

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY 6 AUGUST 1907

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 6 AUGUST, 1907.

The SPEAKER (Hon. John Leahy, *Bulloo*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PAPERS.

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

- (1) Return to an Order, relative to special trains engaged during late general election, made by the House, on motion of Mr. Lesina, on the 1st instant.
- (2) Return to an Order, relative to agents, outside the Lands Department, for sale of Crown lands, made by the House, on motion of Mr. Lesina, on the 1st instant.

CHILDREN'S COURTS BILL.

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. W. Blair, *Ipswich*), this Bill was introduced, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

POOR PRISONERS' DEFENCE BILL.

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, this Bill was introduced, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ELECTIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY (Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, *Enoggera*), this Bill, initiated in Committee, was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the adjourned debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply,

Mr. CREAGH (*Croydon*), who, on rising, was received with "Hear, hears!" said : In rising to address a few remarks to this House I will first of all claim the indulgence which is usually extended to new members on similar occasions. If it is not unbecoming in me as a new member, I should like to extend my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. I think all members of the House, no matter what their political views may be, will agree that those two members may be considered as exponents of the policy they were returned to support, and I believe that each and every member will gather from the remarks they delivered the other day that they have come here with every sincerity to do what they consider is right, and to carry out the policy on which they stood and on which they were elected. In any case, I think those two hon. members will be an acquisition to this Chamber. Before addressing myself particularly to the matters contained in the Governor's Speech, I should like to ventilate one or two matters that I consider necessary to refer to.

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I know that an opportunity is given on such an occasion as this to each and every member of the House to ventilate grievances. I do not intend to take up very much time, but there are just one or two things that I should like to bring before the notice of the House, before my constituents, and before the country generally. I wish to offer my protest, humble though it may be, against the recent appointments to the Cabinet. At the same time, I wish it to be understood by the Minister for Railways and the Home Secretary that I do not offer my remarks as against them personally in any deprecatory form. I am speaking now as a Northern member. I believe that both the two gentlemen recently appointed to the Cabinet are worthy of the positions they occupy, as far as their allegiance to the party they follow is concerned. I, being a new member, perhaps, have no right to offer an opinion on that point, but I have had occasion to interview the Hon. the Home Secretary two or three times, and I think it only right to say that he has treated me very courteously—as courteously as one could expect to be treated by any Minister. The Minister for Railways I have not had much to do with, but I have known him for a long time. Both gentlemen, I am sure, will endeavour to discharge the duties of their position honestly. But what I wish to point out is that there is no representation of the North in the Cabinet. I think that out of seventy-two members in this House, who are very nearly equally divided, the Premier could and should have selected some member for a portfolio who is particularly acquainted with the North, and he should have appointed to the Cabinet such a member as a recognition and a representation of the Northern part of the State. I could point to several gentlemen sitting behind the Government, who have been strong supporters of the Government for years, as men who are fitted for that position. There is, for instance, Mr. Maxwell, the hon. member for Burke, and the hon. member for Cairns.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

Mr. CREAGH: And there are other members on that side—even the hon. member for Kennedy, Mr. Jackson. I contend that Northern members, particularly mining members, should have had at least one seat in the Cabinet.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CREAGH: I consider it absolutely unfair that the Government should allot the whole of the seats in the Cabinet to Southern constituencies.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And to lawyers.

Mr. CREAGH: It matters not to me whether they are lawyers or whether they follow any other occupation. What I contend is that if you want justice done to any particular part of the State, you must have people taken from that particular part of the State who understand the conditions existing there, and allot them seats in the Cabinet. I have not come here for the purpose of criticising the Government in that respect; but I believe it is only fair and just that the Northern constituencies who loyally stuck to the Government should have representation in the Cabinet.

Mr. RYLAND: Why did not you let Murphy come down?

Mr. CREAGH: Because the electors in their wisdom chose a better man. Now, I wish to refer to another matter, but before doing so I may say a word or two on the subject mentioned by the hon. member for Clermont the other night—the subject of elective Ministries. That, I may say, is no new matter with me, as I advocated it when I was addressing the electors. I believe it would be a better thing for the

country—whether the party led by the leader of the Opposition, or the party led by the Premier, or any other party, be in power—if we had elective Ministries. The members who are sent here to represent the constituencies could elect five, six, seven, or eight Ministers—according to the number required—to form the Cabinet, and if that were done it would do away with a lot of disagreeableness which exists at the present time. If they were appointed to the position for a certain time—twelve months, two years, or three years—then, whether any measure they introduced was defeated or not, it would not alter the standing of the Cabinet. I think that by electing Ministers from the Assembly by ordinary vote we should do away with a great deal of the jerryandering which is carried on at the present time to gain office. Whether we elected Mr. Thompson, Mr. Jones, or Mr. Jackson, as the case may be, they would be the best men in the House, and we should get better legislation, as such men would be prepared to submit democratic measures instead of pandering to any particular class or party in the country or the House. I maintain that the way in which Ministers are appointed from time to time is not conducive to the best interests of Queensland; and, seeing how Ministries are constituted, I think the time has arrived when the Northern members in this Assembly—whether they be Philpites, or Kidstonites, or any other “ites”—should stand together and unite as one body to protest against this kind of procedure. I trust that the time is not far distant—that it is only a few months hence—when the idea I advocate will be brought about. I trust that I shall see a Northern party constituted in this Chamber who will assert itself, and who will, on every occasion, protest against the spoonfeeding of the South and the neglect of the North.

Mr. KEOGH: Go in for separation.

Mr. CREAGH: I am speaking for myself, and I speak independently. I am occupying the fourth pillar, without assistance of intrigue in the Chamber at the present time. I have noticed a letter, which appeared in the local Press, signed “An Old Inmate” of the Dunwich institution. I do not know whether his statements are true, but he states that an old woman was recently put in a straight jacket. He gave no reason for this proceeding. Probably there was some reason for it. (Laughter.) But I ask any man in this Chamber—whether he is a Labour man, an Oppositionist, or a Government supporter—if he thinks that an old person of sixty or seventy years of age should be subjected to such a stringent and inhuman act as that of the straight jacket treatment. I intend to ask the Home Secretary, by giving notice in the usual form, to inquire into this matter, if he has not already done so.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where did the statement appear?

Mr. CREAGH: I read it in the *Sun*, and I will bring the matter up later on. I do not know whether the statement appeared in any other paper, but I saw it in that newspaper less than two or three days ago. I have not the slightest doubt that the Home Secretary will cause inquiry to be made into the matter, and that if there is no reason for such treatment of an inmate, he will let the House know. I contend that it is a crying shame to this State—a crying shame to the Government—that such things should be going on day after day in our charitable institutions. Another allegation in that letter relates to the food supply at Dunwich. I am not making any charge against the management, but I consider that the matter is one which, if it be true, should be ventilated, in order that it may be inquired into by the proper authorities. That is all I

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have to say at the present moment on this subject, and I trust that the Home Secretary will see that the matter is investigated.

The HOME SECRETARY: You can rely upon it, a full inquiry will be made.

Mr. CREAGH: Thank you! There are one or two items in the Governor's Speech which I wish to refer to. I confess that, taking the programme as a whole, it is more or less a liberal programme. There are many matters in it which I intend to support, and there are others to which I am diametrically opposed. It has been said that the member for Croydon is to be bought. And so is the member for Croydon to be bought, when the question of justice to his constituency is put against wrongdoing. I come here bound to no particular party. I made that statement before, but it seems to have been received with some doubt where it suits those concerned to say so. It has been said that I was supported by money from the Opposition party in my candidature. The hon. member for Townsville, the leader of the Opposition in this House, who is somewhat opposed to me, will, I am sure, readily admit, if I put the question to him, that I never once wrote him one line in connection with the election or received one shilling from his or any other party.

Hon. R. PHILP: That is true.

Mr. CREAGH: There are measures in the programme submitted by the Government that I consider it my duty to support, because I am in favour of them; but there are others which I intend to oppose. The first thing in the Speech that caught my eye was the proposed amendment of the Income Tax Act, under which there is to be an exemption up to £200. My opinion is that the policy advocated by the leader of the Opposition at the election—which included the total abolition of the tax—is a proper one; and I trust the Government will see their way, when they introduce the amending Bill, to propose its total abolition—if not immediately, at a short distant date. The Government are not always responsible for the administration of the Act, but in its administration people have been repeatedly victimised, and they get absolutely no consideration from the Commissioner of Income Tax; and the Government should inquire into the matter. The Act was never made for a poor man, but the man who has studied its provisions, and who understands them, can get off by paying a slight tax. On the other hand, a man who is penalised to the extent of two or three pounds when, perhaps, he ought to pay only about £1 or £1 10s., has not the capacity or the ability, through his little knowledge of the Act, to protect himself, and if he goes to an agent for assistance he has to pay that agent more than the difference between the tax he has to pay and the amount he should be charged. I should like to say that during the time the leader of the Opposition was in power the Act was administered differently from what it is at the present time. Whether that was due to any action on the part of the hon. member for Townsville or to the action of the Commissioner, I am unable to say. But there is a provision in the Act under which a man may make a declaration before a citizen or a justice of the peace to the effect that he is not able to pay the tax. The matter was then brought before the Commissioner, and in nineteen cases out of twenty his claim for exemption was allowed. Many of these people have come to me to make a declaration, and I remember that some twelve months ago some persons were told that they could not be met in the manner described, but would have to pay the tax and send in an objection against the assessment in the proper way for the court's decision. They were told that if the money was paid and their claim was considered reasonable

the tax would probably be refunded, which in itself is ridiculous. Because in reality they have no redress. When the Income Tax Act was passed it was intended to be only a temporary Act. There was a good deal said about the poll tax, but I say—and I said it on the platform—that it was much more preferable to pay the alleged poll tax, than submit to the claims under the present Act and the Government's administration. I consider it unjust that the poor men who are subject to that sort of thing have either to "pay up or shut up"—to put it plainly in a Northern colloquialism. I will quote a case which happened at Croydon: I remember that about twelve months ago last Christmas a man having a business residence—an hotel—blown down in a cyclone, made application for certain allowances. There is a provision in the Income Tax Act which states that sums expended should be allowed for repairs, additions, and so on; but when a claim was sent down for such allowances, notwithstanding that the return had been perused by a solicitor, and though the man was as poor as Lazarus, he was not allowed one solitary bit of consideration in regard to those matters. This applies also to many other cases where people were subjected to such treatment. He was simply told that the amount of tax he had to pay was the sum assessed, and no reason was given for the decision. I do not think that is a proper thing to do under a democratic Government—or any Government, for that matter. I contend that we are all democratic. If a Commissioner of Income Tax or any other authority is going to have absolute power to tax a man to any extent he likes, it is about time that the Government asserted themselves, and saw that a proper interpretation was put upon the Act, or that the Act was amended. Coming back to what I stated just a moment past, I consider that the Income Tax Act should be abolished, as it is intolerable and most inequitable. There has been some talk about a reduction in railway fares and freights, and everyone will agree that that is a very good thing, as it will give the working classes—and other classes, for that matter—a chance of going from one place to another in pursuit of their avocations at a much cheaper rate than at present. But what is the good of offering this concession with the one hand and robbing them on the other by means of the income tax

[4 p.m.] The surplus last year roughly amounted to £396,000, and the amount received from income tax represented something like £280,000; so that, without any income tax, there would still be a surplus of about £110,000, and that should be quite sufficient in a State such as Queensland, considering the population. I hope to see the income tax abolished, or, if it is not abolished, that there will be as large an exemption as possible. The next question of interest to me is that of the land. We must all admit that the land is a great source of wealth production and a great revenue producer; but there have been times in the history of the country when the agricultural industry has failed owing to the want of good seasons, and the mining industry has pulled the State through. Although I admit there is a great deal of scope for agricultural pursuits, the land question is not the only industry to be considered. Too much altogether has been said about the land, while other industries, particularly mining, being also very important if not the greatest factor in wealth production, and yet that industry has been neglected, and, to use the Northern way of putting it, has been allowed to "go to the dogs." I sincerely hope it will be rectified. At the same time I congratulate the Government on their efforts to settle people on the land, and I trust they will be successful. There has been a great deal of discussion regarding the question of

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immigration. In the manifestoes issued by the leader of the Opposition and by the Premier they both favoured immigration. One was somewhat guarded, and, to my mind, had some purpose that perhaps it would not be wise to dwell too much on as it has nothing to do with the question now. The question is whether immigration is desirable or not. I contend that, until it is proved by reliable information that there is not sufficient labour in Queensland to carry on the agricultural industry and the sugar industry, the time has not arrived for us to strike out with a vigorous immigration policy. At the present time I contend that it has not been proved. I noticed a few weeks ago in the newspapers that a certain agency engaged 250 men at £1 2s. 6d. per week for employment on the canefields, and they were spoken of as very good men, and I have never heard anything to the contrary. I also noticed in the newspapers some months ago that the Government of New South Wales applied for 200 men. There were seven days given in which the applications were to be made, and within forty-eight hours 800 men had applied. Whether those people were desirable or not is not for me to say, but if men can be got in such numbers it is not necessary to have immigrants brought here. Then, again, the class of immigrants who were brought here a few days ago by the "Miltiades" are not the class of people we require to settle on our lands. If the question comes to a vote in this House, I trust that we shall be put in possession of information which will prove conclusively that it is absolutely necessary to bring immigrants here. When that is done, the Government—whoever they may be—will have my support; but till that is done I intend to oppose it.

Mr. MANN: We want no Spaniards.

Mr. CREAGH: No; I am not in favour of Spaniards being brought here. I believe we can get a better class of immigrant from the British Isles. While touching on this question of immigration, I might refer to the remarks of the hon. member for Toowoomba when seconding the Address in Reply. The hon. member said that he would back up the Premier for the reason alone that he was in favour of a vigorous immigration policy. A few minutes later the hon. member gave a very graphic description of men in his own electorate with families of ten and twelve for whom they were unable to get land. Now, if that condition of things exists in the hon. member's electorate, I can, I think, assure him that he is not isolated in that respect. The same state of things exists in other directions. The families of our pioneers should be given the first opportunity of becoming settlers on the land instead of sending home for immigrants. For the reasons I have mentioned, I do not feel inclined at the present moment to support an immigration policy. The next question in the vicinity of the land policy is that of the prickly pear. I notice that the Government are offering £10,000 as a reward for the discovery of means for eradicating the pest. As a person who has lived in the North and who has a great deal of knowledge regarding the bush—not exactly from experience, but from knowledge imparted to me by others—I believe that the greatest pest we have in spreading the prickly pear is the wild fowl of the bush. They come along and eat the fruit, and in their peregrinations they disseminate the seeds. If the Government were to add another £10,000 or £20,000 and have the prickly pear taken up by the roots and destroyed, without doubt they would be doing more good than by offering £10,000 to some person to give us a temporary arrangement, which will be found in four or five years to be no good.

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Mr. ARMSTRONG: Do you think you can clear the land with £1,000,000?

Mr. CREAGH: I am offering my remarks as they come to me. I trust that in another month or so I shall be better acquainted with these things; but whether it will cost £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 I pretend to know nothing about. But if it is going to take £1,000,000 or more, it appears to me that it is ridiculous to offer £10,000, with the idea of securing a bogus patent from some undiscovered genius. It is a well-known fact that if a man has land—whether it is a quarter or half an acre, or whether it is 200 acres—and it is thickly covered with prickly pear, as soon as he clears it all and thoroughly cultivates it, he is not troubled again with the scourge, but immediately outside his boundary you will see the prickly pear growing unhindered. I consider it would be better to offer the land free to people willing to clear it of the scourge. The question that interests me most in the Speech from the Throne is mining. It is very gratifying to find the Government propose to offer railway facilities to mining centres. No details are given. I notice that the Etheridge and Cloncurry fields are specially mentioned. It is very remarkable that, though hon. members on both sides of the House for the last fifteen years have been constantly talking about those two fields, they have received no recognition from the Government. It is only fair to say that last year the Kidston Government gave the Croydon field £2,500. There was £10,000 promised, and we got £2,500, or part thereof. It redounds to the credit of the leader of the Opposition that, although Croydon never returned a member to support his party while he was in office, yet he gave us something like £10,000 for one particular mine at Croydon. At one time Croydon was recognised as the third most important goldfield in the State, and I trust that in their wisdom, or in their justice, the Government will do something to make it a more prominent factor in wealth production than it enjoys at present. In connection with railways—to digress for a moment from mining—there has been some talk about the railway from Almaden to the Etheridge being taken to Charleston instead of to Georgetown. Only the other day the hon. member for Burke, the hon. member for Carpentaria, and I waited on the Commissioner, who said that there was nothing definitely fixed about the matter, but later on we would get more information. I take it this will be a Cabinet matter, and I trust Ministers will take some steps to ascertain the truth of the matter regarding the route before granting any deviation. The people of Georgetown—some who went there years and years ago reared their sons, and their sons reared sons—men who have stuck to the place through thick and thin—should not have the railway taken away to a practically unknown place. I admit that at present a great deal of gold is being got in that direction, and it is urged that Charleston is the centre of the Etheridge field, but that is not correct. I trust the Government will not allow the company to hoodwink them in regard to this matter. It concerns my district very much. Normanton, Croydon, and Georgetown are in sympathy on this question, and I think the Government ought to give the matter full consideration before they allow the deviation to be made to Charleston. If it is taken to Charleston there is very little hope of the construction of the connecting link between Croydon and Georgetown, which we have looked for a long time. I believe the Government will see the utility of building this line at once. It has been surveyed twice. It will run through 94 miles of flat country, and the cost of construction will be very small. Speaking again on the question of goldmining, the Speech states that

the mining industry is in a healthy condition ; but the qualification is added that there has been a decline in the gold yield. There has been a very big decline in the gold yield. It may be said that the reason for that is that greater attention has been paid lately to copper and other metals ; but if the same facilities were offered to gold-fields which have been offered to Chillagoe in the direction of railway construction, gold would once more stand in the forefront for metal production in Queensland. The population of our district is decreasing. No less than 600 or 700 people have left Croydon within a less number of months, the reason being that other places are more prosperous, and have railway communication. For fourteen or fifteen years Croydon supported itself on its own people's individual and collective enterprise. We have not been spoonfed by Governments or by outside investors. We have gone on our own resources ; but the time has arrived when we have not the money to put into the ground. The decrease in our population exceeds the departures from any other goldfield at the present time, and the reason is that other places are receiving attention from the Government, and our district is receiving none.

Mr. COWAP : I thought you got a subsidy of £10,000.

Mr. CREAGH : We were promised £10,000 for a proposition to sink the Highland Mary line of reef. We have now only got a promise of £2,500, and we have not got all that yet. Only twelve months ago, when the Premier was there, he was waited on with reference to a grant from the Government, and he promised us £10,000 ; and I hope the Government will give us the amount then and now required. While speaking on that question I may say that the Highland Mary line of reef has been abandoned for years. I was just reading an account of the last general meeting of the company, when the shareholders were in great hopes that during the next five or six months the reef would be rediscovered. I feel sure it will. If we do discover that reef, I believe that Croydon will again boom, because there is a whole mile of country along that particular line where every claim within a radius of 20 or 30 yards on the Highland Mary line of reef paid handsomely. Then, with regard to Mr. Bennion's property, the Government paid £500 towards subsidising it last year, and I trust will do so again if required. Mr. Bennion spent, as his own enterprise, £10,000 on that property, until he had not a solitary shilling left. He has now formed it into a company, and I hope the Government will treat it as the Philp Government treated the Golden Gate people, by giving it a subsidy of £10,000 to enable them to prove the property. In this case we have almost got the reef, which went about 4 oz. to the ton on a small trial, when the water came in.

Mr. MAXWELL : For a few hundredweights.

Mr. CREAGH : I hope the Government will be able to do something in this matter and in the whole case, and assist it if it be put before them. If they do not do anything, well we will, I suppose, be able to say something regarding it later on. That is the position so far as goldmining in Croydon is concerned. With regard to the tinfield, which was discovered some eight or nine years ago, the greater part of the metal sent away from there for treatment returned 70 or 80 per cent. to the ton. It has been treated locally in lots of 5 to 10 tons at a time, and treated by a gold recovery plant, and not a plant suitable for recovering tin, which in itself shows unbounded possibilities. While on that subject I might just point out that the railway regulations tend to bar the prosperity of the Croydon Tinfield. If less than a ton of ore is carried the freight is £2 5s. 5d. per ton, but if 1 ton or over is carried the freight is reduced to £1 7s. 8d. per ton.

When the Railway Commissioner was there we waited on him by deputation on several matters regarding the regulations, as far as they concerned us, and he promised that he would see into the matter, but, like many other things, we never heard anything more about it since. I am sure that if the matter had been properly represented to the Minister by the Commissioner, and he was shown the injustice of it, he would, if at all fair, have taken some notice of it. I do not know whether the Commissioner had the power to do anything in the matter himself, but the facts as I have stated them are correct. Now, that tinfield, instead of employing 300 men, as they were doing last Christmas, should be employing at least 1,300 men. Since I have come down here I noticed in the *Daily Mail* that Croydon sent 10 tons of ore to be treated in a battery which was not suited, as I previously stated, for the treatment of tin at all. It was a battery used for the recovery of gold, and for 1 ton 2 cwt. of concentrates 68 per cent. of metallic tin was taken. Anyone who understands anything about milling will know that in using a gold recovery battery you would not get the same amount of tin as if you used the proper tin battery.

Mr. MAXWELL : Just the same.

Mr. CREAGH : I differ with the hon. member for Burke.

Mr. MAXWELL : You do not know.

Mr. CREAGH : The hon. member for Burke says I do not know, and I say he does not know, so we will leave it at that before the House ; but it is a fact all the same. There is another matter which I might mention as a hardship on the pioneers of these districts. The hon. member for Clermont mentioned it the other night, but it is a strange thing that I also had the same matter on some notes I made. If a miner or a fossicker takes up a claim, after working it for three, four, or five months, although he may not get a solitary shilling out of it, he has to go to the warden's office and pay a fee of 10s. before he can abandon. That regulation, I understand, has been in force for a long time, but it has never been enforced until the last twelve months. I think that sort of thing should be done away with, and it would be a good thing if we allowed these regulations to operate as they did in the past, as at present it is an unwarrantable penalty.

Mr. MAXWELL : It is not so.

Mr. CREAGH : I may tell the hon. member for Burke that, in company with another gentleman, I went to the late warden in Croydon, Mr. Millican—Mr. Millican was warden at Croydon at the time, but he is now stationed in Charters Towers, he having resigned his position at Croydon—and I gave him my idea of the injustice of the fee. Mr. Millican said he could not help it, as he had to follow instructions. He mentioned that he had definite instructions on the point, and he must obey them. I said I thought it was the greatest injustice possible to inflict on poor men, and I contend so now. I have made that statement ; something can be traced from it, because I do not want to come here to tell the House something that cannot be proved.

Mr. HAMILTON : What is the 10s. for ?

Mr. CREAGH : It is a charge in connection with the Stamp Act, and it has been misconstrued to suit under the regulation. I mentioned before, when I was speaking about the railways, that I was pleased to see that the Government intended to do something in the matter of reducing the fares and freights, and I said then that I hailed such a proposal with delight. I think it is a very good thing, but I would much sooner see the abolition of the income tax, because the

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administration of the Income Tax Act is not a good one. However, if it is the intention of the Government to amend that income tax, and make the exemption higher, I hope they will also go further and reduce the fares and freights. I hope that they will see their way not to further burden the taxpayers in any other direction to make up for what is taken off, because I do not believe in the principle of "robbing Peter to pay Paul." I believe the rates on the Queensland railways are equitable enough so long as there is unification. I pointed out in an earlier portion of my speech that for under a ton of ore, speaking of one particular item—and there are many—we have to pay double the rate that was paid for what was 1 ton or over. I hope there will be a unification of the freights, so as to give the struggling man with a few hundredweights the same chance as those who are in a position to send 10 or 12 tons over the line. I do not think it is the duty of the Government or the State to take away from one man and put it on to another man, or to tax a man to twice the extent that another man pays. The hon. member for Bowen will bear me out when I say that in the classification of goods in Croydon and Bowen we pay 25 per cent. more than any other line in Queensland.

Mr. KENNA: We pay 50 per cent. more in Bowen.

Mr. CREAGH: I think you are wrong in that. I can quote something in confirmation of what I say. There was a time when the fares and freights were raised 50 per cent., and the people of Croydon—I do not know whether the people of Bowen took any action at that time—but the people of Croydon kicked up a fuss about it, and we received a reply stating that the Minister considered it a fair thing to reduce the amount by 25 per cent., and if the records are looked up they will show that that is the amount we are paying.

Mr. KENNA: They reduced all the others except Croydon and Bowen.

Mr. CREAGH: I am sorry to hear the hon. member for Bowen boast that the action is correct, but if he thinks it is a right thing to do I am sure I do not think so.

Mr. KENNA: I do not think so.

Mr. CREAGH: I consider that when we have got State railways we should consider the people who are living in the North just as well as the people living in the South or elsewhere, and who are getting the benefit of those railways. I consider that as we sent down £1,250,000 from Croydon and the Northern Territory in the last ten years, we should get equal-handed justice for the things controlled by the State. We are suffering the greatest hardships in the North, and the people down in the South are enjoying all the benefit of our railways, and, therefore, we should be put at least on the same level as them. (Hear, hear!) I take it that the hon. member for Bowen does not think it is right to advocate this—

Mr. KENNA: I do.

Mr. CREAGH: I think the old system is wrong.

Mr. KENNA: So do I think it is wrong.

Mr. CREAGH: I offer my protest against it. The matter I wish to touch on now is the Croydon to Georgetown Railway. That railway was passed by this House on two occasions. In Croydon, deputations have waited on every Minister who has come there. When the Premier was there last year the matter was laid before him, and he promised to give it due consideration. Probably something has cropped up since, and he has not had time to attend to it. When

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Mr. Blair, the Attorney-General, was there the same matter was represented to him, and he asked the deputation, through myself, to send him all particulars in connection with our request. I had the honour to be mayor of Croydon at the time, and the particulars were sent, but it is a strange thing that as soon as those particulars were sent an order was issued by the Government to send our rails to Richmond or to Almaden, or somewhere else. When this took place the Hon. the Premier was approached about the matter by wire, and in a wire in reply he told us that when the time came along our case would be considered. We accepted the Hon. the Premier's word, and I hope that when the railway proposals come forward before the House that the extension from Croydon will be included amongst them. As I say, we have had this measure on two occasions passed by this House, and on both occasions they were thrown out by the Upper House. When Mr. Philp was in Croydon he told us that the railway had his sympathy and he would give it his support. I hope that the hon.

[4.30 p.m.] gentleman is of the same opinion to-day, and that if the Government introduces that measure it will have the support of the leader of the Opposition and the party sitting behind him in favour of the building of the line from Georgetown to Croydon. At the present time there are only 500 acres of land under cultivation along that route. Down in the Southern part of Queensland you can nearly always buy maize at about 2s. 3d. per bushel, but from there you have to pay 3s., 3s. 6d., 4s., 5s., and even as high as 10s. per cwt. for cartage at times—which is equal to 5s. per bushel—to carry it by team from Gilbert River to Croydon.

Mr. KEOGH: Did you say 5s. per cwt.?

Mr. CREAGH: Yes; and up to 10s. per cwt. I have known it to be as high as £10 per ton. When you understand that that is the price you have got to pay to send it 60 or 70 miles by teams you will see that it will not pay settlers to go on the land, although they have the greatest possibilities for agricultural pursuits there, and some of the best soil along that route that can be found anywhere, the depth reaching to almost any distance. Members of this Assembly will, I think, admit that there are as great possibilities there as can be found in any district, and yet there is only about 500 acres under cultivation, when we might easily have 500,000 acres tilling if we had railway communication. If that line were built we would also save £2,000 a year, being the cost of the Croydon to Georgetown mail service. We would also get all that land opened up and our many resources developed, which at the present time it is hopeless to expect. I trust that the Government, in its wisdom, and in justice to the North, will try to do something to connect that link between Georgetown and Croydon. Take it even from a national standpoint. We have had a good deal of talk about the storming Japanese and Chinese for the last four or five months during the election campaign. Suppose there was an invasion of these or other races to-morrow, and the railway was linked up between Georgetown and Croydon—I see the hon. member for Cairns smiling, and of course he was likewise smiling when he saw the railway going round Robb's Hill at Cairns. But I say from a strategic and economic point of view, if nothing else, it is necessary that something should be done to connect Croydon by rail, so that the troops can be brought to and fro if the occasion arises. If there is any foundation in the alarming reports we hear about the Japanese and Chinese and their forces coming here, then the time has now arrived when those railways should be connected

to enable our troops to be brought to and fro. Another question that deserves consideration is the construction of a deepwater railway to Norman-ton. Sometime ago there was a Bill passed to allow the Cloncurry-Norman-ton Railway to be built by a syndicate. A deposit of £10,000 was made, and that deposit of £10,000 is still lying at the Treasury—or it should be—because it cannot or should not be utilised for any other purposes. I could read you figures and reasons by Mr. H. H. Russell and Mr. Macdonald, Government surveyors, which I have in my possession, and which were contained in their reports, but I do not intend to give them in my remarks to-day. These gentlemen say that the Government could build this railway for £10,000, and another £10,000 would be required for bridges and other small engineering difficulties, making about £20,000 altogether. I consider myself that we could easily build that railway, as we have one-half the amount lying in the Treasury, more especially as the Hon. the Premier spoke very hopefully of it himself, and I believe he will build that railway. I sincerely trust that the Government will see the justice of doing something for North Queensland, which has been glaringly neglected for so long. It will only cost £20,000 to build, and £10,000 of it has been deposited already, as previously stated.

Mr. KENNA : No, it is forfeited.

Mr. CREAGH : The money is there.

Mr. KENNA : No, it is not there.

Mr. CREAGH : Well, where has it gone to? The hon. member for Bowen seems to know all about many things that no other private member of the House can get any information about. I would like to know where the money has gone to.

Mr. KENNA : It is in the surplus.

The SPEAKER : Order, order!

Mr. CREAGH : We will see about that later on. Taking all these things into consideration, I think that railway should be built. That brings me to the Torres Straits steamship service question, which the member for Cook dwelt on with some enthusiasm the other day. I was equally glad to notice a mention of this service in the Governor's Speech. I was also pleased to notice that the leader of the Opposition stated that the time had arrived when the Torres Straits service should be again established.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS : He has advocated it for years.

Mr. CREAGH : Well, I am advocating it again now. I hope the question will come on, and it certainly should come on, as it is included in the programme, and the member for Cook spoke so enthusiastically about it, and the leader of the Opposition also favoured it. I take it that the proposal will have the full support of the Government and the support of the Opposition party, so I hope it will be one of the first measures dealt with, and before very long that the service will be in operation. When that is done, I hope we will have a deep water railway line to Port Norman or some other suitable place. The survey has been made and everything has been brought up to date to bring steamers there, and if that is brought about we will be able to send our produce to the East at five minutes' notice. I hope we will learn in the near future that something definite has been done by the Government to bring about the Torres Strait mail service. I went, in company with one or two Northern members, to the Premier to see what had been done in that matter, and he told us that he was making arrangements, but that nothing could be disclosed for the present. I could quite understand that it was necessary, under the circumstances, that nothing should

be disclosed then. But I hope something has been done by now, and that the Northern people will be considered and the service established. There is one other thing I would like to refer to, and that is the question of the educational system. I notice a good deal has been said on this matter, and, if I remember rightly, I read in the manifesto of the leader of the Opposition that he was in favour of a University, while the same thing appeared in the manifesto of the Premier. The Premier in his speech the other day gave some hope of a reform in our educational system, but I noticed that the Premier spoke in such a way that it did not to my mind give us any idea of the seriousness of the question of being assured at the present time. I hope that some reform in our educational system will be brought about, and that something will be done for the establishment of a University at once, so as to give our children all the education that it is necessary for them to have. The Premier pointed out at that time that a further improvement of our primary educational system was necessary, and I quite agree with that. With regard to establishing secondary education by the State, the work could be carried on by the same staff of teachers that we have now. That would reduce the cost of running the lower schools, and any extra cost there would be in running the higher schools would be infinitesimal compared with the advantages gained. We would then have a system of education under which our children could go out into the world with some practical knowledge of what they have to do. There are other matters in the Speech to which I might refer, but I do not wish to take up much more time, as there are other hon. members who wish to speak. But I should like to say a word or two with regard to the question of water conservation. The proposal to make provision for water conservation is a good one, as it will provide against times of drought. At the Stan-hills Tinfield, 25 miles distant from Croydon, where big lodes have recently been discovered, there were 300 men employed last Christmas. At the present time there are only eighty men employed there, and the trouble is that there is no water. There is no subsidy forthcoming for water conservation, and the local authorities have no money to sink wells or to provide water in any other way owing to lack of subsidy. I trust that in this water conservation scheme of the Government no one particular industry will be considered as against another, but that some provision will be made whereby the Government will give local authorities a reasonable subsidy on the amount spent in providing water. At this little town of Stanhills, men who were earning £4 or £5 a week had to go away to Chillagoe looking for work, leaving their wives and children behind, simply because there was an insufficient supply of water on the field. I hope that something will be done in the way of providing or conserving water on mining fields. With regard to the Barron Falls proposal, it appears to me to be a very good one. I do not know much about the proposal at present, but I know that there are very great possibilities in connection with those Falls, and I trust that the Government will be able to evolve a scheme which will make a good use of the power there going to waste, and bring in a fair return to the State. With reference to old age pensions, that is a matter which I have advocated for a long time. I have often wondered how people get the indigence allowance at present granted. I should like to see the regulations so altered that persons in need of such an allowance should not have to run to a doctor, a justice of the peace, or three or four householders in order to get their approbation, and also to the police and all that

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sort of useless procedure. I see no reason why the Government should not devise a scheme under which old and infirm people could get the allowance they are entitled to without so much formality. I trust that the Government will make the old age pension 10s. a week, and that it will be provided that where any man in receipt of a pension has died his wife shall receive the old age pension allowed her husband as well as her own.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Surely you don't want the Government to pay an old age pension after a man is dead!

Mr. CREAGH: No; but I wish to point out that where two may live fairly well on 15s. or £1 a week, one may not be able to carry on on 10s. a week.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You practically propose a double allowance.

Mr. CREAGH: Yes, a double allowance in such cases. With regard to the proposed legislation relative to local authorities, there is to be a conference of representatives of the different councils throughout the State—I am going to attend that—and I believe they will formulate such suggestions as will enable the Home Secretary to draft a good amending Bill, if not a new Bill altogether. The present Act is a good measure in many respects, but as applied to goldfields it wants amending. I believe that arrangements have been made to bring in the amending Bill immediately after the conference, and I shall therefore say no more about it on the present occasion. As to the question of wages boards, I believe that they should be established; and I am also of opinion that the Factories and Shops Act needs amending. Those measures shall have my support. There is another Bill which I shall support, and that is the Bill to provide for children's courts. It is a measure that has been required in this State for a long time. That is all I have to say in regard to the Governor's Speech. In conclusion, I trust that the Government in framing their railway policy will submit such proposals as will benefit not one constituency but the whole of the constituencies—the whole State—and that they will in their wisdom do what they think is right, and not forget what is justly and longingly required by the Northern people.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: You threw Murphy out for voting for that railway.

Mr. CREAGH: Mr. Speaker,—Can I reply to that interjection; can I make a personal explanation?

The SPEAKER: No other hon. member having risen in his place since the hon. member resumed his seat, I think he is in order in continuing, if necessary.

Mr. CREAGH: The hon. member for Cairns sat there very quietly, as he usually does, in his little corner of insignificance, and although I was speaking on the question of railways he never made a remark until I sat down, and he thought I would have no opportunity of answering him. The hon. member interjected that Mr. Murphy was thrown out for voting for that railway. As a matter of fact, the only thing I commended him for during the whole of the election was for voting for that particular railway. The reason he was thrown out was because he did not vote for the North enough when he was in the House; and was absent from the House when he should not have been.

Mr. MITCHELL (*Maryborough*): I regret, and I am sure the whole House regrets, the absence of the leader of the Labour party. Since the assembling of Parliament, and previous to that, there has been a good deal of talk

outside the House, and since the assembling of Parliament there has been a good deal of talk inside the House, about what is known as "the three-party system." I intend for a minute or two to refer to the three-party system, and show how it originated. We find that this system is the outcome of the progressive policy that has been adopted by the Labour party in this State for the last sixteen or seventeen years. The old system which was in existence previous to the advent of the Labour party was what was called "the two-party system." We might very well have only one party, because whatever party represented the people of the country, they were always looked upon as the "haves," and those who were outside Parliament as the "have nots," who were allowed the privilege of electing their members from time to time, and they played very carefully and very systematically what we might call the game of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. The people outside the House saw that if they were to get anything like fair representation it was necessary for them to send men to the House who were in sympathy with them, or to send men from their own ranks. The result was that they began to adopt the system, and it has gradually grown, until we are now in a position to wedge ourselves in between the two other parties. If the other two parties had come together at the beginning of this session, and there had been a fusion of those two parties, then the Labour party would have had to take their place in Opposition.

Mr. KEOGH: The proper place, too.

Mr. MITCHELL: But seeing that that did not result, we have still the three-party system. It is only a transition stage—a stage between the three-party system and the two-party system which will come about later on—that is, when the Labour party are strong enough to take their proper place either on the Opposition or the Government benches. There are many measures included in the Governor's Speech which are what are generally called by us palliatives—that is, they have no place in our objective in the great effort we are making to bring about a proper reformation of society. The Labour party can claim credit for many of the progressive measures which have been placed before the country at this time. We claim to be the hammerers of progress, the men who have moulded public opinion, who have enabled the country to see that there is a possibility of public opinion being so formed and so applied that in time to come progressive reform will be effected to such an extent that the great change which the Labour party desire to see brought about will be accomplished.

Mr. RANKIN: Public opinion shows what the people thought of you at the last general election.

Mr. MITCHELL: It shows exactly what the public thought of us at the last general election, and it shows also what the public thinks of the hon. member for Burrum. These palliatives are perfectly well understood by the Labour party. They are the outcome of our influence, they are the material from which we are to build a bridge that is to take us over from the competitive system to the co-operative or collective system.

Mr. KENNA: Call it socialism.

Mr. MITCHELL: Well, socialism. That is exactly what we are doing, and when we get to the other side it is our intention, speaking metaphorically, to build the edifice, which will be a credit not only to the Labour party, but also to the country which first establishes the true principles of socialism on a broad and comprehensive basis. These palliatives are the scaffolding required in constructing that great building which

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we are seeking to erect, and once the building is erected we shall find that the palliatives are of no use, and they will be put aside, and we shall stand on the established principles we have been fighting for during many years past. That is the explanation of how the three party system has come about, and it is a transition state of things in the progress from the competitive to the co-operative system; and it must remain that way until parties are more equal, or until we get a greater number of men who believe in our principles and who will establish our ideas on a proper basis. If we look at the programme which has been put before us, we shall find in it a great many of the ideas set forth by the Labour party, who can claim that it is through their efforts that it has been made possible to put such a programme before Parliament at the present time. The wages board under our present circumstances is quite indispensable for getting a larger portion of the remuneration which is due to the workers for the work they have to do. The old age pension scheme is another thing which is indispensable. I think we should not allow our aged poor to wait for a pension until a Bill has been passed by Parliament. We were told in the House the other night that the Government have power, without further legislation, to increase the indigence allowance, and I contend that it should be increased from 5s. to at least 7s. 6d. per week until we get a proper old age pension scheme established. The present indigence allowance is a degrading allowance, both as regards the manner in which it has to be got and the manner in which it is distributed when granted. If we increase the amount to 7s. 6d. per week it would do away with a great many of the hardships which the old people feel just now. The Government would do themselves credit if they would take upon themselves the responsibility—not to-morrow, or three or four months hence, but at once—of increasing the indigence allowance, until an old age pensions scheme is established, because we can see that there is going to be considerable discussion on the question as to whether an old age pensions scheme should be a State matter or a Federal matter. My own opinion is that it should be a Federal matter, and my reason for thinking that is, that under the present system of old age pensions as we know it, a person has to be a resident in the particular State which gives the pension for, say, twenty-five years. A man may be ten years in Queensland, five years in New South Wales, and ten years in Western Australia, but, although he has been twenty-five years in the Commonwealth, he would not be entitled to a pension in either of those States. I think it is desirable to adopt the principle of granting a pension to a person who has been twenty-five years resident in any of the States, or to have old age pensions provided by the Federal Government. When it comes to a question of deciding whether the matter should be undertaken by the Federal Government or the State Government, I shall favour the Federal system, and shall then give my reasons more in detail than I am doing on the present occasion. Another thing that I am very pleased to see is the promise made by the Government to amend the Workers' Compensation Act. The Act has

given rise to a good deal of dissension in the country, and people are opposed to the principle of compensation, because they say the employers have to pay for it. That is so in Gympie, Maryborough, and many other towns. I hope the Bill will be passed as quickly as possible, so that the people in the country may see that the Government are in earnest, and that they are not, like past Governments, simply making a show of placing the measure on the statute-

book. If we meet with the opposition in another place that we met with last session, I trust that the members of this House will compel that House to pass the Bill. Another measure that is promised is the amendment of the Income Tax Act. That is a very desirable thing. In speaking on the matter last session I contended that it was desirable that whatever exemption was granted should be granted all round. I also think that the returns might be very much simplified. In many instances people have to pay to have their returns prepared, and in some cases the cost is greater than the difference between what the individual claims he ought to pay and the amount claimed by the Commissioner. This is a matter that is worthy of the Commissioner's consideration. There are several other Bills that this House should assist the Government in passing. Among them are two before the House at the present time—the Bill to make provision for the defence of poor prisoners, and the Bill to provide for the establishment of children's courts. Those are measures that should meet with the approval of the whole House, and should pass without much discussion. Then I come to the Constitutional Referendum Bill. Last session we had a partial referendum before us on the question of Bible teaching in State schools. When we get the Constitutional Referendum Bill passed into law I do not think Bible teaching in State schools should be a question that should come under the constitutional referendum. My opinion is that people have no right to compel any class of religion to be introduced into the State schools. State assurance is another thing that is very desirable, and might well be carried out to the profit of the individual and with benefit to the State. Session after session there is a great cry about settling people on the land. To this I do not object. But it has been my impression ever since I entered the House that too little attention is given to our secondary industries. I always feel that our secondary industries are very much neglected. Three years ago—almost immediately after the advent of the Morgan Ministry—several mining members spoke favourably, earnestly, and intelligently, and I also spoke, on the principle of establishing State batteries. That is a thing that mining members should not lose sight of. They should keep hammering away at the Government until they get the principle properly established. If we want to develop our mining industries, one of the best methods that can be adopted is to establish State batteries to assist new districts, and some old districts too.

Mr. WHITE: It is a good method of losing money.

Mr. MITCHELL: The mining members who took up the question showed that it would not be a method of losing money, but that it would be a means of gaining money both for the State and for the individuals interested. Another thing in connection with our secondary industries is the large importation of agricultural machinery. Every year tens of thousands of pounds worth of agricultural machinery are brought into the country; and I think it would be possible to adopt a system whereby we could manufacture a great many of those implements ourselves. We have established a State bank. I contended two or three sessions ago, and I contend now, that in place of giving a man who applies for a loan to purchase disc ploughs, harrows, and other farming implements, £17 10s. for a plough, or whatever the price may be, the Government should be in a position to say: "We manufacture these ploughs ourselves."

Mr. KENNA: What about the patents?

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Mr. MITCHELL: I was told by the then Secretary for Agriculture, when discussing the matter with him privately, that he thought that was a difficulty which might be easily overcome. There are many implements that it would be the duty of the Government to carefully consider the advisableness of establishing works to construct at once. But they do not need to establish new works. They have the works already established; and all they require to do is to adopt the principle of manufacturing all agricultural implements in the State in place of sending to other countries for them.

Mr. WHITE: Give us protection first.

Mr. MITCHELL: I might go on enumerating a large number of the Bills mentioned in the Speech, because there are many of them that the Labour party would endeavour to place on the statute-book themselves if they were in power. Being a member of the Labour party, I take up the attitude that so long as these Bills are in accordance with our ideas we should have no hesitation whatever in giving them our support. It is said by one of the leading papers to-day that the Labour party have taken up a negative position—that they have stated distinctly that they will support the Government so long as they do not bring forward any measure opposed to their platform. Now, we also say that we are prepared to support any measures—Government or otherwise—that are of a democratic nature, and that will benefit the workers of this State. That is the positive or affirmative position which we take up, as well as the negative one of giving support if our platform is not interfered with. The Trades Disputes Bill was one of the Bills that was thrown out by the Council last session, for which I was very sorry, and I am sorry that it is not again before the House this session. Another Bill that I would like to see before the House is a Compulsory Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. There is a great deal of discussion throughout the States respecting the advantages and disadvantages of such a measure, but I think it is a Bill that is indispensable if we are to do away with strikes and continue the harmonious relations that are desirable in our transitional state between employer and employee. The measure I speak of is not a Bill to promote strikes, but is a Bill for doing away with strikes, and that has been proved in many instances. In New Zealand it has been most successfully carried out. It has prevented many strikes from eventuating. The great difficulty, and one that will shortly be overcome, is the composition of the court. One reason that urges me to speak upon the question of conciliation and arbitration is a difficulty that has arisen—not in my own electorate, but in my district. I refer to the Howard lockout.

Mr. RANKIN: There is no lockout.

Mr. MITCHELL: I am sorry to hear the hon. member for Burrum, in whose electorate this is going on, declare that there is no lockout.

Mr. RANKIN: There is certainly no lockout.

Mr. MITCHELL: I hope the hon. member will have the good sense to hold his tongue while other members are speaking on the matter. He will have an opportunity of defending it, not only from his own standpoint as the member for the district, but also from his standpoint as an employer who is backing up the management of that particular mine in preventing a settlement being come to.

Mr. RANKIN: That is nonsense.

Mr. MITCHELL: When the hon. member gets up we shall be probably treated to a considerable amount of nonsense when he begins to talk about a Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, because it is a Bill that he knows nothing about.

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Mr. RANKIN: I was not aware there was such a Bill before the House at all.

Mr. MITCHELL: In connection with this strike or lockout, whatever it may be called, the question is whether one man is to presume to stand up and defy 200 men—

Mr. RANKIN: That is quite untrue.

Mr. MITCHELL: And say that they can have plenty of work so long as they comply with his conditions.

Mr. RANKIN: You know that is not true.

Mr. MITCHELL: Not only has he taken up that stand with the working men of Howard, but he has taken it up with the Premier of Queensland.

Mr. RANKIN: You know that you are making a statement knowing that statement to be untrue.

Mr. MITCHELL: He says that he will not recognise the union under any conditions whatever; and he goes further, and says that he will not submit the question of unionism or non-unionism to arbitration—a position that was never known in the history of Queensland or in the history of any country in the world for an individual to take up. It is monstrous.

Mr. RANKIN: The whole statement is a tissue of falsehoods.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is monstrous for any individual to have the power to take up such a stand; and, when the hon. member for Burrum takes up that stand and says it is untrue, I am quite prepared to back up my statements by the evidence of newspapers.

Mr. RANKIN: If it is worth no more than yours, it is not worth much.

Mr. MITCHELL: And by the evidence of the members of the union, and by evidence from the manager himself. He has admitted certain things, and he has written certain letters, in which he states distinctly that he will not recognise the union.

Mr. RANKIN: Certainly not.

Mr. MITCHELL: If that is the attitude taken up by the hon. and distinguished member for Burrum, we cannot expect much from the management of that particular mine.

Mr. RANKIN: What has this got to do with the Address in Reply?

Mr. MITCHELL: It has very much to do with the Address in Reply, because it is necessary for this House to see that legislation should be introduced to prevent any man having the power that the manager of the Howard mine is assuming at the present time.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MITCHELL: I want to lay the facts clearly before the House. Just previous to 8th May a young workman at Howard, who had given several lectures on the relationship between employer and employee—

Mr. RANKIN: Give it the proper title—to convey the proper meaning to the House. It was a lecture on socialism, pure and simple.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is really a painful thing when a man, distinguished for other things, cannot have the good sense to hold his tongue while another member is speaking.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are not always out of order; but they are out of order if the hon. member who is speaking objects to them.

Mr. MITCHELL: I have no objection at all to an interjection if it is a sensible interjection; but if it is simply a man making a fool of himself, I decidedly object to it. (Laughter).

Mr. RANKIN: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in saying I am making a fool of myself in interjecting?

The SPEAKER: I really did not catch the hon. member to say directly that he applied his remarks to the hon. member for Burrum. If he did he must withdraw it.

Mr. KENNA: Withdraw, withdraw!

Mr. MITCHELL: I did not say that the hon. member for Burrum was making a fool of himself. It would be quite unnecessary for me to say that.

Mr. RANKIN: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order again. I do not think the hon. member is in order in making that remark.

The SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member is quite in order.

Mr. KENNA: Withdraw!

Mr. MITCHELL: I would not offend the House by saying that the hon. member was a fool, and in deference to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the statement I made, and I will say that the hon. member is not a fool. I hope that is satisfactory, and that he will not at any other time say that I had any reason for making such a statement. Now, I was saying that this man advised the men at Howard to form a union. Seventy-three of them came forward and formed a union, and a few days afterwards two of the workmen who had joined this union were notified by the manager, Mr. W. Rankin, that if they were going to remain in the union they would no longer be required.

Mr. RANKIN: That statement is quite incorrect.

Mr. MITCHELL: The hon. gentleman has again interjected, and he says that the statement is quite incorrect. I say from my place in this House that the manager, Mr. William Rankin, told me that himself, and in confirmation of that two days afterwards he wrote to the *Maryborough Chronicle*, in which he said distinctly that he dismissed Anderson, one of the men referred to, because he was a member of the union. He said that if the man was going to remain in the union he would have no more work for him.

Mr. RANKIN: Two men were discharged for absenting themselves from their work.

Mr. MITCHELL: He told Mr. Dawson that he would have no work for him if he remained in the union. The manager was asked to reinstate those men, but he refused to reinstate them, with the result that the men ceased working and decided to remain locked out until those two men had been reinstated. There had been a great amount of correspondence going on in the Maryborough papers respecting this lock-out, and all the evidence has been in favour of the position taken up by the men. Some time ago my colleague, the junior member for Maryborough, and myself were asked to go to Howard to address the men on lockouts.

Mr. RANKIN: That is the principal cause of the strike—you and your colleague and Mr. Demaine going there.

Mr. MITCHELL: Mr. Rankin says that we were the principal cause of the strike, but I may tell him that we were unaware of what had been done or that a union had been formed. As a matter of fact, Mr. Demaine urged the miners to be very careful about what they were doing, and not to rush into matters, as it was a responsible thing they were doing—throwing themselves out of work at the present time. My colleague and

myself went down, at the request of the men, and we met Mr. Rankin, and discussed the matter with him on the way down. There was also at that time a deputation from the merchants at Maryborough to interview Mr. Rankin, and ask him to reconsider the decision—to allow the men to form their union, and to allow the work to go on as usual. At this time the union had been properly formed, and the result was that Mr. Rankin made an appointment with the merchants of Maryborough, together with my colleague and myself, to meet us there and discuss the whole matter. When the appointed time came Mr. Rankin was not to be found. He had gone to Bundaberg, from whence he had been telephoned for. Unfortunately he returned by the same train by which we left and had not reached Bundaberg. He only got as far as the Junction. However, we met Mr. C. Rankin, junior member of the firm, and discussed the matter with him, but he said he was not going to, on any account, recognise the union. The whole crux of the thing is this: Other employers throughout the State permit their employees to form a union. The management of the mines at Ipswich and all the other mines throughout the State hold that it is their duty to recognise the miners' unions and they do it.

Mr. MAUGHAN: The proprietors encourage the unions.

Mr. MITCHELL: I am reminded, by interjection, that the proprietors encourage the unions, because they see the wisdom of it. They see that it saves in a good many instances both strikes and lockouts, and individual animosity arising between the employers and the employees. Seeing that the men have been told that their union would not be recognised, and seeing that the Premier has been told that Mr. Rankin would not recognise their union, in order to bring about something like a settlement my colleague and myself wired to the Premier, when he was leaving Rockhampton after the elections, and asked him to meet us at Bundaberg so that we could discuss the whole matter with him.

Mr. RANKIN: What had it got to do with him?

Mr. MITCHELL: The Premier wired to us asking us to write him a full explanation of all that we knew in connection with the lock-out, and he said that if he could be of any advantage he would come to Howard and discuss the matter with the management, and try to bring about a settlement. The Premier wired to Howard, and found that Mr. Rankin was in Brisbane. The Premier, however, subsequently had a conversation with Mr. Rankin, but Mr. Rankin refused to give him any satisfaction on the basis of recognition of the union. He distinctly refused to do it. The Premier then wrote my colleague and myself, and we went down and interviewed the men, and persuaded them to leave themselves entirely in the hands of the Premier, and allow him to settle the matter with Mr. Rankin. The Premier agreed to do this, and interviewed Mr. Rankin again. Mr. Rankin said distinctly that he would not recognise the union, and at the present time there are 200 men out of employment, and their wives and families are starving unless they get help from outside.

Mr. RANKIN: Where did you get your figures from? The secretary's books show there are only sixty men on strike. I got the figures only yesterday. I have only just come from there.

Mr. LESINA: There are sixty families.

Mr. RYLAND: There are more than that.

Mr. MITCHELL: I was called to order just now for suggesting that the hon. member might

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be a fool. I might also be called to order if I were to say that what the hon. gentleman just stated is untrue. I would just like to mention that the first pay the men made to the strikers was £170.

Mr. RANKIN: You said that was the number now.

Mr. MITCHELL: I say they are out still so far as the Howard management is concerned. The hon. gentleman knows that some of the men, through the hardships of the company, have been compelled to leave Howard and go to other places to look for work. But still the fact remains that Mr. William Rankin, and the member for Burrum, and other members of that firm, were so inconsiderate that it did not matter to them whether these men and their wives and families starved when they said that they would rather nail down the mines than submit to these men.

Mr. RANKIN: That is untrue. That statement was never made.

Mr. MITCHELL: That statement was made distinctly—that they would rather nail down the mines than submit to unionism and permit these men to form a union. The manager now tries to get out of the difficulty by saying that he is prepared to employ any men whether they are members of the union or non-
[5.30 p.m.] union men, but it is a well-known fact that the men who are taking a prominent part in this movement at the present time would be debarred from getting work.

Mr. RANKIN: That is untrue.

Mr. MITCHELL: The management of the Howard Colliery defied the Premier, so it is the duty of this House—if it cannot come to a resolution, at least it can come to a suggestion, that any employer whatever taking up the stand that he will not recognise unionism should be debarred from getting any State contracts until he abandons the high attitude he thinks he has attained, and says that he will recognise unionism, as other employers do. I hope that this House will consider this matter in the sense in which it ought to be considered. There always was a cry from the other side as to what we ought to do to try to get a spirit of harmony and good-fellowship between the employer and the employees; but how can such a thing be possible when an individual says to 200 men, "You can form 150 unions if you like, but I will not recognise them in any sense, nor will I employ a union man until I am forced to do so"?

Mr. RANKIN: That is done all over the world.

Mr. MITCHELL: I hope, for the good sense of Parliament, that it will be a recognised thing that any man taking up that stand in opposition to the harmony that might obtain will be debarred from tendering for any State contract until he comes down from his high position and says that he is prepared to recognise unionism. (Hear, hear!) There are a good many points I wish to refer to—but they are matters of detail—in connection with the same thing, and it would not be fair for me to go further into the matter at the present time, because I know there are a good many in this House, who are interested in this matter, who will take it up and show still further the gross injustice of our laws being so that any man can take up a stand such as that taken up by Mr. William Rankin in this case.

Mr. JONES (Burnett): After listening to the able speech of the senior member for Maryborough, I feel diffident in rising to address the House. It is not my intention to contribute at any great length to the motion adopting the

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Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech, but representing, as I do, one of the most important electorates in the State—

Hon. E. B. FORREST: You should say the most important electorate in the State.

Mr. JONES: I feel it incumbent on me to put before this House a few remarks appertaining to the industries in that district. Speaking at length on this subject would be reiteration, because it is difficult to speak on the political situation without repeating the remarks made by previous speakers. However, there are one or two matters in the Speech I would like to refer to. Judging the Governor's Speech by the titles of the measures to be introduced, I must say that I consider the programme is a very democratic one. Of course, it is difficult to judge a book by its title; and we cannot pass judgment on those measures until we see those Bills in detail. For instance, the Old Age Pensions Bill is one and the State Insurance Bill is another. Last session the Government came down with a programme, which included a State Insurance Bill.

Mr. RYLAND: No.

Mr. JONES: Yes. I have last year's programme here. I thought it might be questioned, so I brought a copy with me. It says here, Life Insurance and Retiring Allowance Bill. The same thing is now promised. That promise was not fulfilled during the last session of Parliament, although it was also made in the Home Secretary's speech. The Old Age Pensions Bill has been promised, but the party to which I belong may object to the methods proposed to raise money, and they might be objectionable to the majority of the members of this House. So, looking at the measures which have been promised, it is difficult to pass judgment upon them until we see the Bills themselves. Judging them by their titles, they are democratic, and I am sure they will receive, as the senior member for Maryborough says, the assistance of all members of this party if they are democratic in their details. What I object to about this programme is the absence of Bills that I would like to see in it. For instance, the Trades Disputes Bill. I have heard a number of gentlemen speak of the necessity of having some law for dealing with industrial disputes, such as a conciliation and compulsory arbitration measure. However, I will probably deal with that matter later on. What I want to lay stress on now is the absence of any Mining Bill. It is true that in the last session of last Parliament a Mining Bill was introduced by the Minister for Mines, but we, as a democratic party, could not accept that measure. We could not accept a Bill which was so hurtful in its ways.

Mr. PAGET: Was it too liberal?

Mr. JONES: It was not liberal enough. We want a comprehensive Bill that will provide for mining on private property, but in the Bill introduced last year there was a clause that allowed a syndicate or a company to spend a certain sum of money on a lease, and that would be fulfilment of labour conditions. As every one knows, the labour conditions under our present Mining Act is one man to 4 acres, and in the Bill introduced last session under the substitution of the expenditure of a certain sum of money to be spent on the lease for the labour conditions, a person could spend £100 in old machinery, put it on a gold-mining lease of 20 acres, and lock that ground up for a period of twenty-nine months.

Mr. MAXWELL: You are grumbling because you have got nothing to grumble about.

Mr. JONES: The hon. member for Burke introduced a very good Bill last session. I have

asked a question to-day in which I want to know the number of applications that have been received by the Mines Department.

Mr. PAGET : The reply will be none.

Mr. JONES : I am afraid so. That will prove the uselessness of the measure, and the time we wasted in dealing with the measure introduced by the hon. member for Burke.

Mr. MAXWELL : You just said it was a good Bill.

The PREMIER : You should not prophesy until you know.

Mr. JONES : I think it is a useful measure. I really thought it would be more availed of, but, as the Premier says, I must not prophesy, and I will not prophesy until I get an answer to my question to-morrow. The mining industry is one of the best industries we have in this State, and, as the hon. member for Croydon pointed out, it has not received the assistance by this Government, nor by previous Governments, that it deserves. True, there is a decline in the production of gold and an increase in the production of other minerals. To my mind, the reason for the decline in the gold production since 1903 is the lack of assistance that that industry has received from this and previous Governments.

The PREMIER : Was there more assistance given before 1903?

Mr. JONES : No; I do not think so. I am not singling out the Premier for blame. There has not been more assistance given—

The PREMIER : Was there more assistance given before 1903?

Mr. JONES : No. The gold production then was due chiefly to Gympie and Charters Towers.

The PREMIER : I want to show you the decline in the gold yield cannot be attributable to the lack of assistance, because when there was no more assistance the gold yield was higher.

Mr. JONES : Well, we will say there would be a greater increase in the gold yield if the Government had assisted the mining industry to a greater extent than they do at present, and I am disappointed with the Government programme, because the Premier promised in his speech at Rockhampton to give encouragement to mining. This is what the Premier said—

Queensland has great undeveloped mineral resources, and it is desirable to have our mining laws thoroughly revised, so that every possible encouragement will be given to *bona fide* investors. It is quite well known that, particularly in regard to coalmining, our mining law is by no means up to date. It is time also that provision should be made for mining on private property, and that those who are prepared to undertake the development of our mineral resources should be given every reasonable and proper facility for doing so.

Mr. LESINA : That was before the elections.

Mr. JONES : The hon. member for Townsville, in his electioneering manifesto, also advocated the same thing. He said—

The consolidation and extension of our mining laws, giving reasonable security of tenure to the lessee, while conserving the rights of the individual miner, and the subsidising of prospectors—

Mr. MAXWELL : What did the Labour party say?

Mr. JONES : I just want to point out that both the leaders of these great parties have promised a comprehensive Mining Bill. One party has been returned to power, and they have introduced their programme, and we have no Mining Bill promised this session. True, if it is not a better measure than that introduced last session of Parliament, then I will vote against it, as I did previously, because of the objection I stated.

The PREMIER : There were a great many other things mentioned during the elections which cannot be expected to be introduced in the first session of Parliament. We cannot do everything at once. Even Rome was not built in a day.

Mr. JONES : I am pointing out that this industry is the second in this State—it ranks next to the great pastoral industry—and surely it has been neglected. It is only reasonable to expect a Mining Bill would be introduced this session of Parliament, but we will take the Premier's promise that we will have one next session.

The PREMIER : I am not making any promise. I simply pointed out you are rather hasty in assuming the Government are going back on their policy because they do not introduce everything this session of Parliament.

Mr. JONES : It is necessary to have a Bill to provide for mining on private property. There have been instances at Cloncurry where men have gone out prospecting with pick and shovel and they have found ore, and after working it for some time and raising the ore, it was discovered that they were on private property, and they were imprisoned for theft. In the Mount Perry district a syndicate of prospectors, composed of mining men, spent £500 on one show, and subsequently they discovered they were on private property, and they had to abandon their claim. For nearly two years members of our party, when we sat on the other side, requested the Minister for Mines and the Government to have a resurvey of those mineral freeholds—the freeholds that were allowed to be taken up in 1872.

Mr. PAGET : They are very slow.

Mr. JONES : I notice the Minister for Mines, when he was at Mount Perry, promised that they would resurvey the little freeholds in that district. I will just quote his reply to a deputation, as reported in the *Mount Perry Times*—

Mr. Blair thanked the deputation for bringing these matters before him in the friendly way they had done. As to the mineral freeholds, he had not been unmindful of these difficulties. It was his intention to do all he could to get the mineral freeholds resurveyed. The old survey had evidently been of a cursory character, and now they reaped the disadvantage. He would promise to do his utmost; but they must have patience, as there was very little money. This matter was, however, pressing, and he would do his best.

Here we are boasting of a very large surplus, and yet there is not sufficient money to resurvey the mineral freeholds surrounding a small place like Mount Perry, the cost of which would be about £15. Last year the excuse was made that there was not a surveyor, and yet one of the best mining surveyors in Queensland—Mr. Fitzgerald—was walking about the streets of Mount Perry with nothing to do.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : Quite true.

Mr. JONES : I do not often make complaints, but I certainly must make these complaints when we have the money and when we have the surveyors.

The PREMIER : Do you know of any mining surveyors idle?

Mr. JONES : There was one idle in Mount Perry until quite recently. I am pointing out that the Minister for Mines is redeeming his promise. I believe the surveyors are down in the Moonta district, and probably they will reach Mount Perry later on. I do not know when that will be, but in the course of a year or two we will have them in Mount Perry.

Hon. R. PHILP : Is Mr. Fitzgerald one of them?

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Mr. JONES: He is one of them, and I am very pleased he is. I am pleased to see the Minister for Mines is fulfilling the promise he made in that district. I would like to quote from a return that was tabled on the motion of the hon. member for Clermont, Mr. Lesina. He asked for a return showing the expenditure by the Mines Department for prospecting purposes. To the end of October, 1905, the amount was £1,839 12s. 8d.

The PREMIER: You do not ask what the result was.

Mr. JONES: The result was fairly good. Another return was asked by the hon. member for North Brisbane, showing the revenue derived from rents, and the figures given were—

	£	s.	d.
Rents, goldmining leases	8,984	10	7
Rents, mineral leases	7,108	0	6
Rents, coalmining leases and licenses	619	6	0
Rents, miners' homestead leases	4,115	8	0
Total royalties on gold	5,963	10	7
Total royalties on coal	51	15	9
Total	£26,812	11	5

This does not include the revenue derived in other ways—by miners' rights and other methods. But that return proves that the mining industry is not getting the assistance that it really deserves. One would naturally ask in what way should that industry be assisted. In my opinion, I think the first thing we could do would be to establish State metallurgical works in some part of Queensland, even if it is only one like that at Aldershot. Those private works were closed down, and since they were closed the refractory ore and concentrates have to be sent to the Southern States or across the seas—either to England or Germany—for treatment. I maintain in Queensland we have the ability, we have the material, and we have the undiscovered wealth, as well as the wealth that is discovered, but that which we have not got is the inclination, and I think it would be a good thing for this Government, if they wished to make themselves popular, to establish State works. I think it would be a good thing for the State and also for those engaged in the mining industry. Some advocate the establishment of State batteries, but first I would like to see a good, fully-equipped, up-to-date smelting works, or metallurgical works, such as is established at Aldershot, and then they could follow with State batteries. The hon. member for Burke is not in favour of State batteries, but I give the hon. member credit for taking a lively interest in the great mining industry. It has been stated that the State batteries have not been successful in Western Australia, but they have, and, if they have not paid directly in the first year or so, they are paying now.

Mr. MAXWELL: They are not paying yet.

Mr. JONES: They have been successful in this way—they have opened up many of the goldfields that are good fields to-day, and are an asset to that State; and if State batteries were to follow State metallurgical works in Queensland, I think that it would assist that industry to a very great extent; and also, as pointed out by the hon. member for Townsville, the establishment of prospectors' parties would be of great assistance. I do not believe in the method of doling out 10s. or 5s. a week to old age prospectors, who should be receiving an old age pension by right—but the forming of prospectors' parties with a competent head, and with men under them receiving the standard rate of mining wages of £2 10s. or £3 a week. I believe

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if a few of these prospecting parties were formed it would be the means of discovering some of the undiscovered wealth.

The PREMIER: Who would it belong to?

Mr. JONES: It would belong to the State. You could have a State goldmine.

The PREMIER: Will it?

Mr. JONES: It could belong to the prospectors, and the State could receive a certain proportion.

The PREMIER: You have a very innocent notion of mankind.

Mr. JONES: I do not believe everyone is dishonest. Anyhow, I believe it would open up a good many fields that would be of benefit to this State. Another matter in connection with the industry is that a great deal of mineral wealth leaves Queensland, and its value is unknown. I think we should have a proper department—say, an assay department—not an undermanned department like we have now—where the miner, before sending his ore away to foreign works, could have an assay made, and the value of the ore will be known before it leaves these shores. If a private enterprise could run a works successfully, to my mind there is no reason why the Government or State could not do so. We want some mining Bill also that will provide for better wages being paid to those engaged in the industry. A miner's life is a hard one, and a very dangerous one, and I know, because I have followed it for some time. In New Zealand they have a clause in the Mining Act that regulates the wages paid there to the miners. I will quote here from a report from the "Labour Journal of New Zealand," quoting the award that was given in the matter of an industrial dispute between the Waihi miners. The report says—

Wages.

15. The following shall be the minimum rate of wages which shall be paid by the employers respectively to the persons employed by such employers in the capacities undermentioned, that is to say:—

In or about a mine—	Per Shift.
Miners working in	s. d.
Drives and stopes	8 6
Dry shafts	9 0
Wet shafts (six-hour shifts)	9 0
Rises and winzes	8 10
Ordinary miners	8 6
Timbermen	9 0
Timbermen's mates who if and when they shall have had six months' experience of the work	8 6
Chambermen	8 6
Bracemen	8 6
Mullokers	8 0
Truckers	8 0
Surface labourers	7 6
Rock-drillers	9 0
Pumpmen and pitmen	9 6
Blacksmiths	9 6
Strikers (over twenty years of age)	7 6
Tool-sharpeners	9 0
Firemen attending to three fires or less	8 0
Firemen attending to more than three fires	9 0
Fitters	9 6
Engine-drivers requiring first-class certificate and in charge of pumping or hoisting machinery	10 0
Winders	10 0
Winchmen	9 6
Carpenters	9 6

Batteries.

16. *Hours of Labour:* In batteries a shift shall be eight hours, inclusive of crib-time, and work shall commence at midnight on Sunday and cease at midnight on Saturday.

17. *Youths:* No youths under the age of sixteen years shall be employed in a battery or in or about a tailing

plant, but the court does not otherwise limit the number of youths who may be employed in a battery or tailing plant.

	Wet Batteries.	Per Shift.	s.	d.
18. Stamper hands	...	...	8	6
Greasers (over the age of twenty years)	...	...	7	6
Watchmen (when employed)	...	...	7	6
Amalgamators...	...	...	9	0
Stone-breakers or crushermen	...	...	9	0
Man in charge of breaker	...	...	7	6
Stonebreakers' labourers	...	...	7	6
Truckers	...	...	8	0
Repairs	...	...	8	0
Repairs' labourers	...	...	7	6
General labourers	...	...	7	6
Feeders	...	...	7	6

I just want to make one correction in a statement I made before the House adjourned for tea.

I then stated that the wages paid to [7 p.m.] those engaged in the mining industry in New Zealand were fixed by the Mining Act of that colony. That is not so. In that colony the overtime wages are fixed by a clause in the Mining Act of 1906. In Queensland, in very few mines is overtime paid for. I know of one mine in this State where the men work seven days a week, and no overtime is paid for Sunday. In New Zealand the overtime pay and the hours of labour are regulated by the mining laws of the colony, though, of course, the wages are really controlled by the Arbitration Court. I do not wish to deal any further with the mining industry to-night, but I should like to quote a paragraph from the *Moreton Leader*, which is taken from a New Zealand journal. In New Zealand they have a State coalmine, but that is not managed by the same class of manager as we have managing the State coalmine in Queensland. The paragraph to which I allude says—

In this connection it has now been made clear that the success in opening up State coalmines at Port Elizabeth, Greymouth, and also at the Seddonville mine, Westport, is assured, and prices of private enterprise coal have now fallen about 2s. per ton, so that the consumer can now purchase at reasonable prices. As these mines, the latest official report states that at Port Elizabeth the coal seam has been tapped in two tunnels, and a large amount of plant has been installed. Also a railway has been constructed to convey the coal to the port of Greymouth. The coal is said to be of first-class quality, and the Government now supply part of the coal it consumes on the State railways. Good wages are being paid to the miners, and, therefore, no strikes are probable; both mines are giving satisfactory results.

Good wages prevail in New Zealand, but I am sorry to say that in Queensland the wages in the mining industry have a tendency to be lower.

The PREMIER: Have you ever known any Government in Queensland that has done more to develop the coal industry than this Government?

Mr. JONES: I am not complaining about the State coalmine in Queensland, except in regard to the management, but if a State coalmine can be worked successfully in New Zealand, I maintain that a State coalmine can be worked successfully in Queensland. I also maintain that the State should take up the erection of metallurgical works. The Premier at one time believed in State ownership of everything.

The PREMIER: I never did; I may have been a big fool, but I was never such a big fool as that.

Mr. JONES: If the hon. gentleman will look up his speeches, he will see that he has often advocated State metallurgical works and State batteries.

Mr. MAXWELL: Why did the Aldershot works close? I suppose because they did not pay?

Mr. JONES: If they did not pay, they ought to have been able to pay. However, it is recog-

nised by a great many of those engaged in the mining industry in Queensland that the establishment of State metallurgical works will be a great assistance to the mining industry. The Premier cannot say that we have a good Mining Act in this State. In other countries they have elective inspectors.

Mr. MAXWELL: In what other countries?

Mr. JONES: I maintain that inspectors should be elected in Queensland. That brings me to the Howard strike. I believe that the reason why Mr. Rankin does not wish to recognise the union is because he knows that when the men unite they will be strong enough to protest against the bad ventilation of that mine. It is because the mining inspectors of that district do not do their duty and report on the bad condition which prevails in the Howard mines that the present state of things exists.

The PREMIER: That is a very serious charge to make.

Mr. JONES: Yes, and I make it. I have talked to men who have been mining at Howard, and I know men who have left and would not work in those mines, because there are places there which are unfit for a dog to be in. I believe that is the very reason why Mr. Rankin does not want to recognise the union—he is afraid of what will follow the formation of the union.

Mr. MAUGHAN: The inspector has condemned the sanitary arrangements in that mine.

Mr. JONES: The sanitary arrangements are bad, not only at Howard, but at a great many other places. I know a mining inspector who went into a mining township and sat on the box seat of the coach and sent for the manager, and wrote his report, I suppose, from his interview with the manager, and without going down the mine.

Mr. GRANT: That is not fair; give the name.

Mr. JONES: I do not say that happened recently. I could make a charge, but the inspector is dead, and it is no use mentioning his name. I made a reference to the Minister for Mines travelling from Mount Perry during the election campaign per special train, but I must say that he has fulfilled the promise he has made there. The Minister for Lands also visited my district per special train, and he made a promise which he evidently intends to carry out. I refer to a promise made to a deputation of timber-getters. The Minister denies the statement that I made, and I propose to state the facts. I wired to the hon. gentleman from Kingaroy, asking him if he would receive a deputation of timber-getters, and he replied that he would. It is reported that, after hearing the deputation, he asked them which political party they were going to support, and they said the Labour party. They were members of the timber-getters' union. The Minister then said he would keep the interests of the millers well before him in giving his decision. That is a promise which he probably intends to carry out, but I hope he will not. With regard to the sale of a large area of timber country in the Nanango district, a deputation from that district waited upon the hon. gentleman last year and asked him not to sell this area of timber, but to keep it in reserve until the railway line to Nanango had been secured, so that it would help to make the line pay, in case the line, which was to be constructed under the new Railway Act, did not pay. The proposal was that the timber should be held back in order to increase the timber traffic on the line and make the railway pay. Another deputation of timber-getters waited upon the hon. gentleman the same day, and asked him to dispose of this timber country in

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small areas. A notice of sale was issued, and in that notice there was a stipulation that the timber should not be exported in the log. The Minister evidently found out afterwards that that stipulation was unconstitutional, and he withdrew the timber from sale until he had inspected the area. This he has done, and a notice of sale has since been issued, to the effect that the land would be sold on the 12th August. One of the conditions of sale is that the timber must be milled within three miles of the area, and, strange to say, the timber must be milled within three miles of the western boundary of the area. It appears to me that that sale is being made for one company. I do not know whether I am correct in saying that, but everything points to that conclusion. There have been over £10,000—I think I should be nearer the mark in saying between £15,000 and £20,000—invested in bullock teams and horse teams by small timber-getters in that district, and if they are not allowed to compete for this timber area they will be thrown out of work, and will have to seek fresh fields and pastures new. It is only democratic and just to ask that that area of timber shall be disposed of in small areas, so that the small timber-getters and those who haul their timber to the mill or to the railway station for export shall have an opportunity of competing for the land. If those 7,000,000 feet of timber are sold in one area it will create a monopoly in that district, which I intend to protest against. No matter in what part of the House I may sit, I shall always protest against a monopoly. I do not wish to say anything further on this matter, because the Minister has been written to and asked to reconsider his decision, and to dispose of the area in small blocks by auction or by tender. I would like to say a word about the land administration, in regard to which I was compelled to agree with the leader of the Opposition's remarks, that the land agent system prevailing in Queensland is very detrimental to the State—or rather, the hon. gentleman agreed with my previous statements when I was sitting on the Ministerial side of the House, because I think I was the first to ask what remuneration was paid to Mr. Pulsford, of New South Wales, and Mr. Murphy, of Victoria, as land agents for the Government of Queensland. The Minister's reply to my question was that I had better seek the information when the Estimates were before the House. That was done, and we found that Mr. Pulsford received in one year a commission of £1,203, and Mr. Murphy received very nearly the same amount. If the Lands Department was properly administered, there would be no need for Southern agents, and I take it as a great reflection on the Minister and on his department that these land agents are increasing so rapidly. It is a serious injustice to native-born Queenslanders that they have to go past the Lands Department, and approach Southern agents before they can take up land.

The PREMIER: It is very pathetic, but it is not true.

Mr. JONES: Any man can go into the Lands Department and put down his deposit for a selection, and the officers will say "We cannot accept your money." He can then go across the street and pay his deposit to Mr. Pulsford, and Mr. Pulsford can say to him "Go back to your Southern home, and you can have your land within twelve months, or whenever you are ready to go on to it." One way in which Queenslanders are victimised is this: They may apply to either Mr. Pulsford or Mr. Murphy to be allowed to join a group.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I certainly will not pay any commission for them if I know anything about it.

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Mr. JONES: I know of occasions where Queenslanders have joined such groups, and immediately the Lands Department found out they were Queenslanders they said to Mr. Murphy and to Mr. Pulsford, "We do not pay commission on Queenslanders," and these men were then ejected from the groups. I can produce correspondence to prove that Queenslanders have been victimised in this way, because there was no commission paid for them. It is better to increase the officials in the Lands Department than to continue such a system. In fact, I think we made a mistake in introducing the group system. It is a bad one. The lands should be thrown open to competition. When the senior member for Toowoomba was seconding the Address in Reply, he said that preference should be given to young Queenslanders. When we said that, when we sat on the other side of the House, we roused the ire of the Minister.

Hon. R. PHILP: You voted against preference being given to young Queenslanders last session.

Mr. JONES: Oh, we were saving the Government then. (Opposition laughter.) We are in a different position now.

Mr. COWAP: Were you saving the Government or your seat?

Mr. JONES: However, I do not think I ever voted against preference to Queenslanders, though, as a native-born Queensland, I do not ask that we should have a preference. As a representative of a district which is being largely settled by men from the South, all I ask is that equal opportunities be given to all, irrespective of where they come from, so long as they are white people. I do not pose as one who is against people from the Southern States, because I do not think that an imaginary line can destroy the Australian sentiment that is within us. At the same time, I do not like to see any person getting a preference over native-born Queenslanders and those who have pioneered this State. My statement will be denied. The Minister has denied it previously, but I will just quote a case in point. At Biggenden the local people cut a road through a scrub, and made known to the Minister an area of very good land known as the Coalston Lake land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know they were paid for what they did.

Mr. JONES: They cut the road and chanced your paying them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They arranged with me before they cut the road.

Mr. JONES: I accept the correction, but that is what I understood. The area comprised 23,854 acres, of which 11,960 acres were taken up under the group system—that is, just half the area. The first was the Canadian group of thirteen blocks, comprising 2,735 acres. The second was the Maurice and Johnston group of eleven blocks, comprising 1,975 acres. The next was Mr. Murphy's Victorian group of eighteen blocks, comprising 2,768 acres. The next was Mr. Pulsford's group of twenty-eight blocks, comprising 4,482 acres. A local group of Queenslanders applied for 1,200 acres in four small areas. The Minister refused the local people, although the group would not have interfered with the four groups I have mentioned. This is the departmental reply—

[Copy.]

Department of Public Lands,
3rd April, 1906.

Sir,—With regard to your joint letter of 18th ultimo to the Minister for Lands, requesting portions 237, 238, 253, and 256, parish of Degilbo, be set aside for selection by a group to be called the Kimber group, I am

directed to inform you that the Minister regrets that your request must be refused, as it is not considered advisable to open any additional part of the country for group selection.

I have, etc.,

UNDER SECRETARY.

That was addressed to Mr. C. Stephenson and others, the four applicants being the sons of men who had pioneered the country—men of the stamp whom the senior member for Toowoomba said should get a preference; and here they have been deprived of the right to take up land at all; and one of them was one of those who went to a considerable deal of trouble to cut the road and make this country known. The department replied to the *Courier* on the subject in this way—

Referring to a letter published from our Biggenden correspondent, the Assistant Under Secretary for Lands states:—The Hon. J. T. Bell, Minister for Lands, visited this district last year. A special request was then made by residents that land in the vicinity of that asked for by Mr. Stephenson and his friends should not be opened to group selection, but should be available for public competition. A total area of 23,854 acres is now being opened, comprising 111 portions, and of this area forty-eight portions, comprising 11,961 acres, are being opened for competition, and the remainder under the group system. The Minister is of opinion that the area available for public competition should not be further curtailed.

If the local people had known that the hon. gentleman was going to allow half the land to be devoted to groups, they would have formed a group; but they were not aware that the hon. gentleman was going to adopt that system of settlement, and that is where the injustice comes in. The leader of the Opposition and the senior member for Toowoomba complained that the price of land is far too high. I agree with them in that; and if the hon. member for Toowoomba wishes to have cheaper land—and no one doubts his sincerity—he should become a member of this party, for our method of settling land, as advocated in our platform, is the best.

Mr. KENNA: What is that?

Mr. JONES: The perpetual leasehold tenure. Members of this House have repeatedly stated that land is too high in price. Then why not join the Labour party—the only party in the House that has a plank in its platform that will give cheap land? (Laughter.) We are willing to give the land free to the people, and all that should be asked in return is a rental for the expenditure of the people's money.

Mr. COWAP: Why don't you get a special lease of your own?

Mr. JONES: If the Minister will introduce a Bill and make the leasehold tenure retrospective, and enable us to convert our freehold selections into a leasehold tenure, I am willing to support him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you own any freehold?

Mr. JONES: Yes. I do not see any inconsistency in owning a freehold. Can anybody say why I should not take up a freehold?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I was not accusing the hon. member of inconsistency. I only wanted to know whether he was prepared to surrender his freehold and allow me to lease the land to him.

Mr. PAGET: If you pay compensation.

Mr. JONES: Yes, if you pay me for my outlay. I am a freeholder under the old homestead sections of the Act at 2s. 6d. an acre. That was the only system of tenure available. I am suggesting that this Chamber should adopt the land policy of the Labour party—that is, the leasehold tenure—as preferable to the freehold tenure.

Mr. PAGET: Under which you were compelled to select.

Mr. JONES: We had no other system under which we could take up land. In our district, and in the electorate of the hon. [7.30 p.m.] member for Cairns, there is sufficient land to settle thousands of people on. We should build railways to these places, and erect improvements on the land with money advanced by the State to help the people settle there. It is only a fair thing, when land is enhanced in value by the expenditure of public money, that that enhanced value should be charged for by the State. The Labour party is the most misrepresented party on this land question. I really think that members of the Labour party should advocate it here strenuously, so that it might be read in the country. We are misrepresented and told that we want to advocate a land tax as additional taxation, but we do not advocate a land tax as additional taxation, because we want to do away with a lot of the pettifoggery taxation that we now have to pay. There is no doubt that the only way to settle this country, and to settle it properly, will be under a system of leasehold tenure. I remember reading a speech made by the Minister for Public Lands in 1902—I had not the honour of being a member of the House at that time—in which the Minister said—

If Queensland was starting over again, I would not be a party to sell 1 acre of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I say the same now, and my father said the same thing before me.

Hon. R. PHILP: That is a very cheap statement to make.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a perfectly true statement all the same, although I do not think you will get a majority of Queenslanders to subscribe to it.

Mr. JONES: I am pleased to hear the hon. gentleman say that. I am well aware that in what I am advocating I am putting into *Hansard* that which is very unpopular, and probably unpopular in my own district. However, that is the duty of a reformer—(laughter)—to advocate at times that which is unpopular. I am here to advocate measures that will be of benefit to the State, and whether I am thrown out of Parliament or not, I will always continue to advocate them. The Labour party are always accused of having too much regard for posterity, but the man who has no regard for posterity is not worthy of being a member of this Chamber. (Hear, hear!) The day will come when those land sales will rebound on the Government of this day, that is doing so much in disposing of the estate of the people, and I very much question their right to sell land at all.

Mr. GRANT: You have some freehold yourself.

Mr. JONES: I have just explained that was the only system on which I could take land up.

Mr. GRANT: You could have taken it up under leasehold.

Mr. JONES: The leasehold areas were too large.

Mr. COWAP: No; you can get them in any size.

Mr. JONES: I am afraid we are not adopting the best method of settling people on the land. Another thing on which I disagree with the Minister is that the people who are settled on the land do not receive the concessions they are justly entitled to. Some little time ago I

received a letter, which I will quote to bear out my contention. The letter is dated the 27th July, and reads as follows:—

With reference to your letter of the 24th ultimo, forwarding a request from the farmers of Green View, Wondai, asking that a road be cleared to enable them to get to the railway with produce, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that the request cannot be complied with, as the Lands Department advise that there are no Crown lands in the neighbourhood to dispose of which would recoup the suggested expenditure.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Who is that letter from?

Mr. JONES: It is from the Under Secretary to the Treasury Department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I suppose you know perfectly well that we have done more for the people on the land in making the land ready for them before they go on than any other Government that has gone before us.

Mr. JONES: I am quite aware of that. That is one thing I always commended the Minister for—making roads to the country which was really a wilderness.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is the first time I have heard you commend any effort of mine.

Mr. JONES: That is a proof of my honesty. (Laughter.) I have very little sometimes to commend the hon. gentleman for at all. He does not treat my district as it should be treated. I do not think the Government are adopting the right method of settling people on the land. It is only right when we settle people on the land that we should give them the concessions they are justly entitled to. They should be able to get these concessions by direct application to the various departments, and should not need a member of Parliament to go "cap in hand," because it would mean that one member who was a little in disfavour with the Minister would not get the same treatment as one who was not so candid in his criticism.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have asked me for very little.

Mr. JONES: When the Secretary for Public Lands was speaking at Nanango, he said to the people, "You should never vote for Jones, because I never saw him at the Lands Office."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: So far as I can see, you do not seem to display the slightest anxiety in the development of your district.

Mr. JONES: That statement was made by the Secretary for Public Lands in my electorate during my election, and it was answered by the result of the election. If there was one question more than another which helped me it was the administration of the Lands Department, and the preference and priority which the Minister was giving to other people at the expense of his own.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The administration of the Lands Department under this Government has given your district the best lift it has ever had.

Mr. JONES: You built 33 miles of railway. But the people in the Burnett were justly entitled to that railway, and to all they have received. It is only right that a beautiful district like the Burnett should receive this treatment. It is not only a duty that the Government owe to the people in the Burnett, but it is a duty the Government owe to the people of the State, as a whole, to develop that district. It does not matter whether the Burnett district is represented by a Labourite, a Philpote, or

a Kidstonite. It has nothing whatever to do with party politics at all. We are going to ask for another railway shortly, and we believe we will get it, because the country warrants it. The railway should be constructed on the merits of the district, and not because of political influence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What line do you refer to?

Mr. JONES: The Dallarnil branch line. Speaking of railways, I am very pleased to see in the Government programme there is to be a reduction in the fares and freights on our railways. They are too high. I might instance the case of kerosene. It is carried 2,000 miles from America oversea at less cost than it is carried 300 miles on a Queensland railway. That is a comparison for the member for Rockhampton to think over. If the Government is sincere in their programme—and I have no doubt they are—I hope they will reduce the fares and freights on our railways. With regard to railway construction, I believe the route of the railway should be surveyed, and the route decided upon before any settlement takes place, because if that is done our railways will not be compelled to follow a very crooked course to avoid private property, as they have to do at present. People might then go out and settle on the country lands, knowing that some time or other they were likely to receive a railway. However, I do not wish to deal with the lands administration any further to-night, because we will have an opportunity of doing so when the Lands Department Estimates are before us on a future occasion. There is one measure not mentioned in the Governor's Speech which I would have liked to have seen there, and that is an amendment of the Agricultural Bank Act. That Act, to my mind, badly needs amending. I have noticed they have in New Zealand what is known as an Advances to Settlers Act, under which large sums are lent or advanced, running from £25 to the maximum of £3,000, with the right at any time to repay a part of the loan or the whole of it.

Mr. PAGET: That is the same as our Act.

Mr. DENHAM: No, £800 is our maximum.

Mr. JONES: You can pay off the whole amount at any time. But if we borrow £100 in Queensland you cannot pay off £10, say, at any time. In New Zealand you can pay off £1 at any time.

Mr. DENHAM: Any such application would not be refused.

Mr. JONES: The hon. gentleman who was in charge of that Act says it would not be refused, but there is nothing in the Act to show where it can be done. The New Zealand Act contains the following provisions:—

The right at any time to wholly or partly pay off the loan. The easy repayment of loan by annual instalments of £1 per cent. in addition to the right to partly or wholly pay off at any time. No commission or procuration fee. Extremely small valuation fee and legal charges. Secrecy.

The inspection fee in Queensland is too high—£3 for any application. If you wish to borrow a small sum, say the minimum of £25, you have to pay the same inspection fee as you do if you wish to borrow the maximum, £800. I suggest the fee should be on a sliding scale from £1 to £3. In New Zealand they advance money on the value of both freehold and leasehold land. In Queensland we cannot do this. Sometimes the inspection in Queensland takes six months. An officer of the Lands Department has to do the work here; he has to give

[Mr. Jones.

preference to his Lands Department work, and, in some cases, he does not have an opportunity of making the inspection until three or four months have elapsed. There is too much delay in that way. In New Zealand, on the freehold security they advance up to 80 per cent. of its value, and on the leasehold up to 60 per cent. I am very pleased to see we are to have an amendment of the Income Tax Act. Under our present Act we have to pay the tax on the increase of stock and unsold produce. We have to pay on the stock before the actual sale takes place and the money is realised. That is very unfair. When that promised Bill comes before the House, I will do what I can to improve it. We were assured by the Hon. the Premier that the increase of stock would not be charged for until the sale actually took place and the money was realised, but we are assessed so at present. The Workers' Compensation Act is another measure that is badly in need of amending. I am well aware that it is impossible to introduce such a measure and make it perfect in one attempt. The amendment I would like to suggest is that the fortnight which has to elapse between the date of an accident and the time of paying compensation be abolished, and that the worker should receive compensation from the day of the accident. I know of a case in my electorate where a miner had his eye knocked out, and the only compensation he received was £3. Most people are under the impression that the loss of an eye is considered a very serious accident under the Compensation Act, but that is not so. The man received all he was entitled to receive under our much boasted Workers' Compensation Act; he was idle five weeks, and he received £1 a week for three weeks.

Mr. GRANT: His efficiency as a worker would be destroyed, and he could claim compensation accordingly.

Mr. JONES: He lost his eye in doing his work, and it did not make any difference to his employers. Certainly, the loss of an eye should be compensated by a greater sum than £3. I do not believe we will ever get a perfect system of compensation to workmen until we have the method of paying compensation to all under the socialistic scheme—and I am prepared to advocate it—that compensation will be paid to all persons from a general State fund raised by a system of State insurance, where every person—not only a widow bereft of the breadwinner—but every person meeting with an accident will receive compensation for loss of time.

Mr. PAGET: He will have to subscribe to it.

Mr. JONES: We have to subscribe now to the old age pensions, and I will support the Old Age Pensions Bill, although I think it should be a Federal matter. But if the Federal Parliament is not so constituted, not sufficiently democratic, to pass such a Bill, then I, for one, will never vote against it in this Chamber. Certainly, the method of raising the funds may be objectionable. It may be by a wages tax, and in that case it will be very objectionable.

Mr. PAGET: It may be by a land tax.

Mr. JONES: Well, I will support a land tax, but do not advocate a land tax for that purpose alone. I say the workers will never receive just compensation—full compensation—and we will never settle this difficult question until we have that socialistic scheme I have suggested. We have many cases of accidents occurring to the employer, who is very often not as well off as his employee. You often see that in the case of those engaged

in the farming industry, and if an accident occurs to the employer there is no one to compensate him. A case of this nature occurred at the Coolabunia Scrub. A gentleman there employed a man he met on the road to fall scrub on his selection. He paid him good wages, insured his man with one of the agents in the town of Kingaroy, and thus conformed to the law. He went out a day or two after to see how his employee was getting on, and the axe flew out of his workman's hand and cut his foot off. He was weeks in the hospital, and received no compensation. We are all howled down as socialists, and yet the only perfect method of paying compensation is under our system of a State insurance fund—and paying compensation to all persons, whether they are members of Parliament or not. I am one member of the party that endorses the statement recently made by our worthy leader, the senior member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Bowman, to this effect: that it is measures we are here to support, and not men. That is in accordance with the principles of our platform. It matters not from whom it may emanate we must support it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The *Worker* howled for men.

Mr. JONES: The *Worker* did no such thing. The *Worker* did not howl for you. We are a free party, willing to accept those measures. The hon. member for Fassifern, in speaking the other night, said that because the coalition had not come about between the Philp party and the Kidston party the country is suffering and would suffer. I think the country has suffered enough under the party to which he belongs, and I will just say that I do not lean in any way towards them. He was followed by the hon. member for Oxley, Mr. Denham. Mr. Jenkinson was afraid of the socialistic party, and said so in his speech—that Mr. Kidston was doing something wrong in accepting any compromise of support from our party. Then he was followed by the hon. member for Oxley, Mr. Denham, who advocated that which was practically socialism. He is well known in this Chamber as a gentleman who speaks strongly against socialism, and yet who has practised State socialism to a greater extent than any other Minister of the Crown. I believe that while he was sitting on the front Treasury benches he carried more measures nearer State socialism than any other Minister. (Hear, hear!) All the Bills which he introduced at that time were on the lines of State socialism—State assistance to farmers and selectors. I was elected a socialist, and I do not deny it, but that which I do deny, and which I am not willing to accept, is every person's definition of "socialism." I remember that the Secretary for Public Lands at one time stated he was a socialist. I suppose he claims his right to his own definition. I am not prepared to accept the definition of the hon. member for Barcoo, when he said a socialist was always the man who grabbed the big potato. (Laughter.) I believe in the State owning and controlling a great many more of our industries than they do at present. I believe if the State can run our railways and our educational system—if they can run our Post Office with success—and we must admit that they do—well, then, they could establish State batteries and State metallurgical works, and control a great many other industries. For instance, the Premier is a socialist. He has a State coalmine.

Hon. R. PHILP: You do not like the State coalmine.

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Mr. JONES: I do not like the manager of the State coalmine. I do not think it is fair to appoint a man manager at £50 a month who is only there two or three days a month, and allow that man to have the right to say to his employees that they shall not unite. I am not going to deal with the Howard lockout to-night, because the senior member for Maryborough has referred to it fully, and I hope the hon. member for Burrum, who repeatedly called out that what Mr. Mitchell said was not true, is satisfied. I am in a position to state that the senior member for Maryborough and the junior member for Maryborough did not provoke any strike. The strike occurred before they went there, and their actions right through the piece and right through that regrettable lockout—and it is regrettable, because there are women there in need, and also children in need, and it was the action of the public that kept them from starvation, and not the action of their tyrannical employer, Mr. Rankin. Those gentlemen did all they could to bring about a settlement, and no one can say they advocated a strike. I know they are misrepresented, as this party is misrepresented as a discontented party, who go about the country provoking strikes. Well, if we are a discontented party, I would point out that it was from the discontented men that the progress of the world sprang. There are two kinds of discontented men—the man who is discontented and sits at home, and there is the discontented man who goes about trying to alter the conditions under which he lives, and make it better for his fellow-men to live. We have a State bank, or what, if the principle was broadened, would be a State bank. Under our present system we make laws that make men rich, and we make laws to protect their riches—to safeguard those riches against robbery—but we do nothing to make laws to help those who are in need of the necessities of life. We arrest a man for being poor, and we do not guarantee him either work or food. I think our whole system is wrong, and if the State would take up the matter of advances to farmers, carrying his goods overland to the market and providing markets for him, then we will live under better conditions than we are living under at the present time. I have no desire to take up the time of the House any longer. No one desires to speak at any length in a House where influenza is in evidence. But I wish to say that, judging the Government programme by the titles of the measures, it must be considered democratic, and if those measures are not in conflict with the principles upon which I was elected I shall support them. I hope this session and this Parliament will be productive of much good; I hope that we shall settle many people on the land, and do as much good as it is in our power to do, so that when we appeal again to the country we shall be able to do so with a record that is a credit to ourselves and a credit to Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. T. Bell, *Dalby*): Although I am very much in the grip of the influenza fiend, to which the hon. member for Burnett has just alluded, yet I shall endeavour to

[8 p.m.]

make a few observations. I am disposed to think that anybody who has gone through the ordeal of that feverish experience will offer some sympathy in my condition. That reminds me, although it is not necessary to remind me, that the hon. gentleman who leads the party sitting on the Opposition cross benches is himself suffering from that ailment, also a more serious one. I am uttering my sentiments, and, I am quite sure, the feelings of my colleagues, and, if I

may be permitted to do so, the feelings of the whole House, when I say we are extremely sorry that the leader of the Labour party, the senior member for Fortitude Valley, is on a bed of sickness, and that we hope he will very soon be restored to his place. (Hear, hear!) How inscrutable are the ways of Providence! If it is not irreverent to say so, it is inscrutable indeed that Providence, if He had to make a selection from the Labour party, should have chosen the leader as the one to be afflicted. If it is not presumptuous to say so, if it is not irreverent, I would say that if such a duty were cast upon me, I believe I should have made a far happier choice. (Laughter.) I think this debate, so far as it has gone, is one which, if it has not provided much occasion for elation on the part of the Ministry, certainly does not suggest to them any reason why they should be despondent. So far as my recollection goes, this is the first speech which His Excellency has delivered that has met with a general acceptance from all three parties in the House. I have not yet heard anybody—I do not know, of course, what revelations are to follow; but, so far as the debate has gone, I have not heard any hon. member heartily condemn any of the legislative proposals that are contained in the Speech. It would really be an extraordinary thing if there were not a dissentient voice here and there, and I have heard some hon. members suggest that we are not quite sincere in regard to all these proposals—that is, so far as their nature can be gleaned from their title—but I have heard no general condemnation attaching to the measures. That, I think, must be almost unprecedented.

Mr. CAMPBELL: We do not agree with your immigration proposals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When the hon. member says "We," I ask whom he means?

Mr. CAMPBELL: The Opposition party.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am sorry to hear that, but I am disposed to think that when the hon. member says he does not agree with the immigration proposals of the Government, he means as far as he understands them.

Mr. CAMPBELL: And so far as they have been disclosed by your allies.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Upon my word, after listening to some of the speeches, I should say the hon. member's allies! (Laughter.) The hon. member for Clermont, during his speech, which I was so unfortunate as not to hear, but a great deal of which I was industrious enough to read, has displayed indications of undergoing an intellectual conversion. Ever since the hon. member has been in Parliament, and for a good many years before that, he has been disposed to associate with the politics of the Conservative party—the Tory party—what he calls a policy of boodles, and to bestow upon them a series of vituperative epithets which, whatever they may lack in taste, are not at all wanting in fluency. Yet, during the speech the hon. member delivered in this Chamber quite recently, he laid down the doctrine—I was astonished to find it coming from his lips—that if you look through the constitutional history of Great Britain you will find that a very large proportion of the legislative reform that has been effected has come through the medium of the Tory party. When I hear a member of the Labour party saying that, and

[*Mr. Jones.*]

see him sitting where he is—in opposition to the most radical Government which has ever sat on the Treasury benches in Queensland—I am I wrong in drawing the conclusion that we may in future, and at no distant day, find the legislative lion lying down with the legislative lamb, and that we may yet find the hon. member for Townsville, the hon. member for Clermont, the hon. member for Moreton, and I am afraid I must also say the hon. member for Oxley, forming a most interesting “four-in-hand” on the Opposition benches? (Laughter.) Speaking to the motion before the Chamber, I do not wish to omit that which I know is customary—namely, for the earlier speakers from the Treasury bench on this motion to make some reference to the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. If I do make a very brief reference to them I am not doing it for any stereotyped reasons at all. I desire, first, to refer to the mover of the motion we are now discussing. I recollect that as a small boy I used to come to this Chamber and listen to the debates, and I remember very well indeed, during the seventies, listening to the father of the mover of this motion speaking from the exact spot from which I am now talking—I mean the late Hon. John Douglas. I am not employing any idle or irresponsible words when I say that he was one of the ornaments of our Queensland Parliament. If you look at its records even from the month of May, 1860, when the first Queensland Parliament met, you will see that he was a capable legislator, and carried on the duties of a parliamentarian according to the highest traditions of the British House of Parliament—and higher praise than that I cannot give to any member of Parliament. His son, from all the indications we had in his speech, is going to be a worthy successor of his father. (Hear, hear!) With regard to the gentleman who seconded the motion, he comes from a country where, I hope, we are going to see a great many men who will make their homes in Queensland come from, and that is New Zealand. He bears a name honoured and respected in New Zealand, and he gave excellent promise in the remarks that he delivered. I really think I am not exaggerating when I say that, since I have been in the House, I have not heard two men move and second the adoption of the Address in Reply who displayed more promise of becoming useful members of this Chamber than the two members whose motion we are now discussing. Now, I wish to make reference to some remarks which fell from the hon. member who preceded me while they are fresh in my mind. When I have referred to him, I shall come back to some of the speakers who delivered themselves in an earlier part of the debate on the Address and Reply. It is quite evident that I do not possess as an administrator, nor, possibly, in any other capacity, the confidence of the hon. member for Burnett. I am rather surprised at that, because I do not know that there is any district of Queensland where, at the present time, if you were to make inquiries, you would hear kinder sentiments expressed in regard either to this Government as a whole, or to the Lands Department, than you would in the Burnett district. I am not going to retaliate, and say unkind things about the hon. member for Burnett. I can say unaffectedly that he is a man I like personally. I believe him to be a perfectly sincere man. Politically, I have been absolutely unable to understand him ever since I came in contact with him in this House, and I repeat here

what I did not conceal from his constituents—and what I have never concealed from the hon. member himself—that I am unable to understand the interpretation that he places upon his duties as a member of Parliament. Since I have been Secretary for Public Lands I have had a good deal to do with the Burnett district; I have had a good deal to do with pushing a railway into that district, and I have had a good deal to do with introducing fresh blood from outside Queensland on the land in that electorate; and I declare to the House that it has always been a matter of astonishment to me that the hon. member for Burnett has seemed to be singularly indifferent to the introduction of new settlers and to the railways that were being constructed in his district. Only on the rarest occasions has he ever come to me to discuss a matter, and, when he has been brought into contact with me in connection with matters in relation to his district, he has generally come along with some deputation or another, or else he has come to make some twopenny halfpenny complaint with regard to the price of land in two or three selections in his district. The hon. member may be working out some definite scheme that attunes with his conception of the duties of a member of Parliament; but, upon my word, looking at him from the ordinary standard, I find it difficult to appreciate his line of conduct. He told this Chamber a few minutes ago something about the Coalston Lakes country, and he endeavoured to lead the House, sincerely enough, I have no doubt, to believe that I have shown indifference to the interests of Queenslanders in that particular locality, and that the bowels of my compassion have been excited whenever somebody who had his origin and place of abode outside Queensland came forward and endeavoured to take up some of our land. The facts are, that the Coalston Lakes country, which had been lying there all the time that my numerous predecessors were in office—they may or may not have heard of it—but it was brought under my notice by men in the hon. member's own district, and I at once authorised the expenditure of money to be paid to some of the people who were talking about the land to cut a track up to the lakes, which were described to me in the first instance as being inexhaustible reservoirs of water, but which fuller investigation disclosed to be nothing better than a couple of swamps—well, rather better than ordinary swamps—but certainly two reservoirs that did not deserve the enthusiastic language that some of the hon. member's constituents bestowed upon them—language which would have led one to imagine that these two waterholes on the top of a ridge were the centre of a kind of Arcadia for settlers. I had tracks cut to the lakes. I had a surveyor sent up to lay it out in suitable areas. I went up and had a look at the country myself, and I can assure the House that when I went there in company with a considerable number of the hon. member's constituents who live in the neighbourhood there was no proposition made to me—and I think I should have remembered it if it had been made—that I should set aside an area of land in order to meet the demands for land of residents in the localities, or their sons. The only demand that was made was that I should take care not to lock up the whole area in groups, but that I would set aside a sufficient proportion for those in the locality who desired to compete for land. A particular portion was indicated to me, and I was at particular pains to see that the area was left untouched. It was in

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pursuance of that resolve, made at the request of residents in the neighbourhood, that I refused the proposal that was made to me quite at the eleventh hour—weeks, and probably months after I had inspected the land—a proposal made by one of the men who accompanied me on my ride to the lakes, and who had every opportunity of making a proposal for a group if he wished to do it. He came forward just before the land was being opened, and asked to have a group formed on that particular area that months before I had been asked to leave open for general competition. When I declined his offer in courteous terms through the medium of correspondence, and told him that I could not fall in with his views, he turned round and wrote to the papers; he assumed an aggrieved air, and tried to make the people believe through the newspapers, as he is trying to make this Chamber believe through the mouth of his representative, that I was an unsympathetic administrator because I did not do what he wished. I cut the balance of that land up into three or four groups. I regret to say that they have not succeeded. When the matter was raised by the hon. member I communicated with the department, and I find that of 170 blocks that were thrown open for selection only 16 have been taken up.

MR. JONES: You allowed the groups to pick the eyes out of the country.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Very few of the blocks in the groups have been taken up, the reason given being that there is no water upon the area. All I can say is that the whole of the land will now be opened to general competition, and we shall see how many of the hon. member's constituents in the neighbourhood come up to the scratch. The hon. member made a complaint with regard to a road to Wondai. He said that we put people on the land and did nothing for them, and he quoted this pathetic petition from the people in the neighbourhood of Wondai as an evidence of our heartlessness. The fact is—and it cannot be too widely known throughout this country—that there has never been any Government upon these benches who was so much concerned to prepare land before it was thrown open to selection preparatory to the people going on it, or who did so much to keep them there after they were put on to it. What has been the history of the Lands Department in regard to preparing land for settlement? During all the years that preceded the year 1903—that halcyon year when this Administration came into office—what was the general experience when land was thrown open for selection? All that was done was to have it surveyed. It may or may not have been permanently surveyed; at all events it was designed. It was put into the *Gazette*, and was proclaimed open for four weeks. On the day appointed for selecting it people came forward and applied for it. All the land commissioner did was to decide who was the successful applicant. It did not matter whether the land he took up was forest land without a drop of water upon it. It did not matter, on the other hand, whether it was a selection in the centre of a scrub to which there was not even a wallaby track to give the selector a lead. The Lands Department had done their duty. The selector, practically speaking, could go and hang so far as they were concerned. This Government had made a new departure. In connection with the very men whom the hon. member and the party sitting around him—though I am dealing particularly with the hon. member—in connection with the very

men which the hon. member declares he is particularly concerned with, this Government is the first Government to make that departure, and take care that before land is thrown open for selection some provision is made for water upon it, in order that the selectors may have a rallying point, where they can get water until they make their own individual provisions. This is the first Government, when the country is in scrub, to cut roads through those scrubs in order to give the selectors access to their selections. Did the hon. member for Burnett say one word in regard to the action of the Government in this respect during his election speeches? My own opinion is that the hon. member was absolutely ignorant in the matter? I do not believe the hon. member knew what was going on in his own constituency.

MR. JONES: How could I be ignorant, when I live in the centre of it?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then, if he lives in the centre of all that I am describing, why had not the hon. member the common honesty to get up and make some acknowledgment of it. I read some of the hon. member's speeches, and I never saw the slightest reference to it. He has made a long speech to-night. Did he make one single reference to it in that speech? The only reference the hon. member made with regard to land administration was to say that we had done nothing at all. Why, this is a socialistic effort—a collectivist effort.

MR. JONES: I give you all credit for it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Call it by whatever epithet you like, it was a utilisation of the forces of the State in order to make better the condition of those who are going on the land.

HON. R. PHILP: The scheme was there ready for you to carry out.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not dealing with its genesis at all. I am merely dealing at the present moment with its application. And let me say this: There is nobody on the other side who girds at me more persistently, I am sorry to say, than the leader of the Opposition.

HON. R. PHILP: Don't you deserve it?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have an absolutely blameless conscience in that respect, and yet on the public platform, not only in my own electorate but on other platforms throughout Queensland, I took care to say that the germ of the idea was initiated by the hon. member himself somewhere about the year 1900 or 1901.

HON. R. PHILP: I never heard it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; because, unfortunately, the hon. member never had the appreciative impulse that led him to attend any of my political meetings. If he had, I have no doubt he would have blushed to find himself famous in that particular way. I always took care—my instinct of fair play made me do it—to say the hon. gentleman brought about the germ of that idea—I think in my own electorate. The hon. gentleman has the credit of discovering it, but we have amplified it, and made it blossom out into the useful principle of land settlement into which it has grown; and certainly it is deplorable to hear a young member like the hon. member for Burnett deliver himself with an atmosphere of candour all round him, posing as a sort of detached critic, bewailing the defects of the Government with tears in his voice, who is either so ignorant—I prefer

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to say it is ignorance—or so disingenuous that he has not the decency to pay one tittle of credit to the action of the Government in this matter.

Mr. JONES: You are entirely wrong. I gave you credit for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not so pessimistic with regard to the hon. member for Burnett as the hon. member for Burrum appears to be.

Mr. LESINA: He ought not to be pessimistic, because his whole family have appointments in connection with the State coalmine.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is like a good many other statements the hon. member makes—very interesting, but without any foundation in fact. (Laughter.) If the hon. member will contain himself—

Mr. LESINA: I will wait, although it is a weariness.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Well, I am bound to say, I treat this Chamber a great deal better than the hon. member does. When I talk I do not talk for four hours, and I do not wind up by saying that I have been getting my bile off. Before I finally leave the hon. member for Burnett, there is one reference I wish to make which is also some reference to some of the criticisms that fell from the leader of the Opposition. I refer to a matter that I heard something of during the elections—that I have shown all my sympathy to southerners, and that Queenslanders were out in the cold when it came to selecting land—and the grouping system was brought forward as an illustration of the contention. Now, the facts are these—and, after all, I do not know that any great party capital will be made out of that—any party capital that might have been made out of it would have been made at the election, like that other statement with which people on the other side try to damage me in regard to my supposed lack of sympathy for agricultural homesteads. Wherever I went during the election—and I spoke in all kinds of electorates—pastoral electorates, mining electorates, agricultural farm electorates—whenever I dealt with that subject, so far as a man speaking on a platform can gauge it, I had my audience with me on my explanations of it. I want to just give two or three figures in regard to that statement that when I opened land for settlement all my sympathy was shown to southerners. In the years 1905-06, and up till the 30th of June of this year, 1907.

[8.30 p.m.] there was opened for group settlement 1,029,000 acres—I am giving round figures. That was for group settlement, and some of that, not by any means a large proportion of it, but some of it—was set apart for Queensland groups. But of the land open to competition there was 10,000,000 acres of land, and I can tell you that amongst that 10,000,000 acres of land, there was land of just as good quality as you could find amongst the 1,029,000 acres reserved for group settlement. And, moreover, whenever I found land in special demand, I make a particular point of not including it in a group area for selection, but have thrown it open for general competition. I will tell the Chamber this—I will take hon. members into my confidence—I believe that if I had more courage in that matter I should be doing far better work for Queensland, because I do not know anything better that can happen to this country, than getting accomplished settlers up from the South in the way we are getting them. The introduction of this new blood, nearly all men with some

capital, none of them novices in regard to land settlement, bringing these men up here into this community to take up land—men who know their business, and so many of them men who are able to teach us in Queensland something about land farming—I say I do not know a better piece of work that can be done in the development of this country of Queensland than the introduction of these men.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you want to get men into this country, you will only get them in large numbers through the medium of group settlement. It was only yesterday that I was told that a number of southerners refused to come to Queensland because I would not promise to let them have a group in a particular area where they wanted it. I admit that I yielded to the clamour that was made that I should throw this area, set apart for groups, open for competition, and these men from the South, who would only sell out their southern homesteads when they know they are going to make a certainty of getting a selection in a particular spot, said, "Well, if you cannot do that we will stay where we are, and look after land in our own State." It was only yesterday I had the latest example of the necessity for the utilisation of the group system, if you are going to get men from the South to settle upon our lands. If it is contended—and while I have not heard it contended in so many words, at any rate I have heard it by inference—that we should do away with that group system, and have our lands selected by having them thrown open indiscriminately to competition, you will find the result will be not only a diminution in the volume of land taken up, but—what is far more important—a reduction in the quality of men, a lessening in the quantity of the new blood that we desire to take up land.

Mr. JONES: That is a libel on Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A libel on Queensland! In this matter I am about the last man in Queensland to utter a libel on our country. I am a great deal more of a Queenslanders than the hon. member for Burnett. I have not merely been born here, and lived here all my life, but my parents lived here a great deal of their lives, and my grandparents lived here before me. And for the hon. member to turn round and say that I utter a libel on Queensland, why the statement is too ridiculous. The figures I have quoted are a refutation of the contention that the Queenslanders do not get a fair show. When 10,000,000 acres of land are opened to general competition and only 1,029,000 acres reserved for groups, that is an answer to the charge that the men in Queensland do not get a fair go. Now, I will leave the hon. member for Burnett and come back to the hon. member who leads the Opposition.

Mr. LESINA: Shake him up!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not know that that exhortation is necessary. I am not like the hon. gentleman in that respect. I do not come here to shake anybody up. Any shaking that is done is done by the hon. gentleman, possibly in more senses than one. (Laughter.) I desire to answer some of the expressions uttered by the leader of the Opposition in his speech. Without in the slightest degree intending to be carping or unkind, I should like to associate myself with some of the observations that were uttered, on the spur of the moment, by the Hon. the Premier when he said that there was an

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extraordinary difference between the leader of the Opposition when you met him as a private member or in the street and when he gets up on the floor of this House and makes speeches. There is as great a difference as there is between chalk and cheese. In one case you see the man as he is himself, what everyone knows him to be, one of the most popular and generally respected men in this country; but in regard to the other side, we have a man who, when he makes speeches, may be described as being schoolboyish.

Hon. R. PHILP: That may be your opinion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not say it with the slightest wish of being unkind. Fancy the leader of a party getting up in this Chamber, and, with all appearance of sincerity, accusing a Minister of bribery and corruption, and then passing on to accuse another Minister of an almost equal crime, though not so serious, and then going on to accuse a third Minister of something else—accusing the three of a reprehensible series of actions—and then smilingly going on to talk about the politics of the day! Does not the hon. gentleman know that, if he is serious in his assertions, instead of merely making a general speech in the debate on the Address in Reply, he ought to have come down to this House with an amendment to say that this House declines to go on with further business until the Secretary for Public Lands, or whatever Minister he accuses of bribery and corruption, has had his actions submitted to the inquiry of a Select Committee or a commission of inquiry. To accuse a Minister of bribery and corruption is one of the most serious charges that you can make against him. And, as I interjected in reply to the hon. member, that, were not the whole thing so absolutely grotesque and ridiculous, I should have risen on a point of order, and raised the question as to whether he was in order or not in doing it. Why does he make those opera-bouffe charges of bribery and corruption against me? Simply because I have recognised in the most proper way the local needs of a particular part of the country in regard to its great natural resources.

Hon. R. PHILP: Your own electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have recognised that part of the country because of its great natural resources, and not from the mere fact that the portion of the country in question is in my own electorate. That has nothing to do with the matter at all. (Opposition laughter.) I am glad to hear the guffaw of the hon. member for South Brisbane. That is the first sound he has uttered since he returned here after his long absence from this Chamber.

Mr. STEPHENS: It is better than a pantomime to hear you.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am glad to know that I am having such an amusing effect on the hon. gentleman. The fact is, that my contemplation of him is rather in the nature of a tragedy—some serious tragedy. The hon. gentleman seems to be amused now at what I have got to say. If he will undertake to adorn this debate by addressing this House subsequently I shall be glad to hear what he has to say in contradiction of any observations I have made or am about to make on this particular matter. He will find that he is not on a platform in South Brisbane. On the platform of this Chamber we shall be glad to hear what he has got to say

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in the way of practical criticism. The leader of the Opposition charged me with having three lines surveyed in the Dalby electorate, and also with having—

Hon. R. PHILP: Is that not true?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And with having reduced the price of land in that electorate. I will deal with the second charge first.

Hon. R. PHILP: Your agent said that.

Mr. LESINA: Mr. Murphy said that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Am I dealing with Castor or Pollux? (Laughter.) If the hon. member for Clermont will permit me, I will deal with the leader of the Opposition first.

Mr. LESINA: Shuffle with me while you deal with him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not happen to play cards, or I would realise the force of that remark. (Laughter.) Let me deal with reference to the statement of the hon. member on the question of the reduction in the price of land. This Government, in the Act that was put on the statute-book of last session, embodied their views in regard to the betterment principle. That was the decision which had been arrived at in regard to the contribution that the local community should pay for the benefit conferred upon it through the medium of the public exchequer. But I say that we did not arrive at that decision immediately. The matter was considered, but that there was a period when we were disposed to think that a more proper way of ensuring some return from a locality was through the presence or construction of a public work, or by the opening of unselected Crown lands in that vicinity to selection at a price equivalent to what we assumed would be the value that the projected public work would confer upon it. We carried out that idea in the particular portion of the country I am speaking about. I do not know that the exact geographical situation would be any guide to the members, but it is near the Jinghi Jinghi leasehold, and there is also some country along the Moola country towards the mountains. There were two areas of country that, in my mind, were likely soon to be benefited by the presence of a railway, and I told the men who discussed with me their intention of taking up land in that vicinity, that it was probable that we should build a railway before long to those districts; and, that being the case, I was not going to let the land that belonged to the people, and which the people of Queensland were likely to make more valuable by the presence of a railway—I was not going to let it go at prairie values, gauged by its original condition and without a railway—and so I threw open that land on the assumption that a railway was going to go through it, or that a railway was highly probable. I told the men with whom I came in contact that that was my line of conduct. Soon after the land was opened we adopted the idea embodied in the Railways Act of last session, and decided that instead of throwing open unselected Crown lands at a higher rate, it would be a fair method to make a betterment area, and levy upon the area benefited any loss incurred in working the line, and both Chambers adopted that idea, and it is now on the statute-book. I remember perfectly well, when that Bill was going through the House, saying that one result of it would be to cheapen Crown lands when they were

offered to selection in Queensland, and that has been the result of the passage of that measure. Because, although I hear now people making the parrot-cry that has been uttered ever since there was a selection Act in Queensland in the early sixties—that land was being thrown open at too high a price, and though I hear hon. members saying so now—I do not think it can ever be said about me with any truth, but, at all events, it can certainly be said with no applicability at all to any land I have opened since the passage of the Railway Act last session. As soon as that measure passed, these selectors came to me, and said this: "You have done this. You have put a higher price on our land because you said it was probable that a railway would go to it, and yet you have passed a measure through Parliament which will make us, although we have paid originally for the assumed enhancement of the value of the land that that railway would confer upon it—you have passed a measure through Parliament that will make us pay on the value of the land as you proclaimed it open to selection, any loss that may be incurred in the working of that line. In other words, you have made us pay twice over for the enhancement that that railway gives to our land." I had no answer, for it was perfectly true. I have not done it anywhere else in the country, but I have done it there; and if I had allowed those particular areas of land, not large areas at all—you might imagine that I have been dealing with a whole country side, but there were only a few selections—if I had kept them at the values at which it was taken up, there could be no doubt I should have been doing an injustice to those people.

Mr. LESINA: Did you evade the provisions of the Act?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Listen to the startled and aggrieved patriot! Do not be afraid that I have been infringing the provision of some Act of Parliament.

Mr. LESINA: You have.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Let me tell the hon. member for Clermont that if I have ever infringed an Act of Parliament, it is not so ample an infringement as he himself has been capable of, and has performed, as can be shown by the records of one of the Government departments.

Mr. LESINA: Is that a reply to my question?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a pretty good reply.

Mr. LESINA: So you think. It seems to me we have got a lot of snobbishness in you—all the snobbishness naturally drawn from your convict grandfather.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Upon my word! I never expected to learn such interesting information about my genealogy. (Laughter.) If I had a grandfather who was a convict, I should not think one iota the less of myself; but, as it happens, I have not a convict grandfather, nor any convict at all in my lineage. I can say this for my grandfather: he has no reason to be ashamed of his grandson, and the hon. member's progenitor cannot say that. (Laughter.) If the hon. gentleman will content himself, I hope to come to him directly.

Mr. LESINA: I am always prepared to receive you.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I hope the hon. member will not feel any jealousy if I am prepared to give undue attention to his prospective colleague, the leader of the Opposition. I say this, that the leader of the Opposition would have done exactly the same thing if he had been in my place.

Hon. R. PHILP: I do not think so. It is only in your own electorate that this letter was written. You get it for us.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; let me come to it at once. I do not think there were ten votes in the whole transaction. I do not think that in the Jinghi Jinghi resumption, speaking offhand—I ought to have brought the papers down here, but I did not do it—there were a dozen men involved.

Hon. R. PHILP: Still you wanted to build a railway to that place.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do not be ridiculous. I do not believe three of those men had votes. They were Southerners who had only recently come to the country, and I question whether three men were on the roll; and in regard to the other places, it was a small group of Queenslanders formed in some country near Moola Creek. I do not think there were more than five of them there. I really do not think I am wrong when I say that there were probably no more than seven or eight votes at the outside involved in the whole of the transaction.

Hon. R. PHILP: And those people you asked to sign a petition to build a railway.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I never asked anything of the kind.

Mr. LESINA: Your agent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Will the hon. gentleman hold his peace?

Mr. LESINA: We have got you in a hole this time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will try to elucidate this matter as clearly as I can. I want to tell this Chamber—I think most hon. members will believe me—that the question of votes has had as much to do with the matter as a snap of the fingers in the whole transaction. I said there were no more than eight votes connected with it and I do not think there were more than fifteen selections affected. I do not believe more than ten of them, if as many, had votes in the matter. At all events, these men came to me several months before the elections were on, after the Railways Act was passed, and they pointed out the position they were in, and, as I tried to tell the House, I had no answer for them. The fact remained that these men had taken up their land immediately before that Act came in with the prospective value placed upon it from the anticipated proximity to a line, and at the same time that Act would make those people, on those prospective values, the proclaimed purchasing price, make up any loss there was in the working of the line. They said, "You are simply handicapping in two directions."

Hon. R. PHILP: Is that the only place in the State where you put that increase in price?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Oh, yes; these Southerners, of whom Mr. Murphy was the agent—they used him as their mouthpiece—came to me and said, "This is an injustice." I went into it and said, "I recognise that it is, and I am prepared to reduce the price

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of your land." The Queensland group came to me in the same way, not through any agent, but direct, and pointed out the same thing. I said, "Very well, I will reduce the price of your land," and I did it, and the letter which was written by Mr. Murphy, which the hon. gentleman read out, was written, so far as it referred to the contemplated reduction of land, at my suggestion and with my approval, because he came to me about it, and I said, "Yes, you can tell them that I will reduce the price of their land." But the part at the end, to ask them to send in a petition for a railway, was not written, I believe, at my request. Because, as a matter of fact, if I were to bring forward any matter in connection with my electorate I do not need a petition to do it; I bring it up myself. I certainly did not need any petition from constituents to say they want a railway here or there—I am sufficiently conversant with the requirements of the district to know what is required without a petition. I tell this Chamber that I believe I did not authorise the writing of the letter so far as it suggested that a petition should be got up—so far as I am aware, at all events. Even if I had, there was no particular significance in it. But that was the reason why I reduced the price of that land; and I repeat again, in the particular circumstances, there is nobody in this Chamber who, standing in my shoes, would not have done the same thing. To have left that land at the price I proclaimed it open would have been a gross act of injustice. I leave that and come to the other charge of the hon. member, that I did wrong in having three railway surveyors at work in my electorate.

Hon. R. PHILP: And during the election.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think during the election only two. I think I am entitled to say only two, because the hon. gentleman charged me with three. After all, I have not really such a great numerical choice. If the hon. gentleman insists on three, I must really correct him and say there were only two.

Mr. CAMPBELL: It was more advantageous to have them in that electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not think the hon. member will think me unkind to him when I say that I do not think his electorate has any reason to look askance at me.

Mr. CAMPBELL: We are talking about the railway surveys now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, about public works. What is the principle observed on which we have hitherto built railways in this country? We have generally built them either to establish connection with some assumed settlement, or to open up a district that is partially settled, or—I hope this is not an ungenerous remark to make—I make it for the benefit of the leader of the Opposition—we build railways in order to give assistance to the port that is at the head of these railways. (Hear, hear!) One principle we shall have to introduce in regard to railway construction—and I say this with as much emphasis as I can, in order to impress it upon hon. members—and I believe that those who have some knowledge of the remote Crown lands of this State, on whatever side of the Chamber they sit, will sympathise with what I am going to say—I say we must make a new departure in regard to the considerations which have actuated us in regard to some of our railway lines. We must take care that we build railways not with regard to the people who may be at the end of that line—greater or less in numbers—we must build lines not in regard to the seaport at the end of that line, in order to bring

more commerce into it. We must build railways in some districts, at all events, having regard to the fact that there is creeping over those waste lands an insidious and venomous vegetable pest which, in a very short time, will render thousands and thousands of square miles of our country absolutely useless. If I put two railway surveyors at work in my district—because I know perfectly well that if we defer for only a few years the construction of railways in those particular localities affected, the fertile lands in those neighbourhoods will be absolutely lost to settlement—where are they? The first surveyor I put on was on a line from Chinchilla to Roma. Now, at the risk of wearying this House I will say this—

Hon. R. PHILP: That is the fourth line.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, no! In the month of January last I was told of the Juandah leasehold. That [9 p.m.] was an area of several hundred square miles of country lying between Miles, Chinchilla, and Taroom. The lease of it had recently—only two or three years ago—been extended for about a quarter of a century by the Land Court. I was told there was some good country up there, and I went up to look at it. I heard it was under lease—and if I may take this House into my confidence—when I heard of that country being under lease, and the Lands Department could not get it, I had an idea of getting hold of some of it myself. I had a very good account of it, and the country was all that it was described to me, but I very soon saw there was going to be a conflict between my private interests as an individual and my duty as Minister for Lands. I saw that that country—excellent country that it was—beautiful soil and beautiful grasses—was country with pear upon it, and country that, if we left it in the condition which the action of the Land Court had placed it in for four or five years longer, would probably hold out no attraction whatever to small settlement, and I put aside at once any idea I had of clearing that country. I went to the lessee, who is a member of this Chamber at this moment, and arranged with him to surrender a couple of hundred square miles of his leasehold in anticipation of settling groups there, and it is only right I should say he did so on the most liberal terms. I saw that country in January, and before six or eight weeks were over I had a Lands Department surveyor upon it, and I had a railway surveyor at work making a railway survey, because I was determined, as I am determined now, that I would do as much as any Minister can do, to bring about close settlement on that area of country, and I shall do what a Minister can do to make the settlement of that country possible and feasible, by giving them railway communication. I may not succeed, but at all events it was as clear as daylight that it was my duty as a Minister to try and do that, and there is now going on a railway survey from Chinchilla, which is in my electorate, but which survey soon gets into another electorate.

Hon. R. PHILP: Then there are four lines.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a railway going on from that point to Chinchilla, in my own district, and there is also a land surveyor on that area. I say, if I had not seen it, it would still be under lease, while now 40,000 acres have been surveyed into small lots in that district, and when I open the first of that land, some time next month, there is a group from the South who will take up some 20,000 or 30,000 acres, and who, if they fill their obligations to me; and, if I have my way, I shall have many thousands of acres of that country settled, and, I think, favourable conditions going on to

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check the growth of the pear. That settlement cannot prosper unless a railway is built up to that locality. I may not succeed in getting that railway there. We know the Minister for Lands is not the Cabinet; but I have no hesitation in saying I have done my duty. I have made my contribution towards getting it; I have done all a Minister can do to lessen the risk of that large area of good Crown lands going to the inevitable destruction that will overtake it, as surely as the sun will rise to-morrow, unless you put people on it to check the growth of the prickly pear.

Hon. R. PHILP: You gave undue preference.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The leader of the Opposition, in order to take a party advantage and try and do me a little damage, flaunts in my face my action in having the railway survey. Let him do it. I say before any audience in Queensland I am prepared to justify my action; and, what is more, I am proud of it, because in doing what I did I made a new departure as Minister for Lands. I did not sit in my chair—I went to see country that the action of the Land Court had locked up for a quarter of a century, and six weeks after seeing it I had two surveyors on it.

Hon. R. PHILP: All in your own electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member knows something of the coast of Queensland; he knows something of the mining industry of Queensland, but he knows very little of the condition of the country fit for settlement to the west of the Darling Downs.

Hon. R. PHILP: I know more about the country of Queensland than you do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The other railway was on country to the south of Warra, on the Perth leasehold, and Weambilla, a locality which some Victorians inspected, and were ready to take up something like 200,000 acres in groups. They came to me and they said, "We are ready to go on to this country. We will take it up at 10s. an acre in blocks of 1,200 acres, but we cannot stay here unless we get a railway." I said, "I cannot promise you a railway, but I will say this: I will get the land surveyed for you. You can form your groups and take it up. I will undertake to have a railway line surveyed there for you. You must understand in the clearest way that you go on to that land with no promise from me that a railway will be built."

Hon. R. PHILP: That is the line off the St. George line.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I stated, "You must understand that, but I, at least, undertake to have the line surveyed for you." And I am surveying it. That country lies some 40 miles, roughly speaking, to the south of Warra, and the first 15 miles are being utilised of the old survey of the line from Dalby to St. George, and then the route should go a little westward to tap this area. Whether that line will be built or not I do not know. I know this: that those men—

Mr. LESINA: You will not be there long enough to have it built.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I know those men will go on to that country, and I also know unless they get some method of communication, such as is provided by a railway, they will not make a success of that land. If a railway is built there under the Act we have upon the statute-book, those men will make up any loss that occurs on the working of the line. If you listen to the taunts of the leader of the Opposition, one would imagine that in putting on these railway surveyors, I was endeavouring to

work some little job, so to say, for the benefit of my constituency, at the expense of the public taxpayer. The hon. member knows perfectly well that on all railways to be built after this the local benefited area will see that there is no loss to the public estate.

Hon. R. PHILP: For how long?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: As long as this Government is in office, at all events. I will not guarantee how long after the hon. member gets into office.

Hon. R. PHILP: You will be the first man to remove the 3 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you think so!

Hon. R. PHILP: That is my opinion of you.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I may or I may not. You have been wrong before, and may be wrong again. The third line is a line branching off from the Dalby-Cattle Creek line towards a group of settlers some 7 or 8 miles away. I promised those settlers that I would get that line surveyed, and I did. It is a short line, some 8 or 9 miles. That also will be built under the Guarantee Act of last session. Then there is an extension of the line from Bell towards Jondowale. As a matter of fact, I do not think it is a line that is very likely to be constructed, at all events for some time, but it is a line the Railway Commissioner is much in favour of. In any case, it is of no great national importance. I can assure this House that the Chinchilla-Taroom line is one of the most necessary lines in the country if you are going to preserve the hundreds of thousands of acres of some of our best lands from destruction.

Mr. LESINA: Can you mention any Minister in any other Government who had four railway surveys at one time in his own electorate? You have worked the political oracle all right.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I should like now to make some comments with reference to the remarks that fell from the hon. member for Clermont, and I shall be glad if he will give me his attention.

Mr. LESINA: That is all you will get from me.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: During his remarks he read—and he said he did it for the purpose of getting it into *Hansard*—some extracts from his election address to the electors of Clermont. It is a long extract, and it is composed chiefly of denunciations of myself. I must, therefore, state that those denunciations are based on a misconception of facts.

Mr. LESINA: That is in reference to the Land Court.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, very largely in regard to that, but I cannot deal with the whole of it. The hon. member said—

During 1905 this bungling Minister attempted to amend the Land Act in the direction of compelling pastoralists and selectors to pay increased rents on account of their improvements. This will give the selectors and pastoralists of this electorate an idea of the kind of man Mr. Bell is when he is at home. The Land Act provides that in the appraisal of rent any increase in value arising from the tenants' own improvements should not be assessed—an eminently just principle—yet Mr. Bell tried to subvert this principle. He inserted it in the Bill, but the Legislative Council threw it out. Any selector or pastoralist who votes for a Kidston candidate with this knowledge in his possession deserves any evil that may befall him hereafter should Bell continue in office. Lastly, it is well known that if the Government get back with a majority the Land Court will have to go.

I venture to say that if I came down to this

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House with a proposal for the abolition of the Land Court, I should get the support of the majority of hon. members sitting on the cross benches opposite; and the hon. member for Clermont, if he will permit me to remind him of it, having given a written assurance in exact terms that he would ob-y party discipline, would have to obey the wishes of the majority of his party, and vote accordingly.

Mr. LESINA: He would do nothing of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Very well, then he might be in imminent danger of being kept out of the party.

Mr. LESINA: I can get in without having three railways surveyed in my electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I only hope that such a calamity as ejection may not overtake the hon. member; but I venture to say that if his party are going to take a certain line of action, the hon. member will have to abide by their decision.

Mr. LESINA: He will have to do nothing of the kind.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Very well. Let me now put before this Chamber some statements in regard to this completely baseless and unprincipled assertion which was made by the hon. member in May last before the electors of Clermont. The statement that I endeavoured in the Land Act of 1905 to bring about amendments which would make the conditions of tenure for either pastoral lessees or grazing farmers more difficult is a fiction. In the 1884 Land Act there is a provision which enacts that in assessing rent the Land Court shall assume that there is a reasonable expenditure upon improvements in order to make the land under lease available for pastoral work. In the 1897 Act, the principal Act, that particular subsection was omitted. I forget at this moment how it came to be omitted, but the Land Court have always acted in their decisions on the assumption that those words were there, and a representative of the pastoral lessees in court admitted in a controversy that took place between him and the Crown counsel that it must of course be assumed that those words were retained, otherwise if the court deliberately acted upon the view that those words were not there we should get this extraordinary position in connection with the Land Court, that a run—take the first instance that occurs to me—like Wellshot, a magnificent area of country with no natural water, would be assessed by the Land Court on its value as a waterless area, which, of course, is not worth the snap of a finger. But the Land Court have been wise enough never to construe the section in that way; they have always assumed that the country when taken up is to be assessed on the supposition that there is a reasonable expenditure on water improvements in order to make a vast area with rich natural grasses available for stock. I stated before that, acting on the advice of the permanent officials and the Crown counsel—the Crown counsel chiefly, because he told me the dilemma he was in owing to those words not being in the Act, and asked me to insert them—I proposed to put them in the Act. I can assure this Chamber that the insertion of the words would not have had the effect of a snap of the finger on the assessment of rent, because the arguments before the Land Court would have gone on just the same, and the decision of the Land Court would have been arrived at on the common-sense assumption that such a condition was implied. When I proposed to insert those words in the 1905 Bill, the Chamber was with me and I carried my proposal, but it was thrown out by the Upper House. Yet, because of that proposal, the hon.

member for Clermont, in his desire to damage me and to damage the Government, in order to curry favour with the grazing-farmer electors, and more particularly the pastoral lessees, in his electorate, tried to make them believe that I sought to place that amendment in the Bill with the sinister desire of getting more rent out of them. I have given the House the reason for that proposal, and all I can say is that anyone who knows the facts will not acquiesce in such a suggestion as that made by the member for Clermont. The hon. member succeeded by this baseless assertion in gaining support, because I believe as a matter of fact that one of the largest pastoral lessees in that neighbourhood announced that he proposed to support the hon. member. Whether he did so or not, I do not know. But I should like the democrats of Queensland to know that the manager of one of the biggest pastoral properties in Queensland announced that he would support the hon. member.

Hon. R. PHILP: Did that hurt you?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Upon my word, it seems as if this alliance between the hon. member for Clermont and the leader of the Opposition would take place much earlier than I anticipated. However, the hon. member succeeded by his base blandishments in seducing the votes and support of the general manager of the largest pastoral company in Queensland. I should like the denizens of those billabongs to which the hon. member periodically makes reference in his speeches to know that their representative, the true-blooded democrat of Queensland, had the support of the biggest pastoral lessee in his district. It has also been suggested that I endeavoured to intimidate the Land Court. How could a single Minister intimidate three men who are as safely entrenched as the members of the Land Court? They are not like ordinary civil servants; they can only be removed from office by a vote of both Houses, and they can snap their fingers—as they have done—at anything I can do. I should be sorry that anyone for a moment should be induced to believe—by the baseless assertions made by the hon. member for Clermont—that I have ever been wanting in respect for the three gentlemen who constitute the Land Court. Such is not the case. They are three men whom I respect in the highest degree. But I do say, and I have said—possibly I ought not to have said, but no man who has administered the Lands Department of Queensland could help feeling some indignation in the matter, or possibly prevent himself giving vent to his indignation—but I do say that I, representing the people of Queensland, who, next to His Majesty the King, are the owners of the Crown lands of this State, should see that when we lease country we get a fair rent—the best rent going that people are ready to pay for the lease of that land. The land revenue plays a tremendous part in the financing of this country annually, and if we are going to diminish the land revenues of Queensland we have got to turn round to some other sources in order to make up the deficit, if you are going to carry on the government in the same way, or else you have to curtail the expenses of government in some other respect. I look upon our Crown lands as a tremendous asset in carrying on the government of the country, and in my opinion the ideal way of administering those Crown lands is to get the highest revenue it is possible to get from them, compatible with the maximum of successful selection. I have never subscribed, and never will subscribe, to that doctrine that we are to give our Crown lands away indiscriminately, and let the people have a hurry-scurry to get on to them. I hold that we should take care that we,

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as the community which own those lands, should get the best revenue we can out of them compatible with securing the maximum of settlement upon them, and that has been my policy. I found country being taken under lease for a long term of years under the arbitrament of the Land Court at rents which I felt, if I had the fixing of the rent under my own direction, as I have under the 1902 Act, were not as high as I should have obtained. Under the 1902 Act I can make a lease myself and fix my own rent, and I felt I should have got a far higher rent for the country than was fixed by the Land Court. Possibly I was indiscreet in not concealing my indignation more. At all events, I gave vent to it, but in giving vent to it I never made a reflection individually upon the integrity or, if you will, the capacity of the three men who form that Land Court, and I venture to say they know that perfectly well themselves. I have alluded to section 15 of the Act of 1902. That is a provision which enables me to fix my own terms of lease and to fix my own rent in regard to certain runs. The hon. member for Clermont's electorate is the centre of a large pastoral district. I recollect the hon. member for Clermont, the session before last, charging me explicitly in this Chamber with having a large area of pastoral land in his district unleased, lying idle, simply because I did not know my business as a Land Minister, and asked too high a rent for the lease of that country.

Mr. LESINA : Hear, hear !

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : The hon. member confirms that reminiscence. I mentioned at the time that the reason why that country was lying idle was not because I was asking too high a rent, but simply because there was no demand for it, there was not stock enough in the country ; and I stated that I was of opinion that the country would be taken up as soon as stock got more numerous. That was the session before last. What has happened since ? I have a return here showing the land applied for under section 15, which gives me power to fix the term of a lease and the rental for the first period of the lease. This return shows the area of land taken up under that section from 1st July, 1905, to 30th June, 1907, in the Leichhardt and a portion of South Kennedy.

Hon. R. PHILP : There is no other way of getting a lease of that kind.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Of course there is no other way of getting a lease, but the hon. member for Clermont stated that the land was lying idle because I charged too much rent for it.

Hon. R. PHILP : There is plenty of land lying idle yet.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : I am dealing specifically with the charge of the hon. member for Clermont, and when any other member comes forward with any particular charge—when the leader of the Opposition specifies a particular district—I will deal with that charge, and I believe I can deal just as effectively with such a charge in respect to any other district as in respect to the district for Clermont. In connection with the Leichhardt district, and that part of the South Kennedy district which is within a reasonable distance of Clermont, I find that from the beginning of 1905 to the 30th June this year there has been taken up an area of 5,634 square miles, at an annual rental of £4,670. I did not reduce my price one iota for the land in the hon. member's district. If anything, I raised it, and I got an area of country taken up which he accused me of having idle

[9.30 p.m.] because I asked too much for it.

With all respect to the Land Court, I may say that the best lands in Queensland are

under their jurisdiction ; and, if you draw a comparison between the rents which I fixed under section 15 and the rents fixed by the Land Court on the better runs, you will find that I get proportionately a better price for the community than the Land Court. Another statement made by the hon. member for Clermont was that over £1,000 a month is being paid away in commission to private land agents for settling Australians in other States in Queensland. There is not a word of truth in that. I find that the number of persons outside the office who have been acting as agents in the other States for the Lands Department is thirty-one. The total amount paid to 30th June last from the beginning of 1905 is £25,047. The number of settlers introduced for whom commission has been paid is 649. The area of land selected totals 585,000 acres in round figures, and the total purchasing price amounts to £376,000. The return from which I quote these figures will be in the hands of hon. members in a few days. Therefore the statement made by the hon. member for Clermont is without any foundation in fact.

Mr. LESINA : I understand that £1,000 was paid in one month—about the election month. The *Courier* said so in a leading article.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : I do not believe it was ; but, supposing it was, does that warrant the hon. member in saying that we are paying £1,000 a month ?

Mr. LESINA : I will admit the statement is a bit loose.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : That shows the subtleties to which irresponsible—I suppose I must not say unscrupulous—politicians resort in order to win a seat in Parliament.

Mr. LESINA : There was an attack made on the Land Court in the last Annual Report of the Lands Department. Didn't you pen that ?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : There is no more efficient Under Secretary in the whole of Australia than the Under Secretary for Lands. He is an official of whom any public service should be proud.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Any man who meets him must come to that conclusion instinctively, and to suggest that I influence his reports in one iota is to show an utter ignorance of the man. The Under Secretary draws up his own reports, and I certainly do not influence what he writes in the way the hon. member suggests.

Mr. LESINA : Then he is responsible for the attack ?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Before I sit down I would like to say one or two sentences about the system of land agents. The genesis of the system is this : I had an area of country, and I hope the leader of the Opposition will forgive me when I make the confession that it was in my own electorate—the Logie Plains leasehold—

Hon. R. PHILP : Where all this business has been done mostly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : If the hon. member says that, he shows a great deal of ignorance in the discharge of his duties as leader of the Opposition in regard to what is going on in land settlement. I had an area there of brigalow scrub, good soil, but it had no attraction for people in Queensland. They turned up their noses at it. I knew it was good country, and I endeavoured to find out whether I could not get it brought before people in the other States. Through the assistance of an old

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Victorian now living in Queensland, I was told about Mr. Murphy, who lived near Ararat. I was told that he was a man who made it his business to cut up and settle estates in Victoria. I went down to Victoria and saw Mr. Murphy, and described this country to him. I told him the price—10s. an acre—our usual long terms; and I also told him—although this did not come directly within my province as Minister—of the Wyobie Estate in that district, which the leader of the Opposition omitted to purchase.

Hon. R. PHILP: Why did not you purchase it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I hope I shall be allowed to make my speech without interruptions. The result of my interview with Mr. Murphy was that he said, "From your descriptions, I believe I shall be able to get those Crown lands settled, and I believe a syndicate can be brought about to purchase Wyobie." Both those things happened. Wyobie was bought by a Victorian syndicate, and I think 80 per cent. of those Crown lands—aggregating some 45,000 acres of brigalow scrub—was taken up by Victorian or Southern settlers. I then made an arrangement with Mr. Murphy that we should adopt that process with other areas. I had the Land Acts passed which enabled me to do it under the group system; and Mr. Murphy has acted for us in Victoria—not exclusively; but he has been our chief agent there, and he has done his work admirably. Soon afterwards, when this system began to be known, a distinguished member of the Opposition, whom I do not see in his place opposite, brought Mr. Pulsford to me—a gentleman well connected in the South—a son of Senator Pulsford—a man of good business reputation. He proposed that he should act as our agent in New South Wales. He is a man who has done a lot of advertising as a business man. We made arrangements with him also in regard to agency work; and I tell this Chamber, in the most emphatic way that I can command, that this gentleman has done his work excellently, and any man in the Lands Department who has been brought into contact with him—certainly the two Under Secretaries—will subscribe to what I am saying—that he is a good business man, and that he does his work with perfect honesty and in a most satisfactory way. I regret very much that for some reason—the worthiness of which, of course, I shall not for a moment impugn—a leading newspaper in this city has deemed it in consonance with its duty to attack him and also myself—which I suppose is legitimate enough—in connection with the fact that he is our agent in New South Wales. I will go into that matter a good deal more in detail on the Estimates; but I want to say now that, from my experience of the Lands Department, Mr. Pulsford has done most excellent and satisfactory work. In regard to our relations generally with agents, there we learn by experience. I am modifying now the terms on which they were originally appointed—the percentage, for example—and the commission is smaller. I admit at once, like anybody else, that one gets experience in these things as you go along, and you learn where you can make better arrangements. But I claim this credit—and I suppose that a man is entitled to claim credit when he gets a lot of blackguarding from one source and another—I started this thing in Queensland, and it has been a rattling good thing for the country to inaugurate this system of agents to get men to come into the country. (Hear, hear!) And when I go out of office in connection with the Lands Department my memory will be perpetuated in connection with the system of agents to send selectors here.

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Mr. LESINA: You will be known as the member for Pulsford, or the member for Murphy and Pulsford.

Mr. BLOCKSIDGE: What percentage is paid?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Two per cent.

Mr. LESINA: Did they get a couple of thousand altogether?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The percentage to Mr. Pulsford, to start with, was 3 per cent. It is now 2 per cent., and I have reduced Mr. Murphy, on the land taken up, to 1 per cent. or $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I ought to say how it is paid. One part is paid when the first year's rent is paid, and the other part is paid when the second year's rent is paid.

Mr. BLOCKSIDGE: On any area taken up?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: 70 per cent. of it is for agricultural farms. The maximum area is 1,280 acres, and the average price is, say, 12s. Some may get 15s. and £1, but the bulk of it is 10s. But in any arrangements I make in the future, learning from experience, I shall only pay a commission of 1 per cent. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. WHITE: That is very cheap.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Very cheap. I do not know that you could do better business. I want to tell this House that the confusion that has arisen with regard to this matter, and the difficulties that always crop up in systems like this, is in regard to the local agents following the selector. One man in the South is responsible for sending the selectors up to Queensland, and then another agent—or some local agents—may be responsible for putting them on that particular area of Crown lands; and in a matter of that kind a confusion—dispute, if you like—arises as to the allocation of commission. But I may say that I have only had confusion or dispute on the part of one agent in Queensland, and that incident is the basis, I can assure you, on which one of the leading daily journals makes a text for its criticisms.

Mr. LESINA: Why cannot you get it done in your own office?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will go more into detail in these matters when we get on to the Estimates. Generally speaking, the prospects for land settlement are in a good state generally, and of the brightest in Queensland. Of course they ought to be at the present time. We have got an unprecedented conjunction of beneficial factors at work making for the development of this State. Never before have we had such a conjunction. I suppose the most prosperous periods prior to this were 1871, 1872, and 1873, the years that immediately succeeded the Franco-Prussian war. In those years we had good seasons, and Queensland was then more exclusively, in regard to her industries, a pastoral country than it is to-day. We had good seasons and good prices for wool, and these were the chief factors that made for the prosperity of those remarkable years. But at this period Queensland is less exclusively a pastoral country. We have not merely good prices for wool, but we have good prices for sheep—for fat sheep—apart from their wool. That was not the case in 1871. We have also good prices for fat bullocks. We have also got the dairying industry at work, and, to boot, we have also got the good seasons, and they form such a conglomeration of beneficial factors as is without precedent in the history of our State. It would be a very strange thing if our land settlement did not go forward

under such an ægis as that. I want to say as Minister for Lands—and I am now getting back to the points on which the leader of the Opposition jibes at me, but I am on the safe grounds of the administrator who knows what he is talking about, while he is on the shifting quicksands of rumour and uncertainty—if you are going to get land settlement to continue in Queensland, as it has been in the last two or three years, you will have to put your Minister for Lands and your Lands Department in a position to supply land to those who want it—it might either be a demand from the South or even in Queensland itself, to say nothing of that demand overseas from Europe—and you will have to build railways, and build them right and left.

Hon. R. PHILP: In the Dalby electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the Dalby electorate distinctly you will have to build them, and I hope that the leader of the Opposition, the leader of those representative Queenslanders—those excellent men—who are sitting round him, is not going to be influenced by such a petty contemptible spirit that he is going to say, "We will not build railways there because they are in the electorate of a political opponent." I know that if he does take up such a contemptible stand as that—

Hon. R. PHILP: You are more contemptible than I am.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If he is going to take up such a petty stand I am sure it will not be reflected in those sitting around him.

Hon. R. PHILP: How many railway surveys are going on at the present time?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You will have to build railways in the Dalby electorate.

Hon. R. PHILP: That is what we complain about.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you do not do it, you will miss the best moment that you will have of getting the people on the land, for it is as certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow that the opportunity of getting people to settle on the land is not going to be a perennial or a permanent opportunity. You will know that many things occur in Queensland periodically, and a few years hence the land in Queensland may be under the influence of a drought or other disadvantageous conditions. We may find that people are prepared to go to another part of the world for a field for their industrial energy—people who at the present time, we know, will come here if we provide the land. I am providing it as fast as I can. I am going to the limit of my authority, and you must build railways if you want to open up fresh avenues of settlement. If you do not, your land settlement will end now.

Mr. G. P. BARBER: There is plenty of land in the Burnett.

Mr. LESINA: There is land everywhere else, but you only send them to the Dalby district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have no doubt there are several points on which I would have liked to have spoken, which have escaped my notice, but I will refer to them at a later stage, either on the Estimates, or when an opportunity presents itself more appropriately—I think on the Estimates. One thing I will say before I sit down. It was in reference to a remark—an ungenerous remark—from the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. R. PHILP: You have been doing that all night.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not think I have made any ungenerous remarks to the hon. gentleman—any references to him have been rather in the nature of a regret that when he speaks in this House he does himself such injustice. He said in regard to the public estate improvement fund that we were only showing consideration to our own electorates. Now he has only got to turn to the hon. member on his right.

Hon. R. PHILP: I did not mention that fund at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has only to turn to the hon. member for Mackay.

Hon. R. PHILP (rising): I did not mention that fund at all. The Minister is drawing on his imagination now.

The PREMIER: Is this a point of order, or what?

Hon. R. PHILP: You are always disorderly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A personal explanation ought always to be prefaced by the statement that it is a personal explanation.

Hon. R. PHILP: Mind your own business.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are so situated in Parliament in the matter of procedure, that other people's business is our business.

Hon. R. PHILP: I never mentioned the fund at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Somebody did. At all events, the hon. member said we only carried out public works in our own electorates. I say that is not correct. And not merely the hon. member on his right, but the hon. member sitting behind him—the hon. senior member for Mackay—will be able to make some refutation of that, and admit that in his district this Government have undertaken a great public work. I do not wish to harp upon it.

Hon. R. PHILP: I never hear of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are doing a public work.

Mr. PAGET: I told you that I would.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Did you? The hon. gentleman, at all events his own supporters, did not do something else that they might have done, and that was to give the candidate running in the interest of the Government who is carrying out that work a fair show.

Hon. R. PHILP: Where is that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: At Mackay. It is a deplorable fact that although this Government are carrying out that public work—a work which the people of Mackay have been longing to see executed for years—when the candidate of this Government got up in Mackay to address the electors, and explained the policy of this Administration, the local papers which supported the hon. senior member for Mackay declined to report his speech—declined to discharge the ordinary functions of an impartial newspaper—unless they were specially paid for it.

Mr. PAGET: That had nothing to do with me.

Hon. J. T. Bell.]

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:
Except this: that the hon. member represents the electorate where such things are possible; that is the only thing.

MR. WHITE: Did you expect the Government candidate to be returned because they expended some money there?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:
Our expectations with regard to the expenditure of money are not half so canny or sanguine as those of the hon. member, with his natural characteristics fully employed when an undertaking of that kind is in progress. Anything which I have omitted now I will try and say later on. All I can say is that, generally speaking—I know the hon. gentleman won't like to hear it—generally speaking, land matters are in a satisfactory state.

HON. R. PHILP: I am glad to hear it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:
Things are going on well. Despite all those wonderful figures which the hon. gentleman quoted at the election, more people are going on the land than before; and far more care is being taken to make the land ready for them than ever before. I only hope, with every other patriotic Queenslander, that the Administration which is able to bring about such a successful consummation may long remain on the Treasury benches to carry out its good work.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PAULL: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

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