

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 1906

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. T. Bell, *Dalby*) replied—

1. I prefer to extend the privileges of the group system to men who are not already selectors.
2. In the formation of future groups it is intended to exclude females unless under exceptional circumstances.
3. Yes.
4. Five years.

DIAMANTINA RIVER STOCK ROUTE.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

Have the lessees of Kynuna station a depasturing right over the stock route on the north side of the Diamantina River to the east of Kynuna township, and between the river and the town reserve and portions 10v, 9v, and 17?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

No.

OPENING OF WARENDA RESUMPTION.

Mr. HAMILTON asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

About what date will the land resumed for selection purposes from Warenda holding, in the vicinity of Boulia, be opened to selection?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

As soon as possible after the 1st of November, 1906, the date on which the resumption will take effect.

SILVERWOOD DAIRY FACTORY COMPANY.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

Will part of the purchase money paid by the Wide Bay Co-operative Dairying Company to the Silverwood Dairy Factory Company be used to liquidate the debt of £1,150 owing by the Silverwood Dairy Factory Company to the meat and dairy fund, according to the *Government Gazette* of 31st August, 1906?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) replied—

No. The amount due to the Meat and Dairy Board will be liquidated by the Wide Bay Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited.

AGREEMENT WITH THE AUSTRALIAN PASTORAL COMPANY.

Mr. LESINA asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

Will he inform the House how it occurs, if the agreement entered into between the Australian Pastoral Company and the Lands Department was not a secret one, that the people of the St. George district, who are most concerned in the matter, knew nothing of it during the past three years, and only recently became aware of its existence?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

The supposition that the people of the district knew nothing of the matter during the past three years is unfounded. A public meeting to discuss the matter was held in January, 1904.

FRIDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER, 1906.

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

QUESTIONS.

CONDITIONS OF GROUP SELECTIONS.

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

1. Are all persons who have taken up selections from the Government, and still hold them, disqualified from forming one of a group?
2. Can young men and women of over eighteen years of age form members of a group?
3. Will continuous personal residence be necessary by each member of the group?
4. If so, what is the duration of residence?

[*Mr. Maxwell.*]

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Question—That the sum of £300 be granted to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor—stated.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I, in common with other members, desire to express my regret that the Premier is so unwell that he is unable to take his place in the House. I am sure we all hope that the hon. gentleman will have a speedy

recovery, and that he will soon be back in his place to take up the important duties which fall to his office. I am inclined to think that the hon. gentleman has been attempting too much, and if it only points out to him the advisableness of not taking so much responsibility on his own shoulders, it may be beneficial after all. I desire to congratulate him on the condition of the finances of the State. It is, indeed, a matter of congratulation that things have so much improved, and I do not think that there is anything in the Statement which shows the improvement which has taken place so much as that portion on page 7 which shows the relative increases in the varied items therein mentioned as between the years 1903, 1904, and 1905. There is quite enough in that Statement to account for the adjustment of the finances, and I am only sorry that general confidence has not accompanied the very great improvement shown under that heading. For some reason or other there is a want of confidence and a want of enterprise. I do not know if it is because of fear of legislation that may emanate from this Chamber, or fear of legislation that may emanate from the Federal Chamber, but there is something interfering with the confidence of the people, and with that extension of enterprise which one would reasonably expect from an improved condition of things such as this Statement very clearly indicates. Now, I would like to say a word or two about the surplus. The Statement shows a surplus of £127,811 for the last year, and it seems to me that it is extraordinary that we should have a surplus of that amount, considering the large increase which took place in expenditure, and considering the somewhat pessimistic Statement that the Treasurer put before us in 1905. I was one of those members who somewhat sharply criticised that Statement. I thought it was pessimistic in many respects, and I was forced to the conclusion that it was purposely so framed in order to justify the introduction of a taxation proposal which, in fact, was introduced last year, but which was very wisely dropped, or perhaps I would be more correct in saying rejected, by another Chamber. I notice that this year the hon. gentleman has not followed that practice, but has estimated a small surplus, and no proposition is made for further taxation, unless it is to be found in the suggestion which emanates from the Minister of the introduction of closer settlement. We have not yet heard the particulars of that Bill to promote closer settlement, but judging from the references which have been made to it, and from the name which is given to it, I suspect that it will be the Land Monopoly Tax Bill introduced last session. If that is so, I can only tell the hon. gentleman that it will meet with as strong opposition as the Land Monopoly Tax Bill met with last year. I think the hon. gentleman is to be congratulated on his recognition of the claims of officers who are in the receipt of small salaries for increases. I do not think anyone will grudge the younger members of the service the increases which are set down on the Estimates. But all the increases are not to junior members of the service. There are many officers who are in receipt of substantial salaries who are down for substantial increases. While I cannot blame the Government for giving substantial increases where substantial increases are due, it seems to me that system of administration which prevails in Queensland with regard to public servants is by no means a satisfactory one. The increases are not made on the recommendation of an outside board, but are necessarily the recommendation of the Public Service Board, which is constituted by Ministers themselves, and it naturally follows that members of

the public service who are more closely associated with Ministers in the administration of the departments reap the benefit when increases are on the board. I do not think they can possibly help that. When a man comes in contact with a Minister, and shows his ability and his energy, it is only natural that the Minister should recognise that ability and energy. But there are other members of the service who are equally energetic and equally able, who do not come in direct contact with the Minister to any extent, and, consequently, they are sufferers. Personally, I should have liked to have seen some proposition during the session for putting the service on a sound and permanent basis, and I have before expressed the opinion that that can only be done by the appointment of a strong and independent board, at least a board more independent by virtue of statutory provisions than the last Public Service Board we had. Until we have a board of that sort we shall never have a satisfactory and contented condition in the public service. I am almost tempted to say that the system which prevails in connection with the Commonwealth public service more nearly approaches what would be the best system for this State. No doubt the initiation of that system led to a considerable amount of extra-federal expenditure, but the system is working well, and, as far as I can judge, the Public Service Commissioner is not subject to the interference of the Federal Parliament to any extent. It will be a good day for the public service of this State, a good day for the Government for the time being, and a good day for Queensland, when our public service is put on a sound basis, and is independent, to a large extent, of political control. Quite apart from the question of salaries, it seems to me an unfortunate thing that Ministers should have to deal with public servants, not only in regard to the ordinary complaints which arise in such a service, but in connection with matters which impinge upon politics and burning questions of the day. The Public Service Board cannot be absolutely independent when they have to deal with matters of that sort. I am not going to refer to any particular cases. It is probable that, when the Estimates are under consideration, special cases will be discussed, and possibly warmly discussed. But as a matter of policy affecting the taxation of the State, I think it would be a good thing if this expenditure were carried out on the recommendation of an absolutely independent board. With regard to retrenchment, I quite agree with what the hon. member for Bulloo said last night, that we ought not in time of trouble arbitrarily and suddenly reduce the emoluments of public servants, who have entered into contracts on the assumption that they would receive a certain reward for their services. We ought not ruthlessly to cut down the salaries of those officers, and thereby put them in such a position that they are not able to carry out obligations in respect of the education of their children or otherwise which they would have been able to fulfil were their salaries not suddenly reduced. That is a wrong principle, and if by increasing salaries unduly at the present time we are going to get back to that old Special Inquiry Board, or some similar experience, it is an absolutely wrong policy. I do not say that the public servants are overpaid, nor do I say that the public servants who are getting increases are not entitled to those increases. I believe that in the majority of cases they are entitled to increases, but there are a good many officers in different branches of the service who are also entitled to increases, and whose claims are not likely to be taken into consideration for

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some time, if they are ever taken into consideration. It is satisfactory to note that some consideration has been extended to the Police Force with regard to their statutory service increases. We have not had details of those increases yet, and it would be premature to discuss them now. It is also satisfactory to find that the promotions due in the Railway Department are being conferred in accordance with the rules and regulations for the management of that branch of the service. It is also satisfactory to find that there is a restoration, or a partial restoration, of the endowment to hospitals. Upon my word, I am unable to reconcile the restoration of that endowment with the attitude of the Government towards the Brisbane Hospital last year. It seems to me an extraordinary thing that a responsible Administration could introduce legislation of that sort, and endeavour to force it down the throats of the people of Brisbane and the surrounding districts, and then go into the country and point out as a justification for keeping them in office that they had done this to the people of Brisbane, and advise the people of the country to look forward to the 1st March, or the "Ides of March," to see what the Government were going to do to the Brisbane Hospital. It seems to me that the action of the Ministers, supported by the hon. member for Barcoo, was of an extraordinary nature, and it goes to show that their action was very largely directed to the next general election. But apparently, so soon as an election is over, they will break faith, just as they retrenched public servants after promising that their salaries would not be reduced. The Statement, generally speaking, is sugar-coated in many ways, and it seems to me that even anyone reading the Statement who did not know the fact themselves would understand that the general election was close at hand. In many respects the Statement is purely electioneering. Now, I wish to say a few words in connection with the central sugar-mills. That is rather an interesting and a warm subject at the present time. When we look back and find out what the principles were which led to the establishment of these mills, and when we remember the trouble there was in the various districts to get them established, we can recognise clearly how the Government find themselves in the present trouble. People did not quite like giving mortgages over their lands for the establishment of these mills. Some of these people were actually growers of cane. Others were owners of land, and all of them were moved by the more active spirits at the time to mortgage their lands in order that their respective districts should have the benefit of a central mill. I was very intimately associated myself with the establishment of one or more of these central mills, and I know the difficulties which pertained to their establishment. I know that it took some months to get the necessary number of people to agree to the mortgage of their lands before the requisite amount of security required by the Government was obtainable. Men mortgaged their lands who had no intention whatever of growing cane. They did not do it simply because they thought they were going to get a profit out of it. The persons who wanted the mill pointed out to them the advantages of a mill, and that if they did not mortgage their lands they would be clogs on the settlement and progress of the district. They came forward, although they were not actually cultivators of cane, in order that the Government should have the margin of security which was wanted before they would undertake to erect the mills. I know of many such cases. All the cases, of course, are not exactly on the same footing, but I am aware that people mortgaged their lands

who were situated in places where they could not possibly have their cane taken to the mills if they grew it. I know of one or two cases in which the lands were 10 and 12 miles distant from the mill, and in which the Government valuator valued and accepted the land as proper security to the Government.

Mr. NIELSON: That only shows bad administration.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There are all sorts of cases to be considered in connection with the establishment of these mills if we are going to take into consideration individual cases. It was pointed out that a large amount of unmortgaged land is supplying cane. Does that not indicate the initial difficulties which were encountered in endeavouring to get the people to surrender their land? When there are so many unmortgaged areas in the immediate vicinity of the mills, whose owners were not speculative or public spirited enough to come forward and mortgage their land, you will recognise the initial difficulties of the situation, and the cause of some of the present difficulties. It was well known to the Government of the time that many of those men held positions which absolutely prevented them from growing cane, except by letting their land to tenants, but the very fact that these people were induced to come in and mortgage their land shows that they were acting in a public-spirited manner in offering their land as security. I confess I do not understand that paragraph in the Speech which suggests that foreclosure is going to assist in that co-operation which was the principal idea in the minds of the Government of the day when they established these mills. I have never appreciated that in the slightest degree, and it seems to me that the Government have slipped into this position by the arbitrary and high-handed action of Dr. Maxwell. I am rather inclined to think that they would have acted more in their own interests if they had refused to recognise the action of Dr. Maxwell in insisting on this foreclosure. I think myself the Government have raised a very serious position for themselves, and they have unquestionably raised a very serious position for the shareholders of these central mills. Now, what is the position of these mills? What is the position of the Government in regard to them? To what extent has the Government had any authority from this House in connection with these mills? The authority the Government have acted on is that they are the mortgagees representing the State, who hold in trust these properties as security for the amount due, and for no other purpose whatsoever.

Mr. NIELSON: Is that not sufficient authority?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I would not find any fault with the Government if in a straightforward way they endeavoured to recover the money due in cases where default has been made; but if the position of mortgagee is going to be used for a collateral purpose, then it becomes a matter of policy which should be submitted to this Chamber in concrete form in order that Parliament may express an opinion upon it. It seems that an idea has gone abroad that there are some of these owners of mortgaged lands who are not entitled to any consideration at all, and therefore that they should be wiped out and their property given to others who are supposed to be honestly entitled to it. I do not know whether there are any proprietors who are in such a shameful position that they should be punished, nor do I propose to enter into the policy of that; but it should not be left with Dr. Maxwell or the Treasurer to pick and choose amongst the farmers as to whose land they will take, and whose they will not. The Government are parties to an ordinary business bargain; they have mortgages over the mills and various

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lands to secure a certain expenditure, and they have no right to prefer one debtor over another. They have to recover for the State the money due in a straightforward, business-like manner, and they have no right to initiate a policy which will enable them to do something which has never been submitted to this Chamber and never authorised by it. That, I think, is clearly the position, and I think the Government should hesitate before they allow Dr. Maxwell to be the arbiter of the ownership of property of the men who are unfortunately connected with these central mills, and whose action in connection with the establishment of these mills, I think I may add, can only be regarded meritoriously, whatever developments have taken place since. Dr. Maxwell has given notice of his intention to

foreclose; he has also drawn a [4 p.m.] distinction between the various classes of occupiers and owners, and given a series of notices to the various tenants. The Government say that it is not intended to interfere with those tenants in the slightest degree, and that it is not intended to foreclose. If it is not, I cannot understand the position. I admit there are ambiguities in the notice which Dr. Maxwell has sent out, as there are in all he does and all he says. He says to these men, "You come to my office, and I'll then dictate to you something or other, and if you do not there and then carry it out I'll do something else."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He wants them to sign an agreement.

Mr. MACARTNEY: But he does not tell them what that agreement is.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He cannot until after a conference with the men themselves.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman makes a mistake. Dr. Maxwell should have said in the notice that the terms of the agreement would be disclosed at the conference of the shareholders, or something to indicate that the Government were going to be frank and open with the shareholders. Instead of that he goes about in an ambiguous fashion and gives them no indication of what the intention of the Government is. However, the notices are sufficient to indicate that the Government intend to foreclose on certain farmers' lands, and it seems to me that it would be the height of injustice for this Chamber, or the people of Queensland, to allow the Government or Dr. Maxwell to interfere with any rights those farmers have outside the ordinary provisions of the mortgage, unless that question of policy is submitted to the Chamber. The Government are taking these steps just when everything looks prosperous for the farmers, but what is going to be done nobody knows. I repeat that the Government should make a clear explanation of the whole position in order that the thing can be understood by the farmer and the public alike. There are cases, no doubt, where it would be unwise not to foreclose, but these are very limited in number, and have nothing to do with the general policy of the Government. We can only infer from the speech of Dr. Maxwell, which was read by the hon. member for Moreton, what was running in his mind when that foreclosure was proposed. The proposed foreclosure on the farms is apparently a subsequent idea. The foreclosure the Government propose can only be worked out by action or by an agreement with the company, and it seems to me that the Government are laying the foundation for a large amount of litigation with these foreclosures. Before foreclosure can be obtained, an action will have to be brought, a decree will have to be obtained, an account will have to be taken, and an opportunity will have to be given to the mills to find the money due to the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Unless an agreement is come to.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is the position. It will take many months, and when it is done what is to be gained by it? According to Dr. Maxwell's speech to the management of the various central mills, there must be no improper expenditure in connection with the mills. I believe—I do not know it of my own knowledge—that the Government have in one case consented to the construction of a portion of a tramway line not for the benefit of the mill or of the mortgagors attached to the mill, but for connecting it with certain unimproved Crown land; and that the result has been that this unimproved Crown land was considerably enhanced in value, and has been sold at a higher price for the benefit of the Treasury. That may be all very well, and a proper expenditure from the general point of view of railway construction, but it is not a proper expenditure with regard to the persons who are parties to those mortgages. Why should these unfortunate farmers who are to be foreclosed upon be compelled to contribute to undertakings of that sort, which are not justified under the provisions of their mortgages? The Government are mortgagees, and the mills and the farmers are mortgagors having their rights under those mortgages—rights at equity, at common law, and under the Sugar Works Guarantee Act. Why should the Government, or Dr. Maxwell, be allowed to take from these farmers the rights which they have under that simple transaction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They lose the rights.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Government are simply mortgagees. They have the right to go into possession, and to manage the mills; but they must do that with due regard to the rights of the mortgagors; and I submit that they have not got the right to make use of those mills for some collateral purpose, such as the enhancement of the value of Crown land. If they want to do anything of that kind they should introduce a Bill and give the House an opportunity of expressing its opinion upon it. The Government say, "We find ourselves in the position of mortgagees in an ordinary business transaction; we recognise that times are getting better, that certain things have happened that were not contemplated at the time of the passing of the Act, now we are going to do certain things quite outside our power in that transaction in order that we may bring about a different effect." I say they have no right to use their position as mortgagees for collateral purposes. This is the initiation of a new State policy, and as such it should have been submitted in a constitutional way to the Legislature of the State. What is the use of our coming here year after year to look after the interests of the people? We might as well, as has been suggested by an hon. member, shut up Parliament and hand Queensland over to Dr. Maxwell for the next five or ten years. The position is absolutely monstrous, and the height of injustice. It is all very well for the hon. member for Bowen to talk glibly about taking away one man's property and giving it to another. That may be done by legislation; but if the Legislature is inclined to consider such a proposal the Government have no right, by a left-handed kind of procedure, to initiate and carry out what is nothing more than a policy of confiscation, however benevolent may be their intentions. The question of the interests of the State also arises in connection with these foreclosures. I would ask the hon. gentleman in charge of this matter what will be the position when the Government foreclose in regard to

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these mills? We must recollect that while they say they are not going to foreclose on the farmers, the notices that have been sent out state that they are going to do so; and they have created a great feeling of unrest in the minds of the recipients of those notices.

Mr. NIELSON: I think you people on the other side have had more to do with creating that unrest than the notices.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is a very proper thing to create unrest when you find the Government of the day acting arbitrarily, and as reasonable men would not act. Is it not a proper thing to call the attention of the people to it as well as Parliament?

Mr. NIELSON: You are creating unrest outside for political purposes.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If there was not unrest outside it would be unlikely that hon. members on either side of the House would hear anything of it. It comes to us, in the first place, from the people whose rights are attacked.

Mr. HAWTHORN: Does the notice distinctly set out the foreclosure?

Mr. MACARTNEY: Yes. I have the notices here, in some of which foreclosure is distinctly mentioned. Here is one of them—

To the Chairman of Directors, Mount Bauple Central Mill Company, Limited, Tiaro. Sir,—I have the honour to give you notice that default having been made by the mill company in the terms of its mortgage, the Treasurer, who is now in possession, has decided to foreclose on the properties mortgaged to him, and that I propose entering into such arrangements with various growers of cane on mortgaged lands as will enable the supply of cane to the mill to be kept up.

Mr. NIELSON: I think that is very mild.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Here is another notice issued to the individual mortgagors of land, and which is limited to mortgagors who have leased their land—

I have the honour to give you notice that default having been made by you in the terms of your mortgage, the Treasurer has decided to foreclose on the properties mortgaged to him, and has entered into possession of the land mortgaged by you, and that I propose entering into such arrangements with growers of cane as will enable the supply of cane to the above mill to be kept up.

So that it is clear that these printed notices were issued to shareholders conveying to them the intention of the Government, per medium of Dr. Maxwell, to foreclose on the individual farmers. I really fail to understand how it is that the Government deny that it is their intention to foreclose on the farmers. But the point I was illustrating just now was the question of what the position of the Government would be when they did foreclose on the mills. In reference to the mortgaged properties, it seems to me very doubtful whether the farmers would not be discharged altogether. They are practically guarantors of the principal debt, which was incurred in the erection of the mills. The amount of money spent on the mills, however, exceeds the amount advanced by the Government, because considerable sums have been spent out of the profits of the mills in improvements and additions. By means of the foreclosure procedure the Government will secure the freehold in property probably of greater value than the amount of the mortgagors' indebtedness to the Government. Under those circumstances, can it be said that, by means of subsequent action, the Government can come along and, under the covenants of the mortgages, if there are any, foreclose on the farmers in respect to their property? That is a matter which should be considered from the State point of view, and that the Government should hesitate, in the interests of the State, before they take action for the purpose of giving Dr. Maxwell autocratic powers to expend money

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as he likes, irrespective of the rights of the parties, and, probably, for political purposes, at the expense of the mortgagors. The Government should hesitate before they take a step which may materially affect the position in which they now stand, of holding security not only over the mills, but over the farmers' lands. I do not wish to burden this too much, but several instances of the position of farmers have come under my notice, and I must say that, if the Government make any attempt to take from these men the freehold of their farms to give it to other persons, they will be acting the part of confiscators pure and simple, without any justification or moral right, having regard to the circumstances of those particular cases. I am inclined to think that the same remarks apply pretty well to every form of mortgagor to the Government. Dr. Maxwell has already been doing illegal things in connection with the administration of the mills. The case of the extension of the tramline that I referred to is one instance.

Mr. NIELSON: Will you tell us whether the line brought any cane to the mill?

Mr. MACARTNEY: One illegal thing he has done is impounding the money payable by purchasers of land to the vendors of that land out of the proceeds of cane belonging to the purchasers, and which the purchasers had directed the mill to pay to the vendors by instalments. The mortgagors in possession have a perfect right, under the provisions of the Real Property Act, to collect rent, but they have no right to stop out of the tenant's money a part that he has allocated to the payment of purchase money on the land. Dr. Maxwell, to that extent, has been acting illegally by the owners of those lands. The owners of those lands have a perfect right, apart from the merit attaching to their having offered their land as security for the erection of the mills, to expect that money. They have also acted meritoriously in many instances to the mills themselves. I know of one case where a man has over 600 acres, and, although he has not cultivated an acre of the land himself, he has provided a very large proportion of the cane supplied to one of these mills. If the farmers in these districts had not sublet their lands, or sold portions to farmers, at the time of the erection of the mills they would never have got a start at all; and I think the man who has, by his management and by his care, brought a large area of land under cultivation in connection with a mill is entitled to some consideration. I do not think that the men who bought the land would have agreed to give the price they did if they had not seen the money in it by growing sugar for the mills. But even if men have not grown cane themselves, that is no reason why the Government should deliberately distinguish between the men who have mortgaged their lands—probably between the man who has sold the land, the man who has leased, the man who has grown cane, and the man who has meritoriously sold and leased as well. It is a most extraordinary position, and I would appeal to the Government to hesitate before inflicting any greater injustice upon the cane farmers than they have already done.

Mr. BURROWS (*Charters Towers*): I thought that we had heard enough on the central sugar-mills for awhile, and when last night the hon. member for Burke had a little to say on mining matters, and prevented the debate assuming altogether—

Mr. MANN: A sugary aspect.

Mr. BURROWS: I am not going to deal with the sugary aspect; but there are one or two things in the Speech which I would just like to draw attention to. I am pleased to note the fact that there has been a very large decrease in

the amount received from sales of land—that is a good feature in it for me—and I am pleased with the Statement, which is evident on the figures that there was no attempt made last year to raise revenue by the sale of land, and, furthermore, that there is no intention on the part of the Government this year to raise revenue by that means. The hon. member for Carpentaria drew attention to the large amount of land that had been selected under those Land Acts, which provide for the selection of agricultural farms and homesteads, and so on. He pointed out that all those lands were in process of alienation through the method of selection, and twitted the Labour party with not having made an attempt to make any alteration in that direction. The hon. member knows himself that last session we not only made an attempt, but we secured the passage through this House of a clause in the Land Bill which provided means by which these lands could be selected under the leasehold system. Now the Statement points out that it was found necessary to sell certain small portions of land for residential and other purposes, and that the same thing would probably have to be done this year. That is only necessary, or will be necessary, because of the fact that we have no other provision by which these small areas of land can be selected or obtained. There is no provision by which a man can secure an allotment of land on which to build a house or a homestead or a farm, unless he acquires it by sale or selects it as an agricultural farm under conditions that provide for the alienation of the land. I am sorry that no indication has been given by the Government of the intention to introduce a Bill this session which provides for the selection of land under a leasehold system. The Minister promised us this last year, but up till now we have had no indication that the Government intend to redeem this promise by introducing such a Bill. That would be a Bill which I, and I believe a large proportion of members of this House, would welcome, because it would do away with the necessity for selling even these small areas of land. I believe if such a system were introduced it would tend to largely increase our settlement, because we have a great number of men in Queensland who have very little money, and who are anxious to settle on the land, and under a system of leasehold tenure the amounts payable yearly will be so small that the capital they would require to clear their land and make a living upon it would be much less than at present, and if we had a system on similar lines to that introduced by the Government last year, or as contained in the Bill passed last year, which might be made applicable also to allotments, then I believe it would largely do away with the practice now obtaining of selling even these small areas of land. I regret to see that there is no mention of any money being granted for the purpose of further extending the settlement provisions of the 1905 Act, and under which selectors with limited means, or without means at all, would be accommodated by the Government and supplied with land and material, and food in some instances. I know there are great difficulties in the way. I have been to the Minister on various occasions—the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Agriculture, under whose department the 1905 Act is run—and the difficulty is to secure good land in close proximity to railways, or with markets easily accessible. It is no use getting land for settlement of that nature unless it is good and close to a market. I believe the department are willing to do all they can in the matter, but, unfortunately, from what I learnt from the Minister for Lands, he is prepared to give land in any district almost, but the Minister for Agriculture apparently, or

those whom he appoints to make inspection of these lands, have come to the conclusion that, so far as they have been submitted to them, these lands are not suitable.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is because they want to take only the very best.

Mr. BURROWS: They want to pick the very best, and as this land is not very good it would be an unwise thing to put settlements in those places. In Charters Towers the proposed settlers there have been applying to the Minister to secure a group for them up in the Atherton Scrub.

Mr. LINDLEY: The Minister does not believe in Queensland groups. Don't you know that?

Mr. BURROWS: Yes, he does. The Minister has informed me he is prepared to give preference to a Queensland group.

Mr. LINDLEY: You have no chance.

Mr. PAGET: No women ever had any chance at all.

Mr. BURROWS: No women ever had a chance.

Mr. PAGET: They must marry.

Mr. LINDLEY: You must come from New South Wales or Victoria, or anywhere else.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is grossly untrue.

Mr. BURROWS: I do not think there is any ground for such an implication as that.

Mr. LINDLEY: It is quite right all the same.

Mr. BURROWS: My experience shows me that the Minister is quite willing to provide land for Queensland groups, but the trouble is that they have not had sufficient surveyors on for some considerable time. Now they are making an effort to open up these lands, and I am informed that up in the Atherton district they are now preparing plans of lands, which will be thrown open for settlement as soon as possible. One of the difficulties in connection with this is owing to the fact that the previous Government gave away such valuable timber for next to nothing, but the matter having been placed before the House on one occasion the present Government are taking care that the State shall not throw away such timber in the future.

Mr. LINDLEY: You do not know anything about it.

Mr. BURROWS: I have been to the Minister, and this is the information I got from him. It is a very large order to say I know nothing about it. The hon. member himself has said that timber was given away for next to nothing. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. LINDLEY: No, I did not.

Mr. BURROWS: That is what the hon. member said. I have said it myself. I read out, in 1901, particulars with regard to Burns, Philp, and Co. purchasing cedar around Cairns, and the amount they paid for the land was not one-fifteenth the price the cedar was worth honestly.

Mr. PAGET: That was twenty years before the time you came in.

Mr. BURROWS: No, it was in 1900-01. I do not want to enter into a condemnation of the Philp Government on account of the laxity of their administration, or for throwing away land where cedar was growing. I simply want to say this: that, though the selectors have not

been able to secure the land they sought, the department are doing their best in that matter, and one of the difficulties in their way is that they find it hard to get the value of the timber assessed upon the land, because the value of the timber will have to be added to the value of the land. That is one of the difficulties. However, I am pleased to say that I believe that action is now being taken which will remove that to a large extent. One thing I am pleased at is

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the announcement in the Statement that there is to be an exemption of £160 in the Income Tax Act. That is, that those whose salaries amount to £160 will pay nothing, and those whose salaries amount to £200 will receive exemption up to £120.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about the £300 men?

Mr. BURROWS: The tax on £300 will be the same as last year. I noticed with astonishment that the leader of the Opposition and all his satellites who followed after him have all cheered this exemption. They were all in accord with it. What a wonderful change has taken place in the members sitting on that side of the House. We remember that it was not so long ago when the leader of the Opposition declared that the poll tax clause was the only redeeming feature in that Income Tax Act, and now he approves of an exemption up to £160, and his approval in this matter is reiterated by every member on the Opposition benches.

Mr. BARNES: There is a marvellous change in your party.

Mr. BURROWS: What is the reason for this change in members opposite? This is the reason—that there is a general election looming in the immediate future, and they are trying to catch votes. When they introduced the Income Tax Bill they cunningly provided that it should cease in two years. That was just before the next general election was to come on, and, of course, whatever dissatisfaction accrued owing to the income tax, they were going to say to the people: "This was a Labour party measure. They advocated it, and we thought we would try it. We tried it, and it was no good; and we will throw it out." But, of course, things happened after that Act was passed, and the hon. gentlemen who were sitting on this side of the House changed places with the Opposition.

Mr. LESINA: The poll tax was kept going for nine months after the present Government came into office.

Mr. BURROWS: As soon as this Government could do so, they made an alteration.

Mr. LESINA: They did not. They kept it going for nine months and tried to put it on again.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BURROWS: I do not want to go further into that poll tax business. It is a bad thing.

Mr. LINDLEY: You are not game.

Mr. BURROWS: I just want to say that these people who can now see the wisdom of an exemption of £160 in the income tax, now that there is a general election looming in the immediate future, a little while ago said that the poll tax clause was the one redeeming feature in that Act.

Mr. BARNES: Your party sold up people up North to get the poll tax.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Yes, they sold her bedding.

Mr. BURROWS: We did not. The only person who was responsible for the selling up of any individual was the Commissioner of Income Tax.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARNES: It is true, and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. BURROWS: I am surprised that the hon. gentleman wants to try to mislead the House on that matter. I am surprised at the bishop of Bulimba taking such a view as that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. LESINA: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Charters Towers in order in calling a member a bishop?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman is out of order, and when I heard him use the expression I called him to order.

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Mr. BURROWS: I will withdraw the term bishop, and say instead, "my dearly beloved brother." (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman must not make use of any expressions of that kind.

Mr. BURROWS: Well, I will withdraw the expression, "dearly beloved brother," and will get back to the statement the hon. gentleman made that this party were responsible for that selling up. I say this, and I challenge the hon. member to contradict me, this party never sold up any woman.

Mr. BARNES: It is quite correct. The party you are behind did it.

Mr. BURROWS: The hon. gentleman has changed his ground, and says that the party I sit behind did it.

Mr. LINDLEY: The Government did it.

Mr. BURROWS: The Government did not sell up any women, and did not authorise anyone to be sold up. The Government had no hand in it, and the hon. gentleman knows it. Does the hon. member for Bulimba say that the Government sold up any woman?

Mr. BARNES: Practically.

Mr. BURROWS: He is hedging again. He is slandering, or attempting to slander—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is out of order in using such an expression.

Mr. BURROWS: The fact of the matter is this: that the Commissioner for Income Tax, acting on the power given to him by the member for Bulimba and the party he supported, called upon a certain person in my electorate to pay the tax, and owing to the fact that this person did not take any notice of the communication which the Commissioner sent to her she was sold up. That person now knows that had she taken the proper course she would never have been sold up, as she was practically not taxable. It was partly her own fault, and she knows it. Now she is not a lone widow, but she is a fine-looking young woman—(ah! and laughter)—and she has a fine-looking young man for a husband who is well able to look after her, and she is well able to look after herself. But she was not well acquainted with the Income Tax Act, and she was under the impression that as she was not well assessable it was not necessary for her to write to the Commissioner. If she had written to the Commissioner and got the details she would never have been assessed, and this would never have happened. What happened this Government was not responsible for. The power that was given by the Philp Government in the Income Tax Act was exercised by the Commissioner.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Why didn't you stop it, as member for the district?

Mr. BURROWS: I would have stopped it if I had been approached. I know I could have stopped it, because I would have taken the action that would have shown the Commissioner that the person whom he was assessing was not assessable.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Did you apply for a refund?

Mr. BURROWS: Here is another thing I would like to draw attention to. I am sorry that no alteration is going to be made in connection with this timber tax. It is a tax that has operated very badly, particularly in the mining districts anyhow. I brought up this matter some little time ago, and I was reported in *Hansard* to have said that the tax when collected should be paid by the persons who cut the timber. What I said was, that it should not be paid by the persons who cut the timber. I suppose it will be inserted right this time. Perhaps it may have been my own fault in not seeing it put right. What I draw attention to is, that the Govern-

ment have a better method of raising money than this, by instituting a royalty on all gold won from mining leases. I am not going into the details of that matter just now, but there is ample opportunity for the Government to secure revenue from it, and not do it in this pettifogging way which falls on the people who have to go out and cut the timber. These men are in most cases very ill able to bear the burden which is imposed upon them. Then, again, firewood cutters are paying 5s. a month for the right to go out and work like slaves in order to earn a living by cutting firewood. The Ministry would be well advised if they abolished that charge altogether, or made the charge 5s. for the whole year, as in the case of a miner's right. Those people are the hardest worked and poorest paid class of workmen in the State. When the Premier was at Charters Towers this matter was brought under his notice, and he was astonished to find that those people had to pay 5s. a month for the right to work like slaves in the broiling sun in order to earn a living.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They do not earn a living—only a bare subsistence.

Mr. BURROWS: Yes, that is so, and I hope an endeavour will be made by the department to reduce the fee payable by cutters of firewood. The right which is given them for that fee is the right to cut wood for fuel, and the timber which they cut is absolutely useless for any other purpose, and if not cut would fall down and be burned up by the first bush fire that came along. I think a fee of 5s. for such a right is extortionate, and that it is about time it was wiped out altogether, or made a minimum charge for the year. This tax, which falls so heavily on a portion of the community who are so ill able to bear it, only brings into the Treasury £700 per annum.

Mr. LINDLEY: It is the hardest and poorest paid work of any bush work.

Mr. BURROWS: That is so, and yet those individuals have to pay the extortionate sum of 5s. per month as a license fee. I was pleased to see the announcement in the Statement that increases are to be given to junior officers in the service. That is a very necessary thing to do, and many of those who had been debarred from receiving promotion, and the emoluments which follow upon promotion, will receive this intimation with satisfaction. Reference has been made to the higher-paid public servants getting increases. I think that before we think about increases to those who are getting £300 or £400 a year, we should make sure that we are providing a living wage, a decent wage, for others in the service. It is not a pleasant subject to reflect upon, that whereas full-grown men receiving only 5s. 6d. a day are not getting increases, others who are getting £400 or £500 a year are down for increases up to £100. I agree with increases to juniors, and to those whose pay is small, but I think that until we have raised the wages of the lower-paid servants it is not right to increase the remuneration of those who are getting high salaries.

Mr. LINDLEY: Why don't you put in a spoke for gatekeepers?

Mr. BURROWS: I am speaking for all who receives low salaries. The hon. member for Wide Bay can put in his spoke for gatekeepers when he gets up. Reference has been made by some hon. members to the Orient service, and the necessity that exists for the service which will benefit North Queensland. I have received a communication from the Torres Shire Council, Thursday Island, and I believe most of the Northern members have received a similar communication, suggesting that some subsidy should be given to the British-India Steam Navigation Company, or some other company, to carry out a

service *à la* Torres Straits similar to the one we had some years ago. I think the North have a right to ask that the Government should take some action in that direction, because they contribute towards the £23,000 a year which is paid to the Orient-Pacific Company, and the benefit they get from that service is very slight indeed. The hon. member for Cairns referred to another matter, which has been mentioned time and again by Northern members, but to which no reference is made in the Financial Statement, and that is the proposal to establish a Northern benevolent asylum. Northern members have repeatedly brought this matter before Ministers, and I think some effort should now be made to comply with their request. I do not want to suggest any site for such an institution, but if the Government are afraid of incurring any extra expense, I would point out that they have a large number of buildings which might be suitable for the purpose of a benevolent asylum, and by making use of some of those buildings they would avoid the expense that would be entailed by erecting new buildings in some other locality.

Mr. COWAP: Where are those buildings?

Mr. BURROWS: There are the buildings outside Townsville, on Magnetic Island, where they had a quarantine station. Those buildings have not been used for many years, and they could be used for a benevolent asylum. With the prospect there is of things still improving, there ought to be some chance of getting such an institution established in the North in the near future. I have not much to say on the subject of central sugar-mills. An endeavour has been made by members on the other side of the House, who appear to have a brief on behalf of the landowners—landgrabbers I should call them—to discover what are the intentions of the Government with respect to their foreclosure scheme, so that they may be better able to prepare themselves for opposition to that scheme. I do not intend to deal with the matter at all, but I must say that it is gratifying to note the increase in the amount that has been paid to the Treasury by those mills since they were under different management. During the last two and a-half years they paid £51,917, whereas during the previous eight and a-half years under the old management they paid only £28,220. They have got more during the last two and a-half years by £23,723 than they got in eight and a-half years previously. For each half-yearly period they have paid during the last two and a-half years £10,394, as against £1,666 previously; so that they have paid just six times as much to the Treasurer in the last two and a-half years as they did previously.

Mr. PAGET: Exactly as a mine on Charters Towers pays dividends when it strikes gold.

Mr. BURROWS: Not at all. They have not struck sugar at Mackay within the last six months. The analogy of the hon. member is nonsensical. He would have us believe that they have never struck sugar at Mackay until Dr. Maxwell took charge of the mills, whereas they have been receiving money from crushing cane which should have been paid to the Treasurer, and instead of that it has been grabbed by the landholders. I am pleased to see that that is put a stop to. I do not wish to go into this matter of sugar-mills, but I want to draw attention to the fact that the mining members never complained about the money spent on sugar-mills, because they believed they were going to be good for the country, even though they did not pay interest on the money expended. The agricultural members should therefore be lenient towards the mining members when they ask that State batteries should be erected, if not on the same lines, on lines which would be equally as

favourable to the miner. Last year I quoted some figures which I took from the Victorian mines report, which showed that in that State they had fourteen State batteries. There was, of course, a total loss on the working of those mills, but the State has been very well served by them. I do not want to attempt to show that there would be a direct profit from these batteries, but I maintain that the good they accomplish is very great indeed. In Western Australia, as in Victoria, they have had several years' experience of State batteries, and they are so satisfied that they are extending the system. Mr. Jackson was asked to report on this matter in connection with some fields which I mentioned previously, and the figures he gives show that at the 70-mile, and Puddler's Creek, a great deal more stone is raised than is crushed at the battery in Victoria which dealt with the largest amount of stone, and yet he failed to make a recommendation that a battery should be erected. I have seen the figures for 1903, which show that at Creswick, in Victoria, where they crushed the largest amount of stone, 628 tons were crushed for a yield of something like 6 dwt. per ton. Last year—or, rather, 1904—they crushed only about 700 tons for under 6 dwt. per ton. Now, if the 70-mile had been in Victoria they would have had a State battery there years and years ago, but Mr. Jackson does not see his way to report in favour of the erection of a State battery in that locality. I think it would have been a good thing if he had done so, and it would be a good thing if the Mines Department would take the matter into serious consideration and make a start at once. Last year I referred to the high yield given by the stone at Lucky Creek, and the absence of crushing facilities there. I believe that since then private persons have started to erect a battery, but whether it is a good one or not I cannot say. I only know what Mr. Jackson says with regard to the general run of batteries in these outside places. He says they are practically useless, and in no case have they any cyanide plant. That is a great mistake, because if a man has to cart sand he may as well cart stone. At Puddler's Creek they have to cart the stone for 18 miles. There they can produce stone at the rate of 110 tons per month, and the estimate of the Victorian department from their light batteries is 18 tons per week, for a battery which would cost £750. The cost that Mr. Jackson mentions is £2,000, which I believe is for a different kind of machine altogether. What he was referring to probably was a Huntingdon mill, equal to ten head, and there is no necessity for going to that expense.

Mr. MAXWELL: What would it cost per ton for a mill that you say would suit?

Mr. BURROWS: They do not give the cost per ton. No details are given in the Victorian report. They only summarise the actual results. Now I want to give a few extracts which I have taken from the West Australian mines report for 1905. The Secretary for Mines says—

At Lake Darlot mining has proceeded steadily; the revival caused by the establishment of the State battery has been maintained.

Here is a case in which the field was going down. The State stepped in and established a battery, and immediately the field revived and its prosperity has been maintained. He goes on to say—

In the Mount Margaret Goldfield . . . There are five State batteries at work in this field, which during the year have crushed 14,807·7 tons for the public for 21,670·81 oz.

Around Pingin a good many leases have been worked, and excellent returns obtained from parcels of ore treated at the State battery. At Yerri, also, the erec-

tion of a State battery has caused a good deal of mining, prospectors having previously had no facilities for crushing.

At Yerilla, too, a centre that had been practically deserted for some time, the department took over a battery which has immensely assisted mining in the district.

In the North Coolgardie Goldfield there are nine State crushing and cyanide plants, which have during the year treated 24,966·3 tons of ore and 25,860 tons of tailings and slimes for a total return of £118,681 9s. 1d.

All this large amount of money has been distributed throughout the State through the operation of State batteries, and we may presume that but

[5 p.m.] for the erection of those batteries that money would never have been circulated. The mere fact of such

a large amount of money being taken out of the ground and circulated in any State means that that State must derive a great deal of benefit from it. This is one of the indirect benefits which more than compensates for the deficiency of interest on the capital expended. The report goes on to say—

The number of State batteries has been increased annually since 1893, when the system was first inaugurated. At the end of 1905 there were 29 batteries working as against 22 at the close of 1904, and 24 cyanide plants and ore slimes plant as against 13 cyanide plants and ore slimes plant, a tin-dressing plant having been worked in both years. The number of stamps had increased by 61, as compared with 1904.

Here we see that they have been increasing year by year notwithstanding the fact that those batteries have never paid interest on cost, and until this year have never paid working expenses. Indeed they are hardly paying working expenses yet. And yet the people are satisfied that the indirect benefits more than compensate for the apparent loss. The report goes on to say—

To the end of 1905, 314,176 tons of gold ore have been crushed, the gold resulting therefrom being valued at £1,314,629; 165,470 tons of tailings, returning gold to the value of £155,801 and 9,222 tons of tin ore giving tin to the value of £10,557. The total value of gold and tin recovered by State plants was £1,510,767.

The tonnage treated by State plants has been increased year by year, 85,018 tons having been milled during 1905 as against 71,616 tons in 1904; the tonnage of sands and slimes cyanided during the same periods being 61,448 and 43,942 tons respectively.

Then it goes on to show the revenue—

The revenue from State batteries, cyanide, and tin-dressing plants for 1905 has been £82,326 17s. 8d., and the expenditure £78,984 11s. 2d.; the excess of revenue over working expenses being £3,342 6s. 6d.; a more satisfactory result than for several years past.

That is not taking into account the capital cost at all. Yet after seven years they are so satisfied that in 1905 there were seven or eight new plants erected, and they are working now.

Mr. MAXWELL: What was the cost of the plant?

Mr. BURROWS: That is stated in the report—

To the end of 1905, £120,999 6s. 6d. has been spent from loan on State treatment plants, and £87,082 1s. 6d. from revenue, giving a gross total of £217,081 8s., and so far the total results have shown a net loss of £11,090; no account being taken of interest on capital, expenditure, and depreciation of plants.

I take it that the Governments of those States are not devoid of intelligence, and they are quite satisfied that this is a payable transaction from a State point of view. And just as the Governments of Victoria and West Australia have seen the wisdom and the profitableness of this undertaking by continually increasing the number of batteries, notwithstanding the fact that they have never paid interest, and never paid working expenses until last year, so it

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would be wise if our Government made some attempt to institute that system here. The report continues—

In one case assistance was given to put a battery in order, conditionally on its being available for public crushing.

Twenty-five crushing plants were subsidised from 1s. to 2s. per ton, conditionally on their crushing for the public at certain fixed rates. During the year 38,998 tons have been crushed at those batteries.

That is a system which Mr. Jackson in his report favoured, but evidently the Mines Department are averse to the whole scheme, and will not agree even to that moderate proposal. That should be done as well as the erection of State batteries, and there are many places in Queensland where State batteries could be erected on the same principle as in Western Australia and Victoria, with a result very profitable to the State. The report states—

The quantity of stone milled for the year amounted to—

Tons	...	...	...	...	85,018
Yielding, oz.	...	...	...	...	92,327
Valued at	...	...	...	...	£333,013

Average per ton, 1·08 oz.

The stone at the 70-mile averages considerably over 1 oz. without the residues. In Western Australia I take it this would include the amount that is got from the cyanides.

MR. MAXWELL: What is the average cost of crushing at the State batteries in Western Australia?

MR. BURROWS: I have not got the figures by me, but, speaking from recollection, it is about 12s. 4d., and 7s. 3d. for cyaniding. Another practice they resort to in Western Australia is that of buying the sands. They gave £21,289 0s. 9d. last year to owners of tailings—paying 75 per cent. of the assay value of the tailings. There is some difficulty in that, for it all depends on the nature of the tailings. But at the time they made the assay they could also determine what would be the cost of extraction, and they could deduct from the amount payable the extra cost that might be involved in the treatment of such sands and slimes as would pay for the extra cost of treatment. The system has panned out well in Western Australia, and I believe it would do equally well here. I do not say that this will pay, or that it will pay even working expenses. It will never pay here, but the indirect benefits will more than compensate for the apparent loss.

MR. MAXWELL: Have you no regard for the taxpayer?

MR. BURROWS: Hon. members have regard for the taxpayer in certain respects, but not in all cases. I notice the cost of erecting a five-head battery at Yeulla, in Western Australia, was £1,252. If the cost of £750 in Victoria is too low in comparison with Mr. Jackson's estimate of £2,000, here is an instance in which the cost is £1,252. I know that the cost of a battery largely depends on the cost of transport, especially in outlying districts, and that a battery may cost £100 or so more in one place than in another on account of the greater cost of carriage. Still there is no room for believing that such a difference in the estimate is justifiable. I think the batteries in Western Australia crush a very much larger quantity of stone than they did in Victoria, but the quantity crushed in Victoria is considerably less than the amount that could be guaranteed at the 70-mile. At Laverton, in Western Australia, the quantity crushed last year was 985 tons, and at Southern Cross 641 tons. I admit that in other places they crushed considerably more, but, according to Mr. Jackson's own figures, they could guarantee 1,300 tons a year at the 70-mile. The Government would do well to initiate

such a system in Queensland. The hon. member for Burke had something to say last night about erecting a smelter in Queensland, and I know the hon. member possesses an intimate knowledge of these matters which very few hon. members possess. I have received a circular letter, which is signed by Mr. M. J. Cockrell, as secretary of a meeting held at Waverly on 31st July, 1906, and I shall read the following paragraph:—

In the matter of the sale of tin oxide, it has been demonstrated that State buyers do not give within three shillings and ninepence (3s. 9d.) per unit, or over thirteen pounds (£13) per ton, of the home quotations for 70 per cent. ore. There being virtually no competition, sellers are entirely in the grip of the buyers. Ores are almost invariably consigned for absolute sale, mostly in small parcels, consequently the vendor must accept what he is given, and has no appeal or redress. Instances are continually coming to light (more particularly since tin and copper have appreciated in value), where the returns of metallic contents are considerably below the known assay value, so that all confidence in the integrity of the purchasers is entirely lost; consequently a serious decrease in production has resulted, and prospecting for ores has been checked throughout North Queensland.

He points out that the production of these metals is largely in the hands of working miners, several thousands being employed in the industry, and they are practically helpless in the hands of the buyers. He points out that a large quantity of the ores have to be sent to Germany to be treated, and it would be a good thing if the State were to erect smelters to treat the ores here. If the Government do not agree to do that—and I am very much afraid there is not much chance of it—I would suggest that the Mines Department should do what the Department of Agriculture has done in connection with the agricultural industry. The Secretary for Agriculture took over the Cape gooseberry crop, handled it, pulped the fruit, sold them, and returned the profits to the growers.

MR. JENKINSON: And made a loss.

MR. BURROWS: With respect to cotton, he handled the crop, sold it, and returned the profits to the growers. I think it is possible for the Mines Department to deal in a similar manner with the minerals which are being produced by these men.

MR. JENKINSON: There was a loss in both cases you mentioned. Would you advocate a further loss in connection with mining?

MR. BURROWS: I do not think there was a loss in either case. There could not have been a loss, because the department returned the profits to the growers after deducting all expenses.

MR. JENKINSON: There was a loss to the State.

MR. BURROWS: The Government could appoint an officer in the Northern district to take samples of the ores, and pay at least a percentage upon them until they were sold at home or otherwise disposed of, and then the owner could get the balance. I think that, seeing the large amount of assistance that has been given to other industries, the mining industry is entitled to some assistance. It has had very little in the past, and I think the Government would be well advised if they were to act a little more liberally towards the miners in the future than has been done in the past. With regard to the school of mines in Charters Towers, I know they are in need of alterations and extensions, and I do not see any provision made in the Estimates for that. I notice there is a little increase in salaries. An assistant demonstrator has been appointed, who I know is a very competent person, and his salary is a low one; it should be £50 higher. He is doing more work than the demonstrator, and has more pupils under him; but that is a matter we can deal with on the Estimates. I do

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not want to say the Government have done nothing for the mining industry, because they have done something; but I think they should spend more money in the direction I have indicated. There has been a satisfactory result to the State by the batteries, and my contention is that though they may not have paid interest on the cost of construction, and for some years might not even pay working expenses—notwithstanding that fact I claim that the indirect benefit derived therefrom would more than compensate for any deficiency in direct returns.

Mr. MITCHELL (*Maryborough*): I think when we take the Financial Statement into consideration we will find that it is one of the most satisfactory that has been laid before this House for a number of years. We find that both our present and our prospective finances are in a very flourishing condition, and will make the people of the State confident for the future. Taking pastoral, agricultural, and mining industries, and sugar in particular, the returns are expected to be higher this incoming year than ever they have been in the history of Queensland. It is also said that our mineral resources are largely in advance of what they have ever been before, notwithstanding the fact that gold has dropped to a considerable extent. Another thing which has given considerable satisfaction to the people of the State is the fact that the public servants are getting the promotions for which they have been patiently waiting for a number of years. The apprentices also, some of whom have for a long time been going about without boots in order to eke out an existence from the small wages they were getting, are now going to get the advances they are entitled to. The junior officers are also going to get their advances, and all these things make our prospects better than they have been for many years past. Coming to the hospitals, we find that a sum of £14,500 has been set aside to give increased endowment. The sum is not a large one, and I may say that I am considerably disappointed that the base hospitals have not been restored to the position in which they were before the reduction of endowment. The hospital in Maryborough is one that for many years has taken a high standard. It has a reputation not only around the district of Maryborough, but throughout the whole of the State, for work done in connection with it, and previous to retrenchment it was a base hospital, and had a share of the £1,000 which was voted. The district of Maryborough is one that is developing very rapidly, and patients are brought from Kingaroy, Nanango, Eidsvold, Gayndah, and all round about for consultation and treatment to the hospital there, and I think it would be only fair in the interests of the State, and of that particular district, that we should have the base hospitals restored to their original position, as was partially promised would be done when the retrenchment was restored. Then we come to the vote for Dunwich. I think £3,000 is an insignificant amount to vote for such an important institution. I was in hopes that this year, after the debate which took place last session, on the motion of the hon. member for Kennedy, the Government would see their way to take some initiative in connection with this institution. All through we have been simply copying the principle of indigent allowance which has been practised for generations, and it has never been attempted to any large extent, either by this or previous Governments, to make any departure from the old system of indigent allowances. We find the people at Dunwich do not complain very much, but they are discontented, because they feel it is something like a penal settlement. They have been banished from their homes and associations, and have been left at

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Dunwich to eke out an existence on about 5s. 2d. per week. When we see these people down there we begin to question what they are put there for. When we go to St. Helena we know the people there have committed some offence against the country, and are sent there by way of punishment, and banished from their old associations; but at Dunwich we find these old people are suffering from a system equal to punishment, and feeling its influence so strongly that in many instances they cry, and the tears run down their cheeks to such an extent as to almost bring tears to the eyes of those who are listening to them. I think it is time that the Government, or the Minister in charge of the administration, took up some initiative in this matter. I think it may be possible for him to plan out a scheme whereby instead of sending them to an island where they are banished from old associations, a system may be adopted by which each town of the State may be enabled to make provision for its own poor.

Mr. KERR: Poorhouses.

Mr. MITCHELL: I do not mean poorhouses, as interjected by the hon. member for Barcoo, but I should like to see the cottage system established. Another system could also be adopted by which, if old people have relations who are willing to take them in and keep them, a sum of money should be paid to them to prevent the old people from going to Dunwich. These cottages could be built in the various municipalities, and the aged poor left in the towns in which they live, and husbands and wives could be left together. The separation from each other is one of the greatest hardships felt down at Dunwich—the separation of husbands and wives who have lived together for so many years, and are thus deprived of the opportunity of conversing about their families, and the prospects of their children. They have to be sundered, and are only allowed to meet together at long intervals. I think these are things which should be seriously considered by the Minister in charge of that department. Last night the member for Bulloo referred to the fact that the Treasurer need not make any great stir about the small sum he [5.30 p.m.] was not getting, because £50,000 or £60,000 was not of very much consideration. I think if £50,000 or £60,000 in a matter of that kind is not of much consideration, then £20,000, in addition to the present sum that is being spent on indigent allowance, could very well be granted by this country, in its present prosperous state, to give those poor people at least 7s. 6d. a week in place of 5s. I think that this is a matter that should have the earnest consideration of the Minister. What are the aged poor down there? They are not criminals. They are men and women who have spent their best days in giving us the sweat of their brow and in giving us the best blood in their veins to build up what we now call a happy and prosperous Queensland, and I think that instead of allowing them to be kept on the smallest possible pittance, they should be made as comfortable as it is possible for the State to make them. In connection with the income tax, I may say that I am very pleased to see that the exemption has been raised to £160, but I would have liked to see that £160 applied all round. It would then be very much better and much more satisfactory. Now these various things that I have referred to—the promotions, the granting of increased allowances to hospitals, and the small sum of £3,000 for Dunwich—have all being given in the face of a possible deficit from the Federal Government next year of £112,000. I think that when the Treasurer has the courage to give these things in face of a possible deficit from that source, it really shows that he has a

courage that enables him to claim justification for holding the position which he does as Treasurer of the State of Queensland. In speaking about federation, I may say that it has been very much dragged in by leading members on the other side, who have made it appear—and the hon. member for Bulloo said so distinctly—that the object of the Treasurer in bringing the federation question so prominently before this House was purely a political one. He said that the federation was unpopular, and that the object of the Premier in bringing it forward was simply a political dodge. Now, I think that when we view the calm, cool, and calculating manner in which the Treasurer reviewed the question of federation we will see that he did not attempt in any way to make it a political thing, but when we consider the manner in which the federation has been talked of by leading members on the other side we have really to come to the conclusion that it is purely because of political matters that they have taken up this cry at the present time. If we go back to the remarks that have been made by those on the other side with respect to federation, we will find they dwelt at considerable length upon the question of the Braddon clause. We know that in framing the Constitution that there had to be certain fixed sections laid down for the guidance of these States which might be there for all time, and we also know in order to get the consummation of federation within a reasonable time that it was necessary to make some temporary arrangement. Now the Braddon clause was put in as a temporary arrangement. It was distinctly understood that the Braddon clause was making provision for the return of certain sums of money to the States which had become a part of the Commonwealth of Australia. The interpretation which the Queensland people put on that Braddon clause is this: That the amount of money collected from Customs and Excise should be laid aside, one-fourth of that should be kept by the Federal Parliament for federal expenses, and that three-fourths of that amount should be handed back to the State of Queensland. The interpretation put upon this section by the highest authorities is this: That the whole Customs and Excise revenue collected from the whole of the States in the federation should be pooled, and one-fourth of it should be retained for federal expenses and three-fourths returned to the various States *pro rata*. If this is the case—and I think it is only a fair view to take of the matter—there is no need for dragging federation into this discussion so much as has been done.

Mr. J. LEAHY: It was dragged in by the Premier.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Premier simply dragged it in from a financial standpoint.

Mr. J. LEAHY: You admit that he did drag it in?

Mr. MITCHELL: Simply from a financial standpoint, which was that in the event of this system continuing it had a tendency to upset the calculations of the Treasurer when he was making up his Budget for the coming year. I think that was about all that he did. Of course, in doing that he gave details in several tables.

Mr. J. LEAHY: One-third of his speech was made up of federation.

Mr. MITCHELL: No, it was not. A considerable portion of the speech refers to the general financial arrangements of this State, which, fortunately for the Treasurer, and unfortunately for those on the other side, they never thought wise to touch. They passed over these matters and hung their hat on the question of federation. And I may say that, notwithstanding the great attempt that has been made by the various speakers to bring federation into disrepute, we have great reason to be pleased with federation,

because it has given very many advantages to the State of Queensland. In the first place, I may say that I noticed in one of the leading papers the other day it was stated that federation had struck a blow at Queensland—had ruined the sugar industry by the abolition of black labour. Now it is a well-known fact that never in the history of sugar-growing in Queensland has the sugar-grower been in a better position than they are in to-day.

Mr. BARNES: What about the seasons?

Mr. MITCHELL: Of course we have to take the seasons into consideration as well, but along with the seasons we have to take the bounty; and when we are constantly cavilling about not getting our proper return of revenue, we are very apt to forget that the whole of the other States are assisting Queensland in doing away with black labour by paying a higher price for their sugar to enable us to give a bonus to growers of cane at the present time. The Treasurer, in referring to federation, said the crux of the financial problem was in the nationalisation of our State debts. The leader of the Opposition said distinctly that this would be a good thing, but that the Federal Parliament would not agree to it. The hon. member for Bulloo, last night, said distinctly that it would be a bad thing for us to allow our State debt to go out of our hands, and be nationalised by the Commonwealth.

Mr. J. LEAHY: I did not. I said it would be a bad thing to allow the control to pass out of our hands under the scheme which I was condemning.

Mr. MITCHELL: You said distinctly that it would be a bad thing for us to allow the debt to go out of our hands.

Mr. J. LEAHY: I did not. I said under the conditions proposed.

Mr. MITCHELL: There could be no conditions proposed.

Mr. J. LEAHY: You know nothing about it.

Mr. MITCHELL: The hon. member thinks he knows a lot, but if he knew as much as he thinks he knows he would not be sitting where he is to-day. He thinks himself a very clever man, but he has found out—to his great loss, his great concern, and his great annoyance—that there are men in the House who are as clever and as smart as the hon. member for Bulloo. If we allow the Commonwealth to take over the State debts, there is no other way by which the interest on those debts can be paid than by allowing the Federal Government to take possession of our Excise and Customs duties. That would be a necessary corollary, and that was distinctly laid down when the Constitution was being framed. A proposition of this kind was made by the Hon. Mr. Harper, and it was also suggested by our Treasurer, and it is the only clear way out of the difficulty. It is the only way in which this financial irritation which is going on from year to year can be allayed, and I think the sooner it is brought about the better it will be for Queensland and for all the other States. With regard to the influence of federation, I am satisfied that when hon. members on the other side of the House refer to this matter their whole trouble is of a political character. Unfortunately for them, and for other persons holding similar political views, whenever there has been a federal election, democratic members have been returned to represent the States in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr. BARNES: Aren't there many members on your own side who are strongly opposed to federation?

Mr. MITCHELL: I think that is where the feeling comes in. Previous to federation there had sprung up a democratic influence throughout the whole of the States of the Commonwealth,

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and many of those who were in favour of federation then, and who to-day speak so bitterly against it, thought that the adoption of federation would give a big show to the Conservative party to get into power. I remember discussing the matter at the time with a good many who were of that opinion. They seemed to think that the mode of electing senators would go against democracy, but unfortunately for them the result has been that the Senate is mostly composed of democratic members. If it had been the other way, if men of democratic principles and advanced ideas had not been sent down to the Federal Parliament, but that a large number of conservative members had been returned, there would not have been that cry against federation which obtains to-day. They would have been satisfied that federation was a good thing. I am quite satisfied now that it is a good thing, and I think the majority of people throughout the Commonwealth are also satisfied that it is a good thing. The instruction given the other day by the leading paper I have referred to was that we should see that we get a good class of representation. We on this side are quite satisfied with the representation we have got; we are quite satisfied that the men who have gone down there have done good work, but members opposite are not satisfied, and that is the reason for their objection to federation. They expected different things, and they have been disappointed. Is it not very foolish to talk about secession, about withdrawing from federation, as some hon. members opposite have done? How could Queensland remain isolated from the Commonwealth of Australia? The late Mr. Seddon, before his sudden demise, saw that New Zealand had made a great mistake in remaining isolated from the Commonwealth.

Mr. BARNES: Have you anything to prove that?

Mr. MITCHELL: My authority for that statement is that he endeavoured to get a preferential tariff established. From that fact I think I am justified in saying that he began to see that New Zealand in being isolated from the Commonwealth was at a very great disadvantage. We should have been in a very much worse position to-day than we are if we had remained isolated. Had Queensland been isolated from the Commonwealth, our sugar and our fruits would have been very heavily taxed.

Mr. BARNES: There would have been no federation had Queensland not joined.

Mr. MITCHELL: That is a statement that cannot be borne out by facts. I do not think the fact of Queensland remaining out of the federation would have prevented the establishment of the Commonwealth.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: You are the only man in Australia who is of that opinion.

Mr. MITCHELL: I am quite satisfied that the position I am taking up is the correct one. Had Queensland remained out, our agriculturists would have suffered unduly, and before five years had expired we would have been going to the Commonwealth and asking to be made one of the united States of Australia.

Mr. HAWTHORN (*Enoggera*): A great deal of interest has centred round the question of the central sugar-mills, and farmers are very much concerned as to whether they are going to lose their lands or not. The Treasurer, I notice, says he is not going to foreclose on the canegrowers, but I think he ought, if possible, to make the position more clear, so as to give them confidence in the belief that everything is right as far as they are concerned. The mere mention of the word "foreclosure" has greatly frightened everyone who is under mortgage. Stephens in his Commentaries has defined foreclosure as when the mortgagee calls on the mortgagor to redeem

his estate presently, or in default thereof to be for ever foreclosed from redeeming the same—that is, to lose his equity of redemption without possibility of recall. That is why the farmers are so frightened. Although the Treasurer says there is no intention of foreclosing on the farms of the canegrowers, he goes on to say—

Indeed, the action now taken will, it is hoped, enable us at a much earlier date to release the farms from the burden of the mortgages, and to carry out the original purpose of the Act—that is, to make the mills co-operative concerns and worked by the canegrowers.

That seems to have got round among the farmers, and has led them to conclude that they are going to lose their land. If possible, something should be done to abolish that impression. Personally, I have no doubt the Treasurer means every word he says, and will, to the best of his ability, carry out what he says. I am sure he could not expect members to support him if he was going to deprive these small farmers of their holdings which they pledged in good faith to the Government, believing that in doing so they would assist in starting the central mills, and that they would eventually be able to redeem them. Members on the Opposition side have said that they are afraid there is something else behind this, and that the Treasurer intends to take away these farms and hand them over to other men who are not entitled to them, and upon whom he wishes to bestow favours. I do not for one moment think that, and no reasonable man would support the Treasurer in such action. I think it might be possible, by the nomination of a Select Committee, to go into this matter fully, and see what is the best thing to be done, so that the whole position may be put before the House in such a way that members would be fully assured as to the best method of working these central mill properties in the future. I am very much pleased with the Financial Statement as a whole. It is a very intelligible one, and it certainly is optimistic. I think the Treasurer is quite entitled under the circumstances to be optimistic—to look upon our future prospects as being very good indeed. I notice that the returns from the mining industry have improved, but that the gold yield has gone back in value. In that connection it is to be observed that the vote for prospecting is only £1,500. I would like to see that amount very largely increased, for without encouragement being given we are not likely to have any large new discoveries of goldfields. We should make it worth while for miners to go out and search for new fields, which from time to time in the history of the State have done much to assist our finances. I am glad to see the income tax exemption is being raised to £160. I supported on several occasions the raising of the exemption because I consider that any man earning £3 a week should not be called upon to contribute to the expenses of running the State. A man can do no more than live properly on such an income, and we should avoid at all times taxing such men. I am pleased to see that the junior officers of the public service are to get their increases, and am only sorry that they have not been given long ago, as there is no doubt that our public servants are a very deserving body, who will compare favourably with any body of public servants in the British dominions. Although a good many of them are practically routine servants, there are many of them who undertake administrative work which they could not undertake unless they were very well fitted for it. We must remember that the public servants are really the administrators of the State, for, although the Government bring forward programmes, the actual administration is carried out by the public officers; and when we retrench the salaries of the public servants, or stop the

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increase to the salaries, we are not doing that which is likely to lead to the best work on their part. If we want good work done, we must be prepared to pay well for it; and I consider that to in any way underpay the public servants is to risk the chance of getting bad work. I hope we have heard the last of any special retrenchment being made in the case of the civil servants, and that in future they will not be singled out for special taxation in that way. I look upon it as class legislation pure and simple, and legislation which should be avoided if it can be possibly done. Amongst the Bills mentioned in the programme for the session is a Superannuation Bill. I hope that will be introduced and carried to a satisfactory termination before the session closes. The civil servants are very anxious to have a scheme of that kind brought in. I understand, from conversation with a prominent member of the Public Service Association, that a suitable scheme can be started without any cost to the State. The question of advertising the State is a very important one. There is a sum of £3,000 set down for that purpose, to be supplemented by an additional £2,000, in the hands of the Agent-General. I consider that even £5,000 is totally inadequate for properly representing to the world generally the resources and advantages of Queensland. It has been stated that every immigrant we get is worth £300. If we could place the desirability of Queensland in such a manner before the people of Great Britain or elsewhere as to induce 5,000 immigrants to come here, it would add to our material interests a sum of £1,500,000. That is well worth going for. When we see that America last year increased her population by 1,000,000 and Canada by 250,000, we can understand what a very material increase to their wealth was brought about in that way. Here, instead of an increase in the population, there has been a small decrease, as has been the case generally in Australia. That is due entirely to the want of knowledge on the other side of the advantages and resources of Queensland. Canada spent last year £200,000 in advertising, and it behoves us to be up and doing and to spend a very considerably larger sum than £5,000. On the subject of immigration, it would be a mistake to allow the Federal Government to undertake that business. The Governments of each State are the best judges of the requirements of that State, and it would be a mistake to allow the Federal Government to import any immigrants they like and dump them down wherever they like without any question as to whether they are suitable for that particular State. The advantages of Australia over Canada are very great. Although its population is 6,000,000 against our 4,000,000, it does not equal us in any one point. With all its great wheat-growing capacity, Australia exported more wheat last year than Canada did. We exported more wool and more butter, and we have a very much larger amount of money in our banks. I contend that in any comparison with Canada we can show superiority all round. Holding that view, I consider it is our duty to advertise Queensland and advertise it freely, and get what is wanted to make Queensland go ahead—population. California exhibits an instance of successful advertising. There the chambers of commerce and the progress associations are free enough in the way of advertising, and they are backed up by the railway companies, who have a great interest in increasing the population because it results in more people being carried over their lines. Los Angeles is a typical example. A few years ago it was a township with a few small buildings. Now it is a city of over 100,000 inhabitants. Besides

advertising our State, we should also be prepared with land ready for the immigrants as they arrive. If a man comes here desirous to get land, and cannot get what he wants, he goes away dissatisfied, and is a very bad advertisement indeed. We want to offer them facilities for seeing the land, and for putting them on a selection where they want to go. While on the subject of land, I think that far greater facilities ought to be given to the Queensland youth. I have heard of instances where farmers' sons were precluded from taking up land that was thrown open for settlement on the ground that it was set aside for groups from the southern States. That I consider is altogether wrong. We have not only to consider outside immigrants, but particularly the sons of the Queensland farmers—our own people, resident in the State. I hope that aspect of the question will commend itself to the Minister for Lands. I am glad to see there is an increased amount on the Estimates for schools of art and technical education. Technical education is a most important matter, and one which requires a very large amount of attention. We have to compete with countries like Germany, which are spending large sums on technical education. Germany, both politically and commercially, has made very rapid strides within the last few years, due entirely to the amount of attention paid to technical education. We have to consider what each district needs to suit its own particular requirements, especially as applicable to the primary industries. In New Zealand that is taught in the ordinary school curriculum. Something might be done in that way in Queensland, and make it looked upon not as a luxury, but as a necessity. The Financial Statement deals very largely with the question of federation, and it has done it so exhaustively that there is no need to say much about it; but I do say that it is a matter that requires very great attention. There is no doubt that we are not getting our rights under federation. The 87th section of the Constitution Act distinctly provides that only one-fourth of our Customs and Excise revenue shall be retained by the Commonwealth; but, in addition to that, for several years past this State has been mulcted to the extent of about £50,000 in excess of that one-fourth. That is a position that should not arise, especially seeing that New South Wales and Victoria, instead of having a deficiency of that kind, have received many hundreds of thousands of pounds in addition to their three-fourths; so that the position presses most hardly upon the smaller States like Queensland. That will always be the case when we find one set of men collecting revenue and another set spending it. Those who have to collect the money are likely to be much more careful in spending, as they are answerable to the persons who have to provide the money. The federal authorities have not to face irate electors, and so they spend money much more lavishly than they would if they had to account for it to the electors of Australia. What should be done is what was intended should be done—that is, pool the whole revenue and the whole expenditure, and return the balance to the several States on a per capita basis. The Statement also refers to the question of State debts. That is a very big question, and one that could not even be settled by the Premiers of the States meeting the Federal Premier at the various conferences. The Constitution Act provides that the debts in force at the date of the establishment of the Commonwealth—namely, 1st January, 1901—can be taken over by the Commonwealth; but the position has been complicated by two factors. The first is that since the establishment of the Commonwealth the States have incurred a very large

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amount of further debt, and that they have also paid off a portion of the debts incurred before 1st January, 1901; and the question arises whether, on the one hand, the Commonwealth can take over a smaller amount than the debts at the time of the establishment of the Commonwealth, or whether, on the other hand, they can take over any portion of the debts which have been incurred since federation. I do not think anything can be done until there is fresh legislation introduced in the Commonwealth Parliament to enable them to take over the whole of the debts right up to the time of taking them over. I am sorry there is no mention in the Financial Statement about the conservation of water. Although we have good seasons at present, we know that in the ordinary course of events we must look forward to a recurrence of a series of dry seasons. While we have good seasons is the time when we should make provision for conserving some of the water which is running to waste in those good seasons. It is not a question of want of money at all. It is advisable to devise some scheme whereby small dams can be constructed by local authorities in different places, and that could be done on an inexpensive basis. At any rate, I consider it is well worth making an experiment, and the Government should endeavour in that way to assist in tiding over bad bad times. When we do get a drought, a large number of our pioneers are burnt out and have to come in to the towns, with the result that the population of the towns becomes congested, and after the breaking up of the drought the whole process of settlement on the land has to be begun anew. This is a constantly recurring phase of settlement in Queensland, and we should do our best to overcome it as far as possible. In the States of Texas, Colorado, and Kansas, in the United States of America, they have droughts that are far worse than those we suffer from—droughts of six and seven years in duration—and by the conservation of water they have made those States capable, practically, of supplying the whole of the States, and they are able to keep up their supplies at all times. If that can be done in America, we should endeavour to do the same thing here. There is a book published called "The Conquest of Arid America," which shows very clearly what can be done and what has been done in that country in the way of water conservation and how to avoid the disastrous results of dry seasons. I notice there is some reference to a Closer Settlement Bill. I hope it will be founded on the Acts in force in New South Wales and Victoria, which provide that, if the Government require any estate for close settlement, they call upon the owner to fix a price. If he cannot agree with the Government, the price is fixed by arbitration, and at that price the owner has to sell. In that way no injustice can be done to either party. The owner gets a fair value for his land, and it is then available for cutting up purposes. That principle is already recognised in Queensland in connection with land resumed for railway purposes and in connection with local government. Land can be taken from the owner, and the question of value is decided by arbitration. Under a scheme of that sort no question of confiscation can possibly arise, and that is the way in which we should seek to bring about closer settlement. That is the proper sort of Bill to be called a Closer Settlement Bill, and I hope that it is on those lines that the Bill will be framed. I am very pleased indeed to see that the amount of endowment to hospitals has been again raised to 30s. That will obviate the unpleasant necessity of introducing a Hospital Bill such as we were threatened with last year—a Bill that gave rise

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to very great excitement in Brisbane and the surrounding districts, and was looked upon with very great dread by all taxpayers in the metropolitan districts.

Mr. REINHOLD : By the big taxpayers.

Mr. HAWTHORN : By the big taxpayers, and the small ones too. This restoration of the endowment to 30s. will do away with that dread, and will enable the hospitals to get into their former condition. Another question I would like to touch upon is that of endowment to local authorities. I am sorry that no money is placed on the Estimates for that purpose, as I consider, speaking as a representative of a local authority, that the endowment should be restored. The endowment was taken off in bad times, and now that they have improved, either the endowment should be restored or the local authorities should receive an extension of time in regard to redemption and interest payments. Take the case of the local authority of Ithaca, with which I am connected. This year we have to pay to the Government a sum of £2,000 out of a total revenue of about £5,000. In addition to that, we have to carry on the office and keep in order a very large mileage of streets, and it is practically impossible to do it. If the endowment is not restored, it will cause a great difficulty in carrying on. The different local authorities throughout the State are very much concerned over this, and the majority of them have passed a resolution that they desire to have this endowment returned. I may read a letter, dated 13th May, 1906, which was sent by the Bowen Town Council to the Home Secretary, which goes to show the attitude that these different councils take up. [The hon. member here read the letter.] I have a similar letter from a large number of other local authorities—Ayr, Fitzroy Council, Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Cooktown, Roma, and a large number of other places; and their complaint is practically the same. They consider that when they laid out money in constructing roads and bridges it was distinctly understood the endowment should be carried out, and that they should have an opportunity of paying their portion of loans back out of this endowment. That has been stopped, their rates have been run up as high as possible, the value of the properties has gone down, and their income has been very seriously diminished. I hope that the Treasurer will seize the opportunity of returning the endowment or a portion of it, or, at any rate, of allowing the local authorities an extension of time in which to return the moneys that they owe. If that were done, it would place them upon a very much better footing, and enable them to get into a position to pay their way properly.

Mr. BARNES (*Bulimba*) : I desire to say tonight, in commencing my remarks, that I want to join with some other members who have spoken—speaking as a private member, and perhaps as a back-bencher, representing at any rate that class—my sincere sympathy with the leader of the Government in his present indisposition. (Hear, hear!) I think it is due to every man who occupies a prominent position—I think it will be admitted generally that, as far as I am concerned, I do not sit on a rail, and am not afraid of expressing my opinions—but I think that every member of the House should express their sympathy towards the Premier, notwithstanding their political convictions, and I desire very sincerely to say that I join all other members in expressing my regret at the absence of the Premier through illness. In saying that, if anything that I may say subsequently may appear to be in a measure hostile, it will be understood that I am not directing myself against an individual, but rather against the policy of the Government. I have listened very patiently to

the debate, and I followed the hon. member for Maryborough this afternoon more particularly in connection with the inmates of Dunwich. I am bound to say that I sympathise with him to a great extent in some of the remarks which he made regarding those inmates. I believe it would be a good thing if an arrangement could be brought about by which some at least of the old people might be saved from going to Dunwich. There is no question that old people have a distinct aversion of going to Dunwich.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What for?

Mr. BARNES: I am not saying one word against Dunwich. I believe it is splendidly managed, but I have a case in my mind in my own electorate where a woman of seventy-six is practically incurable, and it appears there is no hope of her being able to get into the Diamantina Hospital, and the only thing left is to go down to Dunwich. I find that the objection to going down to Dunwich is due largely to the fact that the people object to being shut out from their friends. There are many old people who count the presence of their friends near them in their sickness as a very valuable asset; and to them it is a very serious trouble to have to be cut asunder from their friends, perhaps for the rest of their lives. I do not agree with the hon. member for Maryborough in thinking that even an allowance would be a suitable thing for every inmate of Dunwich. I am not here in any way to attempt to traduce the inmates of Dunwich or to say anything against the poor, but I think it will be admitted that there are a few people at Dunwich—not very many, perhaps—who are far better off under the care of the officials there than they would be if they were receiving their allowance in the city to do just as they like with.

Mr. TURNER: There are a good many.

Mr. J. LEAHY: I know something about it. What about shareholders in breweries?

Mr. BARNES: Perhaps all those in Dunwich are not as temperate as they should be.

Mr. KERR: There are some abstainers.

Mr. BARNES: I should be very sorry, by inference or otherwise, to say that there are not temperate people there. The hon. member for Bulloo makes an interjection which is not applicable to us who do not own shares in breweries. Perhaps the hon. member for Bulloo does.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Oh, no!

Mr. BARNES: Perhaps the hon. member for Rockhampton also. The hon. member for Bulloo assures me that he is not a shareholder, and I accept that in perfect good faith. I think the hon. member for Rockhampton will be able to explain his position later on. I want to deal for a short time with the Financial Statement as read by the Premier, and I would like to say at the outset that to me it is exceedingly pleasant to notice that, for the first time since this Government came into office, we are not told that there is going to be fresh taxation. I am aware of the fact that when this

[7.30 p.m.] Government came into office it was clearly on the understanding that there was to be no fresh taxation, but one of the very first things they did was to pile on taxation for all they were worth. And this is the only time that they have not come down with some drastic proposals in connection with fresh taxation.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There is the Closer Settlement Bill.

Mr. BARNES: Well, with that exception, this is the first time they have come down without any proposal for fresh taxation.

Mr. TURNER: Don't get angry about it.

Mr. BARNES: If the hon. member for Rockhampton North is in the habit of getting angry, especially when brewery shares fall, he must not think that I also get angry. We have

been finding, in connection with this Government, that taxation is one of the things that they have loved. Even the poor Savings Bank depositors have been brought in, and they must get a little out of the frugal man. With the exception of the Closer Settlement Bill referred to by my friend the hon. member for Toowoong, this is the first time that the Financial Statement of the Government has not been brimful of taxation proposals.

Mr. KEOGH: We are on the eve of a general election.

Mr. BARNES: I can on one occasion remember that the Minister for Lands rose up in his place—and I regret that he is not in the Chamber at present—I remember he rose up—and he is given sometimes to get up very quickly, because he is built that way—and he told us that if we did not accept a certain thing, and then he quoted Scripture. It would be pardonable for the member for Bulimba to quote Scripture, but on this occasion the Minister for Lands used it, and said, "If you do not do so-and-so you will be lashed with scorpions. If you don't swallow our Betterment Bill you will be lashed with scorpions." And he grew quite warm.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Perhaps he will get some of his own beverage.

Mr. BARNES: It may have been done to whip up some of the Morganite following, but at any rate he used those words. I was exceedingly pleased to notice that some members of the Morganite section—Mr. Tolmie, for instance, and Mr. Lindley, who has since come over to this side of this House—went up the North Coast line and said they would not swallow it. Mr. Tolmie spoke at Tiaro, and the hon. member for Wide Bay backed him up. They said: "We have been very foolish, and have been swallowing these things in the past. If these things are again introduced we will take certain action, and we will show that we are independent." They are to be admired for the courage they displayed on that particular occasion, although they were rather late in the day in showing it, and even though it is approaching a general election. There is no suggestion of a land monopoly tax in the Statement on this occasion, except in an altered form. The Minister for Lands has returned to the Chamber, and I would remind him that I was not blackguarding him as an hon. member just interjected, but I was telling the House that on one occasion he told us that if we did not swallow the Betterment Bill we would be lashed with scorpions. It was a threat, a threat that was never realised, but he may carry out that threat at some future period.

Mr. KEOGH: Not until after the general election.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Don't you tremble.

Mr. BARNES: I am not going to tremble, but it might make some members of the community tremble if such a tax was introduced. There is another thing in the Statement which pleases, and that is that the Treasurer has the manliness to admit that he is not infallible.

Mr. FORSYTH: He does not say so, does he?

Mr. BARNES: Practically that. At one time we were told that it was impossible for the Treasurer to make a mistake, although it was quite possible for the late Treasurer, Mr. Cribb, to make a mistake; but as for the leader of the Labour party making a mistake—never! Now, in this Statement we find, as was pointed out by the member for Bulloo last night, that there were two factors which saved the situation in connection with the excess of revenue over expenditure during the last financial year. One factor was the railways, which came to the rescue and accounted for more than the surplus.

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Mr. J. LEAHY : The railways gave £492,000 in three years.

Mr. BARNES : And there was the other factor—that there came from the Federal Treasurer an amount almost equal to the excess of revenue over expenditure. If the Treasurer's own forecast had been in any way realised, then instead of having a surplus we most certainly should have had a deficiency.

Mr. TOLMIE : How could that have happened if his forecast was realised ?

Mr. BARNES : If he had not received so much from the Federal Treasurer and the railways—and he estimated that he would not—his forecast would not have been realised.

Mr. TOLMIE : I ask you if his forecast was realised how could there have been a deficit ?

Mr. BARNES : I remind hon. members that the hon. member for Toowoomba was once a schoolmaster, and he found it necessary to put questions to his scholars. I am not one of the hon. member's school children, and I am not going to answer the hon. member's question in any other way than I have answered it.

Mr. TOLMIE : You have not answered it all.

Mr. BARNES : I am content to say that I did answer it. The Treasurer practically admits—in fact, he does admit it—and it is the first time he has ever admitted it—that the condition of things in Queensland was largely due to the altered seasons. I remember going on one occasion with a deputation to the Premier, and he made a very significant remark. There is no doubt that office makes a wonderful difference in men, and apparently it has made a wonderful difference in the personality of the Premier. Members sitting on this side have been abused—they were abused when they sat on the Treasury benches—but now at last the Treasurer admits that the big alteration in the affairs of the country is a result of the good seasons, and I want to show how that alteration has arisen. It will, I think, be admitted that the increased receipts from the railways have been an important factor in bringing about a surplus. I need not refer to that more particularly, as the hon. member for Bulloo pointed out clearly last night that the revenue last year was largely in excess of the revenue from our railways for some previous years. Then look at the tremendous increase there was in the production of sugar. In 1905 the quantity of sugar produced was 152,512 tons, as compared with 91,828 tons in 1903. The quantity of butter produced in 1905 was 20,319,976 lb., as against 7,717,325 lb. in 1903—an increase of 13,000,000 lb. The increased production of our industries was largely instrumental in bringing about the improved condition in our finances. I do not think any man in the House will deny the statement that our dairying industry could not have reached such proportions unless good seasons had prevailed. But I want to be perfectly frank in my criticism, and, though the Minister for Agriculture and I differ on some political matters very much, I say now, as I have said before, that he has been exceedingly energetic, and has not spared himself, in the administration of his department. (Hear, hear !) It would be unfair on the part of any man sitting on this side of the House not to admit that fact. I do not believe in sitting on a rail, and while I make that frank admission I still differ from the Minister very widely on some matters political, and I do not think we should be the worse friends for that.

Mr. FORSYTH : Have you always differed ?

Mr. BARNES : My friend, the hon. member for Carpentaria, simply wants to draw me—(laughter)—but I have nothing further to say on that subject. Again, in 1903 we produced 34,997,076 lb. of wool, while in 1905 the quantity

produced was 53,072,727 lb. What does that represent, even in connection with railway freights alone? The hon. member for Bulloo and other hon. members will tell you that if there is one thing more than another that the Railway Department likes to carry it is wool, because it pays ever so much better than agricultural produce. The freights are most satisfactory, and in many cases the wool has to be carried a great distance, which is all in favour of the department. Then look at the increase in the number of sheep. In 1903 the number was 8,329,044, and in 1905 it ran up to 12,535,231, and so on through all the items mentioned in the table given in the Financial Statement. These facts all go to show that the altered condition of things is largely due to good seasons, and not altogether to the administration.

Mr. TOLMIE : You must allow something for the energy of the people.

Mr. BARNES : The energy of the people on the Downs is indicated by the energy of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, as instanced the other day by the interest he took in a neighbouring electorate for the good of his own. I want now to refer to another matter, and therein I differ from the hon. member for Enoggera, and that is that, notwithstanding the good seasons in 1904, there was a drop in the population, and in 1905 there was only a very small gain. I do not think the hon. member for Enoggera put his finger on the spot when he said that we were going to advertise the State. Has not the State been advertised largely through the Federal Parliament, in a way which has been most disastrous, not only to this State, but to other portions of the Commonwealth.

Mr. FORSYTH : They are stonewalling there now.

Mr. BARNES : I am convinced that no stonewall there now can do so much harm to Australia as some of the early Acts of the Federal Parliament, more particularly in connection with immigration. Is it any wonder, when they blazed forth to the world that the Commonwealth did not want population, that there should be no increase in our numbers? It seems to me a wonder that people come here at all, because for a time at least—

Mr. LESINA : Where did you get your figures ?

Mr. BARNES : Certainly not from the hon. member from Clermont. Perhaps I shall have the pleasure of appropriating at a later period some of the hon. member's figures and statements. The real reason why there has not been a due increase in the population of Australia was the attitude of the Federal Government towards immigration from the old world. At the same time I quite agree with advertising the State. I believe that the proper course is being taken, provided the money is spent wisely and well. I do not think we can go very far astray in spending £3,000 in advertising Queensland. There has been too much of the talking down of Australia, and what we want is to talk it up, and make people feel that we believe in Australia ourselves. (Hear, hear !) There is another thing I wish to say—and I say it advisedly, and I hope the hon. gentleman in charge of the Government just now will open his ears to it—and that is that we want to leave alone legislation which will have a disturbing influence on the community.

Mr. LESINA : Leave out the referendum on Bible reading in State schools. (Laughter.)

Mr. BARNES : I am going to deal with that at the proper time. We should not deal with any matters which will exercise a disturbing influence on the community, and I say no Government have done so much to disturb capital if you will, as the Government who are now occupying the Treasury benches. Reference is

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made in the Statement to the railways. I will read the reference to which I wish to refer, on page 4—

It might be well to note how the economy in railway management combined with the growing revenue has improved the net returns from our railways. . . . It is pleasing to note so marked and rapid an improvement; and a few years more of such progress will make our railways directly profitable, and may enable us to lower fares and freights to the advantage of our producers without imposing fresh burdens on the general taxpayer.

Now, I desire to repeat here what I said last year, and I believe I am perfectly within the truth when I say that the Government have been starving the railways, and that is borne out by the attitude which has recently been adopted by the Secretary for Railways—and I commend him for taking the action he took—in connection with the building of new engines. Some hon. members on the opposite side laugh at that statement. I noticed the other morning at Roma street a line of trucks coming into the market shed on one side, and although it is the practice for ordinary produce to be unloaded by those to whom it is consigned, yet on this occasion a gang of eight men were employed to do the work.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is rather heavy traffic just now.

Mr. BARNES: I am sure that is the explanation, and it only proves my point that the economy of the department has led to the starving of the railways. I venture to say, as a man who knows something about the working of the railways, that before the sugar season is over the department will be in a complete hole, and we shall have complaints on all hands. We shall possibly have to pay the piper, as we have had to do on former occasions, by spending a lot of money, and making up for what should have been done in the ordinary course. Take my own electorate. Look at the stations along the line. They are a disgrace to the Government.

Mr. KEOGH: Paint.

Mr. BARNES: No, want of paint.

Mr. KERR: What about the places that have no stations?

Mr. BARNES: That is a senseless interjection, because if the hon. member had a house and found it going to ruin for want of a coat of paint, would he say: "What about the other fellow who has no house?" I do not think he would. I say all this is false economy, and that the stations should be kept properly painted and repaired. It is the worst possible advertisement for the State, because when strangers travel on our lines, and find them in this condition, they will say: "Never more this way."

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: What about the freights?

Mr. BARNES: One would be afraid to say much about that, because not long ago, at a deputation which waited on the Secretary for Railways, a threat was made by the hon. gentleman about taking up the rails.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: He was only speaking figuratively.

Mr. BARNES: I certainly understood him to be serious.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said it amounted to a question which was the best policy, to continue the loss or remove the rails.

Mr. BARNES: I am prepared to accept the hon. gentleman's statement, but my impression was that he suggested taking up the rails. Probably the hon. member for Barcoo would do that if he were Secretary for Railways. I would like very much if the Secretary for Railways would think over a suggestion I want to make to him in connection with the Cleveland line. It has been said that it does not pay. I want to point out that I do not think that line gets a

chance to pay; in other words, I do not think the method of financing and charging the debits is fair to that line. Some few weeks ago I asked the hon. gentleman this question in regard to that—

1. What was the cost, including land resumptions, of that section of the railway line from Melbourne-street Railway Station to beyond Park road where it junctioned with the then line from Woolloongabba?

2. How much of the total cost was debited to the Cleveland Railway line account?

3. How much was debited to lines other than the Cleveland line, and, if split up into different amounts to other lines, how much to each line?

And his reply was—

1. £243,330 16s. 5d.

2. £30,750 16s. 4d.

3. £182,580 0s. 1d. was debited against the line from South Brisbane to Southport (including Yeerongpilly to Corinda, and Boggo Junction to Woolloongabba).

I say the amount debited to the Cleveland line is not by any means fair. It is known to hon. gentlemen that the line from Melbourne street not only goes to Southport, but to Beaudesert. Between Melbourne street and Park road is the place where the heaviest expenditure took place. Then there is the line from Ernest Junction to the Tweed. Surely in all fairness,

[8 p.m.] whatever the original cost was, there should be a redistribution of the amount. Is it fair that the Beaudesert portion should not bear some part of that expense? It is very evident that the Cleveland line has not had a fair deal in connection with this expenditure; and I appeal to the Minister, as a sensible man, to look into this matter, and see if it is not a fair thing to debit the Tweed line and the Beaudesert line with a portion of it. I would also draw the hon. gentleman's attention to the case of the women in charge of some of the gates on the Cleveland line. I know women with families who are in charge of those gates and getting the miserable pittance of 10s. a week.

Mr. GRANT: Are not their husbands employed as lengthsmen?

Mr. BARNES: In some cases. But I have in my mind's eye the case of a woman who is a widow with several children. She is receiving 10s. a week. I say it is not fair, and I appeal to hon. members opposite if I am not right in saying that something should be done in a case of that kind.

Mr. COWAP: She wants a better job.

Mr. BARNES: No, she does not. She wants a place where she can live. This woman has never spoken to me once on the subject. The information I have got has come from outside sources. I want now to refer to the overland traffic. I noticed in this morning's *Courier* a reference to a statement in the report of the Commissioner for Railways that there had been a splendid improvement in the overland traffic. We are all pleased to know that. I want to take this particular occasion of saying that, while we are all glad to know that there has been a great improvement, some better provision should be made for second-class passengers. The provision made for second-class passengers on the Southern and Western Railway to the border, though better than it was, is not sufficiently good. I have seen women put into carriages where there were no lavatories, and altogether the business has been a disgrace. It may be a misfortune not to be able to travel first-class, but it is a misfortune shared by the bulk of our population, and they should certainly be better treated than they are. In the interests of the country, and the impressions that are created on people coming into Queensland, there should be an improvement in this particular direction; and I hope the Minister

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will at once take it in hand. I want now to say a few words on the question of expenditure, and again I am sorry the Minister for Lands is not here. I said the other night—and he took great exception to it—that the bulk of the expenditure had been in Ministerial constituencies. The hon. member for Clermont, in an article in the *Worker*, figured out how and where the money had been spent. It is very evident that unless members of Parliament have the proper brand—and the Premier on one occasion said, “Why don’t you return members of that brand”—it is very evident that unless members have proper brands they will have very little chance of getting public money expended in their constituencies. With regard to increases to civil servants on the Estimates, let me say I do not object to a man with a big salary getting an increase—probably he is worthy of it. But when we remember that this Government is supported by a party who are supposed to be dead against any man getting above a certain sum—

Mr. COWAP: Who said that?

Mr. BARNES: The hon. member will have an opportunity of speaking afterwards. It has been frequently said by members of the Labour party that it was not a fair thing to raise a man’s salary above £500 or £600. We find such salaries have been raised, but I do regret very much that there are some people in the service to-day, with comparatively small salaries, who are not getting an increase, although they were recently reduced.

Mr. KERR: There are more £10 rises on these Estimates than ever before.

Mr. BARNES: On some of the Government steamers—which, by the by, ought to be brought under the operation of the early closing Act—there are men who were retrenched three years ago. In the case of one of the steamers men who had 6d. a day knocked off their pay have not had it put on again.

Mr. BARBER: That is quite correct.

Hon. R. PHILP: They have to work on Sundays as well.

Mr. BARNES: Surely, if rises are being given, men of this description should receive some consideration! What surprises me is that it should happen when we have a Labour Government in power—a Government that is supposed to represent the workers

Mr. BARBER: It is not a Labour Government.

Mr. BARNES: I shall qualify that, and say a Government that is supported by Labour. The hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Mitchell, blamed the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Bulloo for referring to federation in their speeches. Surely they were shown the way by the Treasurer in his Financial Statement.

Mr. MITCHELL: I did not blame them for referring to it; I blamed them for referring to it in the way they did.

Mr. BARNES: It is very evident they did not refer to it in a way that the hon. member liked.

Mr. MITCHELL: That is quite true.

Mr. BARNES: I believe, as the hon. member for Bulloo interjected at the time, that the hon. member for Maryborough is the only man in this House who would stick up for federation at the present time, and in that respect he is a very brave man.

Mr. REINHOLD: He is not the only one who sticks up for it.

Mr. BARNES: The hon. member for Brisbane South, Mr. Reinhold, is another who will stick up for it.

Mr. BARBER: Here is another.

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Mr. BARNES: I want to ask the hon. member for Maryborough if he really meant to tell us that he believes the people of Queensland generally are satisfied with federation?

Mr. MITCHELL: Certainly.

Mr. BARNES: Well, I do not think they are.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are against federation.

Mr. BARNES: I have always been against federation. Has the hon. member gone about with his eyes closed? Brisbane is an important part of Queensland, and does he not know that quite a number of factories have been closed here in consequence of federation? Take the boot trade, for instance. I believe I am right when I say that federation is responsible for driving some of the best firms out of Queensland in connection with that trade; and I believe that if a poll were taken to-morrow on the question of federation—

Mr. MITCHELL: There would be a bigger majority.

Mr. BARNES: No, there would be an overwhelming majority against it. I believe that, if secession could be brought about, there are many members in this House who would vote for it.

Mr. KEOGH: Hear, hear! Two-thirds of them.

Mr. BARNES: I wish now to refer to dairying. I notice in the very excellent report issued by the Department of Agriculture that there has been an advance of 16 per cent. in connection with the dairying industry during the past year. The report says that the increase is not so large as in the previous year, and it very properly points out some of the objections there are to dairying, included in which is the constant labour that is required of families. There is no doubt that the work is exceedingly exacting. People are always at it, and possibly that may be one of the reasons why the increase last year was not as great proportionately as in the previous year. I believe that this country is going upon the right lines in connection with the industry, and that the great majority of the fresh stock that are coming into the country are good stock. One of the judges at the last exhibition said to me—and I had no reason to doubt him—“The exhibits in stock at this exhibition far exceed in quality anything that can be seen in the southern States.” That statement was deliberately made, and I think we are going on the right lines. When we remember that last year the value of the output was £455,863, it is seen what a great asset the industry is to Queensland. The greatest care should be taken in seeing that the quality of the dairy produce that is exported is of the very best. I do not think that such a thing should be possible as an experience I had in connection with my commercial life. I received a letter from one of the largest firms in London—I shall be very pleased to give the name of the firm to the Minister if necessary—and they wrote to this effect, “We are exceedingly glad that we did not touch Queensland butter, because this year it has been unsatisfactory.” That was written this year. I think it is quite probable that they were led astray, and I think that that is so, because the quality of our butter has been improving, but I do emphasise the importance of seeing that anything we send away that is of the very best quality, because we know how difficult it is, once a thing gets a bad name, for it to get rid of it. At a time like this everything should be done to encourage those engaged in dairying to conserve fodder. When good seasons come round people often forget the bad seasons, and the result is that when bad seasons follow there are tremendous losses. I noticed in the Rockhampton court in connection with the late exhibition that one gentleman had a magnificent display of grasses, and

I think we should encourage people—indeed, we should urge them—as far as possible to make provision, by cutting the grasses which they have and making them into hay, because they will come in some day in this country, as we are bound to have a dry period again. To the credit of the gentleman who showed that splendid exhibit of grasses from Rockhampton, it furnished an object lesson to every man who was engaged in the dairying industry, and some provision should be made in that direction. I want to put in a word to-night for the man who introduced travelling dairies—we are very apt to forget those men. I think Mr. Thynne had a good deal to do with it.

Mr. PAGET: It was Mr. Hume Black.

Mr. BARNES: The late Mr. Hume Black was one, and there is no doubt that these travelling dairies started a revolution in connection with dairying. In looking through the report, it is pleasing to notice that co-operation is being introduced in connection with this industry, with some little assistance from the State, and with very little risk indeed. The advances to butter factories on 31st December, 1905, was £12,366, and there is practically nothing in arrear, and certainly that money has been a factor in assisting this particular industry. I also notice that there has been an advance to the creameries to 31st December, 1905, of £1,919 12s. 2d. There are nineteen creameries in all. This shows what can be done by co-operation—people pulling together—and I think it will help towards the development of the State to a very much larger extent than many of us think to-day. I want to say a word or two about exporting. We have done a great deal of exporting; we are going to do a great deal more, and it seems to me that the lands on the Downs more particularly will very largely have to give way to lamb-raising, and the Western country used for wheat. I believe the time will come when the valuable lands on the Downs will have to give way to lamb-raising. I am dealing more particularly with exporting to the old country. There is another matter which I want to bring under the notice of the Minister. I can remember when I first came into this House how I was laughed at when I made reference to the export of eggs, as if eggs were something that should be used at election time, and had no other commercial value, hon. members forgetting the great value they are to some countries such as Canada and the United States. Queensland is suitable for poultry-raising, and I believe the quantity of eggs, not only those that are going south now, but the quantity that will, as a result of the increase of poultry, be available for distribution will make it necessary for the Minister to see, when the Torres Straits steamer route is dealt with, that special provision is made for the carriage of eggs in cold storage. I hope that a line of steamers will run from Brisbane *via* Torres Straits to the old country.

Mr. LESINA: If you can get the Minister for Agriculture to sit on the question you might.

Mr. BARNES: If the hon. member for Clermont and the Minister for Agriculture will sit down five minutes and allow the House to look at them fraternising, it will be really good physic for us. If the two of them sit on the eggs, they would soon be hatched. I want to impress on the Government the importance of the lamb-raising. There is no doubt we shall have an opportunity in years to come in making the rich lands of the back country a more valuable asset than they are at present. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Tolmie, made reference to settling the people on the land, and I agree with his arguments. Exception has been taken in this House to the repurchasing of estates, but I think it has been conclusively

proved that most of the estates that have been purchased—I know somebody will interject “What about Seaforth?”—but the majority of the estates which have been purchased have been in the interests of this State.

Mr. MANN: Not in the interests of the farmer.

Mr. BARNES: Settling the people on the land is the most important business of this State. I venture to say that the amounts which have been charged for the repurchased estates have been in the main reasonable and satisfactory to those who bought and in the interests of the State. Not only do we want to put them on the land under the most favourable conditions, but we want to keep them there. The hon. member for Toowoomba stated that some land which is being set apart for selection in the old country is land which is unsuitable. That is a huge mistake if the statement is correct. I noticed in the *British and Australasian*, under date 5th July, 1906, an advertisement pointing out the advantages of coming to Queensland, and it says that a return of the purchase money may be paid, after deducting interest, after five years, if they are not satisfied with the land. If we get people here on land which is not suitable, what will be the effect upon the people who come? It will simply ruin any scheme we have, no matter how well it may be devised, as far as getting them here is concerned, if they are not put on good land. Better put them on land that they can live upon with some prospect of success than on land which is bound to be a failure. That is the trouble in respect to some of the settlements in the past, and we ought to try and avoid it now.

Mr. MANN: That is what the land monopoly tax was for.

Mr. BARNES: The hon. member for Cairns seems to have all the wisdom of the House. Not only should special provision be made for people from the old country, but the people in Queensland should have similar provision made for them. I am an advocate of immigration, but why should we not treat our own people as liberally as those outside? It is certainly class legislation, and legislation which I do not think is fair to the residents of Queensland. I want to deal now with a very serious matter in connection with the administration of [8.30 p.m.] the Lands Department. I do not know whether the Under Secretary is responsible or not, but if any attempt is made to interfere with the courts of justice, whether by the Under Secretary or by the Minister, then a grave wrong is being done to the residents of this country. There is a reference in the annual report of the Under Secretary for Lands to the Land Court, which in my judgment is altogether unfair.

Mr. KERR: That court wants shaking up.

Mr. BARNES: It seems that the hon. member for Barcoo thinks that if decisions do not go just in the direction which he would like he would sweep away judges and everything else in order to accomplish his object. Is that Labour justice? Is that what we have come to—that the Labour party has just to lift up its finger and say, “It shall be done,” and it will be done? I say that when an Under Secretary, presumably at the instigation of the Minister, makes a statement like this—

Mr. KERR: It is not fair to say that it was at the instigation of the Minister.

Mr. J. LEAHY: It embodies the views previously expressed by the Minister.

Mr. BARNES: On page 4 of the report of the Under Secretary for Lands is the following:—

The rents determined by the Land Court were heavy reductions, ranging from 66 per cent. to 18 per cent. below those paid for the preceding period. Under such

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circumstances, and in view of the fact that abandoned country in the same district had been relet at rentals much higher than the re-determinations, it was felt to be a public duty to bring the cases before the Appeal Court. The result, however, was the dismissal of the appeal in every case, as already stated—

Now I ask hon. members to mark this expression, which I say should never have appeared in this report—

but under conditions which no one can regard as quite satisfactory.

That is a libel upon the Land Court, and on the judge who heard those particular cases.

Mr. J. LEAHY : It is more. It is a scandal.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY : It is an outrage.

Mr. BARNES : It is a statement that should never have been put on paper.

Mr. MANN : Except *Truth*.

Mr. BARNES : The hon. gentleman does not want the truth. When anyone tells him the truth he cannot see that it is the truth. I say it is a serious scandal to have such a reference in that report, and I am surprised at the Minister for Lands allowing a report like that to be sent forth to the public. Hon. gentlemen opposite may laugh, but it is a matter of great importance to the State of Queensland if our judges are to be interfered with. What next will we have? The hon. member for Croydon interjected, but I must ask him not to forget the fact that a judge presided at that court.

Mr. MURPHY : I merely remarked that a judge is not particular about getting on to a police magistrate when it suits him.

Mr. BOWMAN : Some of them are very biassed.

Mr. BARNES : We are not dealing with police magistrates now. We have some splendid police magistrates, and Mr. Ranking is one of them.

Mr. J. LEAHY : The judge never made a remark about the police magistrate at all. He said he was a very able police magistrate. He was referring to the members of a board appointed by this Government, and not the police magistrate.

The CHAIRMAN : Order, order!

Mr. BARNES : In dealing with that subject, I would like to make reference to the fact that no provision, so far as I can see, has been made for better building accommodation at St. Helena. (Laughter.)

Mr. MULCAHY : Do you expect to get there?

Mr. BARNES : If the hon. member for Gympie desires to get there, he may do so.

The CHAIRMAN : Order! I must ask hon. members not to continue making these interjections, and I hope the member for Bulimba will not be drawn away by them. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BARNES : The Comptroller of Prisons has frequently called attention to the fact that the building accommodation down there is exceedingly dangerous in case of fire, and generally unsuitable, and yet no reference is made to it. I claim as a representative of men in that institution—(laughter). Let me say in answer to that laugh that there are some splendid people in St. Helena—wardsmen and others. It is really a serious matter, and I hope the Government will see that something is done in the face of that report. There is another matter to which I might refer, and I am sure hon. members will agree with me in this. While other States make some provision, no provision is made in Queensland for dealing with men who are constantly addicted to drink—in the way of establishing homes for inebriates.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Yes.

Mr. BARBER : It is under consideration.

Mr. BARNES : I hope it will soon eventuate and that something will be done to establish homes for those who have become slaves to strong drink. It is a duty that is cast upon us to make provision for people of that description.

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Mr. MANN : What is the church doing?

Mr. BARNES : The hon. gentleman asks me what the church is doing in that matter. He never goes to church himself. (Laughter.) Whether a man is an abstainer or not he will admit that this is one of the most serious problems that confronts the community; and if we can rescue men who have become incapable of governing themselves, then we will be doing a great thing for the State in making better citizens of them. The hon. member for Bowen referred to another important matter, and that is the question of land settlement. If the Government is going to reap any benefit in this respect, settlers should be assisted as much as possible. One of the problems is the difficulty of getting to market. If you put people on roads that are simply impassable, then you discourage them at the very first step. I believe that there is a great future not only in the districts referred to by hon. members living in Northern constituencies, but, speaking from personal knowledge, I know that there is a great future for some places, even adjacent to the city, with regard to production. There are lands even near the city, comparatively speaking, which can be put to such a use as to provide homes for the people—homes that will be most satisfactory. I will give a typical case in the electorate of the Secretary for Agriculture—I think it is in the Brookfields district. A man took up some land about twelve months ago, and the only assistance he got was to take away a little undergrowth. He did all the ploughing and all the work on the farm, and he was not able to bring anything into market until the 1st of March. At the end of last month it was found that that man took off that land £235 unaided.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : What was the area?

Mr. BARNES : The area under cultivation was 15 acres. I have another case in view in the electorate of the hon. member for Toombul, in which three men last month took from their land in the Eagle Farm district £146 worth of cabbages, sweet potatoes, and other produce.

Mr. MANN : Was he a Britisher?

Mr. BARNES : Yes; a decidedly better Britisher than the hon. member who interjects. My reason for mentioning these facts is to show that there are possibilities for settling people on the land, even near the city, and I think we should avail ourselves of every opportunity to settle people on the land, be it near or far. I think the Treasurer was right in looking upon the prospects of the country with a favourable eye. No man who believes in his country can do otherwise. Conditions have certainly improved, and I do not hesitate to say that we have the best State in the Commonwealth. We should be loyal to our own country and talk it up, and if we do that I believe the developments in the future will be greater than those of the past. This is a great country, and we ought to develop it. We ought to believe in it more than we do. One of the things which, in my judgment, will help to make this country, will be to leave it alone, so far as some of the legislation which is from time to time introduced is concerned. Give it a chance on its own.

Mr. MANN : We will deal with the half-crown amendment of yours when you bring it up.

Mr. BARNES : The hon. member proposed to support 2s., but I proposed to raise the amount to 3s. 6d. Again I repeat that what this country needs is a rest from socialistic legislation.

Mr. LESINA : Give it a rest.

Mr. BARNES : The hon. member is very anxious to get up and speak. I believe that this country is capable of very great development, and I trust that every member in this House will do his best, not only to talk it up, but to assist its development in every possible way.

Mr. SPENCER (*Marrano*): I join with other members in expressing my pleasure at the state the country is in at the present time. The figures contained in the Financial Statement show that it has made considerable progress. During the past three years dairy produce has increased 30 per cent., the quantity of butter produced having risen from 7,000,000 lb. in 1903 to 20,000,000 lb. in 1905. The increase in the number of stock is also very considerable. The annual increase in cattle is 9 per cent., and in sheep 15 per cent. Those figures are very gratifying, and in view of the fact that stock-raisers have to pay income tax on the progeny of their stock, I am inclined to think that the annual returns are lower than they really should be—that the increase in the number of our stock is greater than is represented by the figures given by the Treasurer. Another gratifying thing in connection with our stock is that during the last few years a large number of valuable stock have been imported into the State, which I am sure will improve the general quality of our stock to a large extent. Stock-raising at the present time is a very remunerative occupation; all the people engaged in it are doing very well. I only hope that the prices and the seasons will continue good for the next few years. If they do, I am sure that Queensland will be one of the best States in Australia so far as the number and the quality of her stock are concerned. There is one thing I should like to impress upon the Minister for Railways, and that is that he should endeavour to grant a reduction in fares and freights to the people in the Western districts. They are certainly deserving of some differential treatment, not only in the matter of lower railway rates, but also in the matter of cheaper land. The conditions of life in the West are not so pleasant as they are near the coast. The people there are far away from a market, they do not get the regular rainfall we get near the coast, and the same variety of crops cannot be grown there. In some parts of the West the only crop that can be grown is wheat, and large areas of land are required for that purpose. When speaking to the Minister for Lands the other day he told me that it was a difficult thing to induce people to take up land in the West, as they preferred to be near the coast. The fact is that men realise the many difficulties they have to contend with in the West, and I think some greater inducement should be offered to them to take up land in that part of the State. I would suggest to the Minister that he should offer land in the Western districts to some of those southern groups in 640-acre homesteads at 2s. 6d. an acre. I believe that land would be taken up under those conditions, and we all know that if a settler from the south, with his family, becomes a wealth producer he is much more valuable than 640 acres. (Hear, hear!) We want to attract population here—to settle people on the land, and the only way in which we can do that is by adopting some such course as I have just suggested. The homestead selector is of very much more value to the State than the ordinary agricultural selector who devotes a good part of his land to grazing purposes. I believe the Minister is prepared to deal very liberally with anybody who is prepared to take up prickly-pear land, and I am glad to know that, because, unless some of the prickly-pear lands in the West are taken up and utilised, they will very soon become absolutely valueless. There is one thing in connection with the Railway Department that I should like to bring under the notice of the Minister, and that is in connection with the excursion trains which are run from the West once a year to convey people who desire to make a visit to the seaside. In previous years those excursion trains

have been run at a very low rate, but for some reason that I could never find out the Commissioner declined to allow men to travel at the cheaper fares. The cheaper fares were only for women and children. I hope the Minister will make some alteration in connection with this matter during the summer, and allow men to avail themselves of the cheaper fares, as well as the women. We all know that women, especially those who may be in a delicate state of health, would not think for a moment of coming to Brisbane with their children—because they are not used to town life—unless they were accompanied by their husbands. I hope the Secretary for Railways this year will at least give it a trial and allow the men to have the same fares as women have. Another suggestion I made last year was in connection with the public estate improvement fund. I spoke then about the Jondaryan land, and said the clearing of that land would cost £20 an acre. I see now by the returns that it has cost £20 2s. 8d. an acre. It was unfortunate that money was spent on lands so thickly infested with prickly pear. If it had been spent where the prickly pear was less dense, a much larger area would have been cleared, and it would have been of greater service to the country. Then in regard to ringbarking, I desire to point out that for the private owner there is no better investment than ringbarking, and if it pays him it would pay the Government. The selector finds that to clear land where the timber is green costs from £2 to £3 an acre, whereas if the timber has been ringbarked for two years you can clear it for 10s. an acre. It would be a good scheme to have a large area ringbarked, and I am certain it would be taken up by selectors who would be only too pleased to pay the cost.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Will you suggest a suitable area?

Mr. SPENCER: I shall be very pleased to do so. Land that has been ringbarked for two years is much improved: it becomes sweeter, and is ready to cultivate straight away. I am sorry to see by the Statement that no provision has been made for conserving water in the West. There are large areas of land there that would be selected only, unfortunately, there is no water, and the cost to the small man of providing it is beyond him. If the Government would put down artesian bores, wells, or tanks, I am sure it would be money well spent, and would encourage closer settlement. I should like also to refer to the renewal of certain leases, especially in my district. There has been a great deal of misunderstanding through a number of pastoral leases being renewed. I have made inquiries on the subject, and I find that it is through no fault of the Lands Department.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I hope that will be generally made known.

Mr. SPENCER: I mention it now so that it may be made publicly known. These leases were about to expire, and the lessees had the right, by giving certain notice, to a renewal under certain conditions. That right was given under the Act of 1902. When they made these applications the assessor went on to the land and merely placed his value on it for grazing purposes. He put it at so much per mile, and had not to report whether it was required for close settlement, or whether it was agricultural or grazing land. He valued it for rental purposes. These applications then come before the Land Court, and the Lands Department have no right to appear there. Nobody can object, and the Land Court merely gives its decision as to whether the land comes under Class I., II., or III. Under these different classes there are different conditions. For instance, under Class II. they get a lease of twenty-eight years, and the Minister has

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power to resume one-fourth at the expiration of the old lease. Consequently, the Lands Department were not to blame in any way in granting these renewals. I hope, however, the Minister will exercise his right of resumption, because it is much better that the land should be held by grazing or agricultural farmers than under pastoral leases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have taken action already.

Mr. SPENCER: I am very pleased to hear it. I hope he will resume the land and have it thrown open as agricultural farms or grazing farms. With the prices we are getting for wool and sheep it will pay handsomely to have small men on 3,000 or 4,000 acres.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: In what district?

Mr. SPENCER: I am talking more particularly of my own district. There is very good land there to be resumed. There has also been a great deal of misunderstanding with regard to the Bindango lands. The leases there also had the right of renewal under the 1902 Act, and the Land Court has granted leases under Class II., but the Minister has power of resumption. He has the right to resume 18 square miles.

Mr. LESINA: Some is quite close to the railway.

Mr. SPENCER: I know it is. One selector wrote to me on the subject, and I advised him to apply to the department to resume the land, and tell them what area he wanted, and where. However, I do not think he has taken any action. I would also like to impress upon the Secretary for Railways the necessity of remembering the promise, or partial promise, made to the taxpayers of Queensland that when the income from railways reached 3 per cent. consideration would be given to the question of a reduction in railway fares and freights. I think it is most unfair that the trunk lines which reach out into the West, and open up the country, should have to bear the cost of those non-paying lines, such as the Cleveland line, which has been mentioned here to-night, and many others. It is very hard that the wealth producer in the West and near the coast should have to pay the cost of these non-paying lines. There is just one other matter I wish to speak about, and that is the report of the Surveyor-General. I do not know whether hon. members have read it; if not, I should advise them to do so. Really it shows a most unsatisfactory state of affairs in connection with the Survey Department. The work is increasing considerably, and yet the staff of surveyors is not increased,

[9 p.m.] and there is a lot of work in arrears.

The Surveyor-General says the map of Queensland is obsolete, and suggests that an entirely new map should be compiled. He also states that there are not sufficient maps for use at the lands offices in the country. That is quite correct. A little while ago I had occasion to send a man to an acting land agent's office in my own district, and he was unable to get a map of the district quite close to the place where this land agent's office was situated. For the efficient management of the Lands Department it is absolutely necessary that the survey branch should be strengthened. There are other things the Surveyor-General calls attention to. He says that in the goldmining areas the department has no control over the surveys nor is there any record of them in the office; nor have they any record of surveys made by private individuals in towns. The Surveyor-General says all those things should be brought under his notice, and a record of them kept in his office. I think it is a very necessary thing, too, and I certainly hope the Minister will give attention to the recommendations made by the Surveyor-General. In conclusion, I express the regret,

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with other members, that the Premier is not with us. I hope that by Tuesday next he will have returned to his place with restored health. (Hear, hear!) Queensland cannot afford to lose his services. Whatever political opinions men may hold, they all agree that Mr. Kidston is an able man, and that we cannot do without him. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): There are two opportunities given to hon. members to criticise the conduct of the Government—the Address in Reply and the debate on the Financial Statement, or, as the hon. member for Toombul says, a countryman of mine called it the “finnerical” statement. (Laughter.) I can assure you, Mr. Jackson, that members like myself, who are supposed to be the rag, tag, and bobtail of the party—(laughter)—have their chests full of political matters, and this is the opportunity to get rid of them. We are a long-suffering people, but our backs are up and we are full of fight. That remark of the hon. member for Toombul reminds me of a story that I was myself a witness of. It occurred at Ipswich. The father of the present Minister for Works was chairman at a meeting addressed by a very respectable gentleman who was then candidate, and afterwards became a member of this House, and a very valuable member he was too. It is not necessary for me to mention his name. I was the secretary of his committee. At that period public buildings were not so numerous at Ipswich as they are now, and an immigration depôt was required; immigration was then in its infancy. When this gentleman had finished his speech, he was asked by someone in the audience, “If you are returned, will you see that a sum of money is placed on the Estimates for an immigration depôt?” He replied, “Yes, I will do all I can to see that the ‘depott’ shall get this money.” The chairman pulled him by the coat-tail, and said “depôt, dépôt.” The candidate turned round and said, “Doesn’t d-e spell ‘de,’ and p-o-t ‘pot,’ and isn’t that ‘depott’?” (Laughter.) The audience cheered him, and sent him into the House by a large majority. It will be conceded that we are not all gifted in being able to express ourselves with the polished and nice language which the Minister for Lands uses on every occasion when he addresses the House. We have to some extent missed the flowing language of that hon. gentleman for some time. The attraction in a certain place is not so prominent now as it was in the olden time. That attraction is not here, but in his own home. (Laughter.) It would be advisable that that hon. gentleman should be our Treasurer in the place of that heaven-born gentleman who is not here, which I am sorry for. I am pleased to know that he can handle plenty of the coin of the realm. I wish him joy, and I hope he will always have it. Had I been present when the hon. member for Woothakata proposed his motion for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the working of the railways, no one would have been more pleased to assist him than I, knowing as I do that the system in many instances is rotten to the core. It is true that a commission has been appointed now, but it should have been appointed on a broader basis, and should have been asked to inquire into the whole service. As an instance of what is done, I may mention that the Commissioner announces that a certain number of lad porters are required, and the applicants are required to lodge 5s. each with their applications. I know of many instances in which it is very difficult for unfortunate people to find even that small sum—in some cases a widow with several children. Supposing there are only five of these lads wanted, the unsuccessful applicants do not get back one penny of their 5s.—they all go into the revenue.

That is a disgraceful state of things, and one that should be remedied at once, and I call the attention of the Secretary for Railways to it in the hope that he will see to it that this money is handed back. Of course it is only right that it should be retained in the case of the successful applicants, but it certainly should be returned to the others. Then, with respect to the increases which it is proposed to give to members of the public service, I find that those whose bread is buttered on both sides are down for large increases. But look at the men who are doing the work! Look at the lengths-men on our railways—they are not getting one penny of an increase.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes they are. There is £27,000 down for automatic increases, and for special advances less than £2,000.

MR. KEOGH: Of course, that is something; but I would point out that these lengths-men are at work from 6 in the morning till 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening, with only one hour off. The hours are exceedingly long. What astonishes me more than anything else is that nothing is done in this matter by this Government, which is supposed to be composed mostly of the labour element.

MR. LESINA: No.

MR. KEOGH: One of the great planks in the platform of that party is an eight-hour day. I say that these men should not have to work more than eight hours a day, or, if they have to do so, they should be paid for overtime work. It is only right that men who do such bone-fagging work should be paid for the work they perform. Eight hours is quite long enough for any man to work on a hot summer day on those metals. In fact, they cannot stand the work for very long.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Didn't you vote for the E heridge Railway?

MR. KEOGH: With reference to the Etheridge Railway, I may say that the Bill is quite different to the proposal for the construction of that railway which was brought in by my leader, the hon. member for Townsville. This proposal only gave the syndicate the right to construct the line. There was no talk of giving them a guarantee of 2½ per cent. for fifteen years, and that the Government should buy the line at the end of the fifteen years. Then again, this line is to be built with 40-lb rails. The hon. member for Woothakata will bear me out when I say that at the end of fifteen years those rails will not be worth very much, if there is any traffic at all upon the line, and new rails will have to be laid. For the first ten years it is just possible that the line will pay. If it does not, of course the company will get their 2½ per cent. from the Government. Even if the line makes 5 per cent. or 6 per cent., the Government will have to pay the company 2½ per cent., and nothing will go into the Treasury.

MR. BURROWS: How much did the Government get from the Chillagoe Company?

HON. R. PHILP: The Government get £26,000 a year out of them.

MR. KEOGH: I do not know anything about that. I know that in connection with this railway that the syndicate get everything and the Treasury nothing. I believe that the members of the syndicate know perfectly well how to work the oracle. The price to be paid for the railway will depend upon the earnings during the last five years of the fifteen, and I believe the Government will have to pay more even than the £400,000. Those are the grounds upon which I was opposed to the Bill. The proposition of the hon. member for Townsville was a much better one. The other day I had the honour of asking some questions from the Treasurer, and I must confess that I was answered in a very curt

and ungentlemanly way. I was told that the policy of the Government would be delivered in due time. I have waited for two sessions during which those gentlemen have occupied the Treasury benches, and up to the present what policy have they put before the country? In every instance their policy has been impregnated with land taxation and the taxation of the people. The policy which they adopted was the policy of the hon. member for Townsville, and to-day they occupy the Treasury benches on the sufferance of the members on this side of the House, who supported them because it was really the policy of the leader of the Opposition. I must confess that I did not like to support them. I do not see what right they have to occupy their positions, because I believe they are not fitted to do so. There is no doubt that the Government are kept in their place by the votes of hon. members on this side of the House.

MR. LESINA: The cat's out of the bag.

MR. KEOGH: I am loyal to my leader, though I think that he has erred in keeping the present Ministry in power when they have no right to be there; because, as I have shown, the policy they have enunciated is the policy of the leader of the Opposition.

MR. BURROWS: Which you have just been denouncing. (Laughter.)

MR. KEOGH: I am loyal to my leader, and am prepared to vote with him. I do not "rat." (Government laughter.) Contrast the attitude of members on this side of the House with that of the occupants of the Treasury benches—place them in juxtaposition one against the other. What was the position of the hon. gentleman who filled the Speaker's chair? Did he not come down and join members who did not show a friendly spirit to our leader on that occasion? I think the hon. member for Townsville was wrong in giving up the reins of government at the time, seeing he had a majority of two, which was sufficient to carry on. We have heard it stated in this House that there was an hon. gentleman waiting at the telephone to know if the breath was out of another hon. gentleman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Financial Statement.

MR. KEOGH: I want to show the position occupied by that gentleman then and that occupied by him now. The position taken up by that hon. gentleman I do not think was an honourable one. We have the Minister for Railways here, and I have much pleasure in informing that hon. gentleman that about ten or twelve days previous to his getting the position of Minister he stated that there was not a whiter man in Queensland than the Hon. R. Philp. What was the fact? At the very time he was saying that, I believe, he had a portfolio in his pocket.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. KEOGH: I want to ask whether I am in order in making any allusion to the reduction of members, as I was not here yesterday. My own opinion on this matter is—and I have held it all along—that a reduction of members should be one of the first things which should take place, and that a Bill for the redistribution of electorates should also be brought in by this Government. I do not believe in a referendum. I think this House can deal with that matter, the same way as they did in Victoria. If we take the basis in New South Wales or Victoria as our basis of representation, we would not be entitled to more than thirty to thirty-three members; but this might, perhaps, be too few for a growing State like Queensland. As far as Victoria is concerned, she is in a different position to us. In Victoria all the

lands are alienated, but in Queensland very little, comparatively speaking, has been alienated, and it is advisable that we should have a larger number than we should have on the basis of the number of people, as in New South Wales or Victoria. Therefore, I agree with the leader of the Opposition that a curtailment of members should take place, and that the present administration should take action at once to see that it is carried out at the next general election. Another matter which has been referred to by hon. gentlemen, and I think correctly so, is in connection with the amount of money that has been spent in the different electorates. Very little money has been spent in those portions of the State represented by members on the Opposition side of the House.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Was any spent in Rosewood?

Mr. KEOGH: Not one penny has been spent in my electorate, though I have [9.30 p.m.] gleaned from the Minister for Works that it is his intention to do a little with regard to putting a courthouse and police barracks up there. It is certainly a disgrace to any Government to leave things in the position they are in to-day.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Have you any prickly pear there?

Mr. KEOGH: We have not. There is another matter which I would like to refer to. I see that there is some extra money placed on the Estimates for the members of the Police Force, and I must confess that the tactics that have been adopted by the police lately do not meet with my approval. Say, for instance, that my hon. friend the member for Cairns was going out for a walk with his best girl on a Sunday evening, and he escorted her home to her hotel. I do not think it is at all fair or honourable for one of these "men in blue"—(laughter)—to clap his eyes at the keyhole, or perhaps through a slit in the window, and at once require admittance. We all know that the hon. member for Cairns is a teetotaler, and perhaps he might be having a drink of ginger-beer or sarsaparilla. How would he like it for one of these police to come in and, lifting up his glass, say, "Beer"? (Laughter.) That is what happens, and a prosecution is issued against the hotel-keeper for supplying beer on Sunday. The police have been running into public-houses so much of late, and become so impregnated with beer, that they take everything that is in a glass to be beer, or something stronger. I have no hesitation in saying that such tactics as these were never heard of during the time that Mr. Seymour was Commissioner of Police.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: We have a good man as Commissioner.

Mr. KEOGH: We have a very good man as Commissioner, but he was graduated in the wrong school. He was in the Royal Irish Police. Did you ever hear anyone say anything in favour of an Irish policeman? (Laughter.) I certainly never did. The Irish police are not looked upon in the same category as the Irish soldiers. The red-coats are always thought a lot of, but not the police. Now, I have a word or two to say in regard to immigration.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Finish about the Police Force first.

Mr. KEOGH: Well, I do not know if their tactics lately have been carried out with the authority of the Home Secretary or not, but their tactics are certainly not to anybody's credit. Mr. Seymour would never let policemen go about in private clothes. I suppose that in the near future the police will be allowed to go into private houses as well as into public-houses. In Mr. Parry-Okeden's time these sort of things were not carried out. I do not know why it is

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done now, because it is nothing to the credit of the Police Force. I do not think the police should be employed in those matters at all. I think certain people should be appointed for this particular work. It is dirty work, and it would not be carried out as it is to-day under the two ex-Commissioners of Police I have mentioned.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: The police must follow instructions.

Mr. KEOGH: Then the instructions are not good. With regard to immigration, I certainly am in favour of opening the door which has been closed by the Commonwealth Parliament so that we can get more people here. I worked hard against federation, and I worked hard for separation, as I thought we could carry out our own affairs better than they are doing in the Commonwealth Parliament. I am a home ruler to the backbone. I believe in being allowed to govern ourselves, and not allow other people to do it for us. The Commonwealth have not done the right thing for this State or any of the other States. We should induce immigrants of the best class to come out to this country. A lot of the people who were here with capital have gone away, and did not spend their money here. We should keep those men here, and induce others to come to this country. I do not think that we have any right to hold out inducement to the men from southern States to come here when our own young men cannot get land. In many instances I know young men who are only too anxious to get on the land, but it is given to the men from the southern States. Men are induced to come here by the land being offered on good terms, and I say that those terms should be offered to our own young men—the sons of the pioneers—the men who helped to make this country what it is. Why should we allow foreigners—I call them foreigners—to pick out the eyes of the country? It is not fair. If our own people are anxious to take up the land, and are able to pay for it, they should get the preference. I know several persons who have sent in applications for land, and have been unable to get it simply because it was reserved for groups formed in New South Wales or Victoria. I contend that the first show should in all cases be given to our own people. Like other members, I am pleased to see that there is a possibility of our having a surplus next year, and if the revenue for the past two months may be taken as any criterion of our prospects, I think the Treasurer has taken a somewhat pessimistic view of the situation. I trust that the Minister for Railways will favourably consider the suggestion I have made, that in the case of applicants for employment who have passed the examination the fee of 5s. should be returned, as in many cases it is very difficult for those persons to raise the 5s. I hope also that he will see that the men who do the heavy "yacca" on the railways will get fair consideration in giving increases. If my memory serves me correctly, I think the late Premier, the Hon. Mr. Morgan, said that increases would be granted to men whose salaries were under £200 per annum. That is not the case in these Estimates, for men who are in receipt of big salaries are down for increases. I think those officers might very well do without the increases, and that the money might be given to the lower paid servants. I shall not say anything further on the present occasion, except that anything I can do for the advancement of the State I shall do.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at twelve minutes to 10 o'clock.