knew that we were pretty certain to have a deficit at the end of June. Yet the hon. gentleman piled up figures in that way to try and make things look as black as possible against the Government which was in office before him. Then, again, he referred to the large amount of unforeseen expenditure in that year. He said that there was unforeseen expenditure to the extent of over £500,000, including revenue, loan and trust funds, yet, notwithstanding that such a large amount of unforeseen expenditure would actually increase the deficit very much, the total amount of expenditure that year—including that unforeseen expenditure—was less than the net amount approved of by Parliament. [The TREASURER: I pointed out that it was the first year in which that had happened.] The hon. gentleman made a great deal of capital out of the unforeseen expenditure with the idea of damaging the previous Ministry as much as he could, but the hon. gentleman said nothing about some of the items which were included in that unforeseen expenditure. We had to spend more than £150,000 on our contingents. That was one of the causes of our deficits. We had to pay all the expenses of the Royal visits—the visit of the Duke of York and the visit of the Imperial troops. We also had an outbreak of bubonic plague that year. All these items helped to swell our unforeseen expenditure. Not a single member of the House took exception to any of those items at the time, and yet the hon. gentleman now seizes those figures and uses them in such a way as to convey to the House and to the country that the Philp Government were guilty, not merely of extravagance, but he tried to throw out the insinuation that they were guilty of something worse than extravagance. The hon. gentleman, in the statement he made at the end of the year with regard to our finances, said that the late Government saved only £3,000 on their estimate during the first three months

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of the year, the present Government saved £6,000 in the next three months, and in the six months after that they saved £82,000, and he goes on to argue from that that therefore they practically saved at the rate of £164,000 a year. I have already shown the fallacy of the hon. gentleman's argument by an illustration from one department—the Government Printing Office. In that one department alone, the expenditure for the first three months might very fairly be reduced by over £6,000. On the three items of linotypes, printing the federal rolls, and the supplies for the twelve months, and those amounts ought really to be distributed over the whole twelve months. If that were done, it would make a very material difference in the hon. gentleman's figures. I have not the figures by me, which the hon. gentleman might turn up for himself, with regard to the cost of printing the federal rolls. I mention this one department as an instance of the way in which the hon. gentleman dealt with the expenditure, and it is only one of many such instances that might be given. There is one matter I would like to refer to, but I shall refrain from doing so, as I believe I should be out of order, as it deals with what took place during a previous debate during this session. I may, however, take another method of referring to it. What I allude to is the statement made by the Treasurer with reference to the purchase of a certain property by the late Government. There have been remarks made in various papers with regard to the matter, and it has been made to appear as if there was great carelessness displayed by the late Government in connection with the transaction, if there was not something worse than carelessness. I would like to say something about it, that the public may better understand the matter. The facts are as follow:—I am referring now to what has been said outside the House. The land was purchased from the Church of England authorities for £30,000, and when it was paid for it was charged in error to revenue account. The payment not having been authorised by the House, it had to be transferred to unforeseen expenditure, otherwise the Auditor-General would possibly have refused to pass it. The Treasurer seemed to infer that it had been authorised previous to payment, but it was not so. When the circumstances came to my knowledge while I was Treasurer, I told the Under Secretary that it should not be charged to revenue; that we had a tangible asset the payment for which should be charged to loan account, and by my instructions it was so charged. I think it only fair to explain that, because what has been said in the House has caused the remark to be made in various places that not merely carelessness, but something a great deal worse, should be charged against the late Government in connection with that transaction. I am quite sure any action I took in connection with the matter in putting it right would have been taken by the hon. member for Rockhampton himself if he had been Treasurer at the time; but I would not, under any circumstances, have attempted, as he has done, to use this as a weapon to damage the reputation of a political opponent. I feel I can hardly allow the proposed vote to pass without asking the Treasurer to give us some idea of what he considers the financial position of the State is before Parliament is dissolved. I think we are entitled to that information, and that we should get it under these special circumstances. I should like to know from the Government whether they have any expectation of being able to balance the finances without the aid of the Special Retrenchment Act, and whether they intend to propose additional taxation. If the latter is

[*Mr. T. B. Cribb.*

their intention, I think we have a right to be taken into their confidence before they appear to the country, so that we may lay before the electors some idea of what the prospects are, and what are the intentions of the Government with regard to financial matters. I think we are justified in asking the Treasurer, when we get into committee, to give us a full statement, so that hon. members, when we go to the country, will be able to put our ideas of the financial question before the electors.

Mr. J. LEAHY (*Bullo*): As the hour is getting late, I have not risen for the purpose of occupying very much time; but I have two reasons for rising. One is that I want to get some information from the Government which I hope I can get by means of a question, and the other is to say a word in reference to some remarks which have been made from the other side of the House with regard to my connection with charges which have been made this afternoon by the hon. member for Cook. [The PREMIER: I was not alluding to the hon. gentleman.] The hon. gentleman's colleague, the Secretary for Lands, got up at a later stage, and said it was reported that I was behind the hon. member for Cook, and the Premier did not contradict him. I have only to say that I can do my own quarrels without getting the hon. member for Cook to do them for me. I never ask a man to do my quarrels, and I never undertake another man's quarrels for him. A man has no business in the House if he cannot take his own part. That is the position I take up. It was reported in *Hansard* three weeks ago that the hon. member for Cook interjected, "Are you going to refer to Toolburra?" I knew all about Toolburra nine or ten years ago, and I said I was not going to refer to it. It was a colleague of the Premier's who told me and a great many more about the matter. But nine or ten years ago is a long way back. I can assure the hon. gentleman that I had nothing whatever to do with inciting the hon. member for Cook to bring the matter forward, and I should not have referred to it had the hon. gentleman not distinctly referred to me. I will let that pass. I want to know now from the Government what steps they intend to take with regard to the destruction of rabbits? The danger has been drummed into them as far as drumming will do it, but they do not appear to realise the great necessity there is for dealing with the question. I never could impress on any Government before the late Government came into office the danger there was in connection with this matter. [The PREMIER: Not even on yourself.] When the Government, of which I was a member, were in office, there was hardly a rabbit alive in that country. It was impossible to travel there, and the mails had to be run by canals. The rabbits, in fact, were nearly all exterminated, but they breed very rapidly. We put the sum of £10,000 on the Estimates, to be paid over under the control of the rabbit board, bad as the times were, and it was given to the rabbit board every year. Can hon. gentlemen opposite say that they have given anything to the rabbit board this year? [The PREMIER: We spent it.] They are giving £5,000 instead of £10,000, and the rabbits are overrunning the country. There has been a reduction of £12,000 in the schedules, and most of that has come out of the amount voted for the destruction of rabbits and marsupials. [The PREMIER: You allowed the rabbit boards to permit the fences to tumble down.] It was absolutely impossible during the drought to do anything. You could not get tucker in that country. There was nothing alive there; but we placed that money on the Estimates. Why did not the hon. gentleman allow the boards to spend it? [The TREASURER: Did the whole con-

ditions suddenly change as soon as you left office? No, we put £10,000 on the Estimates and intended to give it to the boards. [The TREASURER: Why did you not give it yourselves? We were only two months in office afterwards, and they did not want it then. They wanted it as they went on with the work. The rabbits will be overrunning the Darling Downs next. [The PREMIER: They are there now according to some people.] The hon. gentleman apparently knows all about it, and I can assure him, if he does not, this rabbit question will wake him up very soon. A rabbit was brought down here the other day which was caught at Dalveen, and, if they come a little further south, the question will then become a big national one, no doubt. [Mr. TOLMIE: There was a cargo sold in George street to-day.] I hope they did not come from the Darling Downs. I have seen cartloads of rabbits sold down south. [The TREASURER: Your complaint is that we did not spend the £10,000 you placed on the Estimates?] You may have paid it since the 30th June. I have looked up the *Gazette*, and I went to the Treasury and found that the figures I have given are correct. [The TREASURER: I think you will find out that the £10,000 has been spent.] Not up to a few weeks ago. I found out that there was a saving on the schedules of £12,000, and if the Government hand over to the boards the extra £5,000 they ought to have received, it may do some good until the House meets again. I know that the Treasurer is anxious to say something, and I am quite willing to give him an opportunity. I do not wish to detain the House more than a few minutes longer. I am one of those members who did not speak on the Address in Reply. [The PREMIER: You spoke on both.] No, I spoke only on the amendment with regard to the maladministration of the Government, and I regret that I had not sufficient time to go fully into the history of the crimes of the Government. I did not refer in any sense to the proposals of the Government with regard to the coming year, and I have no intention now of blocking the business of the country in any way. I shall be very glad if the Treasurer will get up and give us some assurance that this question of the rabbits will be grappled with. I can assure Ministers that it is the biggest question that Queensland has got to deal with. And it has got to be dealt with. If the matter is not grappled with, rabbits will soon be all over the Downs and other places. [Mr. LESINA: We have also rats.] [Hon. R. PHILP: There are plenty on your side.] No matter on which side of the House we sit, this is the biggest question that we have to grapple with. It was a big question when the country was heavily stocked, and the rabbits had not so much to live on; but it is worse than ever now, when the pasturage is good, for rabbits, like other animals, breed in proportion to the quality of their feed. In bad seasons they do not breed to the same extent, and a great many die from starvation; but in a good season like the present, when we have country devoid of stock and waving meadows of grass and herbage, if we do not grapple promptly with this pest, there is no saying where they will not spread to. I know that there are gaps in some of the fences, but these gaps should have been dealt with long ago. Heavy rains seven or eight months ago broke down parts of fences, and they have been allowed to remain down. Tenders have been called for filling some of the gaps; but that is not enough. There must be continual supervision, or else the rabbits will come in wholesale. It is no use talking about the past, except an example to be profited by in future, and we have to deal with this question now. The mistake in

the past has been that too much time has been taken up before acting, and all the while the rabbits have been advancing. We must act immediately in this matter. I trust that the Premier will realise that prompt action is necessary, even for the sake of the Darling Downs, which at present seems to be the most important part of Queensland. It will be much better from the Darling Downs point of view, if we fight the rabbits where they are now, than fight them when they get on the Darling Downs. I trust that this matter will receive the immediate attention of Ministers.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER: I beg to move that there be granted to His Majesty for the services of the year 1904-5, a sum not exceeding £480,000 towards paying the expenses of the various departments and services of the State. I have not taken part in this discussion previously, because it seemed to me to be very much in the nature of electioneering. I understood that hon. members opposite were addressing their constituents—[Government members: Hear, hear!—and I had no wish to interfere. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You had better try and be civil.] [Hon. R. PHILP: He couldn't if he tried.] I think I am civil. I think it was excusable for hon. members opposite to make electioneering speeches. [Hon. R. PHILP: We don't want you to suggest excuses for us.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: If you want fight, you will get it quick and lively.] I do not see that it is necessary for members on this side to waste the time of the country in making electioneering speeches. I do not think they need to do that. When the House dissolves and we get to the country, no doubt we will all have a few remarks to make, but until that time comes I do not think it is necessary for us to make electioneering speeches, and consequently I have no intention of dealing with the large number of statements which have been made any further than I am compelled to. The business before the Committee is very simple. The Governor has decided to dissolve Parliament, and the Government ask for Supply for two months, so that the public service can be carried on while the general election is being held; and now that we have been permitted to get into Committee of Supply we have only to consider the amount to be granted. The Premier has made it very clear that the Government, in asking for what is practically two months' Supply, have made a [10 p.m.] demand for the absolute minimum that could be asked for to carry through the elections in something like a week, or perhaps even two weeks, less than the general election took two years ago. [Mr. J. LEAHY: No.] The figures given by the Premier, when he was speaking, made it rather better than a week less than the general election took two years ago. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Not the election, the return of the writs.] The whole period I am speaking of until the House meets again. That may possibly be reduced by two days, or by a week, and therefore the Supply we are asking for is based on the assumption that the elections will be carried through in that time, and that members will be able to reassemble here at the end of September under either the present or the new Government, if hon. gentlemen opposite are so fortunate as to have the confidence of a majority of the electors. So I do not think there can be much cavil made about the amount which the Government are asking for. A number of speakers—the leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Townsville, and, I think, the hon. member for Toowoong—have appealed to me to say something

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about what are our intentions with regard to one thing and another—as to what was our financial policy for the new year. [Hon. R. PHILP: I never asked you that.] The hon. gentleman referred to the Special Retrenchment Act. [Hon. R. PHILP: I wanted a special promise from you on that matter; we do not want your policy.] I can assure hon. gentlemen that if they do not want to hear me I will sit down. [Hon. R. PHILP: I never heard of a Treasurer giving his financial policy now.] Do I understand hon. gentlemen opposite do not want any information? [Hon. R. PHILP: I do not want any.] Does the leader of the Opposition? [Hon. Sir A. RUTLEDGE: We do not want information that has already been given; we want some information.] I have no objection to giving hon. members opposite as much information on this matter as I have, although it is very little. I think they will understand quite clearly that it would be somewhat improper for me to attempt to make anything like a Financial Statement under the circumstances, and a garbled Financial Statement would be worse than if I had gone carefully into the matter and left it a provisional Statement. In the meantime, as they know quite well, the Government have not had the opportunity of preparing a Financial Statement for the House. It is the fault of the hon. gentlemen opposite—it is perhaps wrong to say the fault—it is the accident of the period of the financial year during which this political crisis has taken place which has prevented that being done. Hon. gentlemen are well aware that it would have been quite impossible for the Government, during the last two or three weeks, to devote attention to details of any of the Estimates, when from day to day they were—[Hon. R. PHILP: I thought they were all ready.] The hon. gentleman pays the present Government a compliment that he was never able to pay his own Government if he thinks they have the Estimates ready by the middle of July. I think it will be apparent to anyone, from what I have said, that it is unreasonable for members of the Opposition to ask the Government for anything like a financial policy—for anything like a detailed estimate of what the position is likely to be next year. [Hon. R. PHILP: We do not expect it.] The hon. member for Carpentaria manifestly expected it, and asked for it, and he gave a great many figures to show that the Government would be behind next year by £200,000. I say this—although I am not speaking authoritatively, and although this is not my final word on the matter—but it is fair enough to say that, as far as I know—as far as I can guess now—my opinion is, despite the hon. member for Carpentaria, that the revenue this financial year instead of being less than last financial year will be greater. [Hon. Sir A. RUTLEDGE: From Customs?] That was one item. There were a number of other items, some of which will be less; but I think on the whole—I say this with diffidence; I would like to give another week or two to the matter before I am more positive about it—my opinion is that our revenue this financial year will be better than it was last financial year. [Hon. R. PHILP: It ought to be.] The hon. member for Carpentaria did not think so. I hope that, as we were so near avoiding a deficit altogether, we will have a small surplus next year. I would just like to say this: Hon. members opposite, as well as hon. members on this side, will, no doubt, be pleased to learn that the statement published in the newspapers on the 2nd July was incorrect to the extent of nearly £13,000. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Have you only found that out now?] The hon. gentleman is only finding it out now. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I found it out a week ago.] [THE PREMIER: In what respect did you find out it was

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incorrect before the Treasurer informed you?] A mistake was made by an officer of the Treasury Department in crediting to a trust account a sum of money which should have been entered to revenue account, so that the revenue for the year was short credited by about £13,000, and the deficit for the year instead of being £25,000, as I stated it would be, is £12,424. [Government members: Hear, hear!] Hon. members will no doubt be glad to hear that. [Hon. Sir A. RUTLEDGE: Do you expect to get another windfall to the tune of £60,000 from succession duties to help you along?] No; but I should be very pleased if some of the hon. gentleman's rich friends would die to give us a windfall, though I do not know of any who are sick just now. We shall of course receive considerably less revenue from stamps next year than we received this year. However, I do not think it is proper for me to speculate very minutely about the possible financial position next year. As I have already said, I cannot do so with any kind of authority, and it is better that I should not say anything about the matter until I can do so with authority. There is one thing the Government have been often asked about to-night, and that is with regard to the matter of special retrenchment. We have had a great deal of weeping by friends of the civil servants opposite on the hardship of retaining the Special Retrenchment Act. The hon. member for Toowong and the hon. member for Maranoa were very pathetic on the matter of the robbed civil servants. [Hon. Sir A. RUTLEDGE: I did not say anything about robbed civil servants.] The hon. member for Toowong actually showed us to-night that the retrenchment effected by the present Government only amounted to £5,555, and yet for two months we have been denounced as cruel and helpless in our business of dealing with the civil service, and that by gentlemen who only two years ago proposed to take £100,000 a year off these same civil servants in one act. They did not exactly do it—the amount was between £35,000 and £96,000. But now, because an election is coming on, or for whatever reason it may be—[Mr. J. LEAHY: You have a good season now.]—they are very much concerned about whether the civil servants are to be relieved of this intolerable burden which they placed upon them. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Is that all you have to say on the subject?] I sat very patiently here to-night and did not say a word, and now when I venture to speak for a few minutes I am not allowed to utter a couple of sentences without objectionable interruption from the other side of the Chamber, which manifests—if the hon. member for Bulloo will permit me to say so—a good deal of intolerance. I have no objection to interjections that are germane to the subject, but I do object to hon. members attempting to bully me by interjections. [Hon. R. PHILP: You are the biggest bully in the House.] I am not a bully. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Of course, if you don't want to get your business through you can choose the proper course.] Will the hon. member permit me to say this? [Mr. J. LEAHY: Yes; as long as you conduct yourself properly.] Thank you. It seems to me that hon. members opposite would have been much wiser men if they had allowed this business to go through on the voices. With regard to the special retrenchment, about which so much has been said, I had hoped a month ago that the Government would have been able to see their way to repeal the Special Retrenchment Act when they brought down their financial policy, which would probably have taken place at the end of this month or the beginning of August. [Mr. J. LEAHY: It expires; you do not want to repeal it.] The hon. member for Bulloo knows that it would not expire at the beginning of July, but would go on till the end of September, and

he also knows that the civil servants have to thank himself and his colleagues for making it impossible to deal with this question in the Financial Statement by the beginning of August. If there is no chance of the Special Retrenchment Act being repealed instead of allowing it to lapse at the end of September, hon. members opposite are responsible for that. I am not sure that the Government would have been able to do that, but I say that it was the wish of the Government to do it, and I had strong hopes that it would have been able to do it. That part of the financial policy which we should have laid before the House when the Financial Statement was made would have been the repeal of the Special Retrenchment Act, and the reason for that was this—ordinary people both inside and outside the House can understand this quite well—that the Government did their very best to bring down the civil servant to what we consider bedrock requirements. Where it was possible we reduced salaries without any pretence about it—without any pretence that it was temporary—we reduced the cost of the public service to, as I have said, what we considered bedrock. Some hon. members think it was below that, but in any case that is what we tried to do; and that being so, it follows as a necessary consequence that we should pay them the salaries that we thought they ought to get, and that we thought their work entitled them to, without any such heavy retrenchment as this £100,000 a year. That was the idea of the Government on the matter. The Government were not certain—could not possibly be certain until they had their Estimates practically completed—whether they would be able to repeal the Special Retrenchment Act for the first quarter of the year, but I do not think any of us had any doubt at all that we would certainly not renew it. [Government members: Hear, hear!] I have no idea at all, nor do I think any member of the Government has any idea, that there is the slightest prospect of our renewing the Special Retrenchment Act. I only regret that circumstances have happened so as to make the repeal of it impracticable. I do not think I need say any more on this matter. [Hon. Sir A. RUTLEDGE: Do you expect the increased revenue will cover the loss of that £100,000, together with other losses?] I think the effect next year will be that we will be able to do without that. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Do you propose to renew the income tax?] You surely know what the policy of the Government is with regard to the income tax! [Mr. J. LEAHY: No, I do not; I know I shall oppose you all I know.] I know that, too. Practically, he will oppose everything this Government proposes to do. [Hon. R. PHILP: He is taking a leaf out of your book.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: You opposed it.] I think what I opposed was the poll tax. [Government members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. J. LEAHY: You voted for the poll tax last year instead of opposing it.] If I understand the situation clearly, hon. gentlemen opposite are very sorry they did not take my advice on that matter. [Government members: Hear, hear!] They are very sorry they did not allow the poll tax to be killed. [Mr. THORN: Who has paid the poll tax up to the present time? How many have been exempted from it who had a right to have paid it? You could have got thousands of pounds.] I hope the hon. member for Aubigny will understand that I have nothing at all to do with exempting people from the poll tax. [Mr. McMASTER: It is not a poll tax.] Yes, it is. I do not think there is anything more I require to say, except to move the motion.

Hon. R. PHILP: I hope I shall not take three-quarters of an hour to say nothing, like

the Treasurer has done. I did not expect a financial statement when he is only asking for two months' Supply, but what he ought to tell us is, how he intends spending that money among the civil servants. [The TREASURER: The Premier has told you that twice.] No, he has not. [The TREASURER: Yes, he has.] There are three classes of people to be dealt with. There is a class the salaries of which the public service commission have recommended should be decreased. The other class is not touched at all. Then there is another class in which the salaries have been increased. The Premier told us increases would not be paid until voted by the House. That is the usual thing to do. Men who have not been touched at all were paid last year. What about those men whose salaries have been reduced? Does the Government intend to act on the recommendation of the commission, and pay them the reduced salary? [The PREMIER: Yes.] Well, that is information. [The TREASURER: I said the Premier told you that two days ago.] I said very little while the hon. gentleman was speaking—he claimed the floor of the House. I think the Government ought to pay those men the same as they got last year, because this House has said practically—one-half the House—that the commission were wrong, and should not have recommended those decreases. There is a typewriter—a girl—and £2 per annum is taken off her salary. There is Mr. Bourne, in the Treasury—whom the late Treasurer quoted to-night—£30 is proposed to be taken off his salary. I know he is an excellent officer, and he has been unfairly treated by men who came into that office who knew nothing about their business, and did not pretend to know. Then Mr. Rendle, the Registrar of Friendly Societies—a man who is held in the highest esteem all over Queensland by the friendly societies. He gets less pay than any other man in a similar position in any of the other States. A reduction of £30 is recommended off his salary. Is his salary to be restored? I think this question might be fairly answered. I would advise the Government to pay everybody according to last year's salary, until they make up their minds to bring their Estimates before this House with the decreases. I understand that some deputations have waited on the Ministers about some of the men. I think the salary of the taxing officer, Mr. Baynes, was recommended to be reduced, but I understand the Attorney-General is not going to decrease his salary. We ought to know whether some favoured men are to get their salaries back, or whether all should get it back, because the discussion has clearly proved that that commission did not do good work: that their advice was bad and should not be followed. That is all I intend to say on that matter. Then there is another matter. I want to congratulate my friend the late Treasurer on the way the Estimates came out, as he prepared them last year, and I want to congratulate the present Treasurer on having made a mistake of only £130,000. He predicted a deficit of £192,000. Now it is only £12,000, so that he has only made a mistake of £180,000. [Mr. DUNSTON: He said at your rate of expenditure.] He reminds me of a friend of mine, who did not do much work, but one day made £10. He came to another friend and said, "Look here, I am making at the rate of £3,650 a year." Those are the kind of statements the Treasurer makes. He made a ridiculous statement in this debate about how I had squandered money the second half of the financial year. The first half of the financial year is always best, as everybody knows.

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and the second half is always the worst. [The TREASURER: This year?] Well, of course we have a new man at the head of affairs altogether. [Government members: Hear, hear!] He is compelled to pay more money the second half than the first half of the year, and it may be he has postponed the pastoral rents till the last half of the year. I am sure the squatters would be very glad if he does. But if you look back for eight or ten years, you will always find a larger amount of revenue collected during the first six months than the last. That is easily accounted for, because the pastoral rents come in in the second quarter of the financial year; and every man in business knows that the business done between [10.30 p.m.] between 1st July and 31st December is from 10 to 20 per cent. better than the business done between 1st January and 30th June. That also is easily accounted for, especially in regard to country business. I have had some experience of that kind of business in my time. You can do no business at all in some parts of North Queensland between January and March, as it is raining all the time, and teams cannot travel. Then again, all the wool is taken off between July and December, all the sugar is crushed, and the harvest is reaped in those six months. In fact, nearly two-thirds of the business in Queensland is done between 1st July and 31st December. You cannot make a correct estimate for one, two, or three months. You have generally to wait until the very last month of the year to know how the accounts are going to turn out. Wiser men than the present Treasurer have been Treasurers in Queensland before Kidston came. Some of the Treasurers we have had during the forty-five years we have had representative government in Queensland have known far more at finance than the hon. gentleman is ever likely to know. He has made several statements, but, when you come to dissect them, there is nothing in them—like his speech to-night—three-quarters of an hour taken up with a long, dreary, doleful speech. He told us he had nothing to say, but we knew that. We did not expect a Financial Statement. We only wanted to know how he proposed to spend the money for two months, and he has not told us that. He asks for £350,000 for salaries, £30,000 from trust funds, and £100,000 from the loan fund account. Well, I am sorry that he is not going to pay the officers what they were getting last year, because I think that those from whose salaries £2, £10, and £30 in two cases, and other small sums like that, should not have those reductions made without a discussion in this House. I do not know why £2 should be taken off an unfortunate typewriter. The board seem to have recommended it simply to justify their own appointment, because they say distinctly—[The TREASURER: You think it would be better to take off a nice round sum like £100.] They say distinctly that the service was not overpaid or overmanned. [The PREMIER: Not appreciably.] Well, that is the same thing. They make recommendations for advances in certain cases, while they recommend reductions in other cases to balance each other, evidently. I think some of the increases recommended will not be passed by this House. It would be very unfair if they were. In fact, I think it very likely that the next House will take up the position that, until there is some other commission appointed, or Ministers themselves go through their departments and give good reasons for increases or decreases, no in-

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creases at all shall be paid. If I come back here, that is the position I shall take up—that no increases shall be paid to anybody until we have good reasons why these capable men have been reduced. I look upon Mr. Rendle as a man better worth £500 a year than some men in the service who are getting £500, and who are recommended for increases. We have heard now how the £350,000 is to be spent, and I regret exceedingly that it is proposed to make these reductions now. The trust moneys asked for will not be sufficient to buy an estate, and the £100,000 loan money will not permit the Treasurer to go in for a spirited public works policy such as he recommended the late Government to undertake some two or three years ago. [The TREASURER: We are not likely to take the late Government's advice in that respect during an election.] I am not going to give advice to the Treasurer. I remember at the time of the last general election the hon. gentleman headed a deputation to me—a most unseemly thing to ask, I thought. When I went to Rockhampton, he met me some 25 miles from the town with a request for a municipal loan. I told him so then, too. [The TREASURER: That was not exactly what you told me.] What? [The TREASURER: That it was an unseemly thing.] Well, very near it. Of course, we know that things are very bad just now, but I think the prospects are better this year than they were last year—ever so much better. I hope the sugar crop will take up a lot of the available surplus labour. The Treasurer thought, when he was on this side, that the late Government had a special duty to perform—that was to initiate what he called a spirited public works policy. At that time we were spending £1,000,000 a year out of loan. The present Treasurer does not propose to spend more than he spent last year—£600,000. Personally, I think that is quite enough to spend; but it only shows how a man's opinions change when he gets on to the other side of the House. [The TREASURER: Hear, hear! You are on that side now.] No man sitting on this side ever fumed and talked so much about finance as the hon. gentleman, and of how money ought to be spent. Now that he is over there he is very cautious, and I am very glad he is. He prefers to put people on to out prickly pear now. [The TREASURER: It is a good thing you mentioned you were glad, because we would not have suspected it.] I do not understand that remark at all. However, I am not going to take up the time of the House. I am sorry the hon. gentleman is not going to restore the salaries that were so ruthlessly reduced by this public service commission, and which in some cases were altogether unjustifiable. [The TREASURER: That is five times.] I am not in the habit of speaking five times about anything. Perhaps I speak less than any man, and, besides, I am not in the habit of interrupting the Treasurer as he interrupts me. I was very glad the Premier gave us to understand that the Special Retrenchment Act would not be reimposed. Of course, with reference to the remark of the Treasurer that we prevented them from repealing the Act, everything the hon. gentleman says in this House we have to believe, but nobody outside believes it. [Hon. Sir A. RUTLEDGE: He did not give us a positive assurance that he would have repealed it.] When I remarked on the Address in Reply that I was very glad to see it omitted from the list of Bills, showing that, evidently, it was not the intention of the Government to reimpose it, I

was met with the interjection. "Who told you so?" from the Treasurer. [The TREASURER: Well, who told you so?] Nobody told me so. [The TREASURER: Well, you had no right to assume it.] I have as much right to assume anything as the Treasurer—no one assumes more than the hon. gentleman. The fact that it was not included in the list of Bills mentioned in the Governor's Speech was an indication to me that it was not intended to reimpose it, although I certainly think it was in the Treasurer's mind to reimpose it—[Opposition members: Hear, hear!]-although he now tries to get out of it by saying that he would have repealed it. I am quite as believing as most people, but I would not believe that statement of the Treasurer, and people outside the House will not believe it either. However, I am very glad that the Treasurer is satisfied with two months' Supply. Personally, I would not have objected to three months. It shows, at all events, that the Premier is anxious to get to the country and come back again as soon as possible—one of the few evidences of sincerity that he has given since he has been in office. I am sorry that he has not taken steps to reduce the number of members. It has been done in the other States, and ought to be done here; and if no steps are taken before we dissolve, nothing can be done for three years. That I do not think is a fair thing to the country. But perhaps he can justify it to the electors by telling some plausible story. I would make another appeal to the hon. gentleman in reference to holding the elections on Saturday. I think he is making a mistake. [Mr. MULCAHY: No fear.] I think so, and I have as much right to an opinion as the member for Gympie. I think it is a mistake to in any way hurt the feelings of any sect in the community. [Mr. LESINA: Hundreds of Israelites attend public functions on Saturday.] If you look at the cables you will see that Russia is trying to get money at present from the Jews of the Continent, and she will only get it on certain terms. Some day the Treasurer may want to go to London for money, and the gentleman who usually guarantees the Queensland loans belongs to the Jewish persuasion, and this proposed act on the part of the Government may affect our rate of interest to the extent of 1 per cent. or 1½ per cent. [The TREASURER: If it will affect us to the extent of 1½ per cent. the Premier ought to consider the matter.] But I know the Treasurer is callous. He cares for nothing and for nobody so long as he gets all he wants for himself; but I hope the Premier will consider the matter. [Mr. DUNSFORD: The Treasurer has done more for the country than all the heaven-born financiers on your side.] What has he done? [Mr. DUNSFORD: He has saved the country thousands of pounds.] Why, in his first estimate of revenue and expenditure he made a mistake of £180,000, and I have abundantly proved to the House that he has not saved anything like the amount he claims credit for. The Premier talks about a saving of £218,000. [The PREMIER: No; £118,000.] Yes; but the Press tells us he claims to have saved £218,000. [The PREMIER: I cannot be held responsible for that.] The next statement will be that the Government have saved £1,000,000, or very likely we will be told by and by that the Treasurer had a surplus last year. I suppose it is no use talking any more about the amount to be voted. The Treasurer has made up his mind that he is going to take from the civil servants the amounts which the inquiry board recommended should be taken off. I think that is a

mistake. It is only a very small matter altogether. In fact, I think the increases almost come to the amount of the decreases, and a great injustice will be done to very deserving men if these recommendations are carried out.

Mr. CAMPBELL (*Mornton*): I take the opportunity of asking the Secretary for Agriculture what are the intentions of the Government in regard to the resolutions arrived at by the fruit conference? The papers were tabled on the 22nd June, and the association in my electorate is very much concerned about this matter, and have asked me to ascertain the views of the Government with respect to these resolutions. They are very much alarmed about the proposal to retrench Mr. Voller. They regard him as one of the most indispensable officers in the Agricultural Department, and from my knowledge of him I can endorse that statement. I would like to have some assurance on these two points. Will the resolutions arrived at by the conference be reconsidered, because certain associations hold that they were arrived at too hastily, and that great injustice and damage will be done to the fruit industry if they are carried into effect. It will be necessary to bring about some amendment of the Diseases in Plants Act, but I should like the opinion of the Minister in regard to these matters, which are of great importance to my district.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*): The question of administering the Diseases in Plants Act has been one of very great difficulty, and in order to ascertain the opinions of those immediately interested, a conference was held in the month of May, the report of which has been placed on the table. The desire of the department was that district boards might be established, so that the fruitgrowers in the immediate neighbourhood might have local government with respect to controlling the inspections, and the fees that might be levied in respect thereto, but that was outvoted by the conference, and a decision was arrived at to levy a tax of 2s. 6d. per half-acre and 5s. per acre on fruit trees. The conference requested the associations to communicate again with the department on matters affecting amendments of the Diseases in Plants Act, and we have also written to the various associations not represented at the conference to ascertain their views with respect to the proposed charges. It is not the desire of the department to inflict charges on the fruitgrowers unless they themselves conceive it to be in their own interests. There is, however, a very large sum spent annually in respect to fruit culture, and I do not think it would be a fair thing to increase the demand upon the consolidated revenue in respect to that industry. We have suggested that an inspection charge upon fruit from Tasmania and the other States should be levied, and such charge would then form a fund for our inspections. South Australia charges a very high fee for inspection of fruit from the other States. Whether that is infringing the Federal Constitution is a matter that requires looking into; but if it does not, I think we will get enough in this way to enable us to employ more inspectors on the staff; but it is not at all likely that any action will be taken during the next coming short session. That is highly improbable for more reasons than one. Time is not permissible, and the answers to our queries are not coming in as freely as we expected. There have also been objections raised against any increased taxation in this direction, and the Government have not the least intention

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of imposing taxation unless the fruitgrowers themselves desire it. [Mr. CAMPBELL: What about Mr. Voller?] It was not considered necessary to retain his services, as the larger portion of his time was taken up on the State farms at Westbrook and The Hermitage, and he was in charge of the orchards. The State farm manager has now full control over them, and it was found to work very inconveniently that an officer could commandeer horses and plant from the manager. The responsibility was a dual one, and as the manager of the State farm is competent to manage the orchards it was not thought necessary to retain Mr. Voller's services; but I can assure the hon. member that the fruitgrowers are not going to be penalised or allowed to suffer for want of an extra officer. The Department of Agriculture is one that the State should not hesitate to spend money upon if good results come from that expenditure. (Hear, hear!)

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution; and the resolution was received and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the TREASURER, it was resolved that £350,000 be granted out of the consolidated revenue, £30,000 out of trust and special funds, and £100,000 from the loan fund account.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions; and the resolutions were adopted.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1.

ALL STAGES.

A Bill, based on the foregoing resolutions, was introduced, passed through all its stages without debate, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that the House do now adjourn. The Government have no further business to bring before [11 p.m.] the House. The Appropriation Bill will be forwarded to the Legislative Council when it meets to-morrow, and when this House meets I presume the Speaker will leave the chair and await the return of the Bill. I do not anticipate that the proceedings will be very long, and in any case we will endeavour to consult the convenience of hon. members as much as possible.

HON. R. PHILP: I understand the elections are to be held on the 27th August. Can the hon. gentleman give the House the date of the nominations?

The PREMIER: I am not able to do that now. I may be able to do so to-morrow—approximately, anyhow. As the hon. gentleman knows, the nominations are in groups, and we have not quite arranged the grouping yet, but we shall endeavour to do so as promptly as possible. It will be very much after the arrangement made on the occasion of the last general election.

Question put and passed.

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

[Hon. D. F. Denham.]