

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1909

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WARDERS IN BRISBANE PRISON.

Mr. ALLEN (*Bulloo*) asked the Home Secretary—

1. What is the average number of hours per day the male warders are on actual duty in the Brisbane prison?
2. What is the average length of time daily that they are on reserve duty?
3. What is the average number of hours per day the female warders are on actual duty?
4. What number of hours daily are they on reserve duty?
5. How many Sundays per month are these officials off duty?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*) replied—

1. Nine hours 27 minutes.
2. Two hours 18 minutes (sleeping or resting in guard-room).
3. Nine hours 20 minutes.
4. Three hours 43 minutes (sleeping or resting in guard-room).
5. Two male warders off duty every Sunday. Male warders have twenty-four hours off duty every fifth day. One female warder off duty every Sunday. Female warders have twelve hours off duty every third day while on night duty (three weeks on night duty and one week on day duty). Warders must be employed on Sundays as the prisoners cannot be left unguarded.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER, 1909.

The SPEAKER (Hon. J. T. Bell, *Dalby*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 4.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER reported that he had this day presented the Bill to the Lieutenant-Governor for the Royal assent, and that His Excellency had assented thereto in the name and on behalf of His Majesty.

A message to the same effect was received from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor.

QUESTIONS.

SELECTION ON FAIRLIGHT RUN.

Mr. MAY (*Flinders*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

As portions of the Fairlight run in the Hughenden district are to be opened for selection on 11th December next, will the Minister see that plans of same are forwarded by Friday's mail to the Lands Office, Hughenden, as by report in the *Brisbane Courier* of to-day's issue applications are numerous and plans unprocurable?

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

The lands referred to are to be open on 14th December. The plans were posted on the 20th instant.

RESERVES ON QUEENSLAND NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Mr. MAY asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

Is it the intention of the department to have the necessary reserves proclaimed at Nonda, Maxwellton, and Marathon Railway Stations and trucking places on the Queensland Northern Railway?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

A reserve of 5,000 acres is being provided at Maxwellton. It is not intended at present to provide reserves at Nonda and Marathon.

WYANDRA TOWN RESERVE.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

1. Is he aware that the Wyandra town reserve is, notwithstanding that it is under the control of the Paroo Shire Council, being used almost wholly by adjoining selectors, to the great detriment of the town residents and travelling public?

2. If not, will he cause inquiries to be made as to the correctness or otherwise of the above statement?

3. If the statement contained in No. 1 is found to be correct, will he take immediate steps to prevent the said reserve being used for other purposes than that of the said town residents and travelling public?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

1. No.
2. A report will be obtained.
3. The position revealed by the report will receive due consideration.

METROPOLITAN WATER AND SEWERAGE BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, by message in the usual form.

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*), in moving—

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the despatch of business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Monday in each week, in addition to the days already provided by Sessional Order; and that Government business do take precedence of all other business on that day—

said: As the deputy leader of the Opposition has called "Not formal" to this motion, I assume that he has some objection to it, or wants some reason for moving it. The reason for moving it is just this: The majority of members on this side of the House would prefer if we can get through our business to adjourn at Christmas, and they would be willing to meet on Mondays, if thereby that end can be accomplished. I am not sure that we will require to

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meet every Monday; I hope not, for I may tell the House that I am no more eager to meet on Monday than the member who is least willing to meet on Monday. I am aware that it will be a considerable strain on members to sit five days a week—some of them find it somewhat of a strain to sit four days a week; but if, by sitting two or three weeks on Mondays, we can finish what business is in hand, and give fair time for the discussion of the Estimates, I understand that, on this side of the House at least, that will be more in accordance with the feelings of members than not sitting on Monday and coming back after Christmas to finish the business. How hon. members on the other side feel about the matter I am not quite sure.

Mr. MULLAN: I do not think you care. (Opposition laughter.)

The PREMIER: I am not so anxious as to lose sleep over it. At the same time I assure hon. members on the other side that I would far rather consult their convenience in this matter. I think this is a matter distinctly for the convenience of members of the House, and I desire to consult the convenience of members on the other side of the House as well as on this side.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: There is more than that—there is the conduct of business.

Mr. MANN: Withdraw some of your Bills. They are not of much necessity.

The PREMIER: To please the hon. member for Cairns, I should be glad to soften his troubled spirit in any way. We may not be able to pass all the Bills that are now on the business-paper, and there are two or three Bills yet to come, but they will be non-contentious measures, and easily passed, so that I am not seeking to provide for more time than is fairly necessary to finish the business before Christmas. I think if members remain in the reasonable frame of mind they have shown this last three weeks, we may finish all the business that must be done, and yet adjourn for Christmas. At the same time, it is a matter entirely for the convenience of members. As I said before, hon. members must not understand for one moment that I am personally eager to sit on Mondays—I am not.

Mr. MANN: We can come back after Christmas for a fortnight.

The PREMIER: If we come back after Christmas, we will probably come back for three months; we shall certainly come back for two months, and probably three.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Is that a threat?

The PREMIER: No, it is not a threat. Hon. members know that as well as I do without me saying it. There is a Police Jurisdiction and Summary Offences Bill here. (Opposition laughter.) It is a very useful and desirable measure to get on the statute-book. At the same time, it is a measure comprising a mass of detail, and many of the subjects which it contains will form ground for very serious differences of opinion, very considerable argument, and it is not a thing you could do in a day. I think I am fairly considering the convenience of the hon. members and the needs of the country in trying to do a certain amount of business that should be done, and also trying to get it through before Christmas. I am allowing full time for the consideration of the Estimates in detail if we sit on Mondays for one or two weeks till we know where we are. Though we pass this resolution, it does not follow that the House will sit every Monday. If we see that we can do without it, we can on Friday night adjourn till Tuesday.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): I called "Not formal," and I desire to give some reasons why

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the House should not pass the motion. In a section of the Brisbane Press it has been stated confidently that a certain understanding has been arrived at between the Premier and myself in regard to finishing the business before Christmas, and the junior member for Fortitude Valley was also mentioned in this connection. I say there was no understanding arrived at, and I am sure the hon. gentleman will admit that.

The PREMIER: That is correct.

Mr. LENNON: Last Tuesday I explained to the hon. gentleman that this party could not see its way to arrive at an understanding in the matter; and moreover this is a matter that concerns the whole of the House, and not any particular section. Speaking for this party, we are here with the intention of transacting the business of the State, and I do not think that so far we have shown any disregard of the promise made at the beginning of the session that we would do all we could to facilitate the business; but I think the unseemly manner in which business has been rushed through this session is entirely unprecedented. I do not think anyone can point to a like record.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. In 1908.

Mr. LENNON: We will prevent as far as we can the setting up of Cabinet government. We believe in government by Parliament, not government by Cabinet or any other form of bureaucratic government. The hon. gentleman suavely pointed out that this motion need not be put into operation if we behave ourselves—if we pass measures with sufficient rapidity there may be no need to sit on Mondays. I believe hon. members opposite are open to reason, and I ask them if they have not had enough work during the last three weeks with sitting four days a week? Many members have permitted the measures that have come before us to pass—particularly the Water Supply and Sewerage Bill—without probably having read them, and I say that kind of thing is not conducive to good government. This is supposed to be a deliberative Assembly; but what sort of deliberation have we shown in the passage of Bills that we have dealt with this session? I therefore appeal to members on both sides to take a stand for reasonable time to discuss in an intelligent manner the Bills brought before us. If we do not do that I am sure that within the next six months there will have to be a number of Bills brought in to amend the legislation of this session. I therefore desire to offer my most emphatic protest against the motion. Until we offer anything like factious opposition the Premier might very well hold his hand, and not seek to impose on us this extra burden, which probably some of us will not be very well able to bear.

Mr. THEODORE (*Woothakata*): I emphatically protest against sitting five days a week, as I think four days are enough. New members find the greatest difficulty in getting a grasp of the Bills to be passed, and I think more time should be given for their consideration. The Land Acts Amendment Bill is very intricate in its nature, and no member can get a grasp of it without giving it considerable attention; and sitting five days a week will allow too little time to study these things properly. It is a shrewd move on the Premier's part to move this motion, because he is anxious to get out into the country and take an active part in the forthcoming Federal elections. We are not so anxious to do that, and I would come back after Christmas and sit three months if necessary. If the hon. gentleman is willing to withdraw the Bills now submitted and bring in an amendment of the Workers'

Compensation Act that will be acceptable to this side of the House, and give us an assurance of passing it, perhaps he will get the assent of this side to this motion, with a view of adjourning before Christmas. Not long ago he gave an assurance that he intended to introduce an amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act this session, if possible. Had he submitted that measure, and it had been founded on good lines, members on this side would have supported it, and would have allowed him to get into recess and go out into the country and do his little bit of electioneering.

Mr. BRESLIN (*Port Curtis*): As another new member, I have to object to the proposal to sit on Monday. We are sent here to do our best, and we are trying to do our best; but it is absolutely impossible to understand these Bills and study them if the Premier takes away the only day left to us. There are new members on the Government side, and I defy any of them to stand up and say he has been able to study and give proper attention to any measure presented.

The PREMIER: It is not for want of time.

Mr. BRESLIN: It is for want of time; and I, as a new member, enter my emphatic protest against Monday being taken from us. I do not talk as much as other hon. members, perhaps, but I read the Bills and study them; and I fail to see how any member, new or old, will be in a position to do that if the Premier is allowed to have his way on this occasion.

Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*): There is something more than the convenience of members to be considered in this matter, and that is the wants of the people who send members into Parliament. Before I came to the House I used to smile at the idea of four days a week being considered too much, but I can honestly say that I have found, when sitting four days a week, that a man cannot do justice either to legislation or to his constituents. I have been quite unable to overtake my correspondence, and I have not been able to open a Bill to study it before coming into the House. This Government has been called "the Government of long recesses," and I want to know what has actuated the Government in this. If it is imperative that the work brought forward should be done, what is the objection to coming back after Christmas? I do not object to the Premier going into the country to take part in the Federal elections, and we are not opposing this motion because we are afraid of the hon. gentleman and his colleagues going on the stump; but it would be more reasonable to come back after Christmas for a fortnight at least for the transaction of business.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): This is the first time I have heard a protest from members of this party against sitting on Monday. They have always been clamorous for more time to devote to public business ever since I have been here. I have taken up the stand, for ten long years, that the House should sit five days a week, and should sit until the work is finished. I go further, and say we should only be paid for the days we sit as is the case in Norway and some other countries. (Hear, hear!) From Glassey's time up to the present, members of the Labour party have protested every session against the paucity of time devoted to public business, and the fact that the Government, at the commencement of the session, arrange to sit three days a week and five and a-half hours a day, and towards the close of the session sit four days and sometimes five days a week, and rush business through in such an ill-digested way as to lead to tinkering or amending legislation the following session. I say we should sit four or five

days a week from the commencement. What time is there to get through the business if we are to adjourn before Christmas?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Why should we?

Mr. LESINA: I do not say we should. If the majority are not prepared to come back and sit after Christmas, we will not come back; but if the Government, supported by the majority, are prepared to come back, we can rely on coming here after Christmas.

The PREMIER: If a decent majority are eager to do it.

Mr. LESINA: Quite so, if there is only a decent majority in favour of it we shall have to come back. The motion that we

[4 p.m.] are asked to pass reads, "That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the despatch of business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Monday in each week." If that motion is passed we shall sit five days a week, for five and a-half hours each day—from 3 p.m. till 6 p.m., and from 7 till 10 p.m. A working man on the wharf has to sweat for eight or eight and a-half hours a day for six days in the week, and I do not see any reason why we should not sit five days a week, working only five and a-half hours a day, especially if we wish to get more time to discuss the Estimates. We are not expected to sit on Christmas Day, or even the day before Christmas. Every member desires to be in the bosom of his family on Christmas Day, instead of wrangling about measures in this House. From next Monday till the 23rd December we shall have nineteen days if we sit five days a week. Working five days a week for five and a-half hours each day, we shall work twenty-seven and a-half hours in the week.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You are not allowing for all-night sittings.

Mr. LESINA: There will be no all-night sittings.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Oh, yes, there will.

Mr. LESINA: Well, if we have any all-night sittings they will increase the number of hours worked each week. I believe that, if we could arrange that members should be paid only during the time they sat in Parliament, there would be a majority of members going to the Government during the recess and clamouring to have the House opened. We all do a fair share of work, no doubt, but, as a matter of fact, the country is better off if we are not working too much. I noticed a statement recently to the effect that the Parliaments of Australia had passed 112 Bills in two months, all of which were assented to by the Governor, except two which were reserved for the King's approval. If that kind of thing is continued, it will mean that we shall have to increase the number of members and of civil servants, who are non-producers. But with regard to the motion before the House, I think we should sit five days a week for the remainder of the session, do our work within a reasonable time, and give to each Bill as much consideration as is practicable. I am not going to confess that I object to sitting on Monday, or that I do not understand any measure introduced into the House.

Mr. BRESLIN: We only ask time to understand them.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESINA: Every member has the same time as his neighbour to study the Bills.

Mr. BRESLIN: We have not had the experience you have had.

The SPEAKER: Order!

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Mr. LESINA : That is one of the defects of representative government.

Mr. BRESLIN : You are very funny !

The SPEAKER : Order ! I shall be glad if the hon. member for Port Curtis will be good enough to respond to my call for order.

Mr. LESINA : If it could be so arranged that members should be elected for ten years, and that a certain proportion should retire at periodic stages, we shall nearly always have a majority of members who had parliamentary experience, but if that were done we might just as well be a water and sewerage board, or something of that kind. Members who have not grasped the procedure of the House must not blame the House for that. If a member does not understand the Bills introduced during the first session he is here, that is not the fault of our system of representative government, and it is not necessary to advertise the fact that because a member is new to the House he does not understand the Bills before the House. It is one of the worst possible advertisements he could give himself. (Government laughter.) If I did not understand the Bills that came down on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, I would keep quiet about it. When I entered the House there were men here like Fisher, Dawson, McDonnell, Turley, Stewart, Givens, and Higgs, who knew something about parliamentary procedure, and I sat at their feet, and gradually acquired the necessary experience. We have on the business-paper a Land Acts Amendment Bill, a Mining on Private Lands Bill, a Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill, a Police Jurisdiction and Summary Offences Bill, and Ways and Means, which is the most important. There might also be introduced a Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act, and possibly a Railway Bill. I do not see why we should not pass the most of those measures between now and Christmas. The Police Jurisdiction and Summary Offences Bill is a measure which will probably provoke a good deal of discussion, but I see no reason why the other measures should not be dealt with before Christmas. I am not going to argue that we should or should not return after Christmas. That is a matter entirely in the hands of the House. We are entirely self-governing in this House. Members seem to think that we have not any power in this matter. But we have equal power with one another, and if we want to sit after Christmas we can induce the Government to sit then. Suppose a motion is submitted to the House to the effect that we should sit after Christmas, how many members would vote for it ?

The PREMIER : If the vote were taken by ballot.

Mr. LESINA : Yes, how many members would vote for the motion if the vote were taken by ballot ? January and February are very hot months in which to sit ; they are the two hottest months in the year.

Mr. FERRICKS : What about wharf labourers in January and February ?

Mr. LESINA : Even wharf labourers have to work in January and February. If we sat in March and April or in May, that would probably be the time of the Federal elections, and members on both sides of the House are probably anxious to take a part in those elections. That is probably a reason why the Government and their supporters are not anxious to sit next year, but as far as members generally are concerned they can sit till the 31st July next, if they wish to do so.

Mr. RYLAND : Why not till the 31st December ?

Mr. LESINA : We might sit till the 31st December, but we might do more mischief than

good if we sat so long. Some American Parliaments do not sit oftener than once in two years, or once in three years, but under their constitution they have very little power, and they mostly concern themselves with meddling some legislation interfering with the liberties of the people. At present we are able to concern ourselves with legislation of some use to the country. I would again point out to hon. members that by sitting five days a week we shall have nineteen sitting days between now and Christmas, during which time we might dispose of the more important measures on the business-paper, and have ten days for the ventilation of grievances on the Estimates. Hon. members must admit that all the grievances we have to ventilate can be ventilated before the end of this year. Personally, I say again, as I have frequently said during the past ten years, that the Government should sit five days a week from the commencement of the session, and not begin with three days a week, and then increase the sittings to four, and after that to five sittings. I think we should also sit at an earlier hour of the day, and do our work in daylight. Why should we not sit at 10 o'clock in the morning ? The Federal Parliament sits at 10 o'clock on Friday mornings, and the New South Wales Parliament meets at 10 a.m. one day in the week. A number of years ago the British Parliament met at 7 in the morning, but, with the advent of the commercial era, so many business men entered Parliament that they constituted a majority, and insisted upon sitting in the afternoon, and when they had finished their private business they devoted the fag end of their time to legislation. We should meet early in the morning, and do our work in the daylight, and not strain our eyes by working at night under the electric light. I hope that next session the Government will sit five days a week from the commencement.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*) : I am astonished at the objection which has been offered to this motion, which is the motion usually brought forward at the end of every session, in order to get the work through. We have not a great deal of work on the business-paper—only two or three Bills and the Estimates—and I think new members should hail with delight the prospect of an additional sitting day, which will give them an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the procedure of the House. I think we ought to sit on Monday and get away by Christmas. If we sit five days a week, we might be able to get away on Friday evening at 6 o'clock, and yet do all the work before us. Hon. members opposite have complained that they do not get sufficient time to discuss the Estimates. The passing of this motion will give them a fortnight or three weeks, which ought to be ample time for that purpose. There are only two or three Bills and the Estimates to consider, and this motion will give us three or four additional sitting days. It has been the custom of the House to sit on Mondays during the last week or two of the session.

Mr. LENNON : After a long session.

HON. R. PHILP : This has been a fairly long session, as we have been sitting four days a week since we started. I sympathise with Ministers and the deputy leader of the Opposition, as they are the hardest worked members of the House through sitting four days a week. Sitting five days might not give the deputy leader of the Opposition much time to prepare for the consideration of the measures to be dealt with, but we shall have the Estimates to discuss, and then he can have a spell, as the leader of the Opposition does not want to be always discussing Estimates.

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Mr. COLLINS (*Burke*): I strongly object to the motion moved by the Premier. I do not see why present members should suffer for the sins of past Governments because they neglected to do their duty. I can quite easily understand the hon. member for Clermont desiring to sit five days a week, inasmuch as in the past he has filled more columns in *Hansard* than any other member of the House. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: He wants more time to do it.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member took a long time this afternoon to say practically nothing, and I can easily understand the desire of that hon. member to sit on Mondays; but we newer members do not want to waste the time of the House with long speeches with nothing in them. When we get up to speak we try to give some ideas to the House. To my mind the hon. member is acting as an apologist for the Government—he seems to be an apologist on every possible occasion for the Government—(Hear, hear!)—and the best thing would be for him to go and sit on the other side of the House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): I have listened with a certain amount of interest to the speeches made on this side of the House, and also on the other side of the House, on this motion. It is a curious thing that when you take up *Hansard* you find men on one side of the House saying one thing one year, and when they get on the other side of the House they have quite another thing to say. I am going to quote, first, the hon. member for Townsville. This is what that hon. member said in the session of 1905, and early in the session, too.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He was sitting in Opposition then.

Mr. MANN: Yes; he was sitting in Opposition, and, referring to the Premier, he said—

It is all very well for the Premier and his colleagues to sit four days a week, as they have got their measures, and have studied them, and are prepared to put them on the table and get them passed without any criticism at all. But we on this side have not seen any of the Bills, and we have come here to criticise them, and if we sit four days a week there will be no time to do that satisfactorily. It is perhaps more necessary now than at any other time that we should criticise the Government measures thoroughly, as the Premier has fifty-five men behind him who will vote for anything.

To-day he has got forty members behind him who will vote for anything. That is what the hon. member for Townsville said. I noticed the hon. member for Clermont, in speaking, was rather severe on the new members because they do not understand the Bills put before them.

Mr. LESINA: No; they were severe on themselves.

Mr. MANN: I have, fortunately, got here a quotation from the hon. member for Clermont, and I will just read it to the House, to show what he thought in 1904. You will find it on page 758 of *Hansard* for 1904. This is what he says—

The Premier has outlined twelve measures, and we will have twenty-five days to consider them. That will mean two days for each measure. Well, I want to know what kind of legislation we will get under such circumstances?

At that time two days was not a sufficient time to consider a measure; now he reckons we can get through a Bill in twenty-four hours. In 1904 he said they could not get decent legislation if you studied the Bill for two days. He goes on—

There is no doubt that there will be a necessity to bring in half a dozen amending Bills, and that there will be a waste of public time and public money, and we will get wretchedly bad legislation.

Mr. LESINA: The conditions are different.

Mr. MANN: The conditions are not different. Just to show there was something in the contention of the new members, we have the Hon. Robert Philp saying they had not sufficient time to look through the Government measures, and I have here a speech of the late Hon. John Leahy, and if I just read his speech you will see that he made the same complaint as the new members made this afternoon, and no one doubted his ability to understand measures and get the gist of them. On page 759 of *Hansard* for 1904, he is reported as having said—

The reason that I agree with the hon. member for Clermont is that I think there is no use discussing matters at all unless we discuss them carefully. This is called a deliberative Assembly, and we should have time to deliberate on matters carefully, so as to arrive at a just and deliberate conclusion. Measures have been brought before us recently and we have not had time to consider them properly. They were passed through the second readings and then forced through Committee and the other stages and sent on to the other Chamber. It is impossible for any hon. member to carefully consider measures when they are so hurried through, and the result will be that instead of measures beneficial to the country we will have bad legislation, and very possibly wrongs will be done. We passed a measure the other night—I am not going to discuss the merits of that measure, I am only giving an instance—we passed the Dairy Bill, and now we find there has been a meeting of dairymen in Brisbane and they passed resolutions plainly expressing their disapproval of matters that the Minister in charge of the Bill told us they approved of.

I am just making the same complaint now. We were asked to hurry through the Superannuation Bill—the Premier would have passed that Bill without giving the public servants a chance of seeing what the measure contains. We passed, early in the session of 1908, a machinery and scaffolding measure. That was a rotten measure, passed in a hurry, and we have to bring in an amending measure to rectify it. It ought to have been brought in long ago, because every member of this House has received letters from engine-drivers complaining of the provisions. The reason that Bill was not properly discussed was owing to the fact that the Premier wished to go to the old country, and he came down here and rushed through the House a great number of measures which hon. members had not had a proper chance of studying. There will not be time to discuss all the measures in all their details, and we will have half a dozen amending Bills when Parliament next sits. The reasons given in 1905 by the hon. member for Townsville as to why proper time should be given for the discussion of Bills, apply equally as well in 1909. I most emphatically protest against sitting five days a week and being unable to attend to other business. Of course Ministers have Bills prepared for them. They have the whole thing fixed up by some of the clerks or Under Secretaries of the departments—all the pros and cons are set out on the draft copy of the Bill for the benefit of Ministers—but members on this side of the House have to go through the different Bills for themselves. Every country member knows that if we sit five days a week he cannot go to the departments and do the necessary business of his constituents. I perhaps go this morning to the Lands Department and find five or six other members before me, and, after sitting two hours waiting for an audience with the Minister, I have to go away without seeing him. Hon. members have to go perhaps to half a dozen different departments—he gets half a dozen letters on Thursday dealing with the Lands Department, the Home Department and the Railway Department, and he has to answer most of those letters on the following day. If we sit here five days a week what chance have hon. members of doing their business? Of course members on the Government side may have a

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word with the Minister and he will tell them to "write so and so, and I will fix it up all right." I know it has been done in the past.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have had experience?

Mr. MANN: I know members on the Government side are always complaining about some members being able to get the ear of the Premier. We all know, as a matter of fact, that they can only keep their followers by giving them little sweet bits occasionally. The Premier is always saying to hon. members on this side, as he said to the deputy leader of the Opposition last night, "come over to this side and you will get your railways, and you will get the Mourilyan Harbour improved."

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It was only a joke.

Mr. MANN: There was no joke about it.

The TREASURER: They will get it whether or no.

Mr. MANN: How is it we hear it said at every election time, "You must support the Government, or you will get nothing for your electorate"? On several occasions the Premier has told this House, "Unless you support the Government you will get nothing."

The SPEAKER: Order, order! If the hon. member continues the discussion on those lines, he will be scarcely in order.

Mr. MANN: I was led off the track by interjections from the other side, and of course I replied. I do not wish to transgress any more. I emphatically protest against sitting five days a week.

Mr. COTTELL: You have all the morning to read the Bills.

Mr. MANN: Mr. Speaker, will you please stop hon. members interjecting while I am speaking?

The SPEAKER: I shall be glad, when any hon. member objects to interjections, if he will always call my attention to it. My endeavour is, with the support of hon. members, to suppress interjections as much as possible.

Mr. MANN: I do not object to interjections—

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not a question of individual preference at all. I am here, as hon. members know, to administer the Standing Orders and the precedents guiding parliamentary practice. Interjections are distinctly disorderly. Hon. members have an ample opportunity of expressing their views to the Chamber without seeking an irregular course for so doing.

Mr. MANN: I am very pleased to hear your ruling on that matter, and I trust hon. members on the other side will refrain from interjecting while I am speaking.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER interjected.

Mr. MANN: I am sorry to see that a man should come to this Chamber and so far forget himself as to hiss at another member in the Chamber. It is distinctly disorderly and I resent it. I have no wish to chastise any hon. member on the other side—(Government laughter)—but it is not common decency, and if a member comes to this House and hisses, it shows that he has, in no way, the manner or tastes of a gentleman.

Mr. THEODORE: The manner of a snake.

Mr. MANN: I wish to point out that the sauce the Government are serving out to us to-day will be served out to them on some future occasion. I admit that I formerly voted with the Government to get an additional sitting day, but every new member for a time after he comes to this House takes the Government on

trust. Until a member has had experience in Opposition he does not quite understand what it means to study and go through all the Bills brought in. When sitting behind the Government I confess that many of the measures that were passed I took on trust. I thought the Government was a wise and just one, and would not pass any legislation that would not benefit the country. I find on experience that much of the legislation passed has been found faulty, and for that reason I object to rushing Bills through. I will support the Premier in a motion to come back after Christmas for a month, if necessary, to give due consideration to any Bills he wishes to pass. I will cheerfully assist them in that matter; but a Government caucus was held the other day, and it was decided not to sit after Christmas. This session has been a short one. I have come a long distance to attend to business, but every member of the House knows that a caucus has been held, and it has been decided to close before Christmas. I have no objection to closing before Christmas, but I hope the Government will come back after Christmas and pass a Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill. If they will do that, I can guarantee the House could get all the business now on the business-paper through before Christmas, so far as I am concerned.

Mr. FORSYTH: You guarantee it, do you?

Mr. MANN: In asking the Government to come back after Christmas we are asking nothing unreasonable, because the session has been a short one. There are some measures which ought to be passed; among them [4.30 p.m.] is the Workers' Compensation Bill, to which I have referred, and the Licensing Act, which I should also like to see passed. I trust the Premier will withdraw his motion, allow us to sit four days a week, and to come back and finish any work we have after Christmas.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*): I wish to say a few words on this motion before it goes through, and first I want to say that I am opposed to sitting five days a week. I want also to say that I am no less able to do work than any member in this House, not even the hon. member for Clermont, but at the same time there is such a thing as quality as well as quantity. It seems to me that the quality of the work is of no consideration whatever, it is simply the quantity. I think that the arguments of the hon. member for Clermont are the strongest that can be adduced why we should not close before Christmas, but should come back after Christmas and finish that work, whether it takes one, two, or three months. It is well known that a member's duties do not consist solely in the work he does in this House; he has to do a variety of things as well as sit here and take part in the debates. My experience in the House has led me to the conclusion that there is such a thing as temper as well as time. The first session I sat here a good deal of legislation was put through in reasonable time, but the next two sessions nothing was done; although we sat some months nothing was practically done, because the temper of the House put it out of the question. It seems to me that the Premier might have been satisfied with what he was doing. He seems to me to have grown weary of well-doing, for the House has done solid, substantial work the time it has been sitting, and in the present temper of the House just as much work is likely to be done in four days as if the House was sitting five days. Then as far as getting through the work before Christmas is concerned, and members getting home to their families, that may be convenient to some members, but for Northern members,

[Mr. Mann.]

when the House sits up to two days before Christmas, there is no opportunity to get home to their families, and they can spend Christmas in Brisbane or anywhere else they like. So, from the point of view of Northern members, we might as well sit here up to Christmas Day, and come back afterwards to finish the work to be done. In regard to the remark of the hon. member for Clermont about members being only paid for the work they do, I think it is likely that that hon. member would not get more than other members. I believe other hon. members do their work just as conscientiously—not only to the gallery—but their duty to their constituents, and for that reason, if members were paid by results, I am quite confident that other members would earn as much as the hon. member for Clermont.

Mr. CRAWFORD (*Fitzroy*): I wish just briefly to indicate my objection to the motion of the Chief Secretary. I have frequently been concerned as to the reason for the silence on the Government benches. For a while I thought that possessing, as they undoubtedly do, a monopoly of intelligence, they were quite willing to let all measures go through without criticism. (Opposition laughter). I now find that a still stronger argument in support of their silence can be used, and that is the fact that their most eloquent supporter is on this side of the House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CRAWFORD: That is undoubtedly the case, as I have seen on several occasions since coming here. I do not know whether I ought to regret it, but I think that the hon. gentleman, if he has any regard to what he calls his conscience, ought to take his seat on the other side of the House. (Hear, hear!)

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the question before the House.

Mr. CRAWFORD: I do not wish to pursue that line of argument any further—I simply refer to it in passing—but I wish to say that I believe I bring to the consideration of whatever measures are placed before us quite as much intelligence as the average member of this House, and I experience very great difficulty in arriving at a proper opinion concerning their merits. As I have a responsibility to my constituents equal to that of every other member, I think it only right that I should be given proper time to consider those measures. Here, for instance, is a bundle of [holding up papers] statistics. Now, how can any man have time to give proper consideration to these statistics—to make comparisons of them, and to inquire into the incidence of measures that are proposed for our consideration? If we are to sit five days a week, then I contend that all the difficulties we now experience will be still further accentuated, we will not be able to do justice to our constituents, and we will involve ourselves in this position—that either we must remain silent and permit these measures to go through, or we must give expression to opinions which in a short time we shall see reason to change. I think that is a predicament which any member ought not to be placed in. There is a still stronger objection which I have to this motion. What is the reason for this motion? Simply that the Ministry may get away from their work here, and indulge in free picnics; may absent themselves from the legitimate work of carrying on the affairs of the country in a deliberate Assembly, and go out into the country next year in order to combat the Federal Labour party. I can see very clearly that that is the objective of this motion. There is no earthly reason why we should not come

here after Christmas, and carry on the work of bringing into existence that legislation for which the country is now clamouring. In all the so-called arguments which the Premier put forward, I could discern nothing more or less than mere platitudes, which have deceived the country many times previously, but which I am sure will not deceive the members on this side of the House. He simply wants to get away as he got away previously, and the silence of those behind him gives consent to what I consider to be nothing more or less than a deliberate neglect of the interests of the country. I object to it in the most emphatic manner possible. We have not sufficient time to consider the measures submitted to us, and if we are called upon to come here one more day per week we shall have less time. In passing hasty legislation we shall have to go over the same ground again. We are wasting the time of the country, and not saving it, by meeting five days a week. I wish to place on record my most emphatic protest against this move on the part of the Premier.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER (*Maranoa*): I desire to raise my voice in opposition to this motion, because it is not in the interests of the country that we should hasten through with the work we have before us. It is not the convenience of members altogether which has to be taken into account in a matter of this kind; it is the advantage or interest of the country as a whole. It is quite impossible to get through the work placed before the Chamber in the time, and to do it properly. Already there is an indication of silence on the other side of the House—that members have really been asked not to speak on the measures—and consequently the whole work of criticism is left to this side of the Chamber, and there is not sufficient time to enable members to go through measures, and scrutinise the work as it comes before the House. The result will be that a crop of amending Bills will be brought forward in the course of the next session or two. I contend that it is wasting the country's time, and good printer's ink, to be continually tinkering with legislation. The real object of this motion is to get the House shut down by Christmas. I am as anxious as anybody to get away, and I would rather we closed the House down ten days or a fortnight before Christmas and came back for a month or two after if necessary to do the work required. In raising our objection in this way, we shall be told by the hon. member for Clermont that it is an unfair thing. I am not unwilling to work—if we sat five days a week, and members of the Government as well as members on this side were doing their full share of the work of legislation, every individual member would then have more time to devote to the consideration of measures personally; but the work is resting on the members of the Opposition, and it is their business to see that no ill-considered legislation is placed on the statute-book. I do not mind working five days a week here, under those conditions, and I do not mind coming back after Christmas—though I confess I would rather not—but it is not my convenience I am here to consider—I am here to do the work which is required by my constituents who sent me. The Government have a programme of legislation which they intend to put through, and even if it takes two or three weeks or months after Christmas, I am willing to do my share; but I have no desire to see two months' work crushed into a few weeks, and to do it badly.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Fortitude Valley*): I desire to offer my opposition to this extra sitting day, the motion for which has been brought down by the Premier. I am opposed to it,

Mr. McLachlan.]

because if there is any intention on the part of the Government to pass into law the programme which was submitted to this House in the Governor's Speech, there is no chance at all of them getting that business through, even if they sit five days a week, or six days a week. If there was no business in the programme submitted, what was the reason for its submission to the House? We find a Licensing Bill, a Trade Disputes Bill, an amendment of the Wages Boards Act, a Pearl-shell and Béche-de-Mer Fisheries Bill, an Aliens Leases Restriction Bill—twenty measures were included in the programme, and they are conspicuous by their absence. We are told that we are likely to get an amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act, and possibly an amendment of the Wages Boards Act.

The PREMIER: Also an amendment of the Constitution Act.

Mr. McLACHLAN: I notice, that even that is not on the business-paper. They must have known that there was no chance of getting them through before Christmas, and they should come back after Christmas to put them through. The amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act and the Trade Disputes Bill have been promised a long time; but even if we sit five days a week we cannot get either of them through before Christmas. I believe it is the intention of the Premier to adjourn about the 22nd December, and there will be only four Mondays between now and that date. Once you pass a resolution giving the Government the right to sit on Monday, it means that they will sit every Monday, because the Government can only do what a majority will permit it to do, and seeing that the majority is under such control that it will permit of this House doing what the Premier desires, it means that if the motion is carried we are going to sit five days a week. I am of opinion that it is not wise to pass the motion, and that in order to get through the business on the programme we should come back after Christmas.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*): I am opposed to this motion. Speaking as a country member, I would like to finish up the work and get away, but it is impossible for the work in the programme to be finished before Christmas. Though I used to be of a different opinion before I came into the House, I am now perfectly satisfied that three days a week is quite sufficient. I remember when we sat three days a week we could do our departmental work and look after the work of our constituents, but when we sit four days a week we find it impossible to get our work done. There is a great deal of correspondence to attend to.

The PREMIER: You have six forenoons a week.

Mr. LAND: That is quite right; but men whose opinions are well worthy of respect have spoken against four days a week. I think Parliament should meet earlier and sit three days a week and transact the business of the country in the manner in which it should be transacted. I can understand the hon. member for Clermont supporting the motion, because he wants to go down South. I oppose the motion, because I consider it is against the best interests of my constituents.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (*Kennedy*): If members on this side were assured that we would get the promised amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act by sitting five days a week, there would not be a murmur against the motion. If the Government carry this in order to be able to go into recess for an indefinite period, it means

[*Mr. McLachlan.*

that this pressing need for an amendment of that Act will be deferred for probably another twelve months. I was rather amused to hear some hon. gentlemen say this was a deliberative body, seeing the manner in which business is rushed through. As men who really wish to do their duty to their constituents, I think we should have more time to consider the measures brought before us, and if members opposite had not been drilled up not to oppose the motion, they would express the same opinion if they were to speak their minds. A man representing a constituency like mine has to devote a lot of time to departmental work; but I do not care how many days a week we sit as long as business is done. I think we shall get better results if we decide to come back after Christmas and do our work with deliberation. With regard to the remark of the hon. member for Clermont about sitting in the morning, I think that would be a good thing to do. I would rather see a session of four months with three sitting days a week than a session of nine or ten weeks with five sitting days a week. I emphatically enter my protest against trying to force legislation through without proper deliberation.

Mr. ALLEN (*Bulloo*): I also desire to raise my protest against sitting five days a week, because even at the present rate of progress my hands are kept quite full, and I find it difficult to keep up with the Bills going through and get even a smattering of their contents. Why are there so many amending measures introduced year after year? Simply because in the first place the Bills have been rushed through. Are the Government trying to make this House a deliberative Assembly? No. It is being deteriorated to something like a registration court to register and brand the measures brought forward by the Government; there is to be no discussion and no study with regard to their contents. Not only are we paid for five days a week, but we are paid for fifty-two weeks in the year; and we should be prepared to sit and do business. The motive behind this motion is to close at Christmas and go into recess for six months; and who is going to reap the advantage? The people who will benefit are within the four walls of this Assembly, and it will be to the detriment of the general public outside. I should be much better pleased to sit here three days a week for nine months in the year than just to come here and act the part

[5 p.m.] of a voting machine five days a week for two months. There are a number of members in this House who are nothing more or less than voting machines, and they always vote with their party.

The PREMIER: You don't vote with your party?

Mr. ALLEN: I admit that I vote with my party. At the same time I ask for more time to study the measures submitted to the House. The more study one gives to a measure the better he will understand it, and the better will he be able to give an intelligent vote on it. The hon. member for Balonne spoke about Ministers not having time to attend to their departmental work if they sat five days a week, and the Premier replied that he had no cause to complain, as he had six mornings in the week to attend to departmental matters. What time shall we have to study measures and read reports if we sit five days a week? Some members on the other side, during the course of the debate, interjected, "The less you study the better." What are we sent here for? Are we sent here because we are posts? Are we sent here because if we attempt to use

our brains and study the measures brought before the House, the country will be the worse for our study?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Vote for the platform.

Mr. ALLEN: I do vote for the platform, and I can give a reason for every vote I cast, which is more than some members can say in regard to the votes they give. I sent in a letter on an urgent matter to one of the departments over a week ago, and I have not yet received a reply to it. The conclusion I came to was that the Minister's hands were full, owing to the fact that the Assembly was sitting four days a week. What is going to happen if we sit five days a week? No departmental work can be done by members or by Ministers, and we shall just have to sit here and rush these Bills through with as little discussion as possible. I can assure the Government that I will do all I can by my vote to prevent the House sitting five days a week. The proposal to sit five days a week is made, not in the interest of the country, but in the interest of those members who desire to get into recess, and to stay in recess as long as possible, but to draw their salaries all the time. Members on this side can quite understand the hon. member for Clermont, the apologist for the Government, the gentleman responsible for the Government being there. I wonder how the hon. member spends his time during the recess?

The SPEAKER: Order! I am afraid that an investigation of that kind is quite outside the scope of the question before the House. (Laughter.)

Mr. ALLEN: I was endeavouring to show that the principal object of those members who desire to sit on Monday was to get into recess, and that they spend the recess in selfish recreations, and not in a way that is for the best interests of the country or their constituents. We, who object to sitting on Monday, desire to spend that time, not in recreation, not in going to New Zealand, but in studying the details of the measures submitted to the House. I hope the Premier will withdraw the motion, that he will sit on till Christmas, then adjourn for a fortnight, and come back and continue sitting until the work is done. I trust, also, that the House will sit only three days a week, so that members may have plenty of time to study the measures submitted, and that the Government will submit, not only all the measures foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech, but several other measures for which the country is clamouring.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat urged members on the other side to reconsider this matter. I think it is fairly well understood throughout the State, from the reports which have appeared in the press, that the decision to sit five days a week was arrived at last week at one of the Government caucuses on the "Lucinda." That being the case, the matter is not likely to be reconsidered by the Government and their supporters. For several sessions during the time I have been a member of the House the question of sitting an extra day a week has been discussed, sometimes for hours, and the chief argument used on those occasions by members of the Cabinet was that, owing to their having to attend to departmental work and the preparation of Bills, they were not able to sit more than three or four days a week. When the suggestion was made—as it was made this afternoon by the hon. member for Clermont—that we should meet at 10 o'clock in the morning—a proposition with which I am quite in accord—the excuse given by members of the Cabinet for not agreeing to that suggestion was that they would

not be able to attend to their departmental work if the House met at that hour. During the recent election Government candidates—the Premier especially—stated on various platforms that they were anxious to pass an amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act, and they pointed out, with apparent sincerity, that it was owing to the obstructive tactics of the Opposition that such a measure had not been passed.

The PREMIER: You have taken up as much time this afternoon as would have passed that measure.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARBER: That kind of bluff does not go down with me.

The PREMIER: It is true.

Mr. BARBER: The Premier dealt vigorously with this and other matters at Bundaberg as long as the audience allowed him to speak, and I may say that they gave the hon. gentleman a pretty lively time.

The TREASURER: You saw to that, I suppose.

Mr. BARBER: No; I did not. Although the hon. gentleman objected to the noise, it struck me as very peculiar that when the crowd were giving the hon. member for Townsville—

The SPEAKER: Order! I shall be glad if the hon. member will get back to the question before the House.

Mr. BARBER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I simply mention that by the way. On public platforms at the recent election Government candidates declared, with apparent sincerity, that they were very anxious that the House should meet as early as possible for the purpose of passing an amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act.

The PREMIER: And now you are talking it out.

Mr. BARBER: No; there is no Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act on the business-paper. They said also that they desired to bring in an amendment of the Wages Boards Act and an amendment of the Machinery and Scaffolding Act. So far those measures have not been introduced. I take exception to the House meeting on Monday simply because if we adjourn at Christmas we shall go into recess without passing one of those three important measures. What business has been introduced up to the present? There is the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Bill. That may be of some concern to the people of Brisbane, but it does not affect to any extent the large majority of people outside Brisbane. An amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act and an amendment of the Wages Boards Act would affect the people outside Brisbane in a far greater degree than it would affect the people of Brisbane, and I think the Government should come back after Christmas and sit long enough to pass those Bills. Some hon. members have stated that owing to the House sitting four days a week, to which I take no exception, they have been unable to read and get a grip of the Bills which have been introduced. If we are called upon now to sit on Monday, there will be still less time for members to study Bills. Hon. members may not think I am serious in what I am about to say, but I am. The community generally look upon members of this House as men who are fairly respectable and who keep the Sabbath. But the Premier, if he gets this motion passed, will practically compel members to devote the Sabbath to the study of Bills. As a Scotchman and a strict Sabbatarian, the hon. gentleman should take that into consideration. It seems to me that the matter was decided at the caucus meeting the other day, and that simply confirms the opinion that I have entertained for some time—and I think an opinion

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that is entertained by every hon. member on this side of the House—that this is just merely part of the arrangement arrived at at the late Premiers' conference, when it was decided that the various members of the Government would devote as much time as possible during the three or four months immediately after Christmas to work in connection with the Federal campaign to secure the defeat of the Federal Labour candidates. I understand that promise was made at the Premiers' conference, and the Premier knows that if the House is called together after Christmas to carry into effect important legislation, he will not be able to get out into the country and do the work he promised at the Premiers' conference he would do. Certainly if the House is not called together again after Christmas, I know that the majority of the workers outside will look upon the matter in this way: Unless the amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act is passed within the next two months, and amendments also of the Wages Boards Act, and the Machinery and Scaffolding Act—which also requires a very important amendment to be made in it—they will find out that it is quite probable that it will be twelve months before the amending Acts are brought into operation. Every member of the House knows full well that repeated deputations waited upon the Premier, even during the short term the House has been sitting this session, and asked that important amendments be made in the Workers' Compensation Act. There is another very important Bill that the Premier has been dangling before the electors for some two or three years. I refer to the Licensing Bill. That Bill finds no place in the programme of the Government for this session. It might be in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, but it is not on the business-paper before this House. That is another Bill the Government should pass before the House goes into recess. I intend to oppose the motion.

Question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 33.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hawthorn
„ Armstrong	„ Hunter, D.
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Kidston
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Macartney
„ Booker	„ Mackintosh
„ Bouchard	„ Morgan
„ Brennan	„ Paget
„ Bridges	„ Patrie
„ Corser	„ Philp
„ Cottell	„ Souersset
„ Cribb	„ Stodart
„ Denham	„ Swayne
„ Forrest	„ Tolmie
„ Forsyth	„ Walker
„ Grant	„ White
„ Grayson	„ Wienholt
„ Gunn	

Tellers: Mr. Corser and Mr. Walker.

NOES, 24.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mann
„ Barber	„ McLachlan
„ Breslin	„ Maughan
„ Collins	„ May
„ Coyne	„ Mulcahy
„ Crawford	„ Mullan
„ Douglas	„ Murphy
„ Ferricks	„ O'Sullivan
„ Hardacre	„ Payne
„ Hunter, J. M.	„ Ryland
„ Land	„ Theodore
„ Lennon	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Crawford and Mr. Mann.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Hodge, Mr. Fox, Mr. Rankin, Mr. Appel, and Mr. Roberts.

Noes—Mr. Foley, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Blair.

Resolved in the affirmative.

[*Mr. Barber.*]

COMPANIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council forwarding this Bill to the Legislative Assembly for their concurrence.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the TREASURER, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

WARWICK TO MARYVALE RAILWAY^{*} BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill to the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

SUPPLY.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. W. D. Armstrong, Lockyer, in the chair.*)

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

Mr. MANN: Before dealing with the Financial Statement, I just desire to briefly traverse certain remarks made by the Premier last night, and afterwards pass on to deal with the more important matters mentioned in the Statement. The Premier's speech last evening, if I may say so, was a very weak effort, inasmuch as he dwelt mainly upon the fact that the expenditure during the last two years was amply justified, quite forgetting the fact that while the expenditure has been mounting up by leaps and bounds, our revenue has not been keeping pace with it. I will deal with that matter more fully later on, and at present just deal with one remark that he made last night in reply to an interjection by the deputy leader of the Opposition. When he asked him what was to be done with all the immigrants being brought out, the Premier replied, "Ask your friend the member for Cairns, who says no men are available in Queensland." Last year, and this year—never while I have been engaged in the sugar industry have I seen that industry so well supplied with labour, and while last year I voted for the full amount of £50,000 that the Government set down on the Estimates for immigration, I pointed out it was not wise to flood an already full market—the labour market—such as was the case in the sugar industry, and also in Western Queensland, where men were being brought out to take the place of men already there. I emphatically deny ever having used the expression that we could not get men in Queensland. What I did say was that according to the Brisbane Press—and the Secretary for Railways did not deny the statement—he was unable to get sufficient men to build the railways that we had already passed last session.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said we could put more men on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was plenty of work for able-bodied men.

Mr. MANN: There is plenty of work for able-bodied men, but men will not come to Queensland from the other States unless they know the rate of pay they are to [5.30 p.m.] get, and we tried to set forth clearly in the railway Bills before us what the rate of pay would be, and the Government refused to accept the very reasonable amendment moved on this side of the House. There may be plenty of work for able-bodied men upon the railways, but if the Government are pursuing a

vigorous works policy they will naturally deplete the labour market in agricultural districts, and we will have members like the hon. member for Cunningham and the hon. member for Cambooya urging the Government to bring out more immigrants because there is a scarcity of labour in agricultural districts, forgetting that the Government drive these men away by paying them more than is paid in agricultural pursuits—if we except the sugar industry—and any man with any spirit in him who wishes to make a fair day's wage will leave an agricultural district and go on to the railway lines, if he is, as the Secretary for Lands says, an able-bodied man. That is the reason why there may be a shortage of agricultural labourers, but judging from what I have heard and seen they are not bringing out agricultural labourers, but mechanics and people who have never engaged in agriculture, and while they do that there may be a scarcity of labourers in agricultural districts, but, as I said before, I found no scarcity at all in regard to the sugar industry. The reason why the Premier at first initiated his present system of immigration was because he was told there was a shortage of labour in the canefields.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was at that time.

MR. MANN: That may have been, but the hon. senior member for Townsville asked for 5,000 men, and when the Premier gave the sugar-growers a chance of saying how many they required, the number asked for was only 500.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: 1,050.

MR. MANN: It came down to 500 when they were asked to put up £5 a head, and I think the Secretary for Railways will bear me out when I say that at present there is no demand for more labour in the sugar districts.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There has not been this season.

THE TREASURER: There has been a very small crop.

MR. MANN: I know there has been a small crop, but there has been an enormous amount of public work carried on, and if the men who came to Queensland could not find work in the sugar-fields then they could find work on the railways.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They have done.

MR. MANN: For that reason, I maintain that at present there is sufficient labour in Queensland to meet all our requirements, with, perhaps, the exception of our railway works where insufficient wages have been paid to induce men to work on them. I confess I had to laugh last night when I heard the Premier and the Secretary for Lands saying, "Trust the people." The members on this side, they said, did not trust the people. Now, the Premier and the Secretary for Lands were both Ministers in a Cabinet that refused to trust the people, inasmuch as they refused to pass a general referendum Bill at the time they passed the Bible in State Schools Referendum Bill. I was curious enough to ask them, while we were taking up the time of the House with the Bible in State Schools Referendum Bill, why they could not pass a general Referendum Bill, but they said they could not trust the people. It was, for instance, suggested that if we submitted a Referendum Bill to the people for lowering the rates on the railways, it would be carried enthusiastically; but, of course, the Treasury would suffer. Last night they said, "Trust the people." Why not trust them when passing a Referendum Bill, and put it to the people whether they wished the freights reduced on the railways or not?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are different things altogether.

MR. MANN: For instance, we could have a referendum in the whole of Queensland as to how many members should be in this House, and the rate of pay, but I am satisfied that the present Government will not trust the people by means of a referendum to say whether it would be advisable we should have no members of the Legislature for Brisbane. It would be carried in the country, I am sure.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! I think the hon. member has pursued that subject quite far enough.

MR. MANN: I am simply pointing out that hon. members on the other side do not trust the people, only where it suits them, and with regard to the referendum to be taken on the financial relations between the States and the Commonwealth, they are trusting to the fact that they have got almost all the daily papers on their side, and they are hoping that the people, looking at it from a parochial point of view, will carry it.

THE TREASURER: The agreement is a good one.

MR. MANN: The Premier made the same remark as that which fell from the Treasurer. I am going to show that the agreement is a bad one, inasmuch as the States will have the spending of money that they do not have to collect. The Premier himself, before taking office as a Minister, always said that the most pernicious thing in public life is having the spending of money that they have not the trouble of raising; and I may go further and say that if the States insist on receiving back from the Commonwealth £1 5s. per head of the population, it means that we must have a revenue tariff.

MR. HARDACRE: For ever.

MR. MANN: Yes, because over and above collecting through the customs to meet the wants of the Commonwealth in the matter of their departments, they must have sufficient to hand back to the States, no matter what the population may be, £1 5s. per head.

THE TREASURER: They will do it easily.

MR. MANN: I am pointing out that it will be an easy matter to, say, reduce the duty on sugar to £4 a ton, and thus allow sugar to come in from other countries, and practically wipe out our sugar industry. That is what it will mean under this agreement, because the Government will have to raise money whether they like it or not, and they will have to do it by a revenue tariff, because if we do without a revenue tariff and shut out articles coming in, our collections must fall off and the Commonwealth cannot pay the sum demanded by the States. When the Premier said last night that the agreement was a good thing for the Federal Government and a good thing for them not to have a fixed period that this should run, the Treasurer understood quite clearly the difficulty there is about getting an expression of opinion from the people. There was a referendum taken at the last election, and I do not believe there were 25,000 people who voted at that election in Queensland—that was on the amendment of the Constitution—and I am quite satisfied that the Premier knows that the agreement being made is a bad thing for the Commonwealth, and equally bad for the States, because it will give them the spending of money which they have not had the trouble or bother to raise. It will be a bad thing for the Commonwealth, because it will strangle our national life, make the national Parliament subservient to the State Parliaments, and in the near future, if this becomes law and is carried on for a number of years, the national Parliament will be merely a puppet in the hands of the various State Parliaments. In fact, owing to the weak attitude of Mr. Deakin on this matter,

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I claim that the national Parliament is not controlled by the whole of the people of Australia, but by the Premiers of the various State Parliaments.

Mr. LENNON: By six men.

Mr. MANN: Yes. The Premier's speech was mainly confined to showing our expenditure was justified so long as we had the money to spend. He did not always hold that opinion. There was a time when he said we should have a wide margin of safety between expenditure and revenue, and he was careful last night to point out, when shown by the deputy leader of the Labour party, that the enormous addition to our expenditure had been going on, not for two but for four years. I join issue with him on that matter, and my remarks will, I am sure, be backed up by the hon. member for Oxley. I would point out that the great rise in our expenditure took place in 1907. The hon. member for Oxley on that occasion was sitting in Opposition, and he got up and condemned the Treasurer's Budget Speech in the strongest terms I have heard used in this House. He condemned the Premier's spend-thrift policy, and claimed that if he went on at the rate the Premier was going we would soon overtake the margin of safety, and begin to have deficits. What the hon. member for Oxley said on that occasion has been amply justified. We have been racing as hard as we can along the road to a deficit, and, as showing that the Premier did not always believe in his present boom policy, I will quote from a speech of his delivered in 1904, showing that he did not believe in his present policy of huge loan expenditure, or of having the expenditure practically treading on the heels of our revenue.

Mr. HARDACRE: Do you expect him to be consistent?

Mr. MANN: I expect a man to be consistent. The Premier said—

Queensland, like all the other Australian States, has indulged in excessive borrowing for many years, and is now reaping the aftermath. The stimulating effect of the lavish expenditure on the revenue is gone, but the interest bill remains—a heavy burden on half a million of people. Last year, mainly owing to the increase in railway revenue, the net charge on revenue was the lowest during the last five years, yet, as will be seen from Table K, it amounts to £733,000, equal to 2·38 per cent of our total revenue. And the interest bill is not the only evil result of the lavish expenditure of boom times. Public sentiment, in regard to governmental expenditure, has been vitiated to such an extent as to render a return to a sane financial policy the most difficult and most unpopular task that any Government can undertake.

Going back to 1904, he used these words—

It is certainly desirable to stop borrowing—to stop adding to our already very heavy interest bill. But it is desirable to do this with the least possible hindrance to needful and healthy development. The policy of the Government is to utilise funds now at their disposal—and to provide funds for the replenishment of our capital account—in such a way as will render possible a moderate but continuous policy of development without further borrowing.

Last night the Premier said that the Estimates of last year were cut down to the lowest possible degree consistent with the welfare of the public service. Last year we tried to drum it into his head that he had cut down the amount put on the Estimates for the development of the mining industry, but he said they were just as he found them on his return from the old country, though the late Treasurer, Mr. Airey, and the late Attorney-General, Mr. Blair, assured the House that a very much larger sum was put on the Estimates for the development of the mining industry. Last night he made the admission that the Estimates were cut down, and I want

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hon. members to notice that at last he has admitted the truth in this matter. The Premier said last night that the reduction in the earning capacity of the railways was brought about by the initiation of the eight-hours day and the reduction in freights and fares. To a certain extent that is true, but those factors were in operation during a considerable part of the previous financial year. Freights and fares were cut down in 1907.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: In October.

Mr. MANN: And it came into operation in January, 1908, so that it was in operation for six months of that financial year; also the eight-hours day. We must therefore look for other causes of the falling off in railway revenue. I claim that the reduction was brought about mainly owing to the fact that we are building so many miles of railway that for many years they must be unproductive. The *Observer* of the 19th November, 1909, said—

Premier Kidston may be heartily congratulated upon his lucid, exhaustive, and admirable Financial Statement. He understands figures and knows how to use them does William.

In the *Observer* of this afternoon I notice the same thing appearing, namely—

The real Treasurer of the Government was again made manifest when the Premier handled the Financial Statement yesterday afternoon.

It is curious that the Treasurer should be so overlooked. When the great conference in Melbourne took place, the *Courier* chronicled the arrival of the Premier, but did not even mention the fact that the Treasurer was there too. If this Budget is the Premier's, we may assume that the last was his also, and he was only out £336,340 in his estimate. He over-estimated the revenue by £170,539, and under-estimated the expenditure by £165,801; but, in spite of slipshod financing, there was a surplus of £9,941, a surplus obtained by starving the hospitals—a policy which we notice is continued in this year's Estimates. Perhaps it may be that the establishment of a University in Brisbane will compensate the country districts for the amount taken from the hospitals. The object of the hon. gentleman is to cloak the rottenness of the position. In the Home Department we are told there is a decreased expenditure of £109,650, but that should really read an increase of £25,450, as we have been relieved of £135,000 which appeared on last year's Estimates for old-age pensions. I do not object to increased expenditure if our revenue would only keep pace with the expenditure. But we remember how the Premier brought down a Betterment Bill to increase the revenue. He deliberately cut down his Estimates of revenue, and brought down a land taxation measure to provide more revenue. At that time he claimed for the Betterment Bill what he now claims for the agreement between the Commonwealth and the States—that it would not be of much use the first year or two, but within a very short term of years sufficient revenue would be obtained from the land to almost meet half the expenditure. He claims for the agreement that, while it is a bad bargain for Queensland at present, in a few years, as population increases, we will get back an enormous revenue from the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. HARDACRE: We will only be getting about as much in thirty years as now.

Mr. MANN: The Auditor-General differs from that opinion, and so do I. I claim that if the States stick out for their "pound of flesh" within ten years there will be an outcry for an alteration, or the Federal Government will

cease paying back the amount we are entitled to, or else they will have to come forward with a land tax.

Mr. FORSYTH: Do you think we are getting too much?

Mr. MANN: I think we are getting too little at present, but later on we will be entitled to more under the agreement than the Commonwealth Government will be able to pay. The hon. gentleman shows how the revenue increased in 1908-9, as compared with 1907-8; but why did he not compare the expenditure also for the same period? The small surplus mentioned would have been a deficit of £71,326, were it not for the fact that the Commonwealth Government returned £81,267 over the estimate. Yet the Treasurer, in last year's Financial Statement, complained of the Federal Government charging us with the cost of old-age pensions twice over. That was put into the Budget at the time merely to excite the people of Queensland against the then Federal Government. In 1906-7, he had a revenue of £4,307,912, and a surplus of £396,115; in 1907-8, a revenue of £4,488,398, and a surplus of £115,301; in 1908-9, a revenue of £4,766,244, and a surplus of £9,940. The Government have had a continually expanding revenue, but there has been a continually shrinking surplus. The last Financial Statement winds up in the following manner—

I have called the attention of hon. members to this matter because there seems to be a continual tendency in this House to urge the Treasurer to increased expenditure without too keen an appreciation of the danger that it may entail fresh burdens on the taxpayer, and because I hope that after the statement I have made the good sense of the House will assist the Government in resisting those appeals at least until our growing revenue has secured us a larger margin of safety.

I am not objecting to increased expenditure, but I am asking the Chief Secretary, while increasing expenditure, to devise some method whereby he will draw into the Treasury a larger revenue. That paragraph reads, in the face of the present position, like a pledge signed by a drunkard after a spree—a pledge signed to still an uneasy conscience, and not intended to be kept.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the hon. gentleman reading his speech?

Mr. MANN: No; I have copious notes, and I am simply quoting from them. The Treasurer having signed the pledge, as it were, in connection with his Budget, at the first opportunity he breaks it. We had that plea in his last Budget, and on this occasion the Premier got up and warned members on both sides against pushing the Government into further expenditure. It lies entirely, according to the *Courier*, in the Premier's hands. If he desired to cut expenditure down, he had only to bring down a different Budget. He may claim that he is warranted by the increased revenue in spending a large amount, but formerly he used to argue in favour of cutting down expenditure. When very much less was spent by the continuous Ministry he claimed that expenditure could be cut down by £500,000; but instead of cutting down expenditure himself he has exceeded the expenditure of the Philp Government by £508,000 in one year.

The TREASURER: What was the revenue?

Mr. MANN: The revenue was greater also; but the Premier always claimed that there should be a margin of safety between revenue and expenditure. Now he has out-heroded Herod in slaughtering his old democratic principles. He has copied everything he condemned in the old continuous Government, and he is now, in his own words, racing headlong into the quagmire of deficit. The hon. gentleman has been washing his democratic flannels with a very bad brand of

soap—the Philp brand; and the democratic principle—his flannels—have shrunk like his democratic principles and like his surpluses; and to hide his nakedness he will have to wear the old coat known as the Philp deficit coat.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You have learned your lesson well.

Mr. MANN: And then we will see him in another Philp garment—the land-sales garment—in which the Premier will blossom forth at the close of his political career as a full-blown conservative. (Laughter.) I expect in a short time to see him decked out in a suit of conservative dress clothes made by that eminent firm of tailors, "Boodle and Fat."

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MANN: And that he will then be playing to the dress circle. Either the Premier or the Treasurer remarked that the increase in the railway returns was one of the most satisfactory features in the Treasury

[7 p.m.] figures. If we turn to Table N we shall find that the actual charge of the railways on the consolidated revenue for the year 1907-8 was £46,169, whilst for the year 1908-9 it increased to £81,901. The return on capital invested for 1907-8 was £3 10s. 4d. per cent., whereas in 1908-9 it was only £3 7s. 6d. per cent.—a drop of 2s. 10d. per cent. The expenditure increased from £1,053,000 in 1907-8 to £1,227,000 in 1908-9—an increase of 16 per cent., as against a decrease of 2s. 10d. per cent. on the capital invested. It is interesting to examine the Treasurer's figures closely in connection with the Railway Department, and compare the increase in revenue with the increase in expenditure. Last year the expenditure was underestimated by £71,098; but, says the Treasurer, we earned £70,708 over our estimate. That is to say, that shows a debit of £390—that to earn £70,708 we spent £71,098. Now, last year's receipts were £2,110,708, while the expenditure was £1,227,097, showing net earnings for the year of £883,610, whilst the net earnings in the previous year were £885,622, in spite of the fact that in 1908-9 we had a greater mileage of railway than we had in 1907-8. Of course, the Treasurer explains that as owing to the eight-hour day and the reduction in fares and freights; but, as I pointed out earlier in the evening, we had the same disadvantages for six months in 1907-8. This year the Treasurer estimates that his receipts from railways will be £2,250,000, and he estimates the expenditure at £1,297,768, so that he expects to receive a net revenue of £952,232. Hon. members will note that last year it took £71,098 to earn £70,708, but this year the hon. gentleman expects to receive £139,292 extra for an additional expenditure of £70,671. In other words, he expects to earn almost £2 by the expenditure of £1. It may be asked if we can do that. Frankly, I do not think we can, inasmuch as many of the new railways that we are building will not pay interest and redemption over and above working expenses, and many of the older railways, on the other hand, will require large sums to be spent in maintenance. Of course, I shall be told that the heavier up-keep on the new railways is responsible for the falling off in revenue; but I feel sure that in the future we are going to suffer very much from the fact that we are building very expensive railways, which will not return interest on the capital invested over and above working expense. Take, for example, the railway from Dalby to Tara. I ask hon. members to turn up *Hansard*, and read the debate that took place when the line was passed, and to note the speech made on that occasion by the present Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. Denham. The hon. gentleman

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condemned the line in unmeasured terms. No words of his were strong enough to point out the absolute foolishness of building railways through country that, the hon. gentleman asserted, was almost worthless from an agricultural point of view. During the following recess I visited the district, and I found that what the hon. gentleman said was practically true, and as soon as the House met I made every effort to induce the Government not to go on with the line. Various members on the Government side told me that what I said was perfectly true. In fact, several of them urged me to push the matter. But when I brought it up in the House I was faced with a blunt refusal on the part of the Government to stop going on with the line, although one of the most important members of the Cabinet had said that it would be absolutely worthless from a revenue point of view, or as a means of settling people on the land. Now, take the line from Atherton to Evelyn. I do not know whether the Secretary for Railways has seen that line—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. I have not.

Mr. MANN: But an ex-Minister went up there during the recess, and when he had seen the line and the heavy works in connection with it, he expressed the opinion that it was going to ruin Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Was that the Minister who passed the line?

Mr. MANN: No; the late Secretary for Mines, Mr. Jackson. In my opinion, that line will not pay for axle grease for the next twenty years, so that, instead of being a source of profit to the Commissioner and to the country, it is going to be a very heavy loss. And that is why I am advocating this evening the spending of our loan money in a more judicious fashion than has been the case for the last few years. The expenditure has risen to an enormous extent, and yet we will be told that even if these lines do not pay directly they will pay indirectly, inasmuch as they will settle people on the land. Perhaps, to a certain extent, that is true. But if these railways enhance the value of our lands, how is it that we are receiving such a small revenue from our Crown lands? In the "A B C Handbook of Statistics," issued by Mr. Thornhill Weedon, it mentions that we have the enormous territory of 250,000,000 acres of land leased, and the rent that we receive from that area, and the selections combined, amounts to only £663,000. The estimated expenditure of the Lands Department is £198,636, so that if we deduct that amount from the total revenue received it will leave £466,314 as the net revenue we are receiving from our lands, or practically only £500,000.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A lot of it is due to survey.

Mr. MANN: Yes; but look at the exorbitant rents charged for selections! How are we going to get the proper revenue from the land unless we impose heavier rents on our pastoral lessees? Our revenue must fall unless we get more from the pastoral lessees. I am not saying that the rent the Government are charging is too little for selections, because in my district they are charging too much. We had the spectacle the other day of two men who came down here from Atherton, who, although they came down on some other business as well, said that one of their main reasons for coming down was to offer their protest against the high prices charged for Crown lands in the Atherton district. It is no wonder that we are only receiving a small revenue from our Crown lands. I suppose that in that sum is

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included a good deal of money for timber. A curious thing in connection with the timber business is that there is no record in the head office of how much red cedar they sold, and yet it is one of the most valuable timbers in Queensland. By and by I am going to ask the Secretary for Lands what he got for the last quantity of red cedar that he sold, and I am also going to ask the Secretary for Railways how much he paid for the red cedar that he advertised for on the 2nd October.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You asked for that the other day.

Mr. MANN: No; there is some more I want to get the price of. I will ask you what you paid for the red cedar you bought in November. I heard the Premier say that the reason he turned the hon. member for Dalby out of the Lands Department was that he was going to revolutionise the department and see that things were done much better there, so that there would be no undue delay in settlement on the land, that the settlers would not be unduly harassed, and that we get from our pastoral leases a better revenue than we had received from them in the past. I thought that the Land Court would have been wiped out, and that we would have had such a fair assessment placed on our pastoral leases that they would, in a great measure, make up the leeway of money that we will be short of when the Federal Government starts paying the £1 5s. per capita. I really expected that the hon. member for Oxley would have made the department what it ought to be, one of the most up-to-date and business-like concerns in the State, and that we would not have such an experience of seeing men waiting for two years for land, and that we would not have a repetition of the spectacle we had of immigrants from the old country writing home to their friends and saying that in spite of the fact that they were told that the land would be ready for them as soon as they came, and it would be also ready for the plough, they have been told by the Department of Public Lands that at least two years must elapse before land can be found for them. I believe that the hon. member for Oxley would make some attempt to get some more revenue out of the pastoral lessees only for the fact that the Premier since the year 1902, and possibly before that time, has been an advocate and supporter of the squatter. The Hon. the Premier was a very strong advocate of that 1902 Bill, and he tried to coerce the Labour party into agreeing to the iniquitous clauses in the Bill which allowed the squatters to extend their leases and so lock up their land from settlement, whereas it should have been opened and become a source of revenue to the State. I remember when the Premier used to talk about the lavish expenditure of loan money on the part of the old continuous Philp Ministry, and he used to declaim that if ever he got into position and power in Queensland he would put a stop to this extravagant borrowing policy; that he would have no borrowing at all and no more loans, and that he would get the revenue from our lands, from our railways, and other sources, and that he would go in for a works policy which was to be paid for not out of loan money but out of revenue. But what do we find to-day? The position is that for sins of omission and commission which the Chief Secretary charged against the late Philp Government he has been guilty of most of them during the short period he has been in office. For example, he used always to protest against the large amount of unforeseen expenditure of the Philp Government, and this year we find that there was no less a sum than £165,801 of unforeseen expenditure last year.

Mr. RYLAND: Shame!

Mr. MANN: Of course it may be justified.

The TREASURER: You helped to pass a lot of that in connection with the loan.

Mr. MANN: No, I objected to the loan because it was too big. I objected to borrowing so much.

The TREASURER: You did not object to it.

Mr. MANN: The hon. gentleman can turn up *Hansard* and he will see that I spoke against that as hard as any man could in this Chamber. It is time that the Premier frankly—to use his own word—confessed that for sins of omission and commission he has at least equalled, if not excelled, the late continuous Government. For the four months ending in October, the Premier spent in loan money £469,181 as against, for the same period in 1908, £283,665, or a difference of £175,516. That is an increase of 65 per cent. I remember the time when he was only spending £500,000 a year, and he claimed that the policy that he was pursuing was one of the best in the interests of Queensland. To-day in the best interests of Queensland he is adopting the ruinous, reckless policy of the Philp Government—a policy which he condemned so heartily, and so wisely, that the people helped him to turn out the Philp Government, but to-day we find him sitting there with the Philp party in power and pursuing the same reckless and ruinous policy which he previously condemned—the policy of boom, borrow, and burst. I don't know if the Premier will admit he was wrong when he made such attempts to do away with the continuous Government in 1902-3. Does he remember what credit he got for turning out that wisely progressive, patriotic Philp Government, which, he claimed, during the years they were in office, hindered the development of Queensland and retarded progress for years. We find, however, that the Premier claims that the five years when the Philp party were out of office were the five most prosperous years in Queensland. They were the five years when he pursued a sane policy, and before he adopted the spending policy of the Philp Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The money is being spent in building railways which you helped to pass.

Mr. MULCAHY: No—motor-cars.

Mr. MANN: I admit that we are justified in borrowing money to build railways when there is a reasonable prospect of the railways paying within a short period of their being built. But we are spending a large sum of money on two railways, one of which, in my opinion, will not pay for twenty years, and in the opinion of the hon. member for Oxley the other will not pay for a like period.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: But you helped to pass them.

Mr. MANN: I protested against the route of the line from Atherton to Evelyn, and as soon as I found out what kind of a line the Dalby to Tara Railway was, I urged the Government not to construct it, and what support did I receive? I went to the then Minister for Railways, Mr. Kerr, and the then Treasurer, Mr. Airey, and asked them to delay the construction of the line until the Premier returned. That was done, and not a stroke of work was done on the line until after the coalition was formed. We have heard the Premier ranting and roaring at different times about the necessity of having a fair margin between revenue and expenditure, and what policy has he pursued in this respect for the last two years as the head of the Government? He has had bigger revenues than we had under the old Philp Government, bigger even than we had

before federation, and yet we find that we came within an inch of a deficit last year. Had it not been that the Commonwealth returned us more than we expected to receive, we should have had a deficit instead of a paltry surplus. Last year the Commonwealth returned to this State the sum of £1,057,000. The Premier used to boast that he could run the country for half a million less than it was run in 1902-3. As a matter of fact he has had an average of £150,000 a year more revenue than the Philp Government received at that time, and, in spite of that fact, our expenditure is overtaking our revenue by leaps and bounds, and, unless we have a sheer stroke of luck, I anticipate that we will end this year with a debit instead of a credit balance.

The TREASURER: So Airey said last year.

Mr. MANN: And he would have been right if the Government had not received more from the Commonwealth than they anticipated. In 1907-8 the expenditure was £4,756,303, and the expenditure for 1908-9 was £4,373,096, an increase of £383,207, or over £1,000 a day. But that was only the nominal increase, because the actual increase for the year was no less than £508,000. I get that by including the sum of £125,000, which should have been added to the surplus of that year, but was taken to pay off certain old Treasury debits, so that the expenditure for 1907-8 was £4,248,096, as against £4,756,303, showing an increase of £508,207. The Premier denied last night that there had been an increase of £508,000 in one year, but admitted that there had been an increase of £1,000,000, extending over a period of four years. I again put the hon. member for Oxley into the witness-box. In 1908 that hon. gentleman said—

The expenditure during the year 1902-3 was £3,717,806, and during 1907-8 it is to be, according to the Treasurer, £4,410,300—an enormous increase of £722,494.

Thus we have the evidence of the present Minister for Lands that a great increase took place in 1907-8. Last year our revenue increased to the extent of £277,000, but our expenditure jumped up at almost double the rate of our revenue increase.

Mr. MAUGHAN: That may be justified.

Mr. MANN: I am not saying that it is not justified; but I am pointing out that the Premier always claimed that there should be a wide margin of safety between revenue and expenditure. I would advise the hon. member to study the figures I have quoted, showing how our surpluses have tapered off from almost £400,000 to £9,941 last year. And if it had not been for the fact that the Commonwealth was more generous than we expected, there would have been a deficit last year instead of a paltry surplus of £9,941. I do not object to expenditure if it is warranted; but I claim that it is the duty of the Government to seek for fresh sources of revenue so as to keep a wider margin between revenue and expenditure. Are the Government trying to do that? As a matter of fact, they are jumping up our interest bill at such an alarming rate that if they go on as they are doing a deficit is inevitable. The interest appropriation for 1908-9 was £1,634,789, an increase of £70,000 over the appropriation for 1907-8, which was £1,564,000. Of course I will be told that the money borrowed was to build railways, and I say again that we are justified in increasing our interest bill if our railways show a fair prospect of returning interest and working expenses.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The railways are now guaranteed.

Mr. MANN: The interest is not guaranteed under the Railways Act of 1906. I would point out to the hon. gentleman that if the department

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attempt to collect from the settlers in the Atherton district sufficient to make the Atherton to Evelyn Railway pay, they will bankrupt the settlers.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then why did you support the line?

MR. MANN: I advocated taking the railway, not up the Herberton Range, but through the scrub, so as to open up those scrub lands. By taking that route there would have been good land all the way, but by the route it has followed it goes through barren country and over a range, which has involved an expenditure of over £10,000 a mile. The Treasurer himself is not too sure about the financial position. He says that unless we have a continuance of good seasons we are bound to have trouble. Any man who has been in Queensland for a period of years must know that we have periods of drought as well as good seasons. I dare say the hon. member for Moreton will remember the trouble the Philp Government had during the drought period. I am not saying that a similar drought will occur, but I say it is quite possible that we may again be in the horrors of a drought. What provision are we making to meet such a condition of things? I have always claimed that there should be a suspense account created during good times to tide us over bad times. During the very bad time the Philp Government knocked off all public works. The very time when we should prosecute a spirited works policy is when men cannot find work at their usual avocations.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Philp Government did not stop all public works; they went on with works in the bad time.

MR. MANN: They did not; they practically stopped all public works during the very bad year.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

MR. MANN: There was nothing like the works policy we have now when we are experiencing good seasons, and when men can find work at their usual avocations. We cannot go on with railway construction at our [7.30 p.m.] present rate. My idea is that we should have a continuous railway policy—not have phenomenal spurts and then have a dead pause. Right throughout the whole period we should be building, say, half a dozen railways—three in the South, two in the North, and one in the Central district. If this is done we could keep on at that rate for a long period, but if we build fifteen or sixteen railways a year we must very soon so reduce the earning capacity on our railways that, when we have to go on the London market to borrow money for building railways, the financiers will tell us to call a halt—the interest rate will be so ruinous that we will have to call a halt. As I said before, for a very long time all public works were stopped and we had to catch up with our railway construction because there was more settlement going on, and it was desirable that we should build a large number of railways to make up for the years in which construction had ceased.

MR. FORSYTH: That was not in the Philp Government's time.

MR. MANN: The hon. member must know that for a very long period there was scarcely any railway construction going on in Queensland.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not in the time of the Philp Government.

MR. MANN: The Philp Government did not construct anything like the amount of railways being constructed now. They constructed a few lines here and there, but they had nothing like the big railway policy of the present Government. It was after the Philp Government got

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out that the Morgan Government had to make up that leeway, but having done that, half a dozen lines of railway is any amount to be constructing at one time. I said earlier that in 1909 the Commonwealth returned to Queensland £1,057,000. For 1910 the Treasurer's estimate is £949,117, but for 1911, if this per capita agreement comes into force, the Auditor-General estimates the amount returned will only be £708,000. How is the Treasurer going to meet that deficit? What preparation is he making now, with good seasons, to meet the inevitable decline in our revenue in 1910?

MR. HARDACRE: Trusting to luck.

MR. MANN: He is trusting, as the hon. member for Leichhardt says, to luck. They hope for a continuance of good seasons, and hope that in that manner they may tide over the troublous times, but as surely as I am standing here the time must come when there will be a deficit, and it will be met, if that party is in power, by repealing the Proceeds of Sales of Lands Act, and the selling of Crown lands to meet the current expenditure.

THE TREASURER: That won't be next year at any rate.

MR. MANN: It may not be next year, but there will be a fair drop next year, and it must inevitably come in 1911, unless we get a larger revenue from other sources, and I ask the Treasurer what preparation is he making now, when the seasons are good, to meet the inevitable deficit in 1911? We are preparing for that drop in our revenue by jumping up our interest bill, and the railways they are building I know will, for a very long time, not pay for axle grease. I notice the Treasurer has something to say congratulatory about the disposal of the Maryvale and Jimbour Estates, but he is a little too previous, because after all it is only after a period of years that we can tell whether we have successfully settled Jimbour and Maryvale. The settlers at the outset, with good seasons, and if they have a bit of capital, may be able to pay their interest, or rent, on the particular land they have purchased, but I am pretty well confident that the Treasurer cannot point to half a dozen instances on either of those two estates where poor men have taken up land and tried to make a home. This high-priced land is only for those men who are already fairly well off, and possibly have other farms with which to carry on. Our aim and object should be, as much as possible, to settle people on the land who have not already got land. I do not believe in this method of financing—of buying back big estates at a very high rate, and then passing the burden on to the settler. The settler has a sufficient burden to carry already, and if you just look over the figures of our expenditure per head you will see that I am correct in what I am saying. My argument is an answer. Weedon's "A B C of Statistics" gives the expenditure per head, in 1907, at £8 14s. 11d.; in 1908, £9 15s. 4d.; and in 1909, at £10 4s. 11d.; an increase of £1 10s. in two years, and I say there is nothing to beat this in the whole of Australia.

THE TREASURER: The revenue has also increased per head.

MR. MANN: Quite so. You are drawing more money out of the pockets of the people than you are warranted in doing.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is a large railway expenditure.

MR. MANN: The Treasurer anticipates a surplus of £3,776. Last year he had one of £9,941, but at this date last year things looked much healthier for a surplus of £10,000 than they do for a surplus of £4,000 this year. The

monthly returns for the four months ending October, 1908, show an excess of revenue over expenditure of £597,816, and for the same period of 1909 only a surplus of £537,279, so that the position is £40,000 worse this year than this time last year, although to some extent that position might be recovered—I believe there were heavy payments in the railway service during October.

The TREASURER: There were three fortnightly payments in October.

Mr. MANN: That is so, but judging from the Treasurer's last Budget I am not too sure that too much faith can be put in his predictions. I am inclined to think that this year we shall not have a surplus of £4,000, but that we shall end with a deficit.

The TREASURER: That is what you prophesy.

Mr. MANN: That is my prophecy. Last year we were advised to go slow until we had a better margin of safety between the revenue and expenditure.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the hon. member reading his speech?

Mr. MANN: On an important occasion like this, when you are dealing with a large number of figures, it is absolutely impossible to commit them to memory. I was quoting what I said last year. I questioned the genuineness of that paragraph in last year's Financial Statement. That note of warning in the Treasurer's Financial Statement was made for members on this side not to push the Government, but members on the other side would get all they wanted so long as they were good boys.

The TREASURER: It applied to all members of the House.

Mr. MANN: I have also got, as the deputy leader of the Opposition had, a complaint against the Government in the matter of increases. I notice that the Intelligence Bureau has been cut down by £100. I want a branch established in my district. I believe they have an inquiry branch of the Lands Department in Townsville. I do not know what it is for unless it is to give information about the depth of water in Ross Creek and the height of Castle Hill, but as regards answering inquiries in regard to land, you might just as well have a branch in the midst of the Sahara Desert. There is no Crown land to select anywhere in the neighbourhood of Townsville. It should have been in some other place where there are some Crown lands to be settled. It just shows how utterly futile it is to expect the Government to do things in a commercial business spirit. They sell cedar for about 10s., and buy it back for £1 10s.; and, when they want to settle people on the land, they stick an inquiry office in Townsville, and possibly tell people who go there to look for land that Castle Hill is 2,000 feet high, and that there is 4 feet of water in Ross Creek at neap tide. I do not object to any official getting an increase if he is not already receiving a sufficient sum. There are men working on our railways for 6s. 6d. a day. These Under Secretaries may be all good men, but they were getting good salaries before, and before increasing their salaries we should try as far as possible to give the man who is doing hard manual labour something like a living wage. The Secretary for Railways knows that 6s. 6d. a day is not a living wage in Brisbane for a married man. That is what they are paying in the goods-sheds and on the lines all around Brisbane, and I claim that it is not sufficient. While I always believe in paying a man a good wage, I claim that it is not the men who come most closely in contact with the Minister who should get the increases. That is one reason why we find such a dislike on the part of Government officials

to get away from Brisbane. They think they are in touch with the Ministers of the departments here, and are more likely to receive a reward for their services, and will not be overlooked. I notice that there is a cutting down in the Northern allowance. Men have been shifted from the Harbours and Rivers Department at Mackay and sent up to Cairns, and they get only the same salary, and these men claim that the cost of living is higher in Cairns than in Mackay. As a matter of fact, boatmen at Port Douglas only receive £108 a year, the same as in Mackay; and I claim that some inducements ought to be offered to these men to go North by giving them a higher salary than those who are in the South and in Central Queensland. I am only saying this because the Estimates might be pushed through, and I might not have a chance of saying it on the Estimates. I claim that the Government are spending too much money in some respects, and not sufficient in others. There is an item of £3,000 for the Department of Stock which I wish to inquire into very closely. I notice that the amount put down for hospitals this year is the same as last year, although last year there was not sufficient to meet the requirements of the hospitals, and although this year there are more hospitals established than there were last year. I believe there is less this year for primary education than there was the year before. Although the vote is bigger, that is only because of the fact that the amount for the University is put down on the Estimates. During the discussion on the Estimates I intend to fight against every increase I do not believe in, even if we should be here till after Christmas, and in every case where I think an increase should be given I intend to support it. I intend to do all I can to compel this Government to pay a living wage to the men in the lower branches of the public service.

Mr. BLAIR (*Ipswich*): I desire to say one or two words on this subject before the debate closes. I do not intend to occupy the attention of the House at any great length, but naturally, as this is possibly one of, if not the most important debates that take place in this House, it is incumbent to add a word or two. I notice that the Treasurer mentions in his Statement that the net result of the year's transactions gives evidence of progress and prosperity. To a certain extent I agree with that, but there are other matters to be considered which to a large extent neutralise the full effect of such a Statement. He admits that the State has been extremely fortunate in a succession of good seasons, and that the recent rainfalls have done much to ensure continued prosperity. That is so, and I think that he must also admit that to a large extent this has been one of the chief factors which has led him to be able to present a Statement showing a small surplus. Now, one of the chief matters to which attention should be called in this Budget is the alarming increase of expenditure. I am not one of those who say that expenditure is not necessary, that we should not go in for a policy of expenditure, or that the money has been unwisely expended on certain things; but allowing that it is under certain circumstances a good policy, that in many instances the money has been partially well spent, I think it is an extremely unwise thing to have no margin made for safety. If hon. members will study this Budget carefully, they will see that so far from there being a proper margin of safety, by which the affairs of the State should be conducted on business lines, just as if we were running a concern of our own, that margin of safety is conspicuously absent. Now, in the last two years, the revenue in 1907-8 amounted to £4,373,096, and in 1908-9 it amounted to

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£4,756,303. That left a nominal increase in expenditure of £383,207, but as a matter of fact hon. members who have studied this matter will know that that was only a nominal increase—that was not the real increase—and I shall be able to make the matter perfectly plain by calling attention to what the surplus in 1907-8 was stated to be. That surplus was stated to be £115,000. As a matter of fact, it should have been £115,000 plus £125,000, or a total of £240,000. Now, £125,000 of what should have been the declared surplus of £240,000 was paid in to the loan fund, in order to pay off advances to deep sinking and other charges on previous loans. The result of that was to do this: It lessened the surplus, it boomed loan, and it gave us a fictitious sort of prosperity; and the policy of paying money really from revenue into loan is only going back to what I contend is a pernicious policy of booming loan at the expense of revenue, and inducing people to believe that we are infinitely more prosperous, when we are spending loan money more lavishly, whilst really getting nearer a deficit. Had it not been for the good seasons, and for the amount of money received from the Federal Treasurer, we should have been faced to-day with a deficit.

The TREASURER: That would occur any year.

Mr. BLAIR: Yes, possibly it would; and I think it is a matter which calls for the serious attention of this Chamber. I am not speaking in any harsh spirit of criticism, or with any degree of heat; I am calling attention to what I think is a matter which ought to be particularly noticed at this time, and for this reason, that the financing of last year has been done in such a way that no margin—this is my candid opinion—has been left for safety on the next year's operations, especially if we have a bad season, or if another loan is floated, and it is disastrous.

Mr. HARDACRE: Or if there is any slump.

Mr. BLAIR: Or if there is any slump in any of our recognised sources of revenue. I believe another matter that will have to be taken into consideration by the Treasurer is the fact that the Commonwealth anticipate floating another loan of £3,000,000, or something like that amount. The actual *bonâ fide* expenditure for 1907-8 was £4,373,096 minus £125,000; that is £4,248,000. Against that there has been an increase in revenue in two years of £279,000; and against that, in two years, there has been the enormous increase in expenditure of £508,000. Is not that a matter calling for stringent inquiry and anxious financing, in order that solvency may be preserved? That increase of expenditure is largely due to the insidious policy of lavish expenditure of loan money, nothing more or less. In 1905-6 the revenue rose twice as fast as the expenditure; in 1906-7 it rose two and a-half times as fast; in 1907-8 the expenditure increased twice as fast as the revenue; and in 1908-9 the expenditure has again increased more than twice as fast as the revenue. That is not a good state of affairs. If you are financing a public concern or a business affair, you must keep expenditure within revenue. These figures show that for the last few years expenditure has been going up nearly two and a-half times the increase in revenue. Taking into account that the Government have had—and I hope it will continue—a period of good seasons with splendid productiveness, we find that the revenue has only increased about one-half in proportion to the expenditure.

The TREASURER: There is still a surplus.

Mr. BLAIR: There is a small surplus of
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about £9,000. We know from the history of this State that prosperous years are sometimes followed by lean years.

Mr. HARDACRE: Always.

Mr. BLAIR: And the outlook is one requiring careful attention and rigid economy. In the Railway Estimates an increased expenditure of £50,000 is set down; but that is ridiculously inadequate to meet increasing requirements in that department. The amount put on the Estimates last year was exceeded by £170,000.

The TREASURER: The revenue was there to meet it.

Mr. BLAIR: I say the amount put down is ridiculously inadequate to meet increasing expenses.

The TREASURER: I must go by the Commissioner's report.

Mr. BLAIR: I am taking the amount by which the estimated expenditure was exceeded last year.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: £71,000.

Mr. BLAIR: It increased to the extent of over £170,000.

The TREASURER: £70,000 beyond the estimate.

Mr. BLAIR: Even taking that statement, you are providing less for the increased expenditure than you did last year, and the amount should be increased by at least another £70,000. I say you are not making provision to meet expenditure in such a way as to square the finances. The margin of safety is anything but one that will create a feeling of security in the minds of people who consider these things. In 1903 the Premier, who was then Treasurer, delighted to indulge in diatribes against the hon. member for Townsville, and no one was more frequent or strenuous in his arguments, both in public and in private, than that hon. gentleman was against the wicked policy of booming loan money, or a policy of expenditure without any provision to meet the expenditure. To-day it seems that he has gone back on all that, and has come back to the policy he condemned at that time in season and out of season. The Government have gone in for an expansive policy—that is a nice phrase—which, if the greatest precautions are not taken, will eventually land them in the deficits of 1901-2, and will unmistakably and irresistibly bring about the results of those years if we have the bad luck to meet with a bad season or two. It seems so plain, that the person taking the trouble to casually read through the Budget will see the force of my remarks. Three years ago the then Treasurer, the present Premier, was continuously urging the necessity for making provision for maturing
[8 p.m.] certain loans falling due in 1915. At that date something like £14,000,000 have to be met, £12,000,000 at one particular time. That seems to be forgotten now, and the closer we approach the period when the loans have to be met, the feeling seems to be that the less we need trouble, and the less the danger. Possibly, by that time the hon. gentleman may not be here.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Our hope lies in the expansion of our industries, and the increase of our population.

Mr. BLAIR: There is no doubt that those two sentences express the hope of the Ministry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We must do all we can to secure them.

The TREASURER: Don't you think they are likely to be realised?

Mr. BLAIR: It is difficult to think there is likely to be such an expansion that we shall be able to finance those maturing loans. Judging from the increase per head, I see nothing to justify the hope that the expansion will be sufficient to make provision to meet our loans. But the point I wish to make is that in previous years there was an attempt made to keep expenditure within the four corners of our revenue. To-day that effort seems to have gone—that idea seems to have dissipated into thin air, and the old policy of reckless expenditure seems to have been gone back to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The greatest expansion was during the last year you were in the Ministry.

Mr. BLAIR: No; when I was in the Ministry I have a distinct recollection that the doctrine I am enunciating now was insisted upon, and was indulged in on every platform. It is only within the last two years—practically within the last year—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The year before last there was a bigger expansion than in any other year.

Mr. FORSYTH: The expansion in 1906, when you were a Minister, was the biggest of all—£460,000.

Mr. BLAIR: It is only within the last year that the expansion has gone on without adequate protection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, I called attention to it in 1907.

Mr. BLAIR: If the hon. gentleman called attention to it in 1907, he ought to be in perfect accord with me now, because it has gone on to an extent that calls aloud for correction, and the hon. gentleman's very interjection shows the absolute justice and fairness of my criticism.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It shows the need of keeping a tight grip.

Mr. BLAIR: Exactly—an exceedingly tight grip, and it is a question whether that grip will be kept.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The fact remains that it was when you were on the Treasury benches that the biggest expansion took place.

Mr. BLAIR: The fact remains that in the last year there seems to have been a recurrence to a policy which it was my pleasure, when sitting on that bench, to condemn absolutely. During the last four years, the loan expenditure in one year was only some £227,000, and in another year about £297,000—that was about four years ago. Taking the population at 538,000, that would be an average of about 10s. per head. Now, we have this alarming state of things to consider—that last year the loan expenditure went up to £1,247,000.

The TREASURER: And the year before?

Mr. BLAIR: I have not got the figures for the year before.

The TREASURER: £1,033,000.

Mr. BLAIR: Last year it went up to the enormous figure of £1,247,000—or, practically, it increased fivefold in four years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was an expansion the last year you were a Minister of over £400,000.

Mr. BLAIR: I admit that, and I opened my remarks by saying that I am not criticising this thing unfairly, or endeavouring to conceal anything at all. But, admitting the expansion to which the hon. gentleman refers

and everything else, I say that the loan expenditure has increased to an alarming extent, and that last year it represented £2 5s. per head, as compared with 10s. per head four years ago, and no provision for security has been made.

Mr. CORSER: You must develop the country.

Mr. BLAIR: Who on earth said we were not to develop the country?

Mr. CORSER: We must have expenditure to develop the country.

Mr. BLAIR: We hear the cry that we must develop the country, and that we must pass measures for the material advancement of Queensland. I should be the last man in the world to object to that. But let us be careful, when developing the resources of the country, to see that we make provision to meet the expenditure we are incurring. (Hear, hear!) The Secretary for Public Lands knows as well as I do that unless they have exceptionally good luck there has not been a margin of safety left to meet this expenditure.

The TREASURER: It is all reproductive expenditure—all railways.

Mr. BLAIR: That is another cry—that it is all reproductive. Possibly it is—I am not denying that—but does not the Treasurer know that it will have to reach such a state of reproductiveness to meet the additional expenditure as has not yet been reached in Queensland? When loan expenditure increases five times in four years, it is time to cry, "Halt!" or to inquire very closely indeed into things.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We count on your help in exercising rigid economy.

Mr. CORSER: We have reproductive assets.

Mr. BLAIR: But the people who lend the money have the assets as their security, and, in common justice, we require to be quite certain how we deal with those assets, and see that the debt is paid. Last year we received the highest revenue that Queensland has ever got either before or since federation. And yet the surplus dwindled from something like £400,000 in 1906-7 to a paltry £9,000 in 1908-9.

The TREASURER: Is there anything in the expenditure that you find fault with?

Mr. BLAIR: If I had the time to take out the figures, and had the information that the Treasurer has at his hands, I think there is a great deal of the expenditure that I could take exception to.

The TREASURER: The bulk of it is for railways.

Mr. BLAIR: I have no objection to a railway policy, nor to a vigorous railway policy; but there are other items of expenditure, as the Treasurer well knows—

The TREASURER: Interest on the public debt.

Mr. BLAIR: Which can be picked out, and which would show that, to a certain extent, proper caution has not been exercised.

The TREASURER: Page 2 of the Financial Statement gives the whole of the details. Is there anything there that you object to?

Mr. BLAIR: I am going to refer to the Statement in one moment to show a big omission. I take it that it is an extraordinary thing that in the year when we received the largest revenue we have ever had, the surplus should have fallen from £396,380 in 1906-7 to £9,940 in 1908-9.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is how it should be.

Mr. BLAIR: I am not one of those who believe in large surpluses. A large surplus—allowing for the usual bad financing that

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is inseparable in dealing with large assets and forecasting the financial affairs of the State—is sometimes due to too much taxation. What, I take it, ought to be the ideal balance-sheet for a State, is something that absolutely squares—not too much money from the pocket of the taxpayers, but just sufficient to meet the needs of the State, to pay the interest on the public debt, and close the year solvent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was near your ideal last year, then, was it not?

Mr. BLAIR: It was fairly near an ideal last year. There is where the State, I take it, differs from an ordinary business concern. The business concern is to make a huge surplus in the nature of a profit. I discriminate between that way of doing business and the State's way of doing business.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is bad business to accumulate a large surplus.

Mr. BLAIR: Yes; it is bad business for the State to accumulate a large surplus, because it means more money taken from the pockets of the taxpayer than is necessary. I am not arguing for one moment against the idea of a small surplus, but to my mind it seems to me to be an alarming thing, and one which ought to be investigated, that you find a surplus shrinking from £396,000 in 1906-7 down to £9,940 in 1908-9, when we know every Treasurer seeks to come out with a large surplus.

The TREASURER: You cannot spend it and have it, too.

Mr. BLAIR: Where has it gone?

The TREASURER: Reproductive works.

Mr. BLAIR: The same old cry of development of the State, reproductive works, and so on. We know all those old terms. It is something like that term "Mesopotamia." The Government are going in for an expenditure policy to such an alarming extent that it will be necessary for the Government—whatever Government may be there—to square the finances again. Let us see how the surplus of £9,940 was arrived at. I notice from the Financial Statement that the revenue was £170,000 over the estimate, and that the expenditure was £165,000 over the estimate. So practically they balanced. But how on earth was that surplus realised? They got from the Federal collections £81,000 more than they anticipated they would get—and last year they got £70,000 more than they expected to get—and the railways yielded something like a similar sum over what they thought would be returned from them. So that it was no method of good calculation. It was absolute good luck, good seasons, a windfall from the Federal collections, and a windfall from the railways.

The TREASURER: The money would have been spent.

Mr. BLAIR: I know the money would have been spent, but I am not arguing that at all. I am showing how the surplus was obtained. There was £81,000 from the Federal collections more than the Government expected and a similar sum from the Railway Department over the amount the Government expected; and, in spite of all that, we have only got a surplus of £9,940. I have a distinct recollection of a terrible wail, a terrible cry of injustice which went up against the Commonwealth in the 1907-8 Financial Statement, where the Commonwealth was blamed for the precarious financial position the State would be placed in from the mere fact that the State was not getting a certain return from their

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collections. These tables, bearing the hall mark of the Treasurer, indisputably prove that the Commonwealth has come to the rescue of the State in financial matters.

The TREASURER: That sum includes some payments which should have been made the previous year.

Mr. BLAIR: That does not affect the argument one iota. It was a deferred payment; still the State got that amount from the Commonwealth. It was because of the exceptionally good seasons and the amounts the State received from the Commonwealth during the last two years that left the Treasurer with a surplus. Take the interest bill. I do not desire to inflict many figures on the House, but one or two remarks are necessary in connection with the interest bill. The interest bill for the year 1908-09 was £1,634,789. Queensland has a population of 558,000, so the interest bill meant £3 per head for every man, woman, and child in the State, or £15 per head for every wage-earner. I say that the interest bill of this State is reaching an amount that calls for alteration. It calls for reduction. It is an enormous amount, and our ability to pay that bill is made to depend on a policy of trying to boom the loan expenditure, putting in moneys which should allegedly go to a surplus, paying it into loan fund, expending money in various places, booming it in that way—

The TREASURER: Only £10,000 last year.

Mr. BLAIR: And then with a fictitious increase getting only half of the money that has been borrowed. That is not a good policy and not a sound policy. It is a policy, which, if pursued in the way it is pursued here, will bring us back to the terrible days of 1901 and 1902. There can be no question about that. We must have the lean years following the fruitful years that have preceded. In the gross the receipts from the railway are exceptionally good. It is marvellous how they have gone up. They amounted to £701,000 more than they were in 1905, yet the surplus has dropped from £13,995 in 1905 down to £9,940 in 1909. These figures only show the precarious financial position which we have got into. I do not say this in any harsh criticism, or in any unfair spirit, but it seems to me that there is little or no control or check on the expenditure in Queensland. There is absolutely no control—no reasonable check—on the expenditure, and the tables of the whole Financial Statement seem to me to be framed in such a way that there is no margin of safety left. The total debt of the State we know is £43,000,000. The State has a population, as I said, of 558,000—a very small population, especially considering the £3,000,000 spent on immigration—and that will give a debt of £79 per head for every man, woman, and child in the State. Seeing that Queensland is such a young country a debt like that seems to me to be burdensome to the extent of disaster. If we go on at the rate we have been going and spending £1,500,000 of loan money a year—

The TREASURER: We are not doing that. It was only £1,250,000 last year and £1,000,000 the year before.

Mr. BLAIR: And another £1,000,000 this year. If we go on at that rate, and we strike a bad season, or if we have to apply for a loan and it turns out disastrously, it will be a bad thing for the State.

The TREASURER: Are you against loan expenditure altogether?

Mr. BLAIR: No; I am not against loan expenditure altogether. I made it perfectly plain at the outset of my remarks that I was not against a judicious loan expenditure. But I argue that the State, as it appears to me, has no margin of safety in it, and the expenditure is going ahead by such leaps and bounds that if there is not a continuation of successful seasons, which the Treasurer fairly admits at the opening of his speech, is accountable for the surplus, then we will be running into difficulty indeed.

The TREASURER: All Statements are framed on that.

Mr. BLAIR: Yes; that has to be taken into consideration in making the calculations. The Premier alluded to the fact last night that he borrowed £3,000,000, and he was only paying interest on £2,000,000.

The TREASURER: What he said was that £3,000,000 had been spent.

Mr. BLAIR: And he was only paying interest on £2,000,000. I remember him often talking about the widow's cruse—no matter how much she took out, the more came in. (Laughter.) That is all very well, but when it is a question of paying hard cash it will be found that the widow's cruse is found wanting. This is something I know which hon. members may not know, and that is that he borrowed £1,000,000 from the Savings Bank, for which he only paid 1½ per cent. Yet, while he has the advantage of this money, he comes down to the House and says that he is only paying interest on £2,000,000. The Treasurer knows that he had the advantage of £1,000,000 from the Savings Bank for which he only paid 1½ per cent. interest. The Treasurer can contradict me if it is not true. He has been using it as loan money in financing the State, and it is not a proper method of dealing with the funds of the bank. I am pointing out what seems to me a matter that wants looking into. I suppose it is another widow's cruse arrangement. The Premier went down to Melbourne some time ago to attend a conference. I am one of those who believe that these conferences are absolutely unconstitutional. They are simply excesses; they are warts, nothing more or less; and as they savour of that malady, so they are irritating in their results. I am also one of those who believe that the State made a bad bargain in the last conference.

The TREASURER: No. The last was very successful.

Mr. BLAIR: The Treasurer is welcome to his opinion, and he may be right. I am giving my opinion for what it is worth. I prefer the scheme which Sir William Lyne propounded. To my mind it was grossly folly on the part of the States, on the part of Queensland in particular, when they refused to avail themselves of that scheme. I have here the salient points of the scheme, and I think it is well to bring them before the Chamber once again.

Mr. D. HUNTER: It is no use crying over spilt milk.

Mr. BLAIR: It may be no use crying over spilt milk, but it is well to remember who spilt the milk. Sir William Lyne's scheme provided, first, for the taking over by the Commonwealth of the State debts; secondly, for paying the States £6,000,000; thirdly, for taking over old-age pensions, £2,000,000 per annum; and, fourthly, for a sinking fund. It is a pity that we have not something of that kind in Queensland for dealing with financial matters—something in the nature of a suspense account or a sinking fund—as it would give greater solidarity to our finance.

The TREASURER: They are very good in theory, but they do not work well in practice, as a rule.

Mr. BLAIR: I am sorry to hear that, because I thought it was a solid method of dealing with finance. Sir William Lyne's scheme provided for a sinking fund, which the Auditor-General of New South Wales stated would be worth about £2,000,000 per annum to the States of Australia. That was the scheme. The interest on the public debts and old-age pensions totals roughly £9,000,000. And the State Premiers, in one of those wretched conferences, refused that offer, and to-day they are accepting a scheme which is to give £1 5s. per capita to the States, and they are pursuing the Commonwealth Labour party, after having accepted from the Commonwealth £1 5s. per head, which the Labour party recommended.

The TREASURER: Which the Labour party are now opposing.

Mr. BLAIR: No; as I take it the Labour party are opposing that agreement because it seeks to fetter Commonwealth expenditure.

The TREASURER: Because it seeks to substitute in perpetuity a clause for the Braddon section.

Mr. BLAIR: Because it seeks to establish in perpetuity a provision in the place of the Braddon section, which takes the matter out of the hands of Parliament.

The TREASURER: That is the most essential feature.

Mr. BLAIR: That is the reason why they are opposing the agreement, as I understand the matter. Sir William Lyne offered that splendid scheme.

The TREASURER: He very soon withdrew it.

Mr. BLAIR: I know, as a matter of fact, that it was refused with scorn. Sir William Lyne was called a Rob Roy financier, and all that kind of thing, and it was said that he was endeavouring to rob the States. I believe that that offer will stand out in future history as the most liberal solution of the Commonwealth and States financial problem that has ever been put on paper. Sooner or later it would have worked out that the Commonwealth and States finances would have been separated, and until that happens this so-called magnificent agreement will be unsatisfactory. The present agreement purports to give security in this way—that it is in perpetuity. My opinion of section 87 of the Commonwealth Constitution is that no agreement of that kind will bring about perpetuity.

The TREASURER: It will give as much permanency as you can possibly get.

Mr. BLAIR: As much permanency as you can possibly hope to get. If that is the opinion of the hon. gentleman, I agree with him. That means permanency so long as the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth is in favour of it.

The TREASURER: No, the people.

Mr. BLAIR: The moment the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth is against that arrangement, he will have power under that section, which is not taken out of the Constitution, to make an alteration by passing a Bill through the Federal Parliament. The words in the section to which I refer are "until Parliament otherwise provides," and an alteration made by a sort of referendum to the people will not, in my opinion, take away the power of the Commonwealth Parliament to alter that agreement in a year or two, if it so suits them.

The TREASURER: It is not until Parliament provides, but until the people provide.

Mr. Blair.]

Mr. BLAIR: The Commonwealth Government have made an agreement with the Premiers of the States, and they are going to get that agreement sanctioned by a sort of referendum.

The TREASURER: That is to substitute the provision embodying this agreement in the Constitution in place of the Braddon section—section 87.

Mr. BLAIR: Even if that is done, the Federal Parliament will still have power to substitute another provision. The Federal Parliament is sovereign in its own jurisdiction, and can substitute any other provision they please.

The TREASURER: Not without a referendum.

Mr. BLAIR: I am of opinion that there will still be power, in spite of the so-called permanence of this agreement, the moment the Prime Minister is so minded to alter the arrangement, and you will then be back *in statu quo*.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Then what is all the fight in the South about?

Mr. BLAIR: I take it that the fight in the South is whether the Parliament of the Commonwealth will agree to sanction an agreement which is fettering Commonwealth [8.30 p.m.] transactions—an agreement under which the Federal Parliament will let go out of its own hands the power of securing absolute freedom in its own transactions. Although that agreement is to be referred to the people, there is no perpetuity about it. It will be, as the Treasurer himself admits, only useful and only lasting as far as circumstances suit.

The TREASURER: As long as the people wish—the people have the last say.

Mr. BLAIR: Instead of being a perpetuity clause, the people having the last say will reduce this to a mere pretence, and subject it to the fluctuations of popular feeling. The Auditor-General in his report indicates that next year there will be a loss of something like £160,000 on Commonwealth collections. That is one of the almost direct results of this financial agreement, which has been the outcome of the accumulated financial skill of the Premiers and Treasurers of the States—that £160,000 is going to be lost through Commonwealth collections.

The TREASURER: If we had not made that agreement we might have lost the lot.

Mr. HARDACRE: They are paying the old-age pensions.

Mr. BLAIR: Yes, they are taking over and making provision for the old-age pension. But there is to be a loss, as the Auditor-General says, of £160,000.

The TREASURER: More than that probably.

Mr. BLAIR: I am taking exactly what he says here. The interest bill will probably be £70,000 or £80,000 more, and, instead of making provision to meet this, it seems to me that the Government are carrying on simply a policy of reckless boom which will be followed by the inevitable result. There are only one or two other matters to which I wish to refer. First of all, hon. members know that the mining industry has more than once come to the rescue of Queensland. A year ago a promise was made by the Premier to place £50,000 on the Estimates. (Hear, hear!)

The TREASURER: No definite promise.

Mr. BLAIR: He made that promise to a deputation at which I sat with him as Minister for Mines. I took the trouble afterwards to consult the then Treasurer, and the then Treasurer, with the sanction of the Premier, allowed me to make provision for that amount. That amount was sanctioned, but was after-

wards cut down to something like £30,000—I am speaking from memory—and to-day, according to the Estimates, it seems to me that mining is going to be starved.

The TREASURER: The newspaper reports do not mention any amount.

Mr. BLAIR: I am speaking from my memory and my official knowledge of the matter.

The TREASURER: The reports refer to the increased amount, but they do not mention a definite statement.

Mr. BLAIR: I am making a definite statement. Whatever the reports were, that amount was promised, and the promise was not kept. And to-day mining members will bear me out when I say there is absolutely no proportionate provision made for assisting the mining industry of Queensland. As an ex-Secretary for Mines, I am sorry to see that an important industry like this has evidently not been thought worth while considering. We know in many places the industry is at a low ebb. I notice that the Treasurer says the experience of the policy of lending money for deep sinking has been such as not to induce a repetition. I am aware that much of that money has never been repaid.

The TREASURER: £51,000 loaned and only £1,500 repaid.

Mr. BLAIR: Surely the Treasurer does not judge it by the amount returned? Discoveries have been made, land has been developed, fresh minerals have been discovered, and the indirect result to the State has been, I take it, much more than that amount. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. CORSER: Not as productive as railway expansion.

Mr. BLAIR: Possibly in itself it is not as productive as railway expansion, but we must remember that mining, time and again, when a drought has affected Queensland, has come to the rescue, and brought in a revenue which enabled us to carry on, when otherwise we would have been insolvent. Although the building of railways might be a safer investment—I do not express any opinion one way or another on that matter at present—still I think it is the duty of the Government to make some provision for mining expansion, and in this Statement I do not see any adequate provision made for assisting that industry. I join with other hon. members in rejoicing that our flocks and herds have increased. It is an exceedingly gratifying thing to find that last year was one of great prosperity in the pastoral industry. Cattle increased from 3,892,232 to 4,321,600; horses from 488,486 to 519,969; and sheep have increased from 16,738,047 to 18,348,851; and I hope that the anticipation of the Treasurer, that this year they will equal the greatest we have ever had in Queensland, will be realised. During the time I went through Queensland I found that the pastoralists, like everybody else, had to suffer through the drought, from pestilences and things of that kind. They have had their bad days, and I, for one, do not grudge them their prosperity. I hope they will continue prosperous, because the more prosperity the people of Queensland have, the more we will have for the State. It strikes me that the Government might have done considerably more than the Estimates show for mining, agriculture, and for the poorly paid public servants. It is another gratifying thing, and I think it is worth while emphasising, that the number of taxpayers having accounts at the Government Savings Bank, and the amounts have increased. It is very satisfactory to learn that the Government

[Mr. Blair.

have opened branches at the different railways under construction. I think if that method of procedure is followed, it will enable those who are earning money on the line to save a larger proportion of their earnings. I notice that the return of wheat has been greater than was anticipated, and I venture to say, subject to the opinion of hon. members more experienced in that matter, that agriculture might receive more assistance if the present Agricultural Bank Act was made a living thing instead of the ghastly farce it is. The people I have sympathy with are the people who have to administer that Act, for the simple reason that it is so unworkable, so restricted in its operations, that it is almost impossible to make a good thing out of it, and it would be much better if the Government took the matter boldly and firmly in hand and wiped it out altogether, and passed some decent measure that would give the people on the land some generous assistance. (Hear, hear!) Some time ago I had a conversation with dairymen in regard to the Agricultural Department, and the strongest condemnation was voiced of that department, particularly on the tick question. I understand a deputation is shortly to wait on the Minister, and I hope the views of the members of that deputation will commend themselves to him. I had an opportunity of hearing the matter discussed by men who knew what they were talking about, and appreciated to the full extent the weight of their utterances, and they assured me that instead of that department being of any assistance to them it was practically a clog on the wheels of their progress. There are other matters in the Agricultural Department that want looking into, and I hope the Minister in charge will see that the views of men thoroughly experienced and conversant with the matters on which they are speaking will secure the attention they deserve. There is another very important matter dealt with in this Statement, and that is the conservation of water and irrigation. I am glad to see that the Government have taken the opportunity of making use of the visit of Dr. Elwood Mead.

The TREASURER: He was brought up specially.

Mr. BLAIR: I am very pleased he was brought up specially, because we cannot possibly spend too much money on matters of that kind. I would like to see wells provided on stock routes, and bores sunk testing for water, so that if a drought ever besets us again provision will be made for the people who will have to transfer large numbers of stock from one part of the State to another. Then also in connection with linking up our trunk lines. I would also like to see this—and I throw it out as a suggestion—I would like to see bores made use of in testing for minerals. (Hear, hear!) In many districts in the North which I had the pleasure of going through there seems to be a vast expanse of mineral fields, which are not tested, and it seems to me that if the system of boring—as well as testing for water—were adopted in testing for minerals, much good would result to the State. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. HARDACRE: There are immense coal seams there.

Mr. BLAIR: As the hon. member for Leichhardt reminds me, there are immense coal seams there. There are immense coal seams not tested in my district yet—at Bundamba and round there—and I would be very glad if some such system of testing for minerals and coal were adopted. I do not think it could possibly result in anything but good to the State. I have only

one or two words to say in regard to immigration. I am one of those who are of opinion that a good deal too much has been paid for the immigration we have got. I am not against immigration at all; but I believe that the class coming to Queensland—or a majority of them—are not the class suitable for settlement here. I notice by the Treasurer's Statement that it is said they are absorbed. That is not my experience. There are men coming out here as immigrants who not only are not absorbed, but go to swell the labour market, and increase the difficulty of the solution of the unemployed problem. I would like the Treasurer, or those associated with him, to look carefully into this, and ascertain whether these criticisms are not well founded. There are men here that I know personally who are unable to get work, and there are men coming out who, so far from being absorbed, are simply swelling the unemployed.

Mr. GRANT: The railway contractors in New South Wales advertised for 1,000 men just now.

Mr. BLAIR: That gives an explanation of what was said the other night, because the railway contractor down South is offering better terms, and when we made an endeavour the other day to get 8s. a day for the navy, it was unfortunately defeated. As long as wages of that kind are paid, there will be a dearth of labour on the lines. The hon. member knows as well as I do that there are better wages given, and better terms of employment given by the contractors of New South Wales than by the contractors on our own lines. He knows that, he appreciates it, he voted for it last time. That is my answer to the hon. member's remark. With regard to the Estimates, I am sorry to say that there is a tendency to increase the emoluments of the highly paid officials to the sacrifice of the lower paid officials.

Mr. KROGH: I am with you there.

Mr. BLAIR: Then we shall succeed. (Laughter.)

The TREASURER: There have been increases all round.

Mr. BLAIR: The Premier the other night—I had not the opportunity of hearing this wisdom, but I read some of it, and the Treasurer referred me to the newspaper reports and other matter—said that for a person to get up here, and argue that the less highly paid servants were not getting sufficient was a kind of cheap electioneering claptrap. That was the answer he gave to the deputy leader of the Opposition. I do not think that is fair criticism; I do not think it is just or right. The less highly paid servant is entitled to our aid to see that he gets a living wage, and it is incumbent on us to stand up in our places and do everything that we possibly can to see that the large majority of the public service get a living wage, before we vote large amounts to highly paid officials all round.

Mr. KROGH: Hear, hear! I am with you in every instance.

Mr. BLAIR: I take it that this is an argument which will appeal to all, that it is not fair to obtrude the charge of seeking to gain popularity by charging those who are trying to do their duty with endeavouring to catch votes.

The TREASURER: Have you seen the increases on the Estimates?

Mr. BLAIR: No. I understand that the word went round to the civil service that the Estimates were to be cut down—the Treasurer will contradict me in both statements if I am wrong—

The TREASURER: As a matter of fact, they were put up.

Mr. Blair.]

Mr. BLAIR: Did the word go round that they were to be cut down?

The TREASURER: At first.

Mr. BLAIR: At first. As a matter of fact, are they not largely cut down?

The TREASURER: No, they are all put up—considerably over what the original Estimates were.

Mr. BLAIR: I am very glad to hear that, but I am very dubious. If they are put up, then I still say there are a large number in the service—I am sure the hon. gentleman agrees with me—who are not receiving a living wage, and I am perfectly certain, from what I know of him, that he would personally rather help those than he would spend large sums of money in increasing the emoluments of those who are already getting a very fine living out of the State. I am not saying one word against giving increases where they are deserved, even where the man who deserves that increase is getting a good emolument at present, but I do say there are instances in the Estimates which could be well left at the salaries at which they stood last year, and the amounts saved there disbursed among the less highly paid members. I have nothing further to say. I have endeavoured to compress my remarks into as short a space as I could. I merely say that the criticism I have voiced has not been in any partisan spirit, but has only been uttered because I felt it was my duty to utter it. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*): The brief remarks which I have to make will be centred around the agricultural industry, representing, as I do, a farming constituency. While the Financial Statement presented to the House reads rather optimistically, I find in it causes for serious regret. The main cause for regret is the absence of any provision for the increase or extension of our splendid system of central mills, which has worked so successfully since its initiation, and which has conducted so much to the settlement of our coastal lands, especially in the North.

The TREASURER: They are only working to the half of their capacity. I have got the figures to-day.

Mr. LENNON: That is an exaggeration.

Mr. FERRICKS: I know of instances in the North where the mills cannot cope with the cane. The Treasurer gives agriculture a very prominent place, and says that sugar is the main feature of the agricultural industry as a revenue-producing factor. Of course, I appreciate that prominence, but when you come to examine the Statement there is only a theoretical prominence, there is nothing in the shape of encouragement. I believe there is some little uncertainty in the minds of the members of the Cabinet, or the Chief Secretary, regarding the future of the sugar industry, and I think that accounts somewhat for its absence. I will endeavour to show you that there is not an atom of uncertainty regarding the future of this great industry, either from a State or a Federal point of view.

The TREASURER: You must be very confident then.

Mr. FERRICKS: The main feature of this matter, which has been brought before the people of Australia of late years by a few calamity-howlers—if I may so term them—who, since they have been deprived of their stock-in-trade bogey—the shortage of labour bogey—have looked round for another bogey, and have grasped upon the question of over-supply. Now, speaking from memory, the year 1907 was the nearest approach of pro-

duction to consumption, when the difference, I understand, was about 30,000 tons of sugar, equal in round numbers to about 300,000 tons of sugar-cane. When that stage was attained, we were given to understand by the men that I have just referred to that, with the increased area going under cane, it would be only a matter of a few years when the production of sugar in Australia would overtake consumption; that the Australian white-grown sugar then would not be able to compete with that grown by coloured labour in Java and elsewhere, but would be confined to Australian markets; and that with the over-supply there would be a fall in the price of sugar, and a decrease in the price of cane. That serious state of affairs, however, has not been brought any closer to a consummation, but has been further removed. Last year the discrepancy between production and consumption was about 50,000 tons, and there is every indication that the falling off this year will be even greater. The deputy leader of the Opposition made the estimate that it would be 37,000 tons, and I am prepared to accept that as correct. I realise that this year has been abnormally unfavourable; and we learn from the annual report of the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly that that gigantic concern last year handled 250,000 tons of sugar for the first time in the history of the industry in Australia. That comprises the consumption of sugar in New Zealand, which may be set down at 45,000 tons, leaving about 205,000 tons as having been consumed in the Commonwealth. So far from being realised is this fear of over-production that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's report points out the consumption of sugar in Australia was double last year what it was fourteen years ago. On the same basis of increase, the consumption fourteen years hence will be 410,000 tons.

Mr. CORSER: No. You won't double the population in that time.

Mr. FERRICKS: I will admit that that is too sanguine a view to take; but I will put the increase at 50 per cent., and that will allow for the consumption of about 305,000 tons fourteen years hence. In the North there has been a great expansion of cane-growing during recent years, and that will be increased if the Government will erect more central mills; but to balance that increase, I would remind hon. members that on the Northern Rivers of New South Wales a lot of sugar-farmers are going out of the cane business because dairying and other avenues offer better inducements. In the face of these facts, whatever trouble the sugar-farmer may have, the question of over-production is not one of them, or likely to be one of them. There is another aspect of the question which I think has had some bearing on the Cabinet's resolve to mark time in this matter.

The TREASURER: The Proserpine mill is not running up to its capacity.

Mr. FERRICKS: I am speaking of districts where mills are required. I think it is the Federal control that influences them in marketing time. Last year, when a deputation of Johnstone River farmers waited on the Chief Secretary and asked him to establish a central mill on the guarantee of their lands, his reply was that, the sugar industry being in the hands of the Federal Government, the State Government did not think an investment of £50,000 or £60,000 for the erection of a central mill on the Johnstone River was warranted.

The TREASURER: Apart from that, the proposition was not sound.

[*Mr. Blair.*]

Mr. FERRICKS: And by interjection yesterday the Premier said the sugar industry of Australia was under Federal control. To what extent is it under Federal control? To the extent only that it is the Federal Government that has the power to increase or maintain or decrease or wipe out altogether the protective tariff of £6 per ton now charged on black-grown sugar coming into Australia.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: If that was wiped out the industry would be wiped out.

Mr. FERRICKS: The Excise and the bounty—which is really a rebate of Excise—have no application to the question of the permanency of the industry. These two conditions were imposed as a protection to the white grower against the black grower: and if both were wiped off to-morrow it would not matter a scrap. Cane would be worth 2s. a ton more if both Excise and bounty were removed, but whether that 2s. would go to the farmer is another matter, because it would first have to pass through the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly. There is already a movement against the re-enactment of the Excise and bounty provisions after 1913, when they expire automatically. The old school of black labourites are protesting against the reinstatement of those arrangements, because they think they see the opportunity of indulging unrestrictedly in their old love, black labour: but the chance they have in that respect can be estimated by the fact that there is not a public man in Queensland game to get up and advocate a return to coloured labour. To return to the tariff phase of the question, is it thought that there will be found a Government in Australia that will throw open the door to an unlimited influx of aliens? The declared policy of Australia is white: and if any Government did that, the howl that would come from the people would be sufficient to rend them in a thousand pieces politically. And where is the difference between allowing the free influx of aliens and allowing an influx into Australia of commodities produced by alien labour? In my opinion there is no difference, and no Federal Government would be so foolish or inconsiderate or unpatriotic or so looking for disaster as to throw open the doors of Australia to an unlimited landing of alien-grown sugar to compete with sugar grown in Australia under white labour conditions. The people of Australia have declared in very emphatic language that the sugar industry is to be a white industry. They have signified their intention of maintaining

[9 p.m.] that in a practical way by paying an increased price for their sugar. Hundreds and thousands of Southerners as well as of Northerners are employed in various phases of that industry, and I contend that any fears on the score of the sugar tariff of £6 per ton being removed are groundless. In addition to the declared policy of Australia being in favour of a white industry, the declared policy of the Commonwealth is towards protection, and I think the tendency is rather that that £6 per ton will be increased to £8 per ton, and that a rise in that direction would receive a hearty endorsement at the hands of the people of Australia. That constitutes the Federal control of the sugar industry, and it is a control that need not cause any misgivings in the minds of the Cabinet as to the future of the industry. The Financial Statement refers to the sugar industry as the primary revenue producer of the great agricultural industry, yet we find that

there is a tendency to expend some of the surplus—small though it be—in the erection of additional meatworks.

The TREASURER: That is not a Government undertaking at all. That is a private enterprise.

Mr. FERRICKS: The Financial Statement says—

The rapid increase of our flocks and herds has led to the consideration of ways of utilising the surplus, and it is suggested that further meatworks should be erected to cope with the situation.

The TREASURER: That refers to the surplus stock, and to private enterprise, not to a Government undertaking.

Mr. FERRICKS: I thought it was the intention of the Government to build these works. I am pleased to learn that that is not the case, because we all know that there is no great demand for additional meatworks, but that the existing works have difficulty in obtaining a sufficiency of cattle to keep them going. I thought the Government were going in for building central meatworks, and that would be a rather bad preference to give over an extension of the central sugar mill system. My remarks on the sugar industry would not be complete without a passing reference to the question of labour in that industry. I do not believe there is a member in this Chamber who is in any way sceptical as to the success of white labour in the canefields. Of course in the early stages there was a little trouble, but that has passed away. So much so, that that political organisation—the Australian Sugar Producers' Association—and its official and political organ—the *Australian Sugar Journal*—have been converted to the principle of a white Australia in the canefields. Though they may have done it grudgingly, they have done it, and though there is nothing new about such conversion, the state of labour in the canefields has resolved itself into the old experience that, when men are treated as men, they reciprocate and act as men. Whilst these little difficulties did occur in the early stages, the cause of those troubles was that many of the prominent black-labour politicians of the day—many of them sitting on that side of the House at the present time—

Mr. WHITE: Where?

Mr. FERRICKS: Behind the present Government. Those black-labour members painted work in the canefields in such terrible colours that men hesitated to engage in the work. People in the Northern mining towns were told that the kanaka would have to be retained, or a substitute found for him.

Mr. J. M. HENTER: A coloured substitute.

Mr. FERRICKS: A coloured substitute. They were told that work in the canefields was not fit for white men, and that white men would not do the work. Only a few years ago I heard the senior member for Townsville give expression to those sentiments before his constituents, and I think he will admit that there has been a great alteration since then. Many hon. members may have in their mind's eye the Goondi strike when I am speaking about the industrial soundness of the industry. The hon. member for Clermont, when speaking on this question the other night, made out that the Goondi strike was broken up by cane-cutters and millworkers who had their own houses and ground. They looked at those houses and grounds, and decided to go to work and break up the strike. The hon. member had made that assertion on the authority of the

Mr. Ferricks.]

Australian Sugar Journal. I am not surprised at that journal having made the statement, because we recognise it is one of the greatest howlers against white labour of all the journalistic monstrosities that see the light around Brisbane. Nor am I surprised at the hon. member for Clermont quoting that journal as his authority on industrial unionism, because that publication has treated the non-member very liberally in the past. As a matter of fact, the statement made by the hon. member is not true. The Goondi strike was broken up by two boatloads of blacklegs who were taken up there from Sydney by the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly. Some of those men I saw when they were passing through, and they were a most dejected crew. They were eloquent testifiers to the oppressiveness of capitalism, and to the depths of degradation and poverty to which men are subject in the race for the honour of building up parasitical dividends for non-workers. Some of those men were bootless; others wore a coat and trousers, and an apology for a singlet. Others wore a coat, trousers, and boots, while each of them subjected his one shirt to a wash on the way up. I asked those men if they knew where they were going, and what they were going to do. They said "No"—they were engaged in Sydney to work in a sugar-mill at so much a week and tucker; and that was all they knew about the strike at Goondi. The hon. member for Clermont, when referring to the matter, did not say anything about those blacklegs. He did not say that that friend of unionism, Inspector Malone—a man who gained kudos by riding roughshod over the Western shearers in the early nineties—with his natural officiousness, was there at work, knowing that he had a capitalistic Government at his back. The hon. member did not say anything about Inspector Malone and thirty of his minions being present at Goondi, and that they saw that the blacklegs were protected. There is a further connection in this matter. Some hon. gentlemen opposite—I do not say they are in the Chamber now—but some hon. members who sit on the other side—held up their hands in unctious horror when they heard of the Goondi strike, and they felt glad that they had a Government in power which could bring Gatling guns to bear on the strikers if the worst came to the worst. Let me tell hon. members what the strike was about. It was about the abolition of what was called the "kit system." For the information of members of this House, I may endeavour to explain what that system is.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FERRICKS: I was endeavouring to show that the sugar industry was sound climatically, and that it was sound commercially, and I was going to point out that members of this House and the Cabinet have not got the right conception of the position in relation to the State and Federal Governments. I was endeavouring to point out that the only unsoundness in connection with the sugar industry was the industrial part, and that industrial unsoundness was in the power of the State Government to remove, by bringing the privately owned mills into such a state as would compel the employment of white labour only. (Hear, hear!) If that were done, it would be sound enough industrially. So far as I have gone into the matter of the Federal control of the sugar industry, there is nothing to cause the least fear from a State point of view. The question of land settlement is a matter that attaches most directly to the establishment of these central mills. There is no

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other institution, whether it is a central meat-works or central business of any kind, that has the same power and facilities for settlement on the land. The settlement that follows the establishment of these mills is just the kind of settlement that is required. Farmers who go on 100 and 160 acre blocks start cane-growing, and in a few years are fairly large suppliers. Mining and pastoral businesses are not nearly so consistent as that, and do not so regularly conduce to settlement. The Federal control of the sugar industry might provide a hedge for the Government of the day to dodge behind in regard to the erection of central sugar mills, but the Government have a duty to perform in regard to settling our coastal lands, and there is no more effective way of doing that duty than by the erection of central mills. When the deputy leader of this party was speaking last night, the Secretary for Public Lands asked him if the mills in his district were working at their full capacity, and the Treasurer to-night made a similar interjection when referring to central mills. In the district which I now specially refer to, the mills cannot accommodate the cane supplied to them. The cane crops of the Lower Burdekin are the best in Queensland in weight, density, and uniformity, and the admission made by the deputy leader of the Opposition yesterday that there were pests in his district in the shape of beetles and grubs does not apply to that district, as we have nothing of that sort. We have the highest crops and unlimited accommodation for the settler. But there can be no further settlement, and no expansion in cane-growing, until we have more crushing power. The privately owned mills cannot cope with the cane supply, and unless the Government agree or see to the erection of some central mills they are actually retarding the sugar industry. I have referred to the sugar industry, because I do not think there is a sufficient conception taken of it by hon. members. If the Chief Secretary will look more into his contention about the sugar industry passing into Federal control, he will see that there is only one thing that makes him say that, and that is the protective duty of £6 per ton. There is no possibility, after the declared voice of Australia, of the removal of that £6 per ton protection on sugar.

The TREASURER: There is no certainty of that.

Mr. FERRICKS: It is the declared voice of Australia. Australia has declared against reducing it.

Mr. COYNE: There is no certainty with the Cook-Deakin Government.

Mr. FERRICKS: The tendency, if anything, is to raise the tariff, and I think that that will be done. I do not think that Deakin, Cook, and company even would attempt to lower it. I do not think they would be so foolish as to pull down that obstacle to the admission of foreign-grown sugar. If that protection is removed, it will only mean that there will be an influx into this country of alien-manufactured sugar. That is the only application that can be put to the question of the Federal control of the sugar industry. It is realised everywhere that the questions of excise and bounty have no application, and the question of labour has no application, and the only question is the tariff of Australia. But who is going to wipe this out to admit the free influx of alien-manufactured sugar here? I hope the Government will give further consideration to this matter of the erection of central sugar-mills. If it is considered on its merits, and on strictly business lines—for instance, if the settlement that will

accrue, and the revenue that will follow that settlement, will warrant the Government in advancing the money for such a purpose—if it is looked at in a broad-minded manner, there can be but one answer, and that will be "Yes." I trust, therefore, that it will not be too long before further consideration is given and something done in the direction I have advocated.

Question put.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER (*Maranoa*): I desire to tender the Treasurer my congratulations and also to tender Queensland my congratulations on coming out with a surplus this year. When I think that credit is due, then it is my duty to give that credit. At the same time I think that Queensland is to be congratulated more than the Treasurer, because, after all, it is the buoyant nature of our industries and the excellent seasons that we have enjoyed that are responsible for the result. That will be very clear if we cast our minds back to the estimate that was made last year. In last year's Budget we find that the Treasurer anticipated a surplus of £5,203, and he actually received £9,941. The strange part of the whole thing is that this £9,941 surplus is only secured by obtaining £170,539 more in revenue than he anticipated. Ministers are evidently not in close touch with the financial possibilities of the various departments when they are so far out in their estimate of revenue and expenditure. It is a very easy matter to spend money when you have got it. I am not saying that the money has not been wisely spent; I hope it has. But it is not a question of spending or of surpluses. It is a question of anticipating something approximate to what your surplus is going to be.

The PREMIER: The surplus was a very near approximation to the estimate.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: How far out would your estimate have been if you had not received that increased revenue from the Commonwealth and the Railways?

The TREASURER: We knew from month to month what we were likely to get, and spent accordingly.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I am not talking about what you expected from month to month, but about your anticipations for the year.

The PREMIER: You told us last year that our estimate was far too high.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: If the hon. gentleman says that some member stated last year that the estimate of the Government was too high, he is probably correct, because I heard somebody in the House make that remark, but if the hon. gentleman says I made that statement he misrepresents me. We are told by the Treasurer that sound finance is the largest factor of good government. Sound finance presupposes that the man who is dealing with finance knows something about what he is doing, and when a Treasurer gives an estimate such as the hon. gentleman gave last year, it cannot be termed sound finance, seeing that though he received a windfall of £170,000 in the shape of revenue, his estimated expenditure was exceeded by £165,000. Such finance as that cannot be said to be an evidence of good government; it is rather an indication to the contrary. We are also told that, although extra revenue has been received, it has been spent. I rather think that the Treasurer would have been in an awkward fix in regard to that extra expenditure, which was not voluntary, but was forced by the necessities of the departments, if he had not

got those windfalls in revenue from the Commonwealth and the railways. I do not say that the money has been spent where it was not needed, because if I did so I should be charging the Treasurer and the Government with maladministration. But I do say that the expenditure of £165,000 over and above the estimate would probably have taken place, whether the Government had received those increases in revenue or not. I believe that a large amount of money was spent on railways, and it is probable that the Commissioner undertook to do a good deal of the work on which that money was expended before the Treasurer knew anything about it, and before he knew he was going to get his increased revenue; and that shows that there was an uncertainty in the estimate for last year. That leads one to question whether the estimate for this year will not be just as far out as that for last year, if there is not a corresponding windfall from the Commonwealth and the Railway Department.

The PREMIER: You might get rather extravagant if you knew everything.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: The Government have lived up to their reputation for extravagance in this instance, because as soon as they discovered that they were going to have this extra money they began spending it. Referring to the revenue for 1908-9, the Treasurer, in his Budget Speech, says the marked increase in the railway earnings is one of the most satisfactory features of the revenue. In enlarging upon that statement last night, the Premier said that railway building and settlement should go together. I agree with the hon. gentleman in that statement. Of course, the central idea was that railway building would lead to greater development in the revenue from our railways and from land. I believe that if railway building is properly carried out—that is if feeders are added to our trunk lines—the revenue from railways will be considerably increased. But while telling us that, the hon. gentleman also told us that there must be due economy in expenditure, otherwise fresh taxes would have to be imposed during next year. I am not one of those who believe that our railways should be used for the purposes of revenue, but I find that a large number of our trunk lines are used for revenue purposes.

The PREMIER: You should consider them as a whole.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I am going to take them as a whole, and I am going to endeavour to dissect them also, and show what genuineness there is in the profession of the Government that our railways are simply run for the transmission of products from the great centres to ports or markets. I want to show the Premier that while he is talking about not imposing fresh taxation, there is increased taxation, in some instances, which the people are not conscious of, and that that extra taxation is imposed on those who are least able to bear it, while those who should pay a full share of it are allowed to escape. For that purpose I have taken the earnings of the main trunk lines—the Southern, Central and Northern Railways—and suburban lines. It all depends on the point of view from which you look at it. Let me ask the attention of the Premier a short time to the figures which I am about to quote. I find that amongst the suburban lines—that is the Brisbane lines, represented by a number of members in this Chamber—the South Brisbane to Southport line last year earned 18s. 4d. per cent.

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The PREMIER: You must remember that that line was also a non-paying line at one time.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I am proving that it is still a non-paying line. I am only dealing with last year's figures—I am not [9.30 p.m.] going into ancient history. The Bethania to Beaudesert line earned £115s. 7d. per cent.; Ernest Junction to Tweed Heads line, 14s. 9d. per cent.; the South Brisbane to Manly line, £115s. 10d. per cent.; and the Brisbane to Sandgate line earned £2 5s. 1d. per cent. The Manly to Cleveland line did not pay interest on the capital invested, and the line from Mayne to Erogera was the same.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is a guaranteed line.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: The Pinkenba line is also a losing line. Brisbane and suburbs, with a population of something over 25 per cent. of the entire population of Queensland, is being served by these railways, and that is how they are being taxed for the services rendered. Let us see how the people who go away to the West, and to the North, and in the Central districts, who do pioneering work and open up the country—let us see how they are paying for services rendered. The Gowrie to Cunnamulla line earned £4 6s. 9d. per cent.; the Gowrie to Brisbane line earned £6 0s. 11d. per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The class of traffic has a great deal to do with that.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I will come to the traffic presently. The Charters Towers to Hughenden line earned £5 19s. 8d. per cent., and the Archer Park to Longreach line earned £4 6s. 5d. per cent. This, to my mind, is not acting up to the principles that have been set forth as governing the Government in their idea as to how railways should be run. If the idea is that the produce of the State is to be carried at the lowest possible rate to ports, then I say these rates are abnormally high, and the Western producers are making up the losses on these suburban lines that these people enjoy—as I suppose your constituency enjoys very nice trips from Laidley to Brisbane—they enjoy all these excursions on holidays with cheap fares, and free trips down the Bay. While you are serving the various watering places around the city, the people outside, who have to do all the hard work of opening up the country, and have to live under the greatest difficulties and hardships, are being penalised for it.

Mr. MULCAHY: They pay for it.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: That sort of thing is retarding settlement and the production that should take place in the interior. The suburban lines, that are not paying interest on cost of construction, are being kept up by the high freights that are paid by the Western producers. It is a peculiar thing that during the last general election a great cry went out about the land tax the Labour party would impose if they were returned to power, and it was rather amusing to notice the great interest that was taken in this matter by the metropolitan Press. They pointed out to the farmer and the small allotment holder and the householder that they would be driven off the land, yet I have not seen a single line written to tell the men out on these farms on the Downs and in the West that they are being overcharged in the railway freights they pay. They are not warned about that, because, like the oxen, so long as they will bear the burden, and say nothing about it, it is all right. The only time they are asked

to squeal is in the event of a land tax being brought about. Their concern was not about the man who owned a small farm—they were concerned about what they would have to pay under a land tax themselves in the city and suburbs. The Government and the Press howl forth on these lines, but their indifference can only be shown by their utter disregard as to the taxes that are being inflicted on the people outside Brisbane. In theory, the Premier says that he believes in cheap freights. If he does, and accepts what he said on this point—that he believed the right thing was that not more than the interest on the cost of construction should be charged on railways—then he should immediately set about reducing the freights on the Western, Central, and Northern lines that are paying these large returns. The central idea is that these lines are the means of bringing the interior into as close proximity to the metropolis as possible—placing a market within reach of the producer who has the courage to go out and endeavour to develop our resources. And one of the chief objects we have in our minds when we say we do not believe in syndicate railways is that syndicate railways might have high freights, and take out of the control of the Government the right to give to the people this cheap transit to our ports. If the Government are going to penalise the people in this way by imposing high rates of freight, then the railways might as well belong to syndicates, because the Government are syndicating these lines. They are giving special concessions to certain people of the State, while they are making the outside people pay these high rates. I hold that the long distance freights should be reduced to the level of those being charged in New South Wales. Last night the senior member for Ipswich, Mr. Maughan, read out some of the railway freights from Knibbs, and was told he was wrong. I believe, as far as cream charges were concerned, he was wrong; but had he referred to the long distance freights charged on the New South Wales lines, and compared them with the freights charged on our railways—that is, second and third class goods—he would have been able to show this Chamber that the Queensland Government are charging their settlers on third-class goods as high as 60 per cent. more than is charged on the same goods in New South Wales. This does not harmonise with the profession of the Government that they are arranging for settlement in the interior. When we hear members get up and almost in a state of hysterics declare that the country is about to become insolvent through prickly pear, and rush into panic legislation, advocating close settlement as the one means of combating this pest, one is surprised that they do not consider that it would be better to give men some inducement to take this land up, instead of penalising them when they go there with these high freights. The Chief Secretary said last night that the party on this side of the House was not in favour of borrowing, but you have only to cast your mind back a few months ago, when we assisted the Government in passing a £3,000,000 loan. We are told we are not in favour of railway construction, but that very money was voted because we had already passed the plans and estimates of a number of railways that we believed were needed in Queensland. My desire is to see the Government build more lines than we have. We are behind in our railway building; we are trying to get up to settlement, and, instead of lagging behind, as we have been doing, the Government should get ahead of settlement,

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and build lines out to Crown lands suitable for agriculture, dairying, and pasture. All that the settlers require is to be placed within reach of the main trunk line, and if that is done there is a big future for Queensland. The Treasurer, in his Budget, refers to the pastoral and agricultural industry, and, to my mind, they come closely together, as far as the treatment they should receive from the Government is concerned. Some suggestion has been made that extra meatworks are required in Queensland, and I believe that urgent attention should be given to this matter by the Government. We find the value of stock is depreciating to an alarming degree, and unless they can be dealt with in some way, and sent out of the country, the large increase which has taken place in our herds and flocks is going to injure that industry very much.

The TREASURER: They are floating a big company in Sydney to operate in Queensland.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I would like to see the Government take it up, because we find the disposition on the part of those operating these large concerns is to form rings and fix the price of stock, and in that way the producer is robbed of the full value of his product. I would like to see the Government of Queensland take the same stand as the South Australian Government in this matter, and receive not only stock from the squatter, but also from the small selector. As I have said before, a selector 300, 400, or 500 miles from Adelaide can consign his truck of lambs to the Government, and they are treated, frozen, shipped home, and sold; advances are made against them, and the net proceeds, with the account sales, are sent later on. If we are to be of any assistance to the pastoralist we will have to take him out of the hands of the companies who are treating this stock, and give him the full value of his production. The same thing works out in our agricultural industry. A pious hope is expressed by the Treasurer, which I am afraid will not be realised. He says—

The possibilities of wheat production are so great in Queensland that it is hoped we shall, in course of time, become self-supporting in this regard, and be in a position to discontinue the importation of this cereal.

It will be rather startling to hon. members that, during the last year, we imported from the South £320,829 worth of cereals. Now, there is not one ounce of that but what we might have grown ourselves; indeed, we might have exported four or five times that amount, had we been paying sufficient attention to that particular industry. I have heard it said that there is no monopoly of land on the Downs, and that land is not too dear there. My opinion is that the concentration of people on the Downs is going to bring up lands to such an extent that it is only by using the land for intense cultivation that they can make it pay; and they are not going to make wheatgrowing pay on the Downs at the price the lands are. There is no need for wheatgrowing there, because the lands are too valuable. I want opportunity to be given to people to get out further where lands are more easily cultivated, and capable of producing a better quality of wheat than can be grown on the Downs, and there are hundreds of thousands of acres there waiting for the settler to come along. But there, again, we have the trouble facing us, that even to-day the farmer who has a crop of wheat is at the mercy of men who are prepared to rob him of the full wealth of his production. I say they rob him when they take to themselves something that

should go to him, and if you deprive a man of his rights, what other name can you give it. There are only two buyers of wheat in Queensland to-day, and they fix their own price for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Is not that incorrect?

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Two buyers in Brisbane. Of course, I do not regard Warwick as entering into competition at all.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Maryborough.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Maryborough is the same buyer—the mill belongs to the same party. There is another in Toowoomba. Two in Toowoomba belong to the same people. As a matter of fact, outside of Warwick and the Roma mill, there are none in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did you say Brisbane?

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I meant Queensland. As a matter of fact, we begin to look on Brisbane as Queensland. This Parliament is practically run by representatives of Brisbane and suburbs. So Brisbane is Queensland, and in using the phrase I used it without thinking, because we have grown so accustomed to regard it from that standpoint. What I want the Government to understand is that, until they are prepared to assist the farmer in finding a market for his produce, he is going to be at the mercy, not only of millers but of syndicators outside of millers, who handle his produce. We had an instance of that the other day in Brisbane in a case decided in the courts. We have rings operating in our produce markets, in our grain markets, and unless the Government are prepared to protect the farmer from that sort of thing we are not going to have the production we ought to have. In South Africa they have a system by which the State receives the whole of the produce from the selectors. They have their commercial agent in England. The grower brings the grain to the station-master, who consigns it to the Agricultural Department at the port, where it is shipped to the commercial agent. It is then sold in the best market, and the grower gets full value. Our farmers have real grievances in this matter. They are removed hundreds of miles from the market, and their produce is sold for whatever people like to pay. If the Government are in earnest in trying to bring about increased production, they will take some stand on the side of the man who is on the land. I was pleased to notice some reference in the Financial Statement to irrigation in connection with land settlement; but I would also like to see some steps taken to form water boards. At present, people are putting down bores and making dams without assistance, and there is no method about the manner in which it is being done. We have no idea of the elevation or altitude, and we have no idea of the area we are going to serve when we obtain water. I believe the Government should endeavour to take surveys, and establish water boards to distribute the water for the use of a large number of people. It is too costly for a man with a comparatively small area to put down a bore or make a tank that will serve him through a drought; but, if the Government were to take the matter in hand and establish a system by which men would be insured against dry spells, production would take an immense leap forward, and there would be a very fine return for the expenditure. I have no desire to delay the Committee: I only deal with questions affecting the great West, from which I come. I feel that there is too much centralisation in the cities. In Brisbane and

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the suburbs we have a large number of representatives who use an influence—I do not say they do it intentionally, but it is done unconsciously. Even the Premier is not conscious of those great differences in railway freights which make for the failure or the success of the development of the country. While we are crying out about the country gradually becoming infested with pear, we are doing nothing to see that our lands are settled. I believe that were rational and proper steps taken the pest might be finally overcome, but we are not going to overcome it if we penalise people who are prepared to take possession of these lands and clear them, and turn them into homes for themselves and their families, and increase the wealth of the country. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. THEODORE (*Woothakata*): I have carefully considered the Treasurer's Statement; and, while there are some things in it with which I dare say we may agree, there are far more things with which one must disagree. I think the screw is being put on in connection with some industries rather too much—in connection with the mining industry, for instance. One hon. gentleman said the mining industry was the Cinderella of Queensland industries. I quite agree with him; and I think that putting on the screw will have a disastrous effect. The Premier, in reply to a query from the deputy leader of the Opposition, said it was quite possible that the Government's attitude in regard to the mining industry was controlled by the fact that there are not many mining members supporting the Government. If that is so it is rather unfortunate; but it may be that miners have rather more common sense than other classes of the community. (Government laughter.)

Mr. WHITE: That is a very unfair remark.

Mr. THEODORE: Anyhow, it is my opinion. It is remarkable that for a number of years no mining member has been returned to support that side, and the Government seem to be getting home on mining districts by applying the screw when making up their finances. The Treasurer says on page 5 of the Statement—

In connection with the vote for deep sinking in mines it is interesting to note that the results of advances made by the State for that purpose have not been of such a nature as to induce an increase of expenditure in that direction.

And he goes on to say that since 1894 a sum of £54,436 has been advanced for that purpose. That is only £3,888 per annum, which is a very insignificant sum; and if he expects that is going to make any material difference in the returns of the mining industry he is making a mistake. Though the immediate benefits of the expenditure of public money in aid of prospecting and deep

[10 p.m.] sinking may not be seen, yet it may have developed the industry so that additional revenue is received through the railways. It may have had the effect of making larger markets for the products of other industries. It may have developed the industry in such a way that the Treasurer may not notice any remarkable difference in his finances; but, nevertheless, I contend that the expenditure may have been in the best interests of the State generally. I am rather surprised to see that the Treasurer intends to reduce the vote in aid of deep sinking from £15,000 to £10,000 this year. The money spent in that direction has been well spent. The benefit of it is not immediately seen, but, undoubtedly, there is always a benefit attaching to it. It may take years properly to develop something that has been discovered through an advance for deep sinking, and it

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is rather unfortunate that the Treasurer should have seen fit to reduce the vote. In regard to the £2,000 put on the Estimates for prospecting, it is such an insignificant sum that it will have no result whatever. If the Government adopted the policy that has been practised by the Government of Western Australia for years, it would be of considerable benefit to the industry, and, instead of seeing decreasing receipts from mining, in a few years we would see a considerable increase. The Government would do something to benefit the industry and the people of the State generally if they would establish State batteries, State smelters, and State assay offices. Not long ago, when the Premier was visiting North Queensland, a deputation waited on him and got his views on the question of establishing a State assay office. After listening to the deputation, the hon. gentleman expressed his sympathy with them, and said that it was a good object, and that, if nothing could be shown to him why it should not be done when he made inquiries in Brisbane, he would be pleased to give some assistance in that direction. Last year when the Estimates were passed a sum was voted for the establishment of an assay plant at Mareeba. It was never established, and this year the money has been taken off the Estimates. The deputation to which I have referred pointed out to the hon. gentleman that the industry would be materially benefited by the expenditure of this money. They pointed out that prospectors were not getting a fair deal from the assayers who assayed their ore, for the simple reason that the assayers were on almost all occasions the buyers of ore, and that miners could not be expected to get a reasonable assay from men who were buying their ore. The hon. gentleman considered the argument a good one, and promised to help the men. He has never done so, and that is one of the reasons why the mining industry is in such a bad way. If the Government gave some assistance to the industry, and expended a little more money judiciously in assisting the prospector and the miner by establishing State assay offices, and helping them to get a proper sale for their ore, it would be a material assistance to the whole industry. Not long ago the Government introduced a Bill to deal with mining on private land, and in that Bill they proposed to repeal the section of the Mining Act which provides for a royalty on gold. Now during the last six years the average amount received from that royalty has been about £5,000 per annum; and, by repealing the section of the Act it is equivalent to making a present to the companies who have been paying the royalty of a sum of £5,000 a year. That money might very well be retained by the Government, and devoted to the purpose of assisting prospecting and deep sinking. The Secretary for Mines, when speaking to a deputation on this subject, said that the royalty was an insignificant amount, and yet the Government of which the hon. gentleman is a member have cut down the prospecting vote by this very sum of £5,000. That is not fair to the industry. In connection with immigration, to which the Treasurer makes reference in his Statement, there are any amount of unemployed in Queensland. In the Northern mining districts for the last couple of years there have been large numbers of men continually unemployed. Men have been wandering about from place to place seeking employment—men eager to work, and men who are able to do ordinary classes of work—and they have been unable to get

it. Genuine hardship has prevailed among those men through their inability to obtain work, and yet the Government are in favour of a vigorous immigration policy. They tell us that this policy is good for Queensland, and they quote certain figures to prove their statements. Although there are railway construction works going on in North Queensland, and large mining works, yet there have been large numbers of men continually applying for employment during the last couple of years, and being refused. That is an evident manifestation of an abundance of labour in the State, and while we have all this surplus labour there is no reason for introducing immigrants to compete with the men now seeking employment. Large numbers of men have been leaving the Atherton-Evelyn district, where there is a railway now under construction, and have gone to New South Wales. Now, if the conditions of employment were good, there would be no reason for these men to go away. I also contend that when large numbers of men are eager to accept work at the Chillagoe smelters, and other similar works, where they have to work under unhealthy conditions, and for low wages, employment cannot be plentiful in other districts, and it is also very good evidence that there is no scarcity of labour in Queensland, and that the Government are using arguments in support of their immigration policy which are false. I notice from the Financial Statement that provision is made for building and endowing a University. At the same time I notice that there is not a very big increase placed on the Estimates for ordinary education.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It has been considerably increased.

Mr. THEODORE: Not very considerable—only a few thousand pounds. A little more might have been done for the primary education before going in for such a big endowment for University purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The Government have been most liberal in their expenditure on education.

Mr. THEODORE: I think the money could be better spent in making provision for the education of the children in the backblocks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They are being provided for.

Mr. THEODORE: Well, a school has been closed at Thornborough. They had a teacher there until a month ago, when the attendance dwindled down to an average of seven, and the teacher was removed because the number fell below the average number provided for in the regulations. Now, these children will have to go 23 or 25 miles if they want to get any education.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We cannot provide a teacher for every family.

Mr. THEODORE: I am quite aware of that, but I think some provision might be made for these seven children if we can afford to endow the University to this extent. If you go to the Education Department and ask them to make provision for the education in the backblocks, they will tell you that they have not any money available for the purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Have you been there?

Mr. THEODORE: Yes, and that is what I was told.

Hon. R. PHILIP: The Government have been very liberal to your electorate. There are two schools in your electorate now that are not occupied.

Mr. THEODORE: That is so, but that proves nothing. That is because mining towns are so unstable. A mining township will spring up, and there might be fifty children attending the school, and in a few weeks there might not be any. It was when I went to the department to inquire about the removal of the teacher from Thornborough that they told me it was because the attendance fell below the number mentioned in the regulations. We are asked to make provision for £70,000 for the University and other buildings, but perhaps it might be a laudable object to endow a University when we have attended to the wants of the children in the backblocks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You said you were not altogether favourable to a University the other night.

Mr. THEODORE: I said I was not enthusiastic about it. It would only cost about £50 a year for a teacher for those seven children at Thornborough. With regard to the superannuation scheme submitted by the Government for the benefit of the public servants, I think the Bill has been founded on good principles, and, after perusing the tables, I consider it will be a good thing for the public servants. I can find no fault with this scheme whatever, and the Government are giving better terms than I could get from the Australian Mutual Provident Society.

The TREASURER: There is no provision for widows and children in the Australian Mutual Provident scheme.

Mr. THEODORE: Yes, that is so. I do not pose as an actuary altogether, but I know something of the Australian Mutual Provident business, and this is a better scheme. Some people think it would be a good thing for the Government to endow the fund, but it would not be altogether a fair thing to the outside workers, unless the Government also made provision for them. It would not be fair to favour one class, and a class fairly well provided for, seeing that they have permanent and fairly congenial employment. If anything is to be done in that matter, I would rather see the Government make provision for a superannuation scheme for miners. They have not permanent employment, and have no consideration shown them whatever except certain provisions in the case of accident, fatal and otherwise, and the old-age pension. To advocate a Government endowment for one class is not a good thing, but if the Government introduced a universal scheme of insurance it would be a good thing.

The TREASURER: Four and a-half per cent. is a very good endowment.

Mr. THEODORE: I think it is very good. If the public servants give it mature consideration, they will recognise the benefits of it. So long as the Government do not attempt to make it compulsory, it will be a very good thing. The miners get no consideration in the matter of superannuation from the Queensland Government, although they get the old-age pension from the Commonwealth. They do not get an endowment on their compensation fund in case of accident, and they indirectly have to provide contributions for compensation out of their wages. I see in the

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Queensland Mining Journal an article by Mr. A. L. Hodges on "Diseases Peculiar to Workers Underground." He says—

The miner has added to the danger of his getting hurt or killed by accident, a number of special diseases caused by his peculiar environment.

First among these is miners' consumption, or phthisis. It is contracted through breathing in an atmosphere impregnated with dust particles. It is of slightly different form from ordinary phthisis, or consumption, where the victim's lungs gradually consolidate, break off, and the pieces coughed up. Instead of this wasting away, the miners' variety consists in the different sacs being filled with dust, and thus sealed against their proper function. The lungs gradually change colour, and a fibre-like tissue, caused by dust inhalation, forms and spreads over the porous material. This causes difficult breathing, the patient coughing frequently, and taking in breath with a wheezing sound.

You will see that this gentleman gives a different reason for the cause of miner's disease to what the hon. member for Fassifern gave the other night. The hon. member said it was caused through smoking too many cigarettes.* This writer goes on—

The technical medical name for a disease contracted through the breathing of coal dust is known as anthracosis, a subhead of phthisis.

When metal dust causes the disease, it is known under the name of silicosis. Death is the almost immediate result of any form of this disease. On account of this, every precaution should be taken for its prevention.

And he also adds—

Another miner's disease is known as anæmia, or ankylostomiasis.

If the Government were alive to their duty to the miners and other workers, who are essentially the developers of our various industries, they would go into this matter thoroughly, and endeavour to assist the miners. It would not cost much to take precautionary measures in regard to miner's phthisis. If there is any proposal to endow a superannuation fund or a compensation fund for any particular class in the community, that class should be aged and worn-out miners. The Government have recognised the risks that are attached to the performance of police duties, and have endowed the police superannuation fund; and, as miners are exposed to considerable risks, I think they should receive some consideration. There are other diseases peculiar to miners besides phthisis, and no effort is made by the Government to introduce preventive measures, and insist upon their observance. With regard to superannuation, I think the Government should thoroughly consider the whole matter, and go in for a system of national insurance such as they have in Germany, where it is working satisfactorily. I notice that on page 10 of his Statement the Treasurer says—

From these figures it will be seen that the expenditure is still increasing, but these increases are the inevitable result of the general progress of the State and the expanding revenue, and will, I am sure, not be viewed by hon. members as excessive.

While the total figures cannot be viewed by me as very excessive, still I think that in some departments the increases are excessive. For instance, the schedules seem fairly large, and the Estimates for the Department of Public Works are fairly excessive. Of course, that department has to make provision for the building of the University and so on, but still the figures are somewhat large. Sufficient provision is not made, I think, for the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Mines. I should have been glad to have seen the Government make more adequate provision for the instruction of children in the backblocks, and for the development of mining. In the Home Secre-

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tary's Department there is a decrease of £109,650, which is accounted for by the transference of old-age pensions to the Federal Government. It is stated in the Budget Speech that this will relieve the State of a payment of about £150,000, so that that will be a saving.

The TREASURER: But under the financial agreement we have to pay £85,000 as our proportion of the £600,000 referred to therein.

Mr. THEODORE: Even then there will be a saving of £65,000, and I think the Government would have shown wisdom if they used that toward developing the mining industry. Does the hon. gentleman think that the mining industry is getting a fair deal? Does he think that £2,000 is a fair amount for prospecting, or that £10,000 is sufficient to assist deep sinking? The hon. gentleman must know that £10,000 will not go far in the matter of deep sinking. The expenditure in the past has been insignificant compared with what it might have been, so that that is no basis on which to make an estimate for what is required in this connection. I should like to see the Government spending money on mining in the way the Government of Western Australia are doing.

The TREASURER: They don't spend it in deep sinking.

Mr. THEODORE: No, they spend it in prospecting. But the assistance to deep sinking has not been altogether a failure, and if money was expended judiciously in this matter it would be a great benefit to the mining community and to the whole people indirectly. I should also like to see more money spent in aid of prospecting on the lines which are followed in Western Australia, where the Government assist miners in the development of their mines if the mines show a reasonable hope of developing into something good. The whole thing is controlled by experts, so that the Government always know what they are doing, and the system seems to work admirably. I notice in the concluding paragraph of the Statement the following words:—

I move that there be granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1909-10, the sum of £300 to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor.

I understand that that is a purely formal motion, but I wish to say that I think it is high time that Queensland should have one of her own citizens appointed as Governor. I know that this is not the first time that the matter has been mentioned in this Chamber, but I desire to recall the attention of hon. members to a paragraph in the despatch received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies by the Premier of South Australia, in October last year, in which it is pointed out that in the Dominion of Canada Lieutenant-Governors for the various provinces are appointed by the Governor-General in Council, and that the salaries of those Lieutenant-Governors are fixed by the Dominion Parliament. I think that plan might very well be adopted in Queensland. I see no reason why a citizen of this State should not aspire to the position of Governor. I know there is no obstacle in the way of appointing a citizen of Queensland to that position, but, as a matter of fact, no citizen of Australia has ever been appointed a Governor by the Imperial Government. Citizens have filled the office of Lieutenant-Governor, Deputy Governor, and Acting Governor, and they have demonstrated in those capacities

that they are well able to fill the office of Governor. I would also remind hon. members that paragraph 6 of the despatch [10.30 p.m.] from the Secretary of State for the Colonies says that, if the people of Australia desired to adopt the Canadian system, he had no doubt His Majesty would be disposed to allow it, and I think it is pretty well time the Parliament of Queensland signified very strongly that they are in favour of one of their citizens occupying this position. I do not see that there should be any position in the State to which a Queensland, or an Australian, citizen should not aspire, and every consideration should be given to such citizens to obtain those positions. (Hear, hear!)

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and leave was obtained to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at thirty-three minutes to 11 o'clock.
