

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 19 JUNE 1913

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The SPEAKER (Hon. W. D. Armstrong-*Lockyer*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

AMENDED PANEL OF ASSESSORS.

The SPEAKER reported that, owing to inadvertence, the panel of assessors under the Elections Tribunal Act, which he laid on the table of the House on Tuesday, was incomplete, and he now laid upon the table an amended panel of assessors, consisting of the following members:—James Allan, James Crawford, John Theophilus Gilday, John Huxham, James Lacombe, George Hugh Mackay, William McCormack, Henry Moreton Stevens, Edward Granville Theodore, Thomas Welsby, Robert Godfrey Wynn-Williams, Vernon Winstanley.

PAPERS.

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

Rules of Court under the Industrial Peace Act of 1912.

Regulations under the Industrial Peace Act of 1912.

Regulations under the Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding Acts, 1908 to 1912.

Additional Timber and Quarry Regulations under the provisions of the Land Act of 1910.

QUESTIONS.

WORKERS ON WALLAL-TOBERMORY RAILWAY.

Mr. COYNE (*Warrego*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“What is the average daily number of men engaged in the Wallal-Tobermory railway extension during the months of March, April, and May of this year?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. T. Paget, *Mackay*) replied—

“March, 154 men; April, 238 men; May, 236 men.”

UNEMPLOYED AT MACKAY.

Mr. COYNE asked the Premier—

“1. Has his attention been drawn to the Press reports of the distress that exists amongst the hundreds of unemployed at Mackay at the present time?

“2. If so, what action, if any, has he taken to relieve the said distress?”

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) replied—

“1. I have made personal inquiries into the matter.

“2. I have given the necessary instructions to the local superintendent of labour.”

PHYLLOXERA IN QUEENSLAND.

Mr. HUNTER (*Maranoa*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“What action, if any, is being taken by his department to eradicate vineyards affected by phylloxera in Queensland?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. White, *Musgrave*) replied—

“No steps have yet been taken to enforce eradication of the affected vineyards; and this has been done upon the advice of Mr. F. de Castella, the viticulturist, of the Department of Agriculture, Victoria, who inspected the affected district, and did not recommend compulsory eradication. Further, the district has been quarantined, the conditions of which will be found in the ‘Government Gazette’ of the 14th January, 1911. A fumigating chamber has been established in the district, and no fruit from that district is allowed in the market unless accompanied by a certificate of fumigation.”

At a later stage,

Mr. HUNTER asked the Secretary for Agriculture, without notice—

“Will he lay on the table of the House a copy of the report to his department by the Professor of Agriculture, Mr. Castella?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

“I have no objection to laying it on the table, but I do not intend that it should be printed.”

AGREEMENTS TO FREE PEAR-INFESTED LAND.

Mr. HUNTER asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“Will he lay on the table of the House copies of all agreements entered into by him on behalf of the Government of Queensland with individuals or companies for the freeing of pear land in terms of the Prickly Pear Destruction Act of 1912?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. Tolmie, *Toowoomba*) replied—

“A copy of the agreement with Mr. O. C. Roberts in respect of an area of 100,000 acres of land near Dulacca is now laid on the table. This is the only agreement yet made under the Act mentioned.”

I move that the paper be printed.

Question put and passed.

ACCIDENTS IN MINES.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Quecnton*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction, for the Secretary for Mines—

“1. Is it the practice of the Mines Department to allow six months to elapse after a breach of the Mines Regulation Act before taking action?”

“2. If not, why was this the case in reference to an accident in the Brilliant Freehold, Charters Towers?”

“3. What is the usual method adopted by the department in cases of this description?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. W. Blair, *Ipswich*), for the Secretary for Mines, replied—

“1. No.

“2. Special circumstances necessitated additional inquiry after hearing in warden’s court.

“3. To take action as promptly as possible.”

HOURS OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

Mr. WINSTANLEY asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. Has Regulation 433, which keeps men on duty from 6.30 a.m. to 10 p.m., been brought into operation?”

“2. If so, on what parts of the State railways is it to operate?”

“3. What extra pay is granted for this extra service?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“1. This regulation has been in operation for years.

“2. All parts of the State.

“3. None. Duties go with the appointment and are only required for a minute or two at the actual passing of trains at camps, and then only when specially instructed to do so in accordance with Regulation No. 433.”

STATE SAVINGS BANKS AND EMPLOYEES.

Mr. WINSTANLEY asked the Treasurer—

“1. How many new offices have been opened during the present financial year for the transaction of Savings Bank business?”

“2. How many new officers have been appointed (a) from outside the service and (b) from other departments?”

“3. What amount has been spent in advertising?”

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*) replied—

“1. 161.

“2. (a) From outside service, 16; from Commonwealth, 20; probationers, 9. (b) From other State departments, 3.

“3. £1,290 2s. 3d.”

PROPOSED RAILWAY TO CECIL PLAINS.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*) asked the Premier—

“1. Has any proposal been before the Government for the construction of a line of railway to Cecil Plains?”

“2. If so, by whom was such proposal brought forward?”

“3. Was any proposal placed before the Government with regard to raising the cost of the construction of such a line of railway; if so, when, by whom, and what were the exact terms of such proposal?”

“4. Will he cause all documents connected directly or indirectly with any such proposed railway to be laid upon the table of the House at the earliest possible opportunity?”

The PREMIER replied—

- "1. Yes.
- "2. and 3. See answer to No. 4.
- "4. Yes."

PERMIT FOR SINKING ARTESIAN BORE.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) asked the Treasurer—

"Will he lay on the table of the House all the correspondence between the Treasurer and Mr. G. E. Bunning *re* his obtaining a permit to put down an artesian bore?"

The TREASURER replied—

"Yes."

YANDINA RACECOURSE AND RECREATION RESERVE.

Mr. RYAN asked the Secretary for Public Lands, without notice—

"Will he lay on the table of the House all papers and communications *re* the appointment of four additional trustees, as published in the 'Government Gazette' of 31st May, 1913, for the Yandina Racecourse and Recreation Reserve?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. Tolmie, *Toowoomba*) replied—

"Yes."

PROPOSED REDUCTION OF RAILWAY FREIGHTS.

Mr. HUNTER (*Maranoa*), in moving—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the freight charges on the Queensland Government railways are excessive, and require readjustment on long-distance rates, with a view to a general reduction, for the following reasons:—

- "1. They are inimical to the best interest of the man on the land;
- "2. They retard closer settlement in the interior; and
- "3. Are a serious handicap to that development work so essential to the progress and prosperity of the State."

said: In rising to move this resolution, I do so as one belonging to the great undeveloped West—and also, I may say, as a citizen of Queensland—and I have every confidence in asking that invisible body called the "country party," as well as other members of this House, to join me in giving this matter their very serious consideration.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRAYSON: Will you join us?

Mr. HUNTER: When the hon. member has told me where they are to be found, I might be prepared to join them, but until they materialise, I am afraid that I shall have to remain where I am at present.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Somebody has been "pulling your leg."

Mr. HUNTER: However, I have no desire to discuss that party at the present time, seeing that it is not a party at all. I ask not only the members of that invisible body, but every member of this House, to join with me in considering this very important question. It may be said, and it

[*Mr. Hunter.*

has been said in this House before, that this is a matter which concerns the Commissioner for Railways. I hold that it is too big a matter for the Commissioner for Railways to deal with. The Commissioner has his orders from the Government, and it is a matter of indifference to him what those orders are; he has to carry them out. If the Government of the day say that they wish their railways to return a profit of 10, or more, per cent., then it is his business to try and obtain that revenue for them. If, on the other hand, the Government say that they are satisfied to let the railways be used to the biggest possible advantage, and return a nominal interest on the capital invested, then I presume he is quite prepared to do the same thing. It is simply a matter of the policy of the country as to how the railways may be best made to serve the people. Now, it may be urged—and I have heard the cheap jibe thrown across the floor of this House—that because I and other members advocate a reduction of railway freights, it would be an advantage to us as distributors in certain districts. Anybody who knows anything at all about such a question knows that such is not the case; that the carriage of goods is added to their cost and passed along, so that the retailer or wholesaler is absolutely without profit or loss in that respect, either one way or the other. As a matter of fact, if he does make any profit at all it is when the freights are high, because the added profit goes on a higher cost, so that cheap freights mean no more profit to the retailer, rather less. Having cleared these various matters aside, I hope that we shall face the matter, not as a party House, but as a body of representatives desirous of ascertaining what is desirable in the interests of the community. We on this side claim—and a similar claim is made on the other side of the House—that we desire to see Queensland settled; we desire to see larger and greater production; we want to see the lands which are to-day becoming infested with pear made into farms that are producing wealth for the State. The proper way to do that is to see that our railways are made to serve the country, and to give cheap land, and cheap and rapid access to market to those who are on those lands.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUNTER: Having adopted that as a policy, I think it will not be hard to prove to this House that we are not doing that for the people who are settled along our railways, and those who are not on the railways at all. In the absence of waterways, such as we find in Queensland, the only possible way to a market is by railway. Our railways must be the arteries over which the life and progress of our country will pulse, and for that reason the necessity for railways is great; and after having built them, it is still a greater necessity that those who are living alongside the railways and require to use them should be able to do so at the lowest cost. We have in Queensland, above any other State of the Commonwealth, provided railway communication. Our railways go from four different centres along our coast and extend out into the country. Unfortunately, a great quantity of the lands along these lines are held in fee-simple in large areas, and are not used for agricultural purposes—they are, however, used for the raising of stock—and

we have spent over £30,000,000 up to the end of last year in the construction of these railways. Last year, I understand, from the figures which I have obtained, that 4.021 per cent. was returned to Queensland over the whole of her system of railways after paying working expenses. It will be admitted that this is an excellent return on the capital cost—it will pay interest on the whole construction—and when it is remembered that this return comes after we have had very heavy losses on fresh railways, and railways which are not paying—

The PREMIER: I think in that you are not quite correct.

Mr. HUNTER: I am taking the figures from the Commissioner's report for last year. If I am wrong, I am only too pleased to be corrected. We have railways paying very handsome returns on their cost. Take, for instance, the Warwick to Goondiwindi line, which pays £5 16s. per cent.; Pittsworth to Wyreema, £4 3s. 4d. per cent.; Cunnamulla to Gowrie Junction, £5 14s. 1d. per cent.; Archer Park to Longreach, £6 1s. 10d. per cent.; Townsville to Charters Towers, £6 15s. 10d. per cent.; and Charters Towers to Hughenden, £10 5s. 3d. per cent. Those are among the best paying lines that we have, and are largely trunk railways. Then we have some non-paying lines, and these, we find, are noticeable more in the vicinity of the metropolis than anywhere else. We have the Ipswich to Dugandan line, paying only £2 7s. 2d. per cent. Then we have the South Brisbane to Manly line paying £2 19s. 5d. per cent.

Mr. COYNE: They duplicated it last year.

Mr. HUNTER: That line was duplicated last year. Then we have the South Brisbane to Southport line, paying 13s. 1d. per cent., the Manly to Cleveland line—which has been separated by the Treasurer from the other part—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was always done.

Mr. COYNE: No, it was not always done.

Mr. HUNTER: I do not think that was always done, but that is a very small matter. On the Manly to Cleveland line there is a loss of £3 5s. 3d. per cent., on the Pengarry Junction to Crow's Nest (Toowoomba) 13s. 1d. per cent., Emerald to Springsure £1 0s. 7d. per cent., Emerald to Blair Athol 8s. 5d. per cent.; on Bowen Railway, which cost £182,991, there is a loss of £1,671. The Nankin Junction to Broadmount Railway, which cost £185,214, shows a profit of 18s. 7d. per cent. The line from Ravenswood Junction to Ravenswood, costing £96,135, only paid 10s. 4d. per cent. Those figures show that Queensland has invested money in railway ventures which are not giving an adequate return on the money invested in them, and the Government are not spreading the loss over the whole of the people of the State, but are charging heavy rates on the great trunk lines to make up the deficits on the non-paying lines. I hold that that is not the correct policy to pursue. If Queensland has made bad railway investments, then the people of the State are entitled to make good that loss. It is not good policy, nor is it consistent with the principle which should be adopted in building railways, to do what is being done. The object of constructing these railways is to open up the country and to give the people

who are out in the country an opportunity of getting to their markets as cheaply and as expeditiously as possible. If that is what is intended, the Government are not carrying out the idea. I understand that in New Zealand a system was adopted where, when a railway paid over 3 per cent., a reduction was instantly made in the freights and fares on that railway. If we were to adopt some system like that, I think we would find that there would be an immense increase of settlement along our railways. It is a very serious matter to Queensland that we have long lines of railway along which there are very few people settled. Of course, I shall be told by the Secretary for Railways that there is going to be a big slump in the railway earnings if this motion is given effect to, and the Treasurer will say, "Where am I to find the money to make good the loss, because a reduction of 10 per cent. on the whole of the earnings will amount to something like £300,000 per annum?" But, if you notice, my motion is not to ask for a reduction on the whole of the earnings of the railways, but simply on the freights. I consider a reduction in the freights more important even than a reduction in the fares, because passenger traffic is largely a question of travelling for pleasure or convenience. Sometimes, of course, it is a matter of business, but people who use the railways need not do so unless they please. It is a different matter with regard to freights. The reduction on the freights would be something like one-half the amount I have mentioned, or about £150,000. It will be for the Treasurer to find some method of making good that loss, and I might suggest one. There are large tracts of land along the railways which are not being used, and the owners of those lands might be called upon to contribute something towards the amount necessary to make good this loss in the railway earnings. Perhaps that would be the best method that could be adopted. What I want to make clear is that the system of charging high railway freights is largely responsible for the stoppage of a lot of settlement in the interior, and, what is more, it goes a long way towards preventing people, when they go on the land, from carrying out the improvements necessary to make their holdings profitable. Both those things are very undesirable, and it is not in the interests of the State that they should be continued. It is all very well to find a prosperous city like Brisbane; but Brisbane cannot continue to prosper if the country is going back. It is not the fine streets nor our magnificent warehouses and manufactories that spell prosperity; they are merely the reflected wealth of primary production. It is the production of the broad acres in the interior and our mines, and so long as these continue to prosper then all other things may be added to our wealth. If we look at the history of the United States of America, we will find that it is not her factories, her great cities, nor her warehouses that have made her the wealthy country that she is to-day. It is the wheat and the hogs and the cattle and the sheep coming from her broad prairies that have made her the prosperous country she is in regard to accumulated wealth. I am not speaking about the distribution of that wealth—that is another matter. I am speaking of the wealth that has been produced, and what is true of the United States applies with equal force to

Mr. Hunter.]

Queensland. Unfortunately, we are not making the progress we should be. There is a great deal of country lying idle, and, although great efforts are being made to rid a great deal of that country of the pear, what is the use of it after it is cleared of pear if it is not going to be settled? The pear will just spring up again. I am not saying that we should not clear it, but I say that when we do clear it we should take very good care to see that it is immediately occupied, or else it will fall back into the state it is in to-day. It is no use building railways if those railways are going to charge freights that make it prohibitive for people to go and live in that Western country. We find the Government bringing immigrants to Queensland by every ship, but we find very few of them out in the back country. They are chiefly settling in the neighbourhood of Brisbane. I heard the other day of a gentleman who occupied a house for which he paid a rent of 12s. 6d. a week. Later he was asked for 15s., and then still later for 17s. 6d. a week, and finally he got notice to quit. He asked the landlord what it meant, and the landlord said, "Well, you have to go. You cannot pay the rent I am going to get for the place. As a matter of fact, I have let it for £2 a week to three new arrivals from home. I am getting the rent from one of them, and he is collecting it from the rest." That is what is happening in Queensland to-day.

Mr. KIRWAN: The introduction of the slum system.

Mr. HUNTER: We are introducing into Queensland a lot of immigrants. I am not saying anything against them, but they are not desirous of going out into the country and making homes for themselves where homes can be made, nor are the Government offering them the inducements to do so that they should. It would be of much greater advantage to the State if we set our minds on inducing people to settle on our lands instead of attempting to do a lot of the things the Government are talking about at the present time. It is no advantage to us to have some 300,000 or 400,000 people in Brisbane—over half the population of Queensland.

Mr. FORSYTH: Don't exaggerate. There are only 140,000 people in Brisbane.

The PREMIER: Not one-fourth of the people of Queensland are settled in Brisbane.

Mr. HUNTER: There are over one-fourth—I think nearer one-third.

The PREMIER: There are not nearly one-fourth.

Mr. HUNTER: Well, I will allow the correction to be made. Even one-fourth are too many to remain in Brisbane.

The PREMIER: I quite agree with you there.

Mr. HUNTER: Very much too many, and, if we take all the other ports along the coast, we will find that we are not very much better than they are in Sydney with regard to the centralisation of our population. I think that is very undesirable. That is largely due to the fact that the cost of living out West is much greater than it is on the coast. Ministers must know that, because almost every officer in the Northern and Western territory wants to get to the coast on account of the extra cost of living out there, and are asking for Western allowance when they cannot. We know that the extra

[Mr. Hunter.

cost of living there is variously estimated at from 12½ to 20 per cent. If that is a fact, how can you expect people to go into the outside districts, select land, undergo the hardships which they have to endure, and generally to perform the heroic work of

[4 p.m.] pioneering when they have to pay a penalty in the shape of excessive railway freights for doing that work? Not only is the cost of living higher in the interior than it is down here, but persons settling there have to pay more for the articles they require for improving their homesteads. For pumping plant, windmills, fencing wire, ploughs, harrows, chaffcutters, galvanised iron, and all those things which are necessary for their work, they have to pay excessive charges for bringing them over the railway.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And an excessive duty to get them here.

Mr. HUNTER: We all know that a duty has been imposed on imported machinery of all descriptions, but we also know that an attempt has been made to bring about what is called "new protection," whereby provision is made which will prevent the person who uses machinery that is locally produced being overcharged on account of that duty. The duty is imposed for the purpose of building up various manufactures in the Commonwealth, and anyone who travels the streets of Brisbane at the present time and sees the number of manufactured articles which are made within the State will recognise that it is a good policy. I am with the Government, whatever Government it may be, who says they want to build up within our own borders the means of feeding and clothing our own people. During the time the hon. member for Townsville, the Hon. R. Philp, was Premier a reduction of something like 10 per cent. was made in the railway freights, but afterwards increased rates were imposed, and since then railway freights have been as they are at the present time. For many years it has been suggested in Queensland that we should adopt the zone system in connection with our railways. I do not say the proposal has been made here, but that it has been discussed at various times in various places. While I have not sufficient knowledge of the zone system to say that it is the right one to adopt, I am of opinion that if we are to annihilate distance, if we are to bring our Western and Northern country within distance of ports, we must be prepared to give the man who goes out on the land such freights as will enable him to bring his stuff to port for very little more than it costs men who are settled at a shorter distance from a port. The zone system has been adopted in Austria-Hungary, and a report has been furnished to the House of Commons on the working of the system there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It has been tried also in New Zealand.

Mr. HUNTER: Yes, but the New Zealand system, apart from the zone system, is as fair a system as could be adopted in railway management—that is, to reduce freights when the profits from a railway are above a certain level. That is a declaration that the Government are not desirous of making revenue out of the railways, but are only desirous of using them as public utilities, asking from them no more than is sufficient to meet the working expenses of the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about interest on the capital?

Mr. HUNTER: I, of course, include interest on the capital invested as part of the working expenses. In the "Encyclopedia of Social Reform" there is an article on the zone system in Hungary, which is of interest. It says—

"Tickets are sold by zones, and are good for all stations within the same zone. The first zone runs from 1 to 15 miles, the next from 16 to 25 miles, and so on, the steps in making the bigger zones being longer, and beyond 140 miles all stations are included in the same zone. The rates are 10 cents third class on ordinary trains and 12 cents on express trains for each zone. If your journey takes you over two zones, as, from a station in zone 1 to a station in zone 3, you pay 20 cents (or 24 cents express). If you cover five zones you pay 50 cents (or 60 cents express), and you can go any distance for 1 dollar 60 cents (or 1 dollar 92 cents express). For local traffic special rates are made, 4 cents to the next station from where you are in the same zone, and 6 cents to the second station.

"For short distances the rate is about 1 cent a mile or less; for long distances it runs down to about $\frac{1}{2}$ cent a mile. If we had the same rates one could go from New York to Chicago for 3 dollars instead of 20 dollars, and from New York to Philadelphia for 32 cents instead of 2 dollars 50 cents. We cannot expect so much reduction, of course, because costs are greater here, but that difference does not require six to eight times higher rates.

"The zone rates, as compared with the previous rates in Hungary, caused a reduction in fares of 82 per cent. on the longest distances and 50 per cent. on the medium distances, 60 to 200 miles. The average reduction in the charges per passenger was about 50 per cent. on the whole traffic, and the stimulus to travel was so great that the business much more than doubled the first year, as is shown in the table:—

	Passengers.	Passenger Receipts.
August, 1888, to 31st July, 1889	5,684,845	\$3,800,000
August, 1889, to July, 1890	13,456,712	\$4,620,000

"The simplification of the tariff was immense. Tickets are sold like postage-stamps at the post office, hotels, etc.

"In Austria also the zone system was an admirable success, but the rates were set too low at the start and some increase was necessary. The principal companies have also adopted the zone system under 'soft pressure' from the Government.

"In addition to the zone tariff there is a system of excursion tickets and season tickets in books of 30 to 60 each, at very low rates, amounting to about one-third to one-half of a cent a mile in many cases third class, and 1 dollar 2 cents first class—600 miles of travel, for example, for 2 dollars 68 cents third class and 5 dollars 36 cents first class, 1,200 miles for 4 dollars 80 cents third class and 10 dollars first class. Large discounts

are made on weekly tickets for working men.

"The zone idea is not applied as a complete system to freight traffic, but the principle of tapering rates, or lower mileage charges for long distances, is in use, and special rates are made as in Germany and Belgium; and agriculture, education, etc., are encouraged by very low rates. The farmers can buy transportation stamps and bill their goods at home by a very simple system."

Without further delaying the House, I wish to say, in conclusion, that I feel that this matter is of such great importance to the people of Queensland that it is worth the while the members of this House spending some time in considering what is the best policy to adopt with regard to railway freights, and what is the best use to which we can put our railways. At the present time I am of opinion that some declaration of the sort is necessary. If we are to understand that the railways exist for the sake of saving the Government from raising the necessary taxation for carrying out the work of the Government, well, it is right that the country should know. But if the railways are there for the purpose of opening up the country and settling the people who wish to be settled on the land away in the interior, and for the purpose of making those railways serviceable for all, then I say that the system that we are adopting at the present time is not calculated to bring about that result which was expected. I hold that this House does not approve of the former idea at all. It is not in keeping with the ideas that are generally held throughout the country. The general idea is that the Government build the railways to open up the country and to serve the people, and in my opinion that is the proper thing. I do not think it is a proper system for the Government to adopt, as they are doing at present, to raise money by charging high railway freights. I say that the right system for the Government to adopt is to tax the people directly so that they will know exactly what they are paying to the Government, and then the people will be able to judge if the Government are deserving of the money they are given to spend in the administration of the affairs of the country. In doing so I think this House will affirm the resolution which I have now very much pleasure in moving.

Mr. GILLIES (*Eacham*): I was waiting to see someone else rise, but I have great pleasure in seconding this resolution. I think that the question of the adjustment of freights is a matter that should certainly be done on a scientific basis. I think it is an axiom with regard to freights all over the world that an article carried on a railway—whether it is a private railway or a public railway—should be charged no more than the article can bear. Some articles can afford to pay more than other articles. I am convinced from my little knowledge of Queensland freights that they are not framed on a scientific basis. I am not prepared to say that under the existing Act of 1906 it would be a good thing to bring about a general reduction in freights, seeing that the lines built under that Act have to be guaranteed against any loss, but I am quite convinced that the time has arrived when a more equitable adjustment of

Mr. Gillies.]

freights is necessary. It is possible that a reduction in the present freights will lead to many of our railways paying. For instance, in the timber districts there are some timbers that cannot be placed on the market because of the excessive freights. That is so in my own district, and it is not only due to the railway freights, but it is also due to the existence of the shipping combine which charges for log timber from Cairns to Melbourne three times as much as what the timber can be brought to Melbourne from North America. There are a number of timbers in the North which would find a ready market in the Southern districts, and the freight on these timbers might be reduced, and in that way encourage the timber men to place more timber on the railways.

Hon. R. PHILP: The freights on timber are very low.

Mr. GILLIES: I admit that possibly they are low in some cases, but in other cases they are possibly too high. What we want to do is to arrive at a schedule of freights so that each particular article will bear the portion of the freight it is able to carry. I certainly think that the zone system should also be adopted. I think—although I am not quite sure—that the zone system has been adopted in New South Wales. By the zone system I mean that a man living 10 miles from a railway will not pay as much as a man living 5 miles from a railway. It is a difficult problem under the existing law, but I indulge the hope that the 1906 Act will be reviewed this session, because there are a number of anomalies in that Act which I referred to last night that should be removed. Under the zone system the man living close to the railway should pay more for his goods than the man living 30 miles from the railway. That will place the man living 30 miles away from the railway on the same footing as the man living close to the line, and thus promote settlement. If the 1906 Act were abolished altogether and a new Act drafted on more equitable lines, I am quite convinced that the prosperity and development of this country would be increased. I quite agree with the mover of this resolution that the railways should not be run for profit. The railways are the same as the roads and are placed there for the good of the country. I am pleased that the mover has not included fares in his motion, but has confined it to freights. I think if the Government are sincere—and especially that portion which represents the tail, the so-called farmers' party—that they will realise the necessity of supporting this resolution that has for its object the benefiting of the primary producer. Another matter which is of great importance to the farmers who are called upon to guarantee certain lines of railway was that referred to by the mover of the motion, who said that there are large areas of land suitable for settlement still to be found lying idle along the existing railway lines. I think that the Government which passed the 1906 Act would have been wise if they had provided that the men who benefited by the existing railways should also be called upon to pay a certain tax. That has been suggested by the mover of this resolution. That will to a great extent not only overcome the difficulty of freights, but will provide land for the land-hungry

[Mr. Gillies.

people, and provide also, as the hon. member for Fassifern suggested, land for the immigrants who are being brought out here by the Government. If the Government are desirous of carrying out closer settlement, they will consider that suggestion and adopt some system of taxation for those who have received the benefit of railways without being called on for any guarantee, and yet they do not put their lands to the best possible use. I have much pleasure in seconding the resolution now before the House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. T. Paget, Mackay): The hon. gentleman who introduced this motion took it as his text that the rates on the Queensland railways were excessive. He also quoted a number of returns from the Commissioner's report with respect to the net return on certain sections of railway in Queensland. The hon. member said that the whole of the earnings are boxed together and they produce the net interest on the capital expended. I think I am quoting the hon. gentleman correctly, and the hon. gentleman's contention was that if the railway from Gowrie Junction to Cunnamulla produced a certain rate of interest last year which was in excess of the rate of interest chargeable on the capital amount expended on that particular section, that therefore the rates and fares on that section of railway should be reduced. It is very difficult for one, momentarily, to follow the hon. member's contention. He spoke to this effect: that settlers in the West were very much handicapped owing to the rates of freight that they had to pay. The hon. member also said that if the rates on goods and produce throughout Queensland were reduced by some 10 per cent., then the loss to the Treasury would be about £150,000. The hon. member contended that the passenger fares and the goods rates were about equal. I think the hon. member didn't go further than that. If he turns to page 6 of the Commissioner's report of last year, he will find that the coach traffic produced £857,018.

Mr. HUNTER: That is the net earnings.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, the gross earnings. When we consider that the gross earnings on the railways last year were £3,032,000, we will find that instead of a reduction of 10 per cent. amounting to £150,000, it would mean a loss to the Railway Department, and consequently to the Treasury and the general taxpayer of the State, of £217,000.

Mr. HUNTER: Turn to Table 13—the last figures.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can assure the hon. member that I am quoting from the Commissioner's report, and that is what it would mean. I cannot, therefore, congratulate the hon. member on being correct in connection with his figures. The hon. member also stated that this is a big question of public policy. I grant that it is a big question of public policy as to whether our great business concern in Queensland is to be run on lines which are economic, and run on something like business lines in the general interest of the people of the State. Those of us who use the railways of the State must consider those people who do not use the railways, and if there is a considerable loss accruing on the working of the

railways, then that loss must be made up by the general taxpayer, as it has been made up year in and year out almost ever since the railways of Queensland have been built. The hon. member based his argument upon the fact that the railways were paying more than the working expenses and interest. In 1907-8 the actual charge on the consolidated revenue fund was £46,169; in 1908-9 the charge was £81,901; in 1909-10 it was £108,255; and in 1910-11 there was a profit of £76,279; while last year the charge on the consolidated revenue fund was £56,209 on the general taxpayer. I am quoting from the tables in the Treasurer's Financial Statement of 1912, page 41, Table A, Queensland railways.

Mr. HUNTER: That is not a fair argument.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are discussing the Queensland railways and the question as to whether the rates are excessive that are being charged by the Railway Commissioner, who is the authority who charges the public these rates and collects the money. The hon. member further stated—I think I took his figures correctly—that last year the Queensland railways paid 4.21 per cent.

Mr. HUNTER: 4.021 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I misunderstood the hon. member. The Commissioner's report, at page 1, says that the amount earned by the railways is equal to £4 6s. 5d. per cent.—which is probably 4.021—upon the capital invested on railways now open to traffic, and is 9s. 9d. per cent. lower than last year.

Mr. HUNTER: Look at Table 11.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member in quoting that return of the Commissioner's has forgotten that the Commissioner has hitherto—I hope he will not in future—always based his interest return upon the actual sovereigns that are expended upon railway construction in Queensland.

Mr. HUNTER: It is not fair to the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As a matter of fact, there is a little item of about £1,750,000 that interest has to be paid on. If we turn to the Treasurer's tables—for the Treasurer charges the Railway Department interest on the whole of the money they received, inclusive of depreciation—what do we find? That last year, instead of a net return of £4 6s. 5d. per cent., which is on the sovereigns only that were expended, the net return on the capital expended, including depreciation and the moneys which had been spent on unopened lines, was £3 9s. 11d. per cent. If my memory serves me correctly, the interest returned on the open lines, inclusive of depreciation, was about £3 15s. 6d. per cent. As a matter of fact, the Queensland railways last year paid interest on the capital expended, inclusive of depreciation, and they also paid about £24,000 towards the interest on capital that had been expended on unopened lines, leaving a balance, as I stated just now, of something like £56,000. When we have that condition of things—that the railways, fortunately owing to good seasons, and, I suppose, also somewhat to the good management of the officers—when we, fortunately find, owing to these circumstances, that the rail-

ways are just about paying interest and their working expenses in good seasons, how can we possibly say that the charges are excessive? If the charges were excessive, then I claim that the railways would not only be paying their way, but they would return a very big sum to the Treasury so as to lighten the burden of taxation on the people.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: What is the percentage you charge the railways on the borrowed money?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The percentage is worked out by the Treasury on the average interest payable on the whole of the moneys borrowed. I think it is about £3 13s. 9d. per cent., but just now, owing to money costing us more than what it did prior to the last two years, the percentage will be raised somewhat.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I think that £3 18s. would be nearer the mark.

Mr. KIRWAN: It will be over 4 per cent. presently.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member also spoke in connection with the zone system, and he gave us some very interesting information in connection with the zone system as it applies to Austria-Hungary. This is a question that has not escaped the attention of the officers of the Railway Department, but it is an extremely difficult one to deal with in a sparsely settled community. It is a question that can be more readily

[4.30 p.m.] dealt with in countries which are more closely populated, as the older countries of the world are, but where we have to deal with a country like Queensland in which there is somewhat less than one soul to every square mile of land, it becomes extremely difficult to handle. And it is also very difficult where we have to find the interest on our capital, for however much we may wish to reduce fares and freights, and however popular such a move would be—and such a move would be popular if one is to judge from the experience of some years ago—six if my memory serves me correctly—when the increase on railway fares and freights of 5 per cent. put on about eight or ten years ago was taken off, other duties are cast on the Government and the administrative officers who run these railways, and one of those duties is to find sufficient returns for their services, whatever those services may be, so that the finances of the State may not be unduly loaded.

Mr. RYAN: You don't suggest that the hon. member is seeking popularity by this motion, do you?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, not for one moment. I would not for one moment suggest that any hon. member would seek popularity by such a motion. (Laughter.) I give the hon. member credit for a zeal to reduce the fares and freights on the railways, especially on those railways between Cunnamulla and Gowrie Junction—in the interests of closer settlement. And I congratulate the hon. member that in the opening of his speech he called upon the members of the farmers' party to support him.

Mr. RYAN: To show their sincerity.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Exactly so. I understand the extremely high

Hon. W. T. Paget.]

and patriotic motives which actuated him in calling on the members of that party to assist him. It is quite right that hon. members who represent country districts should do all they possibly can to get the best terms for their constituents.

Mr. HUNTER: It is in the interests of people in the city, too.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Whether it is in the interests of the people in the city especially or not, I repeat that it is quite right that members who represent country districts should endeavour to get the very best terms they can for their constituents, especially in regard to railway fares and freights. But hon. members will also take into consideration the fact that if, year in and year out, there were a very big deficit on the working of this great business of ours in Queensland, to which about 79½ per cent. of the total loan indebtedness of Queensland has been allocated, if that great service did not return anything like the interest that were chargeable to it, these hon. gentlemen would have to consider how the balance was to be made up, and their constituents must pay their share of that balance, and especially those constituents who pay income tax.

Mr. HUNTER: What about the people who have no responsibility?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Quite a number of the railways in Queensland do not pay.

Mr. HUNTER: What about them—Manly, for instance?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The same rates must apply equally to all the lines in Queensland. That is the proposition. The Commissioner is not allowed, under the Railway Acts, to differentiate against one of his constituents as compared with another. And surely hon. members would not be willing to tax people who are not in a position to pay heavy taxation and at the same time lighten the burdens of those who are enjoying good rates—not excessive rates—and are able to bear the rates which are being charged to them for the railways they use.

Mr. HUNTER: Do you think it is fair to make the people in Cunnamulla pay for the loss on the Manly Railway?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is not a question of the people of Cunnamulla or the people of Roma; it is a question of Government policy, in conjunction with the consideration of what is best to be done for the whole of the people of Queensland. We can, of course, quote innumerable instances where lines have paid well, and one line has paid 18 per cent., but it does not follow that the rates and fares should be reduced on that line. The hon. gentleman's argument is that the rates are excessive and that they should be reduced on some lines. It is rather a double-barrelled argument, and what I would like to ask the hon. gentleman is this: "Is he aware that during the last few years the percentage of expenditure to revenue has been very largely increasing in this State?" For, if the percentage of expenditure to revenue greatly increases, then it means that either the rates and fares are not sufficient, or that the point has been reached where the railways do not become a paying business proposition. Now, what has happened during the last few years? During the last three years the wages of the railway men have been, quite rightly, increased by about £140,000, which is equal to

4 and 2/3 per cent. on the largest railway revenue that Queensland has ever possessed—that is to say, the revenue last year, of £3,032,000.

Mr. HUNTER: Do not forget that Cunnamulla still pays you £5 per cent. It is the bad railways that are responsible for that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member says that the bad railways are responsible for the increase in the expenditure, but I would point out that that is not so. The increase in the expenditure and the cost of the train mile is brought about by the fact that the public are constantly demanding better and more services.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: They want better services in the North, at any rate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And the better services given by the Commissioner mean a greater cost. The train mileage is increasing immensely. Last year it increased by about 1,000,000 miles over the year before, and I have no doubt that when accounts are made up on the 30th of this month we shall find that it has increased by another 1,000,000 miles, and when it is understood that each train mile costs something like 3s. 6d. to run, it must be apparent that the expenditure is going up very much. The increased percentage is not due to the fact that some of our railways do not pay, but to the fact that more money is being spent by the department in order to try to better the conditions for the settler on the land, by giving him better transit for his goods, or by giving passengers better facilities for travelling.

Mr. COYNE: I wish you would do that on the Western line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Following out my argument, in 1906-7—and I am giving this information for the use of hon. members—in the year 1906-7 the percentage of expenditure to revenue was £49 17s. 10d. per cent.; in 1910-11, the percentage was £57 5s. per cent., and in 1911-12 it had risen from various causes to £63 4s. 5d. per cent.: and the causes, as I have pointed out, are not only in connection with a quite justifiable increase in the wages and emoluments of railway employees, but also to the fact that all supplies are very much higher in price than they were a few years ago. The cost of maintaining the services, if conditions remain as they are, must increase, and unless our traffic very materially increases the net revenue from the railway capital that is expended must decrease. The Commissioner, on page 7 of his report of last year, says—

"I pointed out in my last report that the working expenses and the percentage of expenditure to earnings must increase, and there are several reasons for this. In order to provide more satisfactory services to the public I have found it necessary to add to the timetables in many directions; and although the additional trains were necessary to cope with the general increase in business, it would be unreasonable to expect them to pay as well at first as trains which have been established for years. On several of the long-distance journeys the time has been reduced; and although this is much appreciated by the travelling public, it necessitates additional trains for local traffic."

That is one reason why the expenditure

[Hon. W. T. Paget.]

necessarily has risen in percentage year by year. On the New South Wales railways for years past they returned quite a handsome surplus to the Treasurer.

Hon. R. PHILP: They have three times our population.

Mr. COYNE: And they own the Sydney tramways.

Hon. R. PHILP: They make nothing out of that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: But owing to the fact I have just pointed out, it is reported that the New South Wales Government is very seriously considering the raising of their rates and fares. How do we show up in this matter in comparison with other States?

Mr. HUNTER: Very badly.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman says, "Very badly." Let us see. On page 88, Table 19, of the Commissioner's report of last year, which is a very interesting report, we find the area of Queensland is 668,224 square miles, New South Wales 309,175, Victoria 87,884, and South Australia 903,650. With regard to population, as against New South Wales we are about two and a-half times less, and we have just about half the population of Victoria. The miles of railway open in Queensland was 4,266, in New South Wales 3,831, in Victoria 2,523. If we turn to population per mile of railway opened, we find that in Queensland it is 146, in New South Wales 437, in Victoria 387, and in South Australia 287. That fact alone speaks volumes for the working of the railways in Queensland, and with such a small population, and an exceedingly large area to serve, when our rates are considered as against those in New South Wales they appear more than favourable. It is a prodigious task for the Railway Department to try to pay its way with such a small population to serve, over such an immense territory. Last year, exclusive of depreciation, the Queensland railways paid £4 0s. 5d. per cent.; New South Wales £4 8s. 2d., Victoria £4 4s. 9½d., and South Australia £5 16s. 2d. Where we have such a small population per mile of railway open, it is an extremely difficult matter for the Railway Department to show the returns that they do, and those returns are not caused by excessive rates, as I think I will prove by the figures I quote. What is the position? The hon. member is especially seized with the fact that the rates are excessive for long distances. The following are the rates:—

LONG DISTANCE RATES AS COMPARED WITH SHORT DISTANCE RATES.

Miles.	CLASS I.		CLASS II.		CLASS III.	
	Per ton.	Per mile.	Per ton.	Per mile.	Per ton.	Per mile.
50	21·8	s. d. 5 2	30·0	s. d. 7 2	41·8	s. d. 0 10
300	88·4	3 5	188·4	5 5	191·8	7 6
400	107·2	3 2	159·2	4 7	200·0	0 6

Kerosene, naphtha, benzine, motor spirit in truck loads.

"The following statement will show the reductions made in the above traffic:—

Miles.	PREVIOUS TO 1910.	1910-12.	PRESENT RATE.
	Actual Wt.	2-ton Lots.	4-ton Lots.
	Per ton.	Per ton.	Per ton.
50	41·8	41·8	41·8 (40 6)
100	75·0	60 0	40 0
200	133·4	101·8	67·1
400	180·0	132·11	89 0
500	180·0	139·2	93·2

MAXIMUM RATES.

"The following are the maximum rates per ton to the West:—

	£	s.	d.
3rd class traffic	10 0 0
Flour	4 0 0
Sugar and rice	5 10 0
Wire—wire netting and galvanised iron...	3 8 6 "

COMPARISON OF BUTTER RATES.

Miles.	Queensland.	N.S. Wales.	Victoria.
	Per ton to Ports. s. d.	Per ton. s. d.	Per ton. s. d.
50	7 6	10 0	10 6
100	13 9	18 10	19 3
150	17 11	26 2	26 2
200	22 1	33 5	33 0

COMPARISON OF WOOL RATES—QUEENSLAND AND NEW SOUTH WALES.

Miles.	QUEENSLAND.		N. S. WALES.	
	Clean.	Greasy.	Clean.	Greasy.
150	68·8	53·4	43·9	37·6
250	91·8	73·4	60·5	54·2
350	104·2	83·4	68·9	62·6
800	125·0	100·0	79·2	72·11

"In Queensland a reduction of 10 per cent. is made for clean dumped and 25 per cent. for greasy dumped wool off the 'clean' rate.

"The rates from Thallon to Brisbane (386 miles) are £4 5s. for clean and £3 15s. for greasy wool.

"Dirranbandi to Brisbane (425 miles)—clean wool £4 10s., greasy wool £4."

"NOTE.—The wool basis in New South Wales for distances over 350 miles is ½d. per ton per mile added to the rate for 350 miles."

Mr. HUNTER: That is double as much as New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Flour is £4 per ton, sugar and rice £5 10s. per ton, and wire, wire netting, and galvanised iron, £3 8s. 6d. per ton. We can carry wire, wire netting, and galvanised iron for use in the West at £3 8s. 6d. per ton—from Brisbane to Cunnamulla, or from Townsville to Selwyn—I think that is 532 miles.

Mr. HUNTER: It is £1 in New South Wales.

Hon. W. T. Paget.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Let me give the butter rates in Queensland. For 50 miles it is 7s. 6d. per ton to ports. In New South Wales it is 10s., and in Victoria it is 10s. 6d. per ton. For 200 miles it is £1 2s. 1d. per ton in Queensland, in New South Wales £1 13s. 5d. per ton, and in Victoria £1 13s. per ton. That was a matter that was very fully thrashed out when Mr. Kidston, the late Premier, and myself and the Attorney-General visited New South Wales in February, 1909, and discussed the question of the border rates. I went into that question very fully at the time, and there is no doubt at all that the reason for New South Wales having such exceedingly low rates for distances over 350 miles is because all her railways lead to Sydney and spread out like the fingers of one's hands to the borders of this State, and those rates are charged to try, if possible, to get our Southern border trade.

Mr. HUNTER: And yet they pay well.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have already pointed out to the hon. member that Queensland is two and a-half times as large as New South Wales, and their population is two and a-half times larger than ours.

Mr. RYAN: That is a reason why you should give the control of the border trade to the Commonwealth. She would prevent that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have not time to quote all these rates, and I would ask the House to give permission for the tables which I have prepared to be printed in "Hansard" for the information of hon. members. I am quite sure they all contain valuable information.

The SPEAKER: I ask the House, on behalf of the Secretary for Railways, if the tables he has prepared may be published in "Hansard"?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will not quote the rates on sugar-cane, but hon. members will see that we carry sugar-cane—which is a very important article of traffic and also of production—at extremely low rates. I shall quote the live stock rates, which are a matter of vital importance to Western Queensland. Surely the hon. member cannot say that the live stock rates are excessive, when for 400 miles we charge 11s. 6.7d. per head for cattle, as against 14s. 10.5d. in New South Wales, £1 2s. 4.8d. in Victoria, and £1 4s. 4.8d. in South Australia?

Mr. COYNE: Do you say that applies in Victoria?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. COYNE: Where have they 400 miles of railway in Victoria?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: These are the figures taken from the official statistics.

Mr. COYNE: That is nonsense.

[Hon. W. T. Paget.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Well, I will give the figures for 200 miles, and surely it is possible to travel 200 miles by rail in Victoria. In Queensland the rate for cattle is 7s. 9d. per head—I shall leave out the decimals in every case; in New South Wales, 9s. 10d.; in Victoria, 11s. 3d.; and in South Australia, 14s. 10d. Sheep are in the same proportion. They run from 9d. per head in Queensland to 11d. per head in New South Wales, 1s. in Victoria, and 1s. in South Australia. The following is the comparative statement of live stock rates in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia:—

Miles.	QUEENSLAND.			NEW SOUTH WALES.			VICTORIA.			S. AUSTRALIA.		
	K Wagon 16 head.	Rate per head.	Rebate to Coast— 15% 200 Miles, 20% 300 Miles, 25% 400 Miles & over.	s-wheeler 20 head.	Rate per head.	Full rate Cattle Truck 10 head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.
100	80 0	s. d. 5 0	s. d. 124 7	120 8	s. d. 6 4	s. d. 73 6	s. d. 7 4 2	s. d. 116 8	s. d. 14 10 5	s. d. 116 8	s. d. 14 10 5	s. d. 14 10 5
200	146 6	9 1 9	162 0	107 6	9 10 5	113 0	11 3 6	268 4	19 7 7	268 4	19 7 7	268 4
300	202 6	12 7 9	162 0	237 6	12 4 5	168 6	16 10 2	275 0	24 4 8	341 8	24 4 8	341 8
400	246 6	15 4 9	184 11	307 6	14 10 5	221 0	22 4 8	408 4	29 2	408 4	29 2	408 4
500	291 0	18 2 2	218 3	347 6	17 4 6	221 0	22 4 8	408 4	29 2	408 4	29 2	408 4
SHEEP.—												
Miles. <th>N Van, 180 head.</th> <th>Rate per head.</th> <th>Rebate to Coast— 15% 200 Miles, 20% 300 Miles, 25% 400 Miles.</th> <th>8 wheeler 200 head.</th> <th>Rate per head.</th> <th>Full rate Sheep Truck 110 head.</th> <th>Rate per head.</th> <th>Rate per head.</th> <th>Rate per head.</th> <th>Rate per head.</th> <th>Rate per head.</th> <th>Rate per head.</th>	N Van, 180 head.	Rate per head.	Rebate to Coast— 15% 200 Miles, 20% 300 Miles, 25% 400 Miles.	8 wheeler 200 head.	Rate per head.	Full rate Sheep Truck 110 head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.	Rate per head.
100	97 0	s. d. 0 6 5	s. d. 141 2	126 8	s. d. 6 7 6	s. d. 73 6	s. d. 0 8	s. d. 116 8	s. d. 0 7	s. d. 116 8	s. d. 0 7	s. d. 116 8
200	168 0	0 11 1	172 5	197 6	0 11 8	113 0	0 8	208 4	1 0 5	208 4	1 0 5	208 4
300	215 6	1 2 4	191 3	247 6	1 2 8 5	168 6	1 6 3	275 0	1 4 5	275 0	1 4 5	275 0
400	255 0	1 5	191 3	297 6	1 5 8 5	224 0	2 0 4	342 8	1 8 5	342 8	1 8 5	342 8
500	295 0	1 7 7	221 3	347 6	1 8 8 5	224 0	2 0 4	408 4	2 0 5	408 4	2 0 5	408 4

Surely it cannot be said that in respect of that very large item of Western production the Queensland rates are excessive when we find that last year, according to page 8 of the Commissioner's report, 385,344 cattle and 1,629,361 sheep were carried over our railways. The figures I have quoted surely must appeal to the hon. member as being, at any rate, not excessive. The hon. member complained that the rates were excessive, especially on the Western lines. Now, how can the rates be excessive, and how can they, in the terms of the hon. member's motion,

be seriously interfering with the settlement of the West when we come to consider these figures?

ROMA TO CUNNAMULLA (INCLUSIVE).

Year.	Passengers.	Tonnage Forwarded.	Tonnage Received.
1906-7 ...	21,611	15,535	16,904
1911-12 ...	45,889	18,941	42,563

	From the West.	In the West.
1906-7 ...	15,535	16,904
1911-12 ...	18,941	42,563

	Miles.	Per ton.
Flour } Roma to—		s. d.
Barley } Coast ...	318	12 6
Bran } New South Wales	318	10 9
Pollard }		
Wheat }		

M Class.	Queensland.	New South Wales.
	s. d.	s. d.
100 miles	8 9	8 11
200 „ ...	15 0	14 2
400 „ ...	25 4	19 5
600 „ ..	31 8	23 7

In the face of those figures, I cannot acknowledge that our rates are excessive as compared with those in the other States.

Mr. HUNTER: Don't you think those figures could be multiplied two or three times?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The freight on flour, barley, bran, pollard, and wheat from Roma to the coast, a distance of 318 miles, is 12s. 6d. a ton.

Mr. HUNTER: Nobody is complaining about that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In New South Wales those articles are carried the same distance for 10s. 9d. per ton. It is hardly possible for me to quote anything more damaging to the hon. member's argument that we are charging excessive rates as compared with New South Wales. In the "M" class in Queensland for 100 miles we charge 8s. 9d. per ton, and in New South Wales they charge 8s. 11d.; for 200 miles, in Queensland we charge 15s., and in New South Wales they charge 14s. 2d.; for 400 miles, in Queensland we charge £1 3s. 4d., and in New South Wales they charge 19s. 5d.; and for 600 miles, in Queensland we charge £1 11s. 8d., and the rate in New South Wales is £1 3s. 7d. Of course the long haulage rates in New South Wales are exceedingly cheap as compared with ours, for the reason I have already mentioned. In spite of the very able manner in which the hon. member stated his case from his point of view, I think that the present is rather an unfortunate time for him to bring his motion forward. The rates and fares in Queensland are not an excessive charge on the people, in my opinion. If it were possible to charge cheaper rates, it would be done at once; but the Government have to consider, not only any particular rate on any particular railway, but they have also to consider the interests of the people of the State. If the railways do not pay their way, then the general taxpayer has to make up the deficit. I cannot support the motion of the hon. member.

Mr. KESSELL (*Port Curtis*): Possibly there are other members, besides the hon. member who has introduced this motion,

who may talk about excessive railway freights in their own particular

[5 p.m.] electorates, but we have to deal with this matter in a much broader spirit than that which regards it from the point of view of a district immediately concerned. Queensland is a young country, and unfortunately we have only a very small population. As the Minister for Railways pointed out, a very large tract of country has to be served with railways. The people of the district which I represent would very much like to have the rates reduced, but yet, as the representative of that district, I feel that I should be false to the trust reposed in me if I advocated anything in this House which would lead in the long run to national bankruptcy, or something very close to it. Everybody knows that a motion like that before the House must be looked at from a broad business point of view. Most of our national debt has been contracted for the purpose of constructing railways, and I, for one, only want to see those railways bring in enough revenue to pay interest and redemption and working expenses. If we look at the record of railway revenue for the last fifteen years, we shall find that only a very few times has the revenue exceeded the expenditure, and when it does exceed the expenditure it does not appear to me right that we should reduce the freights: we should rather use the surplus in building certain new lines in districts which are not provided with railway communication. It comes as a shock to me to find a motion of this kind emanating from the other side of the House.

Mr. RYAN: You will get a lot of shocks from this side before you are done with it. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. KESSELL: A motion of this kind coming from that side of the House which has consistently opposed immigration—

Mr. KIRWAN: That is not true; it is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. KESSELL: From a member of a party who persistently oppose immigration—

Mr. KIRWAN: Absolutely wrong.

Mr. KESSELL: The members of that party get up and talk immigration in one breath, and in the next they do their best to damn immigration throughout the State.

Mr. KIRWAN: What has our leader said on the subject?

Mr. KESSELL: I understand what your leader means and what he says—two different things.

Mr. RYAN: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in saying that I say one thing and mean another in this House?

The SPEAKER: I do not think the leader of the Opposition should consider the remarks of the hon. member worthy of raising a point of order.

Mr. RYAN: Not as long as they are not serious, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. KESSELL: As I was saying, this new-born anxiety on the part of members opposite for the man on the land comes somewhat as a shock to me. I yield to no man in this House in my great wish to improve the condition of the man on the land, to make his conditions as light as

Mr. Kessell.]

possible, and to make railway freights as low as they can be made; but I hold that we must look at this matter with business eyes. If we are to build railways we must find the money for those railways, and we must make common-sense, business-like arrangements to pay back the money to those from whom it is borrowed.

Mr. GILLIES: Are you in favour of the motion?

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He would take it out of the farmer.

Mr. KESSELL: I am not going to take it out of the farmer. The farmer is a self-respecting individual, who is willing to pay his fair share of taxation; but there is one section of the community who want to dodge taxation every time.

Mr. HUNTER: Who are they?

Mr. KESSELL: A section which is led by hon. members opposite. The man on the land is willing to pay his fair share of taxation; but it appears to me that every time a reduction in taxation is asked for, the man on the land pays for that reduction.

Mr. HUNTER: Your side takes good care that he pays all the time.

Mr. KESSELL: Certainly the up-country storekeeper makes out of the man on the land.

Mr. HUNTER: A lot of them would not be on the land if it were not for the up-country storekeepers.

Mr. KESSELL: A lot of them would stop there always if it were not for the up-country storekeeper.

Mr. HUNTER: What do you know about it?

Mr. KESSELL: I know a good bit about it. The man on the land is a self-respecting individual, and does not want to dodge rightful taxation; and I am sure that not one bonâ fide farmer in the country would support such an unbusiness-like proposition as that which now stands on the business-paper in the name of the hon. member for Maranoa.

Mr. RYAN: They are asking for it every day.

Mr. KESSELL: If the leader of the Opposition will listen to my remarks he can paraphrase them when he goes to the country. Unfortunately, many of the remarks made by me have been paraphrased by the hon. member in his own way.

Mr. THEODORE: Your remarks during the election campaign were not paraphrased.

Mr. KESSELL: No; they were absolutely lied about. Unfortunately, my remarks are twisted every time they are repeated.

Mr. RYAN: Who twists them?

Mr. KESSELL: The hon. member for one. While the man on the land wants cheap railway freights and every facility for getting his produce to market, he is not so wanting in self-respect as to ask the other part of the community to foot the bill. I admit that our rates are heavy, but the rates for produce and various other things carried by our railways must be put on a business basis, so that the earnings of the lines will pay interest and redemption on the money borrowed. I should like to see a railway in every agricultural portion of Queensland, if we could build such railways. Personally, I think that the Great

[Mr. Kessell.

Northern line should never have run along the coast, but should have gone on the other side of the range.

Mr. RYAN: What has that got to do with the question?

Mr. KESSELL: I am making this speech.

The PREMIER: You are doing it very well, too.

Mr. KESSELL: I say that the Great Northern Railway should have been run farther inland with small feeders run out right along the coast. In seconding the Address in Reply yesterday I referred to one line in my own district, the Mount Larcombe line, which would be a small feeder to the present railway.

Mr. MCCORMACK: It would all come to Brisbane, then.

Mr. KESSELL: I think that the railway lines of this State should as far as possible cater for the man on the land.

Mr. THEODORE: You want a line to a mining field in your district.

Mr. KESSELL: The hon. gentleman is perfectly correct. I want a line to the Mount Callide Coalfield in my electorate. If that line were built and the coalmine was a success, we would have from 1,500 to 2,000 honest workmen employed there. Right along this particular line there would also be hundreds of farmers settled. Instead of the Railway Commissioner reducing the present existing freights, I would like to see the Railway Commissioner advocating lines in every part of the State which has a ghost of a hope of paying interest and redemption. Everyone knows that agricultural lines do not pay.

Mr. HUNTER: That is nonsense. I just quoted agricultural lines that did pay.

Mr. KESSELL: The Killarney line does not pay, and it is in one of the richest agricultural districts in Queensland.

Mr. HUNTER: It is too short.

Mr. KESSELL: I know that the Mount Larcombe line will not pay when it is built, but it will be built under the guarantee system, and the landowners there are willing to make up the difference. At the present time the rate for cartage is very high in my district, and the landholders know that it would be cheaper if they could get the railway, and they are prepared to make up the difference if the line does not pay. In many instances the rate for cartage is ten times dearer than the rate would be on the railway. The rate of cartage on maize from the Mount Larcombe district is £1 per ton, but if the railway were built there it would not cost more than 8s. per ton. I am not giving the correct figures, but I give them proportionately. The man on the land is not afraid of paying his share. He is not afraid of a little debt unless it gets too big for him.

Mr. GILLIES: Do you believe in the guarantee system?

Mr. KESSELL: No. I would rather see the guarantee system abolished, but the guarantee system is at present the law of this State, and in my district there are a body of farmers who wish to stick to the law, and they are therefore asking for a line under the guarantee system. There is a line in my district that pays 4½ per cent.—the Many Peaks line. Since that line has been built along the Boyne Valley some

dozens of farmers have settled there. There is not the slightest doubt about it, but some parts of this resolution read very nicely. It says—

“That, in the opinion of this House, the freight charges on the Queensland Government railways are excessive, and require readjustment on long distance rates,” etc.

I say that the present rates do not, to my mind, retard closer settlement. (Hear, hear!) There are various other factors which tend to prevent men from going on the land. I say here that, as far as I am concerned, I would adopt the Canadian system for our railways. I would adopt the land-grant system of railways; I would build the railways out the same as the Canadian-Pacific Railway do in Canada, right into the Western areas in advance of settlement. As I told the House the other day, I would be in favour of preparing the land for the immigrants when they come here. But all these things require money, and the only way to get money is to go on the London money market. If we reduce the freights on our railways and at the end of the year show a tremendous loss on our railway services, what hope have we got if we go on the London money market for loans of £3,000,000, £4,000,000, or £10,000,000, when we show that we are not business men enough to at least make our existing lines pay interest and redemption. If the Minister for Railways presented the House with an alarming deficit of £300,000 on the railways, there would be a great song from the other side about mismanagement of the railways. There would be no talk then about the reduction of freights. Personally, I would not mind a reduction in the freights at all. I live 350 miles from here, and it would be much nicer for me if the freight to Brisbane was just half what it is now.

Mr. RYAN: Since when were you 350 miles from Brisbane?

Mr. KESSELL: I am 327 miles, at any rate, and that is near enough for a man who is as accurate as the hon. member. To be absolutely correct, I am 327 miles from here. There is a resident of Gladstone who is willing to try and get a market for Gladstone fish in Brisbane. He wishes to send down consignments of fish from Gladstone. The freights on fish are very moderate, but to follow this motion out to its logical conclusion, if the freights on fish were nothing it would pay much better still. This man did not come to me whining for a reduction in the freights. All he wanted was to see that the business was properly managed in Brisbane when the fish arrived here. He did not ask for a reduction of freight. I am thankful to say that in my electorate we have a class of people who are quite willing to pay their share of the freights.

Mr. RYAN: Your knowledge of your district is very limited.

Mr. KESSELL: Yes, I admit my knowledge is limited. The hon. gentleman's knowledge is also limited. He is not a walking encyclopædia.

Mr. RYAN: I don't claim to be one. You said yourself that your knowledge of your electorate was limited.

Mr. KESSELL: My knowledge of my electorate is limited, but all those limi-

tations it is a jolly sight bigger than that of any member on the other side of the House. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. THEODORE: That is the sort of modest statement we expect from you.

Mr. KESSELL: The people in my electorate know hon. members from the trash which they talked in my electorate during my campaign. They must have thought that the people were fools to believe all the lies that they told.

Mr. GILLIES: Lies?

Mr. KESSELL: Yes, lies.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KESSELL: I was only answering an interjection, Mr. Speaker. This resolution further says—

“3. Are a serious handicap to that development work so essential to the progress and prosperity of the State.”

Mr. LAND: It is a serious handicap when it is carried hundreds of miles.

Mr. KESSELL: Before I vote on a motion like this I would like to understand it. I certainly think that paragraph 3 is somewhat far from the mark. The greatest thing at the present moment that I can think of that is required for the development of this State is railway construction. The greatest need of the whole country and the greatest need of my district is railway construction. There is a large cattle industry in the district which I represent, and I will say this: that on no railway in the States of Australia is that particular industry so well catered for as in Queensland, which gives a most expeditious transport to the ports. As a man who is interested in cattle, I should like to see the rates cheaper, but, at the same time, I am not unfair enough to ask that I should be given a benefit, or that other cattle men should be given a benefit over other sections of the State. The freights, to my mind, are not a serious handicap to the development or progress and prosperity of the State. What is troubling the men who are interested in the progress of this State, and what is still unremoved, is the very dangerous legislation introduced in another quarter. The man on the land has been harassed by the fear of drastic legislation in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. GILLIES: What do you refer to?

Mr. KESSELL: The rural workers' log. (Opposition laughter.) I know there is something hollow in the laugh of the deputy leader of the Opposition. The rural workers' log is a nightmare to the Labour party.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RYAN: What about setting fire to the log?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: The hon. member says “burn the log.” (Laughter.)

Mr. KESSELL: That is in keeping with another statement made by a Labour man who said, “To hell with the farmers.”

Mr. GILLIES: Which member said that?

Mr. RYAN: Who said that?

Mr. KESSELL: It was admitted that it was said by Mr. Bell, of New South Wales.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Mr. Bell was not a member of the Labour party.

The PREMIER: By Mr. Campbell.

Mr. Kessell.]

Mr. GILLIES: The man who said that said, "To hell with the farmers and the Labour party."

The SPEAKER: Order, order! I must ask hon. members on both sides of the House to allow these amenities to cease. The leader of the Opposition is not setting a very good example to members on his side, and I must ask that the hon. member for Port Curtis be allowed to continue his speech without interruption.

Mr. KESSELL: I think, at this juncture, when so much serious work and serious talk must be put into the Sugar Growers Bill, which is to be brought before this House, our time should not be wasted as it is being wasted, on a motion like this. The interests of this State are being jeopardised by the uncertainty that exists in the sugar districts, and I think it is a pity that our time should be wasted in discussing a motion that has no particular end to serve except to air some grievances. A motion such as this, while on the face of it it looks all right, has no useful end to serve.

Mr. HUNTER: You admit it looks all right on paper.

Mr. KESSELL: I understood the mover of this motion to say that we should reduce the fares and freights on our railways when the income from railways exceeds the interest and redemption on the capital invested.

Mr. HUNTER: And working expenses.

Mr. KESSELL: Then, to be logical, if we agree to that, and there is a deficiency on the railways, what happens? Suppose that this year we have a profit of £50,000 and we reduce the fares and freights by £50,000, and next year we have a drought and we lose £200,000 or £300,000, will the hon. member increase the freights by 150 per cent.? When we come to look at a thing like this we cannot legislate for to-day or for to-morrow; we must legislate for the future. We cannot legislate for a few days or for a few weeks. We must not do anything that will retard the progress of the State in the near future. If we are going to ask the Government to go to the London money market to raise £1,000,000 to build railways, we must be behind them and support their administration in providing for interest and redemption on those lines. Then another position arises: We cannot look at one section of the finances alone. Now, we are going in for an expansive, and, I hope, expanding education system, which, to my mind, has a tremendous lot to do with the development of the State. I, for one, will vote for any motion brought along to this House to increase the educational facilities right throughout the State. If we are to do that—and the Education Department is always a spending department and has practically no revenue—if we are to do that each year we will find an increasing expenditure, and if our population grows, as we hope it will, every year our education expenditure will increase by leaps and bounds, and, I suppose, every member of the House would welcome that. If we are to do that, and, on the other hand, make the Railway Department nothing but a spending department, we cannot build railways out of revenue, and we must raise sufficient revenue to pay interest and redemption on existing lines. If we are to make every department of the State a spending department, I would like to see the heaven-born financier who will tell us how to make our revenue and expenditure meet. This year, I understand, we are

[Mr. Kessell.]

to have a small surplus, and I suppose when the Treasurer comes down to the House with his Ways and Means, we will find that practically every department will be wanting increases, and all of us are in favour of increasing the salaries and wages of the lowest up to the highest officer in the departments where it is deserved. If we are to do that sort of thing, and then with the other hand we are to take £150,000, as the hon. member for Maranoa said, off our railway revenue, where is this sort of thing to end? We are sent to this House by the electors on the assumption that we are a body of business men capable of carrying out the financial arrangements of this State.

Mr. HUNTER: We are expected to be fair in doing it.

Mr. KESSELL: I am very pleased at getting that interjection, and nobody knows better than the hon. member who interjected that in his business and in every other business there must be a fair deal, and that is all that any man in the country wants. It will be said, of course, that any member who speaks against this motion is against it, and I am quite prepared to hear it said that I got up in this House and opposed railway freights being reduced.

Mr. HUNTER: Is that not true?

Mr. KESSELL: It is absolutely untrue. I am in favour of railway freights being reduced if we can do it. What is the good of this ridiculous motion being brought forward? It is only set as a trap. I am in favour of railway freights and fares being reduced to a minimum if we can [5.30 p.m.] do it, but I am not fool enough to get up in this House and ask that the railway freights be reduced, so that we will make an enormous loss on our railways; and that is what this motion means. I think that this motion, as I said just now, should not have been brought forward. It is a ridiculous thing; it is only a motion to scratch the backs of the farmers; it will be misconstrued.

Mr. HUNTER: That is not a fact.

Mr. KESSELL: That is my opinion; I think it is.

Mr. HUNTER: It is nothing of the sort.

Mr. KESSELL: I say this: That I am in favour of a reduction of fares and freights—

Mr. HUNTER: Well, support it.

Mr. KESSELL: But I am a business man. The men on this side of the House are essentially business men, and some on that side, or I should say who sit on that side of the House, are also business men, and do they, particularly the mover of this motion, seriously think that this House, composed of a body of business men, or supposed to be so composed, is going to place that motion on the statute-books of this State?

Mr. HUNTER: Can you not adjust fares and freights?

Mr. KESSELL: I say that the mover of this motion cannot seriously think that this motion will be carried by a House of sensible men. If this motion were passed, we should deserve to be laughed at by business men from one end of Queensland to the other. Would the hon. member for Maranoa run his business on these lines?

Mr. HUNTER: Yes.

Mr. GILLIES: He delivers his goods free of charge.

Mr. KESSELL: The purchaser pays for them in his bills; no man delivers anything for nothing.

Mr. HUNTER: Quite so.

Mr. KESSELL: The business has to pay for everything, and what a man delivers for nothing is not worth anything.

Mr. HUNTER: But the storekeeper does not expect to make it all out of flour or all out of sugar; he averages things a bit.

Mr. KESSELL: We are averaging it. There is not a man in this House, particularly the mover of the motion, who believes in it. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the mover—well, he is laughing up his sleeve at the whole thing. He cannot assume that a body of men supposed to be sensible men will be prepared to see our railways lose £150,000 a year.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Ten per cent.

Mr. HUNTER: I said, "If 10 per cent. were taken off."

Mr. KESSELL: I want this House to understand, and the country to understand—my electorate understands it—that I am the friend of the man on the land, and if any concession is to be given, I say that the man on the land, who is the backbone of the country, ought to get it.

Mr. HUNTER: That is the old Tory gag.

Mr. KESSELL: If it is a Tory gag, I am proud of it, because the man on the land knows that his friend is not the wolf in sheep's clothing—the present Labour party.

Mr. KIRWAN: They did not say that at the last Federal election.

Mr. KESSELL: During the last few days we have heard a great deal of talk about the man on the land. I was born on the land, and I have been living in a farming district most of my life, and have had to do with men on the land during most of my career as a banker. I have made most of my income from the land; my supporters are men on the land; and I say emphatically that everything I can do for the man on the land will be done, not only cheerfully but also eagerly. But this motion—this catchpenny motion—brought before us not for our consideration, but to waste our time, is not in the interests of the man on the land.

Mr. BOWMAN: Why, then, are you continuing to waste our time?

Mr. KESSELL: We cannot go on with serious business before tea, and I felt it my duty to express my views as to this motion. And far be it from me to go to the other side of the House to ask for advice. I repeat that if any concessions are to be given to the man on the land, any concessions to advance the best interests of this State, I shall be in favour of them.

Mr. GILLIES: You can show it this session.

Mr. KESSELL: I shall always be there when a genuine motion comes up, but when this motion comes up, a motion with no object in view, I feel it to be my duty to express my views as strongly as possible. I am not against reduction of freights. I am not against reduction of fares. And, by the

way, I was surprised that the hon. member, in moving the motion, did not advocate a reduction in fares.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Free railways.

Mr. KESSELL: As far as I am concerned, I would be in favour of free railways; of course I would; everyone is in favour of getting things free if he can. But we have to look at the position in a sensible light.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And think of who pays.

Mr. HUNTER: You will take care that the poor farmer pays.

Mr. KESSELL: The poor farmer! Why, it nearly makes me sick. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: It will take a good deal to sicken you.

Mr. KESSELL: Well, I have stood a good deal. The poor farmer in my district—the rural workers' log has given him a nightmare. (Laughter.) Every time he sees one of these perambulating Labour johnnies coming, he is afraid that his children are going to be prevented from earning a livelihood.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He has heard too many Tory lies.

Mr. KESSELL: An hon. member says he has heard Tory lies. In one part of my electorate the late deputy leader of the Labour party, the member for Herbert, made the statement that the Chief Secretary—I am making this statement to answer the interjection—was deeply interested in the Wee Macgregor line, and that he had shares in a company in that particular area. He went to a large number of farmers and told them. Fortunately they listened, and one—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HUNTER: You are wasting time.

Mr. KESSELL: Mr. Speaker, is it fair for the hon. member for Maranoa to say that I am wasting time? (Laughter.) I feel quite indignant. (Continued laughter.) With reference to this particular motion, when I was interrupted I was dealing with the statement that the man on the land does not get his fair share of taxation. At the present moment, as far as my district is concerned, we have all sorts of taxation. We have for a start the land tax, the income tax, and then the shire tax, and so on; and now we have this motion, which, if it means anything, means that the party moving it wishes to see a deficiency on the railways. The next thing would be that every little farm in the country would be taxed to pay for the freights on the railways.

Mr. HUNTER: Would it not be a good thing to get more out of your income?

Mr. KESSELL: I pay my taxes cheerfully.

Mr. HUNTER: Why not increase the income tax?

Mr. KESSELL: At the present moment we are talking about the railways. I say if we pass this motion, and there is a big deficiency on the railway, the next thing the farmers will have to fear is that if by an awful calamity through any lapse of sanity of the people of Queensland, the Labour party are returned to power—

Mr. KIRWAN: That is a nice insult to an intelligent democracy.

Mr. Kessell.]

Mr. KESSELL: Under the Federal land tax, in connection with which there is an exemption of £5,000, we would have every foot of land in Queensland taxed, and if I know anything of the farmer, he prefers to pay a small railway freight, and his idea of fairness is a freight put on to cover interest and redemption and working expenses.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has occupied the time allowed under the Standing Order.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): If this motion comes to a vote to-night, I shall vote against it. It is only humbug. There is nothing in the motion at all, and the hon. member knows very well that if it is carried it will have no effect.

Mr. HUNTER: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Townsville in order in saying that in moving this motion I am humbugging?

HON. R. PHILP: So you are. There is no point of order.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Townsville is not in order in saying so. (Opposition laughter.)

HON. R. PHILP: To be parliamentary, I can only say that the hon. member for Maranoa knows very well that if he carried this motion to-night it will have no effect. What Government is going to reduce their revenue by £217,000 a year through any motion of this House? It is not likely. It is no use any member proposing a motion which will disturb the finances to that extent. The hon. member for Maranoa has not made out a case for this big reduction. The railways paid 4 per cent. last year. How many years did they pay 2 per cent. and 1½ per cent.? How much are some of the farming lines in Queensland paying now?

Mr. HUNTER: You reduced rates yourself at one time.

HON. R. PHILP: I had a good reason, but there is no reason for it now. Some railways were paying better at that time than they are now.

Mr. HUNTER: What year was that?

HON. R. PHILP: Let the hon. member look it up himself. While the hon. member for Maranoa was speaking, I have endeavoured to find out how some of the farming lines paid last year. At the present time there are no rates so low as the rates for farmers' produce. The rates for timber are very low too. The Minister has pointed out that the rates for butter, which is a growing industry, is much less than in Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr. GILLIES: The rate on cream is not less than in New South Wales.

HON. R. PHILP: On looking over some of the lines, I am astonished to find what they paid last year. I find that three lines in North Queensland, which are farmers' lines—Tolga to Malanda, Atherton to Tumoulin, and Cairns to Babinda—were all run at a loss last year. They did not pay working expenses. The line from Kingaroy to Nangano, which is a beautiful district and closely settled, paid 7s. 6d. last year, and then on the top of that the hon. member for Maranoa wants to make a further reduction.

Mr. HUNTER: They are paying better this year than ever they did, except last year, since they started.

[Mr. Kessell.

HON. R. PHILP: That may be. If we want to do a fair thing all round we should classify the railways, and find out who is paying too much and who is paying too little.

Mr. HUNTER: That is what I want.

HON. R. PHILP: You will find that it is not the farmers who are paying too little by a long way.

Mr. RYAN: That is what the hon. member for Maranoa says.

HON. R. PHILP: If the hon. member for Maranoa does not want to penalise the farmers, surely he does not want to do this?

Mr. HUNTER: I am asking for a fair deal for everybody.

HON. R. PHILP: It should be a fair thing all round. For what little I am doing, I am paying the highest rates in Queensland for the stuff I put on the railway, but I do not complain, because I know it is more for the interest of Queensland to consider fifty farmers than one man in Western Queensland. For that reason we should make concessions to farmers. The farmers ought to get the special benefits they are getting now, but they will not get them from the hon. member. I am interested in a business in North Queensland, and I find this little business is included in no less than three benefited areas. In connection with the line from Julia Creek to Cloncurry I am compelled to pay towards a loss this year. It is now a complete Western area, and then there is the Mount Cuthbert line.

Mr. COYNE: That is not fair.

HON. R. PHILP: It is very unfair. The railway has not benefited it one shilling. The people who have benefited by the railways should have been made to pay more than they did. The people who benefited by the Cloncurry Railway were the copper-mines only. One copper mine has paid dividends up to £300,000, and they are paying about £12 a year. One friend of mine is paying about £800 a year, and he does not benefit at all by it. This mine which is benefited should pay a higher rate, because it alone is benefited, and nobody else.

Mr. HUNTER: Support the motion.

HON. R. PHILP: If I supported the motion I should be making a further reduction on the £12 a year they pay. The copper won't last for ever; it does not grow again, and once these mines are worked out the burden will fall on the people in the district.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is falling on them now, unfortunately, under the Act.

HON. R. PHILP: Yes. The Julia Creek to Cloncurry line last year only paid 8s. 2d.; I think the year before it paid £2 18s. 1d. What would £10,000 more mean to that copper-mine which has paid at least £300,000 in dividends? They could afford to pay it, and by and by it may be worked out. I have always opposed this guarantee of 3 per cent. on railway extensions. I have always held that people in the distant Western portions of the State are just as much entitled to the railways as the people inside. Their line is built without any guarantee of any kind; in fact, the places which have benefited most by railway extensions are districts such as Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville. All these ports benefit much more by railway extension than any other part of the country.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Why not make them a benefited area?

HON. R. PHILP: I tried to do it when the Bill was first introduced, and the hon. members' friends opposed it. I got no support from the hon. member for Fortitude Valley at the time. If they charge rates that will pay interest and working expenses, nobody will expect them to do more than that. No Government will ever get more than interest and working expenses from the railways. When the returns amount to more than sufficient to do that, they must lower the rates or increase wages. A return which will pay interest and working expenses is all the people expect if they want to have the country opened up. I admit that the passenger rates want altering a good deal, but we ought to get as much out of our railways as we are getting now—that is, 4 per cent. We have borrowed a great deal of money to build our railways, and the people for whose benefit those railways have been built should pay the interest and working expenses in return for the benefit they get; but I certainly think we should alter the 3 per cent. which we now charge the people in a benefited area. I do not suppose this House will wipe it out altogether, but I think 3 per cent. is too much to expect a new district to pay from the outset on the cost of a railway. One of the richest agricultural districts in Queensland is along the Warwick-Killarney Railway, yet that railway only paid 7s. 9d. per cent. last year. That line was built at the cost of the whole of the people of Queensland, and the people in the district have no 3 per cent. to pay. They pay no more than the ordinary rates, although the line runs through beautiful agricultural land. The line from Pittsworth to Millmerran only paid 8s. 5d. per cent. I was quite horrified when I looked up the Commissioner's report and found the small earnings on these agricultural lines. Of course, I always knew that farming lines do not pay as well as the main Western lines. They never have paid as well, and we have always admitted in this House that, if we could get settlement, we could afford to lose money on farming lines. But to agree to submit to a further loss of £217,000 would be suicidal on the part of the Secretary for Railways. We could not possibly expect the hon. gentleman to accept a motion of this sort. We shall have to be very careful of our finances, and we shall make a mistake if we go on spending money in building railways at the rate we have been doing for the last two or three years. I think the Government will be wise if they spend during the next three years what they spent last year. We are going to have the greatest difficulty in getting more loan money for some time for public works. We see what has happened in other States. We see how Victoria has fared. The Government tried to borrow £4,000,000 for the redemption of loans, and they have got £3,000,000. In New South Wales they cannot get money. Victoria and South Australia had to borrow money temporarily from Queensland because they were not able to get it in the old country on fair terms. We know that the Premier of Western Australia went home to try and raise a loan, and he came back the other day without any money in his pocket. If the Government are not above taking a little advice from me, I would tell them some of the reasons why people at home just now are opposed to lending us their money. One reason is that they can get better interest

elsewhere. They get better interest in Canada, for instance. Then the people with money to lend in the old country say, "We do not mind paying the same taxes as you pay yourselves, but it is unfair to tax us more than you tax yourselves." The absentee land tax does not amount to much altogether, but it does stick in the gizzard of the people who have money to lend. They say, "Properties are falling into our hands as mortgagees. We do not want the properties, and we are prepared to part with them to-morrow if we could get our money back; but because we live in England we have to pay double the amount of land tax that you have to pay yourselves."

Mr. RYAN: They can easily sell land now.

HON. R. PHILP: I do not know. They are willing to sell. Then, again, there is our income tax. We charge absentees a heavier income tax than we impose upon people who are resident in the State. I do not think the absentee income tax yields more than £2,000 or £3,000 a year, and I would advise the Treasurer to bring in a Bill even this session and make the income tax the same for absentees as for people living in Queensland. It would help him tremendously when he wants to get that £13,000,000 in the year 1915, and it would help him tremendously when he wants to get more money for the construction of public works, and the sum he now receives from the tax does not amount to anything at all. The Federal land tax on absentees does not bring in more than £60,000, and the benefit to Australia would be more than ten times that amount if the rate of taxation was made uniform.

Mr. RYAN: Money is tight at present all over the world.

HON. R. PHILP: It is. Still, Queensland was able to get money at the beginning of this year, and she could get money now for good investments, but the Britisher does object to having to pay more in taxation than the people here. Taxation in Great Britain is not low, and, between the two, there are lots of people who are sending their money to Canada and even to Switzerland to avoid the Australian and British taxes. It is only a matter of £ s. d. with them—there is no sentiment about it. If we want to get money on the best terms, we shall have to put the people who have the money to lend on the same terms with regard to taxation that we are on ourselves.

Mr. RYAN: You are laying down a very startling proposition.

HON. R. PHILP: I do not think so. We want money, and the only people who have money to lend us in large quantities are the British people. The French people do not lend us money.

Mr. RYAN: Is not money as dear in Canada?

HON. R. PHILP: It is dearer than in Australia.

Mr. RYAN: Have they no absentee tax in Canada?

HON. R. PHILP: They have no absentee tax and they have no income tax.

Mr. RYAN: Then how do you explain money being dear there?

HON. R. PHILP: I will tell you. There is no Labour party in Canada. (Opposition

Hon. R. Philp.]

laughter.) There is a great demand for money in Canada. For every 100,000 acres we put under cultivation they put millions of acres under the plough, and they want money to develop the land, and, as a consequence, money is dearer there than it is here. Then people believe they have more security for their money in Canada. When I went home, people were selling out in England and putting their money into Canada, but there were not many of those who were selling out who were putting their money into Australia, I am sorry to say. Money is just like flour, tea, or sugar. When there is a big demand for it the price rises. At the present time there is a feeling of insecurity with regard to Australian securities on the part of the people at home in consequence of the absentee, land, and income taxes, and they prefer to lend their money to countries where such taxes do not exist. Millions of English money are going to South America—to Argentina. Nearly all the railways in that country are owned by British companies, and they are making a good deal of money out of them. People are cosmopolitan nowadays. So long as they get good security and a good return on their money, they do not care where they invest it. The British public has served Australia very well in lending us money at a low rate of interest. I believe, as a matter of fact, money is cheaper in Australia to-day than in any other British possession.

Mr. RYAN: Even though there are absentee taxes here.

Hon. R. PHILP: We have a great deal of money of our own in Australia. Interest rates have never been high. We have very large life insurance companies which lend their money at low rates of interest, and at the present time there is not a great demand for money in Australia. People do not see their way to go into business; wages are high, and strikes are rife, and people are very cautious about embarking in business.

At 7 o'clock the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*), who was received with "Hear, hears!" said: I desire to say a few words on this subject. As has been remarked before, we are very fortunate in having a gentleman like the present Governor at the head of the State. We are also very fortunate in having a Government who have done so well for the State during the past year. Speaking for myself, I can say that I have received every courtesy from Ministers, the Under Secretaries, and all the Government officers with whom I have had business to transact, and I believe that, so far as they could, the Government have granted everything that was reasonable. We may sometimes ask for things which are a little bit unreasonable, and sometimes we do not expect to get what we ask for, but I believe that every reasonable request has been granted. We, as a House, advised the Government to go slow, and yet some of us have been disappointed at not getting as much money spent in our electorates as we wished.

[*Hon. R. Philp.*]

I, for one, certainly have been. There is one little railway, promised about forty years ago, that I should have liked to have seen constructed. The Premier, however, has given us a promise that that line will be gone on with very shortly, so I shall not say anything about the present. I believe the hon. gentleman will proceed with the construction of that railway, and I hope he will do so very soon. The Premier has spoken of his travels in the North and North-west. He spent some little time—I dare say he thought it was a good while—in one district with which I am familiar, but those who have been out there know that he merely took a glance at the situation, and that he fell into the same mistake as other people fall into who only go there once on a visit. The hon. gentleman said the country was only half stocked. I would remind him that half stocked in a good season might mean overstocked in a bad season. We have some wonderful grasses out West, and when they dry and fall to the ground they are equal as fodder to any hay we can produce on the Downs. If I had my way, I would make it compulsory for every member of the Assembly to travel over the State, because, if they did that, when they came to the House they would know something about what they were talking about.

Mr. GILLIES: They want educating about the North.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Decidedly they do. Many members, especially members on the other side of the House, know very little of the State outside Brisbane. Members opposite are undoubtedly a very fine class of men, but their knowledge of Queensland is, in some cases, limited to Queen street. That is why we as a country party are driven to doing things which we would not do otherwise. We have members on that side continually advocating the purchase of the Brisbane trams by the Government, and yet there are thousands of people in the interior who are 40 miles away from their mail offices. Still, those members would purchase the trams, and so possibly get to picture shows $\frac{1}{2}$ d. cheaper, and there are some who advocate an enormous expenditure for the construction of a bridge across the river. I say that we have a right on behalf of the country people to object to such useless expenditure in large cities. Some reference has been made to the meat industry, and most wild statements have been made with regard to a meat company which has established works down the river. The persons who made those statements must think that the people of Queensland are easily gulled. One statement was that the company was hunted out of New South Wales.

Mr. GILLIES: Which company?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The one down the river. Any man who knows anything about the government of any State or country, knows perfectly well that certain laws govern each State, and that so long as anyone comes within those laws he has a right to go into the country without asking anyone's permission. The company I refer to came here without asking anyone's permission to enter the country.

The PREMIER: Or any favour.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, without asking any favour; and I say the only people who have so far gained by their coming here are the Labour party, for the company have employed a large number of men. I wish to allude especially to a statement made by the leader of the Opposition, a gentleman whom

I respect very highly. Of course he looks at things from a legal point of view. I look at them from a farmer's point of view. I am very sorry that he is not the farmer and that I am not the lawyer, as I believe I should be in a very much better position. The statement I refer to was made by the hon. member at a Labour convention, where he said—

“We actually find the Premier of the State going to Adelaide and saying he was pleased that the meat trust of America was to establish works on the banks of the Brisbane River.

“A Voice: Shame on him.

“Mr. RYAN: As the Labour daily Press has pointed out, beef in America is 1s. 7d. per lb., and if we allow the meat trust here, a similar state of affairs will be seen in Queensland.”

Why do they not get better information without making use of such statements as that? Here we have the very latest from America from the trade itself.

Mr. GILLIES: Oh! That is very reliable.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, it is reliable. While hon. gentlemen opposite say that they will be up against the farmers and there will be no more competition if this company comes here, I can show from this that they are paying double the price for their cattle than what we are getting here.

Mr. BOOKER: Three times the price.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, and they are selling their meat cheaper retail than we are here.

Mr. RYAN: Cheaper than here?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, undoubtedly. This statement I am quoting from is from a Government source, and is as reliable as anything which comes from this House. It says here—

“Buenos Ayres, Tuesday.—The Government has consulted leading politicians, all of whom are cattle-breeders, and has been advised not to intervene between the Argentine meat companies and the American beef trust, unless the Americans as sole controllers endeavoured to establish arbitrary prices for stock.”

Now these are the buyers, the men themselves.

Mr. THEODORE: What are you quoting from?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is in all the Press. You gentlemen opposite must have all seen it. I am quoting from the cable that appeared in the “Daily Mail,” but it appeared in all of the papers. It goes on—

“American buyers maintained that they were able to pay £13 10s. to £14 per head, and sell at an average of 3½d. per lb. without making a loss.”

The PREMIER: That is in the Argentine?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. There it is either one thing or the other. How can a company raise the price of the stock and sell the meat cheaper? They use better machinery and have a better system of treatment, and they employ a large number of men. How is such a company going to injure Queensland, I would like to know? How can it injure Queensland?

Mr. THEODORE: You pretend to be very innocent on that question?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well I assure the hon. gentleman that I am. (Laughter.) If such a company cuts down the price of stock, then the Government which is in power, whether it be Labour or Liberal, would help us to form co-operative companies. They would give us half the amount for the erection of meatworks, which the present Government have offered us, and we could go in for co-operative enterprises.

Mr. GILLIES: How do you know that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Because we have had their promise. (Opposition laughter.) There is no possibility of the trust fixing the prices to suit themselves, because we have our railways. (Hear, hear!) More than that, we undoubtedly have the production in our own hands, and we can just please ourselves whether we give it to them or not. That would mean that we would only give it to them so long as it paid us to do so. We have had a great noise lately about the cost of living, and we have been told the producers, or someone else, are making a fortune out of it.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Cheese has gone up.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. gentleman would not like to have to manufacture cheese at the price it is now, or he would have to work a lot harder than ever he has done. (Government laughter.) I can give some prices of commodities which I got from the daily Press to-day. They appeared in all the papers. They are all the same. Flour to-day is 12s. per bag. I remember when the price of flour was £1 12s. a bag. That was the ordinary price which we had to pay for our flour from South Australia, and I have sold hundreds of bags at that price.

Mr. MCCORMACK: What weight of bag?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: 200 lb. Potatoes, old, are 5s. 6d. to 6s. 7d., and new 7s. to 7s. 6d. It used to be £1 and £1 5s. That is the average price. I can remember when they were £25 per ton, and I paid £25 per ton for them. These are the farmers' prices that I am giving now: Cheese is quoted at 7½d. to 8d. per lb., and butter from 1s. 1d. to 1s. 1½d. Before you got local production, butter was always sold retail at 1s. 6d. per lb., and cheese cost 1s. per lb. wholesale landed in Queensland. I know exactly what I am talking about in connection with these prices. Bacon is quoted at 7½d. to 9d. per lb., and hams 11½d. per lb. The price for bacon used to be from 10d. to 1s., and for English hams the price was 1s. 6d. per lb.

Mr. RYAN: Do you say that the cost of living is not going up?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not the cost of necessaries of life. The cost of living generally has gone up I know. I know I could increase the cost of my living from £100 to £200 a year if I wished to. If we can raise a man's wages so much the better. (Hear, hear!) There is no doubt that a man getting £4 a week is a better citizen than the man getting £2 a week. (Hear, hear!) Chaff is quoted at 3s. to 6s. per bag, and out of that has to come £2 per ton for expenses. That shows how many hours a day the farmer has got to work in order to give the people cheap food. The farmer has to work all hours of the night, and he also has to get his children to help him to

Mr. Bebbington.]

work just for the simple reason that the people who are living in the cities may go to the picture shows and may have cheap food. (Laughter.)

Mr. BOOKER: And keep our friends opposite in comfort.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. Undoubtedly that is the reason for it. Now I want to have something to say about what I consider is Queensland's greatest pest. I refer to the prickly pear. I think if Queensland suspended every other industry and put all her energies into getting rid of the prickly-pear pest, it would be doing something good for the State. When we consider that 38,000,000 acres of our good country is infested with this pest, I say that this matter has got to be regarded in a serious way. I say that we must regard Mr. Roberts as a benefactor to Queensland. I hope that the Government will deal with him as liberally as possible in the matter of his experiments with the prickly-pear pest. It is just possible that the Government may want to be too strict with the contract. I know that you have a big difficulty in keeping the land cleared after you have once cleared it. We know that there is a lot of land near Government reserves, for instance, and they are infested with prickly pear. That land is a rental and more than a rental to keep it clear of pear, and the least the Government can do when the people clear their lands adjoining reserves is to see that the Government reserves are kept clear, and they can do that by letting these people have the land and give them something into the bargain for keeping down the pest.

Mr. COYNE: Would it not be better for the Government to clear the pest off themselves?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, if they can do it. The Minister for Lands said that everything is going on splendidly in connection with the experiments, and there are hundreds of people watching and waiting to hear what the Minister has got to say about it. There are all sorts of stories told about it, some referring to a failure and some to success, and I know that hundreds of men are watching the results, as it means to them the difference between success and ruin. The pear has got them in its clutches to such an extent that they are nearly going to leave their homes, so you can understand how these men are carefully watching for any escape from this pest. The Minister has informed me that it is undoubtedly going to be a success, and that Mr. Roberts is going to build a very large factory to manufacture his gas and to manufacture machinery. I certainly hope, if there is any difficulty about money or anything else, that the Government will step in and give him everything he wants. You cannot be too liberal with him, so long as he is going to destroy the pear, and I trust, when it is a proved success, that there will be a good many small machines manufactured, and if private enterprise does not step in and manufacture them, let the Government manufacture them by all means, and let the farmers have them free of cost to enable them to deal with this awful pest and to regain the land which has already been taken possession of. There are plenty of splendid farms composed of the very best land we have, and worth £5 or £6 an acre, and I saw some only a fortnight ago where there are only about 30 acres cultivated and clear of pear, and as to the rest, you could

[Mr. Bebbington.]

not get a wallaby through the pear. If that land could be cleared at a cost of about £1 10s. an acre, undoubtedly I say Mr. Roberts will be a benefactor to Queensland, and I am quite sure the Government will do everything they possibly can to encourage him. Now, I would like to say a few words on education. We have a good deal to thank the Government for in giving us these high schools in the country, but we want to go further than that. It is no use us having high schools unless we have qualified teachers who can pass the children into these schools, and I certainly object very strongly to unclassified teachers being placed in country schools—when that is the only opportunity that country children have of getting an education—and the best teachers kept in the towns. It would be very much better, both for the teachers and for the children, if we had fully qualified teachers sent out to the country and allow the young teachers to come into the towns where they can study and pass examinations to their own benefit. I say high schools are no good unless we have the teachers who can pass the scholars up to them. Dealing with the Elections Act—we shall have to trust the Government to do the best they can in that matter. I do not profess to be an expert in election matters, and I leave it to my friends opposite, but in the past election there was nothing whatever to stop a stranger, in many of the districts, from voting three times. He could vote three times as easy as voting once. Now we pass to the question of public borrowing. I shall deal with that matter later on, but, just in passing, I would like to say that as we have to borrow so much, and we are so dependent on the British money-lender, would it not be better, in a business-like way, to show them some kind of a balance-sheet—something of what our resources in Queensland are, and in what way the money is expended? I mean our railways. If we put money into a railway—very often the land through which the railway goes is only worth £1 10s. an acre or perhaps nothing before the railway was built, but when the railway goes through it is often sold up to £5 or £6 an acre.

Mr. HUXHAM: Don't we give them full information?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, we don't. I think it would be better to give them all the information we possibly can. There is a reference in the Governor's Speech to mineral oil, and I certainly hope that this industry will be a big success, because with our oil engines and the different things we are running now, if there is one thing we need cheap, it is oil, and I may say that it is one of the most difficult things to get, because if a merchant or commercial traveller is travelling on the Downs, he is very anxious to sell machinery and everything in that line, but he will only take an order for oil fuel merely as a favour.

Mr. GILLIES: Why is that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Because, like many other lines, there is no profit in it.

Mr. GILLIES: Ah!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I can see that the hon. member does not know very much about the business, and for his information I will give some particulars. If a commercial traveller on the Downs takes an order for fuel oil, he comes down here to Eris-

bane, and has to hand the order over to another firm, and the only allowance he gets is 2d. per gallon, and he has to send his cheque for the value of the oil, and take all the responsibility. Therefore you cannot wonder why they almost refuse to take orders for fuel oil, except as a favour. I certainly hope if this business is successful, that the Government will keep possession of it and let us have it as cheaply as possible.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear! A piece of socialism.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There is nothing socialistic about keeping what we have got. I always like to keep what I have got. (Laughter.) We now come to the question of land settlement. I have heard a good many people—usually people from the city and Ministers—talk about ready-made farms on which to put the people when they come here. If there is one thing that I would object to, it is to making farms ready for immigrants.

Mr. GILLIES: Why?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is the one thing that would be a failure, because you cannot make farms to suit other people; neither can you do as much with labour that you have to pay for as a man can do with his own labour. We have already had evidence of that where roads were required for the settlers in the Bell district. What was the result? The roads were very good, but they were added on to the price of those farms, and they cost about four times as much as the farmer could have done the work himself; and if you are going to make farms ready for people to go on to and you are going to do a lot of improvements they do not want, and then charge it on, how long are they going to stop on it? I very much prefer our Agricultural Bank. A man can go and take up his piece of land, and he can settle to work himself as hard as he likes, and then he can come down to the bank and he can get half the value of his own labour. That is finding the man himself in work. He has not to pay four times the value of the labour to somebody else who will be moping about half the time. I certainly object very strongly to ready-made farms. I say it is courting failure. Now, there has been some misunderstanding amongst the farmers who have been expecting rather too much from the repurchased estates. They are asking that their interest shall be reduced to 4 per cent. Every man in this House knows perfectly well that the Government cannot lend out money at 4 per cent. per annum, so that if I was waited on by a deputation on a question like that, I would tell them straight out that it was impossible to get money at 4 per cent., and that they might just as well take their chance at 5 per cent.

Mr. BERTRAM: The Federal Government can do it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Federal Government cannot lend money at 4 per cent. You can take my word for that. If they could, then we could soon place a few millions. I believe that everything has been done and that everything that can be will be done to keep these men on the land, and any man who will work his farm and try to make a success of it, that man will have every encouragement and every assistance

to stay on his farm; but the man who comes along and takes up a piece of land purely for speculation—I do not see that this Government should step in and help him in his speculation. And then we come down to the Stock and Produce Agents Bill—undoubtedly the thing to which we have been looking forward. It is a measure that no other Government in Australia, whether Labour or any other, has ever undertaken. The

[7.30 p.m.] Under Secretary has sent to all the other States of Australia, and not a single one of them has a statute on their books dealing with the selling of produce, so that we shall certainly be the first in that respect. Many of the agents for our factories stand on a very different footing altogether. These large merchants work under agreement, and the commission and the price they shall sell at are fixed, so that there is no possible chance of their getting any more than that to which they have agreed. And more than that, the company with which I am connected has been dealing for many years—about seven or eight years, I should say—with the same firm, and we are perfectly satisfied. Consequently, we are not aiming at those people who do their business honestly, but are only desirous of dealing with those who are deliberately trying to rob the consignee. Cases have been traced that were very far from being what they should be, and these are the object of the introduction of this Bill. All laws are the same; and this one may hurt some persons whom we do not want to hurt; but it should be understood that we only desire to punish those who have been deliberately robbing the producer of his produce. Then I believe that the market accommodation is utterly inadequate for the produce that is sent down to it, and I think myself that in the interests of the consumer and the producer alike the Agricultural Department should spend a considerable sum of money in putting up a proper market, something like the wool stores that are to be seen in Brisbane, where we could have well-lighted rooms on the bottom floors for the display of our produce, to which the purchaser could come and buy from whom he liked or wherever he liked. The rooms higher up could be used for storage. In England the railway companies treat the people very differently from the way in which we are treated here, for they build large warehouses where they store cargoes of wheat, supply bags, and do everything else, merely to get the freight. And I think it is in the interests of both consumer and producer that our Agricultural Department should spend a small sum of money, say £20,000, in putting up a market, with well-lighted rooms on the bottom floor and storage rooms above, to which our country people could send their stuff down and put a reserve on it, so that if it were not sold it could be kept in storage at a small charge, which, I believe, would certainly clear off the interest and redemption of the money in a very reasonable time. I believe that the present building covers an excellent site, but on all that valuable piece of land there is only one story, and I think it would be just as well to put up a six or seven storied building, where storage could be got at a small charge that would quite pay interest and redemption. A sum of £20,000 would be quite enough to start. The leader of the Opposition the other night put forward two platforms—one offered by the Govern-

Mr. Bebbington.]

ment and one put forward by himself—apparently for the farmer to choose between them. He dealt with them in a legal way, and now I want to deal with them from the farmers' point of view. He dealt with it very ably from his own point of view. These legal men always, when they have a weak case, try to cover up as much as possible, and he did that very nicely; he covered up all the ugly parts and showed only the good ones. I am sure that he will give me the privilege of giving my point of view in the same way.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Give us the farmers' platform, too.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The first thing that we see is that the State and local government should own all the means of production, distribution, and exchange. That means that those who own the means of production, distribution, and exchange really own those who produce it. There is no getting away from that, and it means going right back to slavery. (Laughter.) On the sugar plantations they had their slaves producing their food for them, and now they want to give us State slavery, which is ten times worse than proprietary slavery, because the proprietor did, at any rate, have an interest in his slave to the extent of his value. These are the lovely things the hon. member is offering to the farmers. He said we should restrict borrowing, and especially he said he was in favour of the establishment of any effective sinking fund. Now, I do not see why we should pay a large sum of money for posterity, and tax ourselves to help those who have done nothing for us. If we establish our railways and work up our trade, and then hand them down with a country like this, I think it is quite sufficient. And then we come to a graduated land tax on land values. There are just three lines here which I wish to read, and ask any man who knows anything about farming to tell me how the man on the land is going to exist if these come into operation. No, they are pandering to the people who live in the big cities, where most of the votes are; they are looking to the man on the land to support the man in the town, and yet they are trying to do something that will have the effect of driving everybody from the land into the town. First there is the establishment of a sinking fund, then there is the graduated land tax, and then the leasehold system of land tenure; and I ask any hon. member who knows anything about farming how the man on the land is going to live if those three things are carried into effect? Now they throw out a sprat, and they say: We will give you perpetual lease, with the right of arranging the rent when they like and as they like. What can we expect from a body of men who to-day put on a land tax in Western Queensland of three times the rental value? What sort of a rent can we expect them to put on a leasehold tenure? They say that they want every man to have the results of his labour; but I say that in this they are wanting and doing everything possible to give the man in the city the results of the man's labour in the country. Let me show how the perpetual lease works.

Mr. GILLIES: How does it work in England?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This country is not like England. The hon. member does not

[Mr. Bebbington.]

know much of what he is talking about. I expect something better from a farmer. I expected he would know what a selection meant, and that he would know something of the hardships, the privations, and the sacrifices of a man who takes up a scrub selection. Now, you give a man a scrub farm on a lease, and it takes him twenty years to get it into anything like order, and you say he has to have a renewal of the rent—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed under the Standing Orders.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): I think the House ought to be full of gratitude to the hon. member who has just sat down for infusing a little life into the debate. The most noticeable thing last night was the disinclination on the part of the Government supporters to say anything at all in favour of the Governor's Speech.

Mr. BOWMAN: Especially Ministers.

Mr. LENNON: Especially the Ministers. Their thick-and-thin supporters had nothing to say on the question. I think that that may be accepted at once as an indication of the fact that the Governor's Speech means very little. It is a very colourless production indeed, and I think if he had the opportunity a prominent politician would be inclined to speak of it as a gelatinous compound. I will not at all attempt to traverse the remarks—

The SPEAKER: Order! I apologise to the House for having inadvertently followed the course which I took under Standing Order 107 this afternoon. I was under the impression for the moment that the period of forty minutes allowed on that motion operated on the present debate. I now call upon the hon. member for Drayton to speak for the period of one hour if he so desires.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I may say that we are really grateful to you for keeping us in order very often. (Hear, hear!) I will just resume my address on the benefits which the leader of the Opposition said the farmers were going to get from his party. I say that that is driving us to worse slavery than proprietary slavery.

Mr. RYAN: Your arguments are entirely original.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the hon. member had ever taken up a scrub farm, or ever worked one—if he had ever been in the country and knew anything about it—he would not have allowed such a clause to go into that platform. I am sure he would not, because I believe he honestly desires that every man should have the result of his labour, but it is unfortunate that they have so little information on the subject. If they had a few farmers in their ranks who would come over to this side and get a little information it would do them an enormous amount of good. The effect of the operation of those clauses would simply be to give the man in the city the result of the labour of the man in the country, because it takes a farmer twenty years to get a selection up to anything like order. If you give him a lease

for twenty years, you then take back the result of his labour. What does he make sacrifices for? Why does he go short of food and clothing and everything else? Why do his wife and family stay up there? Is it not to make it their home, and not to get a lease? But the Labour party are offering a lease that is not worth the paper it is written on, simply because you can raise the rent until the value of the land is nothing. Are you going to let a man spend the best years of his life to bring a farm to a good standard, and then take it over and give it back to the State—to the people who have sat in the picture rooms night after night? Are they to share the labour of the man who has gone into the country and felled the scrub and sacrificed everything? I say not. Those are the conditions which they offer, and say they are good for farmers. (Laughter.) What is all this done for? It is done simply that the people in the cities may live free of taxation, at the expense of the man on the land.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will give proof from one of their own men at one time—that is Dr. Kidston. I was going with him up North, and I entered into conversation with him on different matters. He said, "There is no need for taxation in Queensland." I knew what he was driving at, but I said, "Why not?" He said, "There is plenty of State land in Queensland, and plenty more that ought to be State land, and if you only get the rents high enough the people in the cities can live free of taxation." I have given the hon. gentleman's own words; he will tell you himself that he said it. Those are the beautiful things that the leader of the Opposition offers to the farmers, instead of what we are offered here. I hope that the Labour party will send their platform up to the farmers so that they can read it. Then there is another thing mentioned—State agency for all farm products with a view to establishing standard prices. They are always talking about reducing the cost of living, and I wish them luck if they can do it; but if they want to reduce the cost of living, and get it out of our bones, I say "No."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not going to associate hon. members on the other side with what is done in places where Labour reigns supreme, but a little thing happened to a traveller which will show what we may expect if such a thing did happen. I am not going to blame hon. members opposite, because they are just as honourable as we are. (Laughter.) What has happened is this—they do not know what they are doing. (Laughter.) If they calculated what they were doing, or what they were dragging us to, it would be a different thing altogether. (Laughter.) They would be perfectly honourable if they had the knowledge. (Laughter.) But they have not. (Renewed laughter.) I will read a quotation from "Life" to give hon. members an idea of what is likely to happen under Labour rule.

Mr. FHELLY: You were at the Trades Hall yesterday. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly I was, and the hon. member treated me very kindly, but I will admit that what I was most afraid of

was the possibility that he would get out and leave me to pay the cab fare. (Laughter.) This is the quotation—

"The persecution of non-unionists at Broken Hill is carried to curious lengths. A letter in the daily Press gives the experience of a writer in a Broken Hill hotel—

"Everyone here is supposed to be provided with a card of a certain colour each month to show it as a sign of financial stability as a good unionist. Failure to produce the card on demand renders one liable to be crushed. My card was demanded, and was not produced. Before I knew where I was I was left sitting at the table by myself as if I had a disease. I thought I would then have tea in peace, but the waiter refused to serve me. I was not going to be beaten, and went out, thinking to buy something to eat, but found I had been published as a scab, and could not get served. This is Labour rule."

(Laughter.) Those are some of the lovely things that the leader of the Opposition has to offer to the farmer. I know they are not his own. I know that he is too honourable for that. I thank hon. members very kindly for the attention they have paid me this evening.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): After the breezy interval which has occurred since I last attempted to address the House, I would like to say that I have no intention whatever of following the exceedingly comprehensive speech just delivered. It covered so much ground that time would not permit of my attempting to cope with it in any respect at all. In the first place, I have to say that I experience no alarm at all at the prospect of the perpetual leasehold system in place of the freehold system. Is it not most remarkable that the most prosperous industry we have in Australia is all the time conducted on the leasehold principle? I refer to the pastoral industry.

Mr. LAND: And a short lease, too.

Mr. LENNON: Ninety-five per cent. of the holdings are held under lease, and that is the most prosperous industry we have in Australia.

Mr. RYAN: And Labour members represent those constituencies.

Mr. LENNON: I would like also to call attention to one instance of the benefits of a leasehold tenure which came under my notice when I was travelling in the North. Like instances occur in larger centres, such as Melbourne and London, but I will take Rockhampton as an example. In Rockhampton they have a municipal area which came into their hands as a free gift from the Government, and they have leased that land on the perpetual lease system, and it is about the best source of revenue in the possession of the municipal council of Rockhampton. There is an instance in local government of the benefits arising from the leasehold system of tenure. Apply it to the whole State, and you have in a nutshell what the leasehold principle could do for Queensland or for any other State. The idea of saying that people could not possibly live under the leasehold system is too ridiculous for me to attempt to deny it. In the city of London some of the

Mr. Lennon.

largest businesses in the world are carried on, and the people carrying on those businesses do not own the freehold.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You do not consider that a good system, do you?

Mr. LENNON: I consider the perpetual lease system is in every way preferable to the freehold system. I think the State is the best landlord. See what landlordism has done in the old land, and I venture to say that the same state of things is gradually growing in Australia, and that we are threatened with the same landlord curse that exists in other parts of the world. Without spending too much time on the matter, it has been very refreshing to me to find that we have a farmers' party after all. Not quite so strong as we expected to find it. Just let us carry our minds back for a few days or a few weeks. I remember when Mr. Arnold Wienholt announced himself as a candidate for the Wide Bay electorate, and spoke quite distinctly of himself as the farmers' selection. He repeated that statement only the other day at the expression of amenities at the declaration of the poll in Maryborough, when he thanked the farmers for their support, and spoke of the Farmers' Union, and said that he was their representative, ignoring altogether the great People's Progressive League and the great democratic and Liberal Government. It is evident, therefore, that we have a farmers' party, though we have not got the belligerent party that we might have expected from the remarks made by Mr. Wienholt. The same gentleman also laid stress on the fact that the party was in existence by saying that the gallant Colonel Rankin is to be the next Premier of Queensland. I understand that gentleman is chairman of this farmers' party, and the hon. member who has just sat down is the deputy leader. Possibly the gallant colonel thought it would be better if the deputy leader did the talking, as he wishes to hide himself slightly behind his deputy at the present time. I see by this morning's paper that he has practically disowned any intention of the farmers' party doing anything to break up the great democratic party of which we have heard so much from the Home Secretary in times gone by.

The HOME SECRETARY: Was that the time when you were alluding to Antonio Torio?

Mr. LENNON: Now we discover there is a farmers' party. We have a meek party—a mild party—quite an apologetic party—supremely thankful for the smallest of small mercies—ready indeed to grovel at the feet of the Liberal party.

Mr. RYAN: A repentant party.

Mr. LENNON: Very penitent indeed. Quite apologetic that they have asked for so many things that they did not expect to get. They acted, apparently, on the principle of asking for a great deal more than they want, in the hope that they may get something that they desire. Perhaps the hon. member who has just sat down has found that it is the best-paying method he could adopt, and I have no doubt that some of the younger members of the House—possibly the newly-elected member for Fassifern—will take heed of the method that has proved so successful in the case of the hon. member for Drayton. Enough of the farmers party! I would like to say that from what we saw last night the party on the other side could evidently discover no good in this policy of the Government.

[Mr. Lennon.

I stated a while ago that probably under different circumstances it would be pronounced to be a gelatinous compound. There is nothing in it that you can grip hold of. It is a jelly-fish sort of policy—a sort of policy which, if you do not like it, can be altered to suit the circumstances.

We see that already the leader [8 p.m.] of the Government has been suggesting that many other things may be done this session besides those named in the Governor's Speech. In one of the first paragraphs of the Speech the Government express anxiety with regard to the sugar industry. I suppose that is a fitting thing now that the Federal election is over, but for the last four or five years I have endeavoured, in season and out of season, to arouse the Government to some sense of anxiety with regard to the sugar industry, but have not succeeded. Possibly they think that if their party has the reins of government in the Federal Parliament they may be able to work matters in connection with the industry more in accordance with their ideas. The Premier said last night that they expected to get an increase in the Customs duty. I do not know on what grounds he bases that hope, when we bear in mind that the leader of the so-called Liberal party—the Tory party, the fusion party—in the Federal Parliament is a pronounced freetrader.

Mr. MORGAN: So is Billy Hughes.

Mr. LENNON: Mr. Hughes was a freetrader.

Mr. MORGAN: He is, and so is Mr. Fisher.

Mr. LENNON: Mr. Hughes was a freetrader, and I am quite prepared to admit that several members of the Labour party were freetraders at one time, but they are now protectionists, because without adherence to the protection idea there is no possible hope of making law what is called the "new protection." No doubt it is true, as the member for Murilla says, that some of the members of the Labour party were freetraders at one time, but they are now protectionists. On the other hand, not only Mr. Cook, but Mr. Elliott Johnson, Mr. Green, Mr. Kelly, and all the leaders of the fusion party—the New South Wales branch of it, at any rate—are all pronounced freetraders, and are all publicly advocating freetrade, particularly and specially freetrade in sugar. They have advocated that inside and outside the House; they believe in freetrade in sugar, and yet the Premier of Queensland expects from a Government run by the politicians whom I have described to get an increase in the Customs duty on sugar. I do not see how he can expect any such thing. I do not propose to criticise the whole of the Opening Speech, but merely to pass in review one or two items. With reference to the proposed amendment of the Elections Act, I notice that the Government are going to reintroduce the postal vote after the condemnation it received from a large number of their own supporters. That is a staggering announcement. Everyone who has had any experience of elections knows that the postal vote was nothing but an abomination. I have known cases in the town of Townsville where people within 100 yards of the polling-place, who were not out of town for one moment during the polling-day, and who were not out of town for days and

weeks before and after the election, voted by post. We know that in Charters Towers the postal vote was manipulated by the Liberal party, and that they bagged quite a large number of votes. That party always guessed to a nicety the number of postal votes they had bagged through the agency of their agents. But that was not the worst evil in connection with it. I am under the impression that at the particular time that Mr. Millican and Mr. Paul were candidates the postal vote was in operation. Those gentlemen were largely concerned in mining matters, and controlled half the mines in Charters Towers. Therefore they had great influence in the place; they had power to employ men or not employ them, or to cause men to be discharged from the service of a mine. Those men sent their agents round to gather from the wives of working men postal votes. That kind of thing will not bear inspection for a moment; it is nothing short of an abomination, and I am really staggered to hear the Premier say that he is in favour of the introduction of the system. With regard to the Elections, Tribunal Act, I certainly think that some amendment of that Act is very necessary. I have had only one experience of it, and I have no desire to have any further experience of it. I think members of Parliament should not sit on that tribunal at all, and that it should be absolutely in the hands of a Supreme Court judge to decide the question of the validity of an election. In the old days the idea was that members of Parliament who adjudicated on the matters in dispute with regard to an election should sit and adjudicate as judges. In fact, in the time of Mr. Justice Harding, or Chief Justice Lilley, the parliamentary assessors sat on the bench and formed part of the court. Now they occupy an inferior position, and are simply jurymen, the judge deciding all matters of importance. I say the judge should decide the whole matter, and that members of Parliament should have no voice in deciding the very troublesome matters which come before the tribunal for determination. Reference is made in the Governor's Speech to the failures and faults of the Federal electoral system. I know that the Federal electoral system is not perfect, just as I know that the State electoral system is not perfect, but I am quite in accord with the leader of this party when he spoke of the insult offered to the Federal authorities by this paragraph in the Governor's Speech. What would the Government of Queensland say if the Federal Government lectured them in regard to their immigration system or their borrowing methods, as this Government has lectured the Federal Government in regard to their electoral machinery? The Premier is a gentleman who gets his back up instantly, and he reminds me of the fable of the frog and the cow. In this case he is the frog. Those who know the fable will know the application of it. I congratulate the Government on their proposal to spend money under the view of possibly striking oil in the Maranoa district. If we only strike oil there, or in any other part of the State, that will no doubt be a happy solution of many of our financial difficulties in Queensland. I sincerely hope also that the efforts of the Government with regard to the destruction of prickly pear will prove successful. I know very little about prickly pear, and will not offer any opinion on the

methods adopted for dealing with the pest, but I hope the efforts of the Government will be successful. I hope, too, that the encomiums passed on the late Minister for Lands will prove to be deserved—that is, that it will be found that he adopted proper safeguards in the action he took in this matter, and that any other safeguards that may be necessary will be employed, so that the general taxpayer will be protected. I make these suggestions perhaps somewhat lengthily because I am aware that very often some of our so-called State benefactors have turned out to be quite different people altogether. I only have to mention the question of dredges to remind hon. members of that. I do not think that State benefactors should have any statues erected to their memory until after they have died—(laughter)—because it has been discovered before this that they are not benefactors after all. (Laughter.) One hon. gentleman, speaking on the Address in Reply—I think it was the seconder—expressed the hope that the Government in its dealings with the Tramways Company would deal liberally with that concern. We hope that the Government will deal fairly with everybody, whether it be the Tramways Company or anyone else.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LENNON: But with regard to giving liberal treatment to the Tramways Company, I do not consider that they should do anything of the kind. (Hear, hear!) I have only to refer to the fact that they are too generously treated altogether. At the time of the strike, fifteen months ago, the members of this party asked the Government to intervene and bring the manager of that company to a sense of his position in regard to that company. Still more recently a deputation waited on the same gentleman—the Premier—with regard to the differential treatment adopted by the manager of the Tramways Company with regard to the daily newspapers published in this city. On that occasion the Premier, who had just been travelling all over the whole of the North of Queensland, and had mentioned on every platform that this Government of Queensland could deal with trusts and monopolies and combines, so that there was no reason to hand over those powers to the Federal Government, said to the deputation, "What power have I to intervene? Show me where I have the power to intervene." The hon. gentleman, as soon as he gets away from this House, travels all over the North in his capacity as Premier, and makes statements that he cannot justify here. Up North he says he has got all the power. Down here, when he is asked by the deputation to see that justice is meted out to the newspapers, he says he does not know that he has the power to interfere. His feathers got ruffled a little later on, and he said he did not intend to use any power at all. I think it is a pity that the Treasurer was not at that deputation, or that he was not the recipient of it. (Laughter.) We know what the Treasurer's feelings are on the matter, and we know that with that nice kind way of his he would have arrived at a settlement that might have been more satisfactory to that deputation. (Laughter.) Let me add that I was not a member of that deputation myself, and therefore do not know all about it. Now, with regard to the railway policy of the Government: I am at a loss to

Mr. Lennon.]

understand the change of front on the part of the Government in connection with the railway policy. They refer to the railway policy of 1910 as an "ambitious railway policy." The Government practically won two elections on that very railway policy—that wonderful, progressive railway policy. Now it is called an "ambitious railway policy." Why do they feel ashamed of it now? Why do they call it an "ambitious railway policy"? It shows that this Government is not responsible for what some other Government did. Something has happened to cause this change. The question of finance has intervened. Is it that money is getting tight? What is it that makes the Government refer to the railway policy of three years ago as an ambitious policy? Why, at the time it was passed the Government were told by members sitting on this side of the House that part of it was a wild-cat policy, and that the Government were going too fast. And they have realised that now, and have shown their good sense, for which I have to thank them, in common with other members on this side of the House, for accepting the advice that was tendered to them from this side of the House, and also from members over there, to go slow.

The TREASURER: You voted for some of the lines yourself.

Mr. LENNON: Yes; but I am speaking of the wild-cat railway, and the hon. gentleman knows quite well what is meant by that remark. I might say that, whilst we want the Government to go slow, we do not want them to stop altogether. There is one degree of slowness that might be approved of and another degree of slowness that must be condemned. With regard to the construction of the railway from Townsville to Ingham, a distance of 69 miles, at the present rate of progress it will take sixty-nine years to construct that section. (Laughter.) They started that railway two years ago, and so far they have only constructed $4\frac{1}{2}$ or 5 miles altogether. That is going slow with a vengeance, and is even a bit too slow for me. (Laughter.) That is not the kind of slowness recommended from this side of the House. Reference is made in the Governor's Speech to the loans falling due in 1915. I regard that as the most serious matter which is put before this House. I hope the House will approach it in that sense, as it is a serious thing for Queensland to have to meet such an enormous amount of loans as are falling due in 1915. (Hear, hear!) I do not think any member of this House, no matter on which side he sits, should do anything to interfere with whatever Government may have the misfortune to be in power in its endeavours to meet the loans falling due. I do not think any member of this House should do anything to embarrass any Government that is making arrangements to meet those loans. (Hear, hear!) It is the most serious situation that has occurred in this State, and it should be approached in that spirit. I hope that that is the spirit in which members of this House will regard it. I will just briefly refer to the fact that we have a programme of measures about to be introduced. I think it is about the most colourless Speech that I have ever heard. It is much ado about nothing, as I am reminded by the hon. member for Leichhardt. There are two Sugar Bills. It is not possible nor wise to attempt to criticise

[Mr. Lennon.]

any of those Bills. We are not in the know in the same way that the hon. member for Drayton is. He gave us a kind of illustration of what the Stock and Produce Agents Bill is going to be. He has evidently been consulted in the matter by the Secretary for Agriculture, who has been fortified by the experience of the hon. member for Drayton in regard to these matters. According to the hon. member for Drayton, this Stock and Produce Agents Bill is going to stagger the community with its liberality. Such a Bill, we are told, is not in existence in any part of Australia. They are actually going to provide cold stores for storing farm produce, and do everything of the best character. Has the hon. gentleman been asleep, like Rip Van Winkle, and has he just awakened from his slumbers? Does he not know that in South Australia, when a Labour Government was in power, they provided cold stores for the produce of the farmers, stored it, graded it, and shipped it to the market in any country abroad in the name of the consignee?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We will do that here.

Mr. LENNON: In South Australia they also advanced to the farmer 60 or 70 per cent. of the value of the shipment, and when the produce was sold the Government collected the money and paid the farmer the balance due to him. All this was done years ago by the South Australian Government, yet the hon. gentleman would have us believe that it was a Liberal Government that started it and not a Labour Government. With regard to these two Sugar Bills, without attempting anything in the way of criticism, might I express the pious hope that the interests of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company will be amply conserved? (Opposition laughter.) I sincerely hope that the interests of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company will not be overlooked in any particular. (Laughter.)

Mr. GILLIES: You can depend on that.

Mr. LENNON: I am hoping that, at any rate. There are several Bills on the programme which we have seen before. We have here a Matrimonial Causes Bill and a Railways (consolidation) Bill. We have had them before, and they were advanced a stage and dropped for some cause or other. Then there is also to be a Rabbit Bill. There was a Bill that was supposed to be the pet product of a high official in Queensland, known as the Police Offences Bill. That Bill has disappeared. It was a Bill that consisted of many absurdities, and I criticised that Bill on several occasions in this House. I called it a Bill for the multiplication of trivial offences. All this is now supplied by the Liquor Bill passed by the Government last session, so that there is now no need for the Police Offences Bill. (Laughter.) There is no need for a Police Offences Bill at all now that we have the Liquor Act on the statute-book. (Laughter.) The Government passed that Bill last year, and I am sure they are very proud of their work, but I say there are some features in it too ridiculous for any civilised community, and a friend of mine in the North expressed the opinion that he believed the Bill had been manufactured in Woogaroo. (Laughter.) I will just give an illustration, not only with regard to the traveller, but the man who, on a Sunday, drives 10 miles from town and goes to an hotel for the purpose of having his dinner

or his lunch. The law assumes him to be there for an illegal purpose, and the policeman can come and demand his name and his business. The reply of the apologists for the Bill is that so long as he consults the policeman and tells him what he is going for, nothing will be said. I ask: Why should any free man in Queensland be subjected to an indignity such as this? The Act places too much responsibility and gives far too much power to the unskilled police officer. A young policeman, perhaps one who has only been twelve months in the force, may, in the country, deprive a man of his liberty, or, at all events, haul him up before the court and charge him with being on premises on Sunday or after hours with the view of doing an illegal act.

Mr. BOUCHARD: Why did you support it?

Mr. LENNON: I supported the main features of the Bill, but I did not support the absurdities in the Bill. The hon. member was prepared to oppose the whole hog—he could see no good in it. I supported all the good that there was in it, and I voted against all the ridiculous things in it. I voted against the absurdity about not allowing a man to have a glass of beer on Christmas Day when travelling on a steamer. Now let me give an illustration from my own practical experience. I was in Cardwell at election time with some friends, and we were waiting for the steamer to come along to take us away. There is only one hotel in Cardwell, and I and a few others stayed at this hotel until 11 o'clock. There was only one policeman in the town and one hotel. Probably if there were three or four hotels there would have been three or four policemen. That is the way the Treasurer would look at the matter. There was only one policeman and one hotel in this town, and at 11 o'clock the hotelkeeper looked at the policeman and said, with fear and trembling, "Gentlemen, I will have to ask you to depart." We could not even sit in the house, and we had to stay on the wharf till half-past 1 o'clock in the morning waiting for the steamer to take us away. What sort of a law is that?

Mr. BOUCHARD: That is not the law, and you know it.

Mr. LENNON: I am not answerable for the law; I am only speaking about the administration of it. I say the police there, and the police everywhere probably, have a wrong conception of the law, but that is not my fault. If these silly laws are passed and you have young policemen charged with such powers as are in the Act, then you will have these absurdities, and I say it is a blot on the statute-book of Queensland to have such an absurdity as this. That is all I want to say about the Governor's Speech, but there are a few other things that I want to talk about. Hon. members have noticed that this is a Speech that refers chiefly to farming matters. The Speech refers to the sugar industry, and it deals with other matters like the Stock and Produce Agents Bill, and so on, and it looks like a bid on the part of the Government to conciliate the so-called farmers' party. I hope they will be successful.

Mr. MORGAN: You admit they have done some good.

Mr. LENNON: I do not admit anything of the sort. I do not think they have very

much influence with the farmers of the North, at all events. No more influence than the Premier had in his great tour throughout North Queensland when he was asking the farmers particularly to vote against the referenda proposals and to return John Mann for the Herbert, and all the other people who were representing his view of politics. What sort of an answer did he get? Why, although the present and all the time member for Herbert, Mr. Bamford—although his electorate was cut up so as to deprive him of 3,000 of his former majority, by reason of Chillagoe and district being thrown into the Kennedy, on the present occasion, notwithstanding all the efforts of the Premier and of others who were going round there, Mr. Bamford received a majority of over 5,000.

Mr. FOLEY: Over 6,000.

Mr. LENNON: So I do not think this bait to try and please the so-called farmers' party of the South will have any effect on the farmers' party of the North. The Premier has referred to the fact that he was very well received everywhere. Of course this is not a matter of very great importance, but I do not myself understand why people should make a boast about things that really have no justification. He boasted on his return that he was splendidly received in the North. I happened to be present at his meeting in Cairns. On several occasions I happened to be in the same town at the same time as the Premier, but I was not only in Cairns at the same time but I went to his meeting. Cairns is a very important town—I think it ranks as second in North Queensland; and though the Premier's meeting was well attended, on the platform was himself, the chairman, and a newspaper reporter. The great Liberal party gave him the cold shoulder. That is the kind of reception he calls a great reception.

Mr. BOUCHARD: Where was the hon. member for Cairns?

Mr. LENNON: The hon. member for Cairns was in the hall too. The hon. member for Cairns had no business on the platform that night, when the Premier was telling such tarradiddles as he indulged in. I will give you an illustration of one of them. When he got down to Ayr he told the people there to be sure and vote against the referenda, and he told them the Ayr Tramline was a great success. I know more about the Ayr Tramline than the hon. gentleman. It was constructed by the three joint local authorities there. It was a great success, and was so successful indeed that when the Government took it over it was paying 11½ per cent. on the capital outlay. The Premier told the people there what a success it had been, and that the Government has taken it over now, and it will form part of their great North Coast Railway; but had the referenda been carried before the tramway had been constructed, no such thing would have been possible. So says the Premier of Queensland. As a matter of fact, the proposed alteration of clause 51 of the Federal Constitution dealing with corporations expressly states—I have written it down for greater accuracy—

"Corporations formed by any State, municipal, or other public authority are specially exempted."

And yet the Premier told the people of Ayr and the people of Townsville and the people of other places that that would not have

Mr. Lennon.]

been possible had the Federal referenda been carried previously. That is the kind of thing the Premier does. What did the hon. gentleman say when he was at Innisfail nearly two years ago, with his insane desire to castigate the Federal Government? He would stick at nothing to do that. At Innisfail the hon. gentleman said—we all felt the deepest sympathy at the loss of the "Yongala" about that time, when nearly 100 people lost their lives—the Premier after referring to the disaster in the most emotional terms, said: "Why does not the Federal Government put a light there?" What was the object of saying that? To make those people believe that it was the duty of the Federal Government to light the coast at that time, when it is only within the last few months that the Federal Government has assumed control of coastal lighting.

Mr. BOUCHARD: The Federal Government had power to take it over.

Mr. LENNON: The hon. member is a lawyer, and he knows that that has no more to do with it than "the flowers that bloom in the spring." I now come to a matter of very great importance to the district I have the honour to represent—I refer to the sugar question. The Premier says additional mills will be built, but he does not say what mills. The Premier was good enough to state last night that the Babinda Mill would be built, and in reply to an interjection from this side he said the Darrigi Mill had been turned down or refused. I want to point out that the Darrigi Mill has been agitated for ever since 1893. Just carry your minds back. That is twenty years that that mill has been agitated for, and every Government that has been in existence has promised that mill. First of all I would like to refer to the fact that the Johnstone River was opened in the year 1869. Mr. T. H. Fitzgerald was a surveyor by profession and a sugar-grower by experience. He had experience in Mackay, and he went North in search of land and he settled on the Johnstone River Valley, and the Johnstone became the very home of sugar-cane. It is an ideal spot as regards rainfall, and has a richer soil than any other district in the North is blessed with. So the agitation went on. They got central mills elsewhere. They got the Mulgrave Mill, they got the Mossman Mill, they got the Plane Creek Mill, and they got a mill down at Nerang and one at Moreton; all over the country, but no mill could be got for the Johnstone River. Of course, this district was represented for some fifteen or sixteen years by a gentleman who did not make very strenuous

[8.30 p.m.] efforts to get a mill. His attention may have been directed in quite a different direction. I might point out to hon. members the reason, some people think, that has caused the mill to be turned down is that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company happen to be in the vicinity. Possibly the hon. gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches over there will not admit it, but it is generally considered throughout the district that I represent that that is the reason why the Darrigi Mill was turned down. The Government has promised it, the Treasurer has promised it, and the Premier has promised it over and over again, and, moreover, it is the mill that people throughout the North always had as their first choice. Darrigi stood first always. But I do not want to throw discredit on any other district. I was present at the Babinda depu-

[Mr. Lennon.

tation, and shall be glad to see that they got their mill, and that the South Johnstone people got theirs; and I believe that the Jarvistown people are going to get theirs, the Government paying two-thirds. But Darrigi will not get its mill, we are told. I would like to point out that the Darrigi men are nearly all poor men. Nearly 90 per cent. of them, I suppose, are men working small areas, practical farmers, the very sort of men for whom the co-operative mill system was designed. The Babinda country, however, is owned by wealthy men.

Mr. GILLIES: The Secretary for Agriculture said that.

Mr. LENNON: The land is held in large areas there. I do not wish to say anything in disparagement of the district. The soil, of course, will not compare with the Innisfail soil, but hardly any soil in the North does, and so I am not casting any slur on the Babinda land when I say that. On the South Johnstone—and I am glad they are going to get their mill—a gentleman named Frederick William O'Rourke owns an area of about 12,000 acres, and other absentees hold large areas. South Johnstone Mill is granted, but Darrigi is refused. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company will not be interfered with by the South Johnstone Mill. That company always look with envious eyes on any agitation for a mill, but especially did they do so on the agitation that was carried on to establish a mill at Darrigi. It is only about 2 miles from Goondi, where that company is established, and here I must say that I very much regret that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has won the fight. The Government, of course, always favoured that company. But I do not want to make a mere statement; I would like to give proof. The railway surveyors when they came there, first of all, recommended that the line should go across the North Arm of the Johnstone River, at a point between the proposed Darrigi Mill and Goondi. The Goondi people objected. They said that the navigation of the river could not be blocked by the construction of a railway bridge across it at that point. The Government were appealed to, and the Secretary for Railways tried to induce the shipping companies to reduce the height of their masts to permit of their vessels going under the bridge. The shipping company would not do it. The shipping companies are a combine, and combines and trusts have a very friendly feeling for one another; and the company said they could not accommodate the masts so that they could go under the bridge, and the result is that the survey has been altered and is taken away north from Goondi, so that it shall have no connection at all with Darrigi. I mention this fact to show the power of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. It is a well-known fact that delay has been caused by this Government and by the preceding Government, but particularly by this Government, of which advantage has been taken by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, who, while the central mill agitation was proceeding, did all they could to seduce many land-owners from their support of it. And so successful have they been that the Premier tells us that there is not sufficient land left at Darrigi.

The TREASURER: And you admit it by your argument.

Mr. LENNON: I do nothing of the sort. The hon. gentleman is a little too previous in his remark. Some land has been taken away, but the Government has lately opened

some land at a place called Canal Creek—I do not know whether the hon. gentleman knows the place—which is within the central mill area, and is so large that the land which has been brought in is greater than the area which has been taken away. So the hon. gentleman's argument tumbles down like a house of cards. I wish to remind the House that the Royal Commission appointed some time ago reported in favour of the establishment of a 10,000-mill at Babinda, a 5,000-mill at Darrigi and a 5,000-mill at South Johnstone. The Premier promised in this House and at Innisfail and everywhere else that he would carry out the recommendation of the commission. He knows that, and he remembers his promise that the recommendation of the commission would be carried out. Recently Dr. Gibson visited Darrigi—some seven or eight months ago, I think—and he reported in regard to this 5,000-mill, and he said that in consequence of the splendid quality of the soil it should be a 10,000-mill instead of a 5,000-mill. But he does not count when the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have to be considered. These people at Darrigi have completed every part of their compact under the Sugar Works Act. They have given their pledges and signed the guarantee, and the hon. gentleman has actually in the Innisfail papers advertised, telling the people that they cannot withdraw from the compact, yet his leader gets up and tells us that the contract cannot be gone on with because the people have withdrawn from the position.

The TREASURER: Why do you not complete the statement?

Mr. LENNON: I have completed the statement right up to the hilt. A contract has been established between these farmers at Darrigi and the Government by the signing of a statutory agreement, and the Government should carry out that contract; but it is apparently much more agreeable to them to keep that beautiful district for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Shame!

Mr. LENNON: Shame; I should think it was a shame. I have already said that Babinda and Jarvisfield are represented by wealthy men, and wealthy men have the sympathy of the Government. They always do. This Liberal Government, this democratic Government—as I have heard it called by one member of it—have no sympathy for the working farmer at Innisfail. I know one man who paid as much as £1,000 for his land in this district and spent another £1,000 on improving it, and has been practically ruined. But what is that to the Government? I know men who have been holding on to their land, wasting twenty or eighteen years, at all events, of their lives, trying to exist on their land whilst waiting for a mill, only to receive this kind of treatment from a so-called democratic Government. It is no use the Hon. the Treasurer trying to make out that I have not told all the facts, because I have. I have stated the case fully and fairly.

The TREASURER: You have not told all the truth.

Mr. LENNON: I have told all the truth as far as I know it. The hon. gentleman has advertised in the papers and has told people that they would not be permitted—that they were forbidden to withdraw. I have seen the hon. gentleman on more than one occasion about this very matter, and he promptly, to his credit, gave me his assur-

ance that no person who signed that guarantee would get his sanction to withdraw from it. How is it, then, for example, that a member of this House has sold his land? I dare say he has held on to it longer than anyone else; but other people, in the face of that promise of the Treasurer, have been allowed to withdraw from the agreement.

The TREASURER: Anyone who liked to get out was allowed to get out. We could not hold people in an agreement of that kind. The hon. gentleman knows it.

Mr. LENNON: The hon. gentleman knows what he is talking about—that when an agreement of this sort is given and people pledge their land as security for a mill, they have no power to withdraw from it, whether they like it or not.

Mr. GILLIES: What is the good of the agreement?

Mr. LENNON: What is the good of the agreement? The hon. members knows it; he gave me his assurance in the first instance that they would not be allowed to withdraw. For purposes which I cannot fathom—I am not familiar with the devious ways of the Denham Government—why have they allowed this thing to be treated in that way? It can only be for this, and for no other reason—simply that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company shall have it as a close preserve for all time. The Premier might get up directly and show what he has done with regard to the railway scheme up there. We had the North Coast Railway passed last year, one clause of which deals with the line from Innisfail to Mourilyan Harbour on a 3 feet 6 inches gauge. This railway has received the sanction of this House, and the Premier goes up to Innisfail, and by some way of cajoling or bamboozling the people there has got them to agree to have a 2-feet gauge between Innisfail and Mourilyan Harbour—1½ miles across the Mourilyan syndicate line—and run the whole thing on the system of a 2-feet gauge, pointing out that they have a network of 2-feet gauge throughout that district. He came with the intention of getting them to abandon the 3 feet 6 inches gauge, which is theirs by right. He came fortified with figures of the result of the working of the Stannary Hills 2-feet gauge system. Farmers are very gullible, notwithstanding what the hon. member for Drayton says, and the Premier was able to cajole them in agreeing to this thing.

The TREASURER: You are trying to make them more gullible still.

Mr. LENNON: I am not, because I opposed it. I said this plan was conceived for the purpose of getting the whole network of 2-feet gauge for that district—that lovely valley of the Johnstone—the Mourilyan Sugar Company and the shire council working together to run this system. It will be conceived by and by possibly that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company will buy out the Mourilyan syndicate, and they would then own the whole of the 2-feet network railway system throughout the valley of the Johnstone, and control the traffic of the whole district, and the whole of the people would belong to them body and soul. I say that the system of dual control is bad. We have had instances of it already. The hon. gentleman is familiar with it. At Ingham, in my district, the Colonial Sugar

Mr. Lennon.]

Refining Company and the shire council are jointly concerned there, and the Treasurer knows that it gives no satisfaction. He is aware that for the last two years the shire council has been trying to get them to sign a fresh agreement, and he knows they cannot succeed.

The TREASURER: Will you tell the House what happened?

Mr. LENNON: The hon. gentleman was very fair in the matter as Treasurer, and would not undertake to give any undue facilities to the company, but he has not yet been able to compel the company to sign that agreement.

At 8.35 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Stodart) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. LENNON (continuing): If I have time I would like to refer to the Halifax-Lucinda road. It is the only place in Australia where a prosperous township 5 or 6 miles from the port has no road to the port. I referred to the matter last year when the Thursday Island Waterworks Bill was under consideration, and with the permission of the House I will quote an extract from the report in "Hansard," page 2206, of last year—

"Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*) had no objection at all to the proposal, but wished to know if other districts similarly situated to Thursday Island would receive like treatment from the Government in case they desired to use the moneys standing to credit in the harbour dues fund for carrying out some public utility, such as was done at Thursday Island. He would like to get the assurance of the Treasurer on that point.

"The TREASURER: He could only say that he regarded the question of water supply as one of great importance, and any proposition received would be treated on its merits; and if it was at all possible the Government would give its assistance. It must be understood that every proposition must be a business proposition.

"Mr. LENNON: The Minister referred to water supply as being important, but the district he referred to did not want any water supply; in fact, they had too much water already. (Laughter.) The proposal he had in view was the making of a road from the township of Halifax to Lucinda Point, a distance of 6 miles. The Halifax district had good grounds for asking for the Government assistance in getting that road constructed, as it was just as necessary to them as the water supply was to Thursday Island. He believed it was the only instance in Australia, where a township 6 miles from a port did not have a road to that port. He hoped the Minister would give favourable consideration to this matter.

"The TREASURER: In the absence of particulars, it was impossible to make any promise, but any proposition—whether it was for water supply or anything else—would receive consideration."

There is an implied promise there.

The TREASURER: Oh, nonsense!

Mr. LENNON: That anything of a public character on all-fours with this should re-

[*Mr. Lennon.*

ceive similar treatment. The harbour dues have accumulated for twenty years at Lucinda until there is standing to the credit of a trust fund the sum of £3,000 or over, and they have as much right to use that money as the Thursday Island people have to use their harbour dues for the construction of waterworks. But is the hon. gentleman prepared to state in this House that a man must be a Government supporter before he can get trust moneys so held to be used for public purposes? Is the hon. gentleman game to take that upon his shoulders, because that is what it means? If the Treasurer does not carry out his implied promise he made in this House that each case which is on all-fours will be treated on its merits, what are we to assume? This case has the same merits. The road from Halifax to Lucinda means just as much to these people as the waterworks at Thursday Island to the people there. They both have standing to credit of a trust fund a sum received from harbour dues, and if it is right for the people of Thursday Island to use the money for a public utility, is it not equally right for the people of another district to use the money so held for a public utility?

Mr. FOLEY: But the traffic is run by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

Mr. LENNON: I thank the hon. member for reminding me that the traffic is run by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. They run it for their own convenience. I have stood on the wharf and seen a steamer coming in only twenty minutes distance away, but the train has run off to town, and forty people have had to "doss" down on the floor of the public-house there because the manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company did not think it proper to keep the train waiting awhile. The Government are not only falling into line with what the Colonial Sugar Refining Company wants, but they have put Mr. E. B. Forrest into the Upper House—a gentleman who was rejected by a Brisbane electorate only a year ago. They have adopted the plan of putting in men who are rejected by the people. Not satisfied with knuckling down and making obeisance to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company at every turn, as they have done in connection with Darrigi Mill, they now put E. B. Forrest, the agent of the company in Queensland, into the Upper House, where he can oppose democratic measures. They are going to form a farmers' party down here, and make the people in North Queensland believe they get justice in regard to sugar-farming. There are people in North Queensland who have wasted their lives and suffered privations—they have carried 50 lb. bags of flour on their backs 8 miles through the scrub to their little place, and they have lived there year after year in the hope of getting the Darrigi Mill. These men have wasted their lives on the promise of this and preceding Governments—but no Government is so much to blame as this, because they promised to carry out the recommendation of the Sugar Commission, and the Premier promised at Innisfail that he would carry out the recommendation of the Sugar Commission, and that he would build the Darrigi, Babinda, and South Johnstone Mills. The other mills could follow in the time to come, as no specific date was attached to their construction, but he promised faithfully to build the Darrigi Mill. He promised also that he

would make a 3 feet 6 inches connection between Innisfail and Mourilyan Harbour, but he went there for the express purpose of cajoling them into abandoning the 3 feet 6 inches connection in favour of a paltry 2 feet 6 inches connection. I say that the Government and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company were working together in regard to this 2 feet 6 inches connection in order that the Government might be relieved of all responsibility. Now there is no chance of carrying the North Coast Railway through that district, and the finest beauty spot in North Queensland—Mourilyan Harbour—is not to be made available to tourists by the action of the Government. By advertisements tourists are invited to visit North Queensland to see attractions like the Parron Falls, and Lakes Eacham and Barrine, and yet the Government have deliberately shut travellers off from this beauty spot. The Premier knows that he promised the people a 3 feet 6 inches line publicly in my hearing in Innisfail the same night that he promised them the Darrigi Mill.

The PREMIER: You are exaggerating.

Mr. LENNON: I am not exaggerating, and I challenge the hon. gentleman to show where I have exaggerated one iota. I have kept well within the mark. I would not be permitted to say one-twentieth part of what I feel in describing the tactics adopted by the hon. gentleman and the hon. gentlemen beside him in order to defeat the people who were promised this Darrigi Mill. We know very well that the Standing Orders are brought in for the purpose of keeping hon. members within bounds and for other very necessary purposes, but words would almost fail me, if we had no Standing Orders, to describe in fitting terms the depths to which those two hon. gentlemen have sunk to defraud the Darrigi people of the mill which they were promised. The hon. gentleman said that when I was addressing a meeting at Innisfail I was indulging in heroics, but, when he was addressing a meeting at the same place, he indulged in heroics when he referred to the wreck of the "Yongala." If he accuses me of indulging in heroics, what I could say of him would make him squirm, and in doing so I would not need to exaggerate, but just speak the plain, downright, naked truth. But unfortunately the truth would not be permitted here—that is the worst of it. (Laughter.) If I could tell the whole truth, I would make the hon. gentleman squirm.

The PREMIER: You would not be capable.

Mr. LENNON: The hon. gentleman is more capable of squirming than I am. He squirmed to Kidston, and then he left Kidston and squirmed back to Philp.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. LENNON: I am very sorry to hear it. (Laughter.)

The TREASURER: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has worked himself into a passion, and I think his action to-night is a sufficient answer to some of the charges he sought to make, in connection more particularly with the Darrigi Mill.

Mr. LENNON: Charges which I have made—not sought to make.

The TREASURER: I am making this speech—charges which the hon. member sought to make; but he has lost his balance once or twice to-night, and surely it is quite pardonable if he made mistakes. I generally find, when an hon. member gets so excited, that there is a danger of his getting away—perhaps unconsciously; and probably on this occasion—possibly unconsciously—the hon. member got away from the exact truth with regard to Darrigi and with regard to certain matters pertaining to Darrigi.

Mr. LENNON: Bulimba will excite you more.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is very much concerned about Bulimba, but Bulimba will take care of itself. The hon. member has sought to have it believed by the public outside that the Government of Queensland have been influenced in their action in connection with Darrigi by two things—first, by the fact that he, as the representative of the district, sits on that side of the House, and, second, by reason of the fact—as he alleges, but which allegation he subsequently disproved—that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are interested in that particular district.

Mr. FOLEY: It looks very much like it, too.

Mr. LENNON: I know they are.

The TREASURER: If the hon. member's first allegation is correct, how is it that the Government are going on with sugar-mills in other districts represented by hon. members sitting on the opposite side of the House?

Mr. LENNON: Don't mix up two things.

The TREASURER: An hon. member who descends to such statements and implies that the Government have fallen so low as to be influenced by that sort of thing surely must be judging other people by himself. The hon. member referred to certain agreements which had been drawn up between certain farmers and the Government in connection with the Darrigi Mill, and I interjected that he had told only half the truth, and I repeat that. Up to a certain point the hon. member was quite right. A request did come from some of those who were interested in the proposed mill to be allowed to withdraw from the agreement, and the Treasurer at that point said, "No, you cannot withdraw." But the hon. member knows just as well as I know that subsequently, when it was found that it was impossible for us to go on with the mill, the parties who applied to be released from the agreement were promptly released.

Mr. LENNON: It never was impossible for you to go on with the mill.

The TREASURER: The hon. member came here apparently for the purpose of making people outside believe that the Government were influenced by one thing. He told only half the truth and not the whole truth with regard to those bonds, and it is utterly unworthy of the hon. member to do a thing like that when he knew what was very different.

Mr. LENNON: The Government breaks its promises; I do not.

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

The TREASURER: Then the hon. member made the other charge—that the Government had been influenced by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

Mr. GILLIES: So they were.

The TREASURER: I want to ask: What has been the position with regard to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company? The Government holds no brief for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

Mr. LENNON: Doesn't it?

The TREASURER: The hon. member himself admitted that. The Treasurer was not influenced by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in connection with the agreement.

Mr. LENNON: What about the tramway loan?

The TREASURER: The hon. member blows hot and cold.

Mr. LENNON: A different matter altogether. You are trying to blow hot and cold.

The TREASURER: I allowed the hon. member to proceed quietly, and I think he should allow me to proceed quietly too.

Mr. GILLIES: Tell the truth.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The TREASURER: The hon. member knows why the Darrigi Mill has not been gone on with.

Mr. LENNON: Tell us the reason.

The TREASURER: He knows that it was made impossible for the Government to go on with it by reason of the numerous withdrawals that took place in the district.

Mr. LENNON: You should not have permitted it.

The TREASURER: I am told now that we should not have permitted it—that we should have said we are not going any further with the mill, but you must stand by your bargain. That would have

[9 p.m.] been an improper thing to do.

Then, the hon. member made another charge. He quoted from "Hansard," and said I made a promise to do a certain thing.

Mr. LENNON: An implied promise; quote me correctly.

The TREASURER: Well, an implied promise. I shall quote exactly what I said, and if the hon. member regards that as a promise, all I can say is that he is not capable of clearly understanding what English means.

Mr. LENNON: Is that so?

The TREASURER: Yes. This is what I said in answer to the hon. member's question—

"In the absence of particulars, it was impossible to make any promise, but any proposition—whether it was for water supply or anything else—would receive consideration."

The matter did receive consideration, and we were made conscious of the fact that the money to which the hon. member referred was lying to the credit of a certain account, and he knows as well as I do that it is very likely that considerable dredging work will

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.

have to be done at that place in order to provide for the large steamers which will go there.

Mr. LENNON: You have no right to say that I know that, because I do not know it.

The TREASURER: The hon. member ought to know it, and he should at any rate have ordinary common sense. If he has not, that is his fault, not mine.

Mr. LENNON: I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman said I know that dredging work would have to be done there; I say I do not know, and he should accept my disclaimer.

The TREASURER: The hon. member likes to give a little, but he does not like to receive anything. (Government laughter.) Generally he is good tempered, but on this occasion he is a little ruffled, and apparently is not conscious of what he said himself. Although he tried to be very heroic in this matter, he has signally failed in his object, because he has allowed bitterness to creep into his remarks. It is quite transparent that behind his remarks there was a strong desire to make a damaging charge against the Government. But I shall now give the hon. member for Herbert a little rest, and address myself to matters pertaining to finance, more particularly to matters referred to by the leader of the Opposition. That hon. gentleman, I am sorry to say, did not exercise the care which he usually exercises in making statements in this House. There are two points which I wish specifically to mention. First of all, the hon. gentleman showed his want of knowledge with regard to the actual position respecting the £1,000,000 loan, and then he showed that his prejudices against a Liberal Government might lead him to sacrifice the best interests of Queensland. In making that second statement I am conscious that I am making a statement seriously affecting the leader of the Opposition, but I think I shall be able to prove it up to the hilt. The hon. member said the Treasurer committed an awful bungle in borrowing £1,000,000 from the Commonwealth, that it was due early this year, and that the Treasurer renewed that loan without any authority.

Mr. LENNON: You had a whitewashing Bill.

The TREASURER: I shall quote another Act which gives the Treasurer ample power to do what he did. I am sorry the leader of the Opposition is not in his place to hear my remarks. On the 9th July, 1912, His Excellency the Governor assented to an Act entitled "An Act to authorise the raising of money under any Government Loan Act by the issue from time to time of short-dated Treasury bills, debentures, or other form of Government securities, as and when occasion may arise." I am exceedingly sorry that the hon. member who occupies the important position of leader of the Opposition made a statement without attempting to verify it before making it to the House. Section 2 of that Act says—

"For the purposes of this Act, the term, 'Government stock' means and includes debentures, Treasury bills, and any other form of Government stock or securities having a currency not exceeding five years from the date of the issue

thereof, and bearing interest at a rate not exceeding four pounds per centum per annum."

The hon. member said the Treasurer had done something which was absolutely illegal, though there is a statutory provision giving the Treasurer ample power to do what he did in connection with that particular loan.

Mr. HARDACRE: The money was borrowed before that Act was passed.

The TREASURER: I am exceedingly sorry to say that the hon. member for Leichhardt is very seriously involved in some of his ideas, and that he appears to be very involved in regard to this particular matter. The money borrowed previously was borrowed—I am speaking from memory—in April, 1911, and fell due in April of this year, and we have issued debentures for the amount of that borrowing. It must be patent to any hon. member who has listened to the arguments advanced by the other side that in matters pertaining to finance they consider it is our duty to take whatever the Commonwealth choose to give us. Apparently anything the Commonwealth Government do is right, and a Liberal Government ought to take what they choose to give, and even fall down on their knees and say how thankful they are for being whipped a little. That is what hon. members opposite try to defend in a Commonwealth Labour Government. I am exceedingly sorry that the leader of the Opposition was not here to hear the position which he had fallen into in regard to that £1,000,000 when he could have expressed the opinion—as I am sure he would have done—that he had not been following the Acts of Parliament as he ought to have done. I made another statement, and I repeat it to hon. members, because the leader of the Labour party shows that he is so prejudiced against the Liberal party that it leads him to sacrifice the best interests of Queensland.

Mr. LENNON: Draw it mild.

The TREASURER: I think I shall be able to show to the fullest extent how prejudiced he was in dealing with Savings Bank matters. He told us deliberately that because we had not opened our arms to the Federal Government and allowed them to swallow our Savings Bank that we had lost, I think he said £169,000 by the transaction.

Mr. GILLIES: He did not use that expression.

The TREASURER: Of course he did not use that expression, but he made it clear to everybody who listened to him that the Queensland Government, in his judgment, had made a mistake in not allowing the Commonwealth Government to take over the Savings Bank.

Mr. RYAN: I repeat it. I think so still.

The TREASURER: I am glad that the hon. gentleman makes that interjection. I say that any hon. member, if he seriously makes that statement—whether it is made by a member sitting on this side or on the opposite side of the House—then I say he is sacrificing the best interests of Queensland.

Mr. LENNON: No. Don't talk nonsense.

The TREASURER: First of all, we were asked to go into a contract with the Federal

Government. We were to allow them to take over a business which had been established for many years and which had been a successful business. What did they say to us? They said, "Look, here is a going concern, and we are just casting longing eyes on your going concern, and for the sake of taking it over we will allow you 75 per cent. of new business, but we will certainly not allow you a share in the management." That is how generous they were.

Mr. LENNON: What about a share in the expenses?

The TREASURER: I will deal with the question of expenditure later on. They said to us, "We will take your going concern at a discount of 25 per cent." I ask, is there a commercial house in the city to-day—is there a man engaged in business in the city or elsewhere to-day who has a going concern who will let someone from outside come in and say, "We will take your business—you must hand us over your business, and we will give you a discount of 25 per cent."?

Mr. RYAN: You are deliberately misleading us.

The TREASURER: I have not done yet. I will show that instead of deliberately misleading you—

Mr. RYAN: It is pure sophistry.

The TREASURER: Last night the leader of the Opposition, in his speech, either deliberately misled us, or he did not know the subject he was talking about.

Mr. RYAN: I know the subject I was talking about quite well.

The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman was like the boy who said he knew his lessons and he only gained 35 per cent. out of 100 per cent. He knew portion of them. The hon. gentleman knew one portion, and the major portion he did not know at all. Yet here in this House the hon. gentleman gets up and says that because this proposal comes from the Commonwealth Government we must accept it.

Mr. RYAN: No, I said if you had accepted the Commonwealth proposal you would have been £169,000 better off.

The TREASURER: I say that the hon. gentleman is altogether wrong in that statement. The hon. gentleman told us a half truth with regard to the transaction with Tasmania. When I interjected, he said that Tasmania had gone over, but he did not say that there were two or three banks in Tasmania. He said that the Savings Bank had gone over in Tasmania. It is true that one has, and that is the smaller one. The hon. gentleman told us half the truth. He tried to draw a red herring across the trail, and implied, with regard to New South Wales and Victoria, that the proposal made to these people was not identical with ours. As a matter of fact they were identical.

Mr. HARDACRE: The conditions were different.

Mr. LENNON: Be fair.

The TREASURER: Mr. Cann, the Treasurer of the New South Wales Government, surely would not do an unfair thing to the Labour Government of the Commonwealth, even if a Liberal Government would do it. Mr. Cann made the statement publicly that

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

if he had accepted the proposals of the Commonwealth Government he would have lost over £300,000.

Mr. HARDAGRE: The circumstances were different in New South Wales and Victoria.

The TREASURER: The circumstances are not at all different. This matter is of very great importance to the State of Queensland, and I want to read to the House a rather long minute bearing on this particular subject, showing exactly where we would have suffered in this particular matter if we had consented to the transfer of the State's business to the Commonwealth.

Mr. LENNON: Well, get to it.

The TREASURER: This is the minute—

"After allowing for the profit and loss account credit balance, as dealt with in the proposals, the net result would be that the State would issue debentures of a face value of £5,080,283 in exchange for State Government securities of a face value of £4,988,146, resulting in a loss to the State of £112,137."

Yet the hon. member deliberately stated that we apparently had done a wrong thing by not doing what the Commonwealth Government suggested.

Mr. RYAN: I said, "obviously." I say it again.

The TREASURER: I will show the hon. gentleman something more—

"The annual interest payable by the State Treasury on the securities held by the Savings Bank is £175,796. The amount which would be payable on debentures required by Commonwealth is £181,834, to which must be added interest at £3 13s. 8d. per cent. on £102,284, the profit and loss account balance referred to above, £3,790, a total of £185,624, making the additional annual interest to be paid by the State Treasury £9,858."

I want to specially impress the House with another phase of the Savings Bank business. Hon. members will remember that two-thirds of the amount received on account of Savings Bank had to be invested by the trustees in Government stock, one-third being left at the disposal of the bank, on which they paid 3 per cent. interest. I will say something more about that later on. The minute goes on—

"The amount at credit of the Savings Bank current account, viz., £2,476,300, is to be handed over to the Commonwealth Bank, but the proposals do not suggest how the State is to carry on without this large balance to work on, but merely says, 'The State to have first call at current rates.'"

What are the current rates? Current rates so far as the Savings Bank is concerned are 3 per cent., but current rates so far as we know from the Commonwealth are 4 per cent. There is straight away a loss of a very considerable amount in connection with that alone.

Mr. LENNON: It meant the Savings Banks' deposits current rates.

The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman is trying to excuse his friend at every turn.

Mr. LENNON: It means Savings Bank deposits, all right.

The TREASURER: The minute goes on—

"For State requirements on amount

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.

paid as sinking fund in redemption of above debentures, provided the amounts are not required to meet the withdrawals of Savings Bank depositors, and also to have first call on 75 per cent. of the increased deposits at current rates. For some years the amount of the sinking fund and 75 per cent. of the new business would be quite inadequate to meet the cash requirements of the State; consequently, either a large overdraft would have to be arranged for, which at present would cost at least 6 per cent., or loans raised at a cost of 4½ per cent. After allowing the Savings Bank 2½ per cent. interest on the current account, the cash costs the State Treasury 1½ per cent., as 1 per cent. is received from the Government bankers."

Now, boiled down, the position is this—

"The proposals provide for a sinking fund of 1 per cent., which would mean an additional annual charge to the State consolidated revenue fund of £50,802.

"Briefly summarised, the result to the State if the proposals of the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank had been accepted would have been an increased annual charge of £172,094 for interest on debentures and current account, and provision for sinking fund, or, if current cash requirements were raised by loans, £128,759; and a loss on debenture account of £112,137, which would have to be made good from revenue fund.

"The above annual charges, viz., £172,094 and £128,759, represent the interest at 4½ per cent. on a capital of £4,040,270 and £3,029,620, respectively."

Mr. RYAN: What are you reading?

The TREASURER: This is another phase which the hon. member will not like.

Mr. RYAN: What are you reading?

The TREASURER: That is my business.

Mr. RYAN: We want to know what you are reading.

The TREASURER: The hon. member will not like this last paragraph.

Mr. RYAN: Who made it up?

The TREASURER: This is a State Treasury document.

Mr. RYAN: You could not make it up yourself.

The TREASURER: The hon. member judges me by himself. This is another phase that the hon. member will not like, because he has shown great antipathy to anything pertaining to Queensland.

Mr. BERTHAN: That is an unfair statement.

The TREASURER:

"The Savings Branch of the Commonwealth Bank commenced operations in September, 1912. The following statement shows the transactions of the State Savings Bank during the period September, 1912, to March, 1913:—

	No. of Depositors.	Amount to Credit.
As 1st Sept., 1912 ...	142,847	£7,445,852
As 31st May ...	152,289	£7,948,561

At 9.20 p.m.,

The Speaker resumed the chair.

The TREASURER (continuing): I think that any hon. member who is interested in

the affairs of Queensland will realise that it would have been a suicidal thing to have handed over the State business to the Commonwealth Bank. I think it would have meant a very serious dislocation with regard to the affairs of Queensland, and might I remind hon. members of the fact, which they seem to have forgotten—I ask, will the leader of the Labour party say that it would be a fair thing, with a view to meeting his friends in the South and paying them more interest on the money—would it be a fair thing to hand over, not only that money, but to say to the men under the Workers' Dwellings Act and under the Agricultural Bank Act, "We will have to raise your rate of interest because we have to pay more interest to the Commonwealth"?

Mr. RYAN: That is not correct.

The TREASURER: That is exactly what would happen, and yet the hon. member gets up in the responsible position of leader of the other party, and says the State Government have made a mistake in not handing over the business to the Commonwealth. I have proved most conclusively that instead of making a mistake we did the very best in the interests of Queensland by sticking to them, and we are going to stick to them.

The PREMIER: It saved the workers 1 per cent. under the Workers' Dwellings Act.

Mr. RYAN: You will have to stick to them now.

The TREASURER: Might I call attention to some of the tactics that were pursued in the attempt to get this business—tactics which seem most extraordinary to me. I have no word to say against the manager of the Commonwealth Bank here. Anyone who knows him knows that he is a gentleman. But this is the kind of letter that came to the Treasury from the Commonwealth Department, dated 20th February, 1913—

"For the information of the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, I have the honour to request that you will be good enough to furnish me with a detailed list, as under, of the business done at your various branches and agencies for the months of December, 1912, and January, 1913."

It is almost inconceivable. Then they specially detailed what they want—

"Agency; No. of operations, deposits; No. of operations, withdrawals."

Of course you will readily understand that we were not quite so green as to furnish that information, even though the Commonwealth Government asked that we might supply it.

Mr. LENNON: The Commonwealth Government did not ask anything of the kind.

The TREASURER: Evidently hon. members opposite do not like the truth.

Mr. GILLIES: Stick to the truth.

The TREASURER: At all events, the answer was short and sharp. I informed the manager of the bank that the information would not be given, nor will it be given. Now, I want to deal with another position with regard to the bank. What is the position as a result of the successful management of the bank? The hon. member for Herbert made light—I admit it was more particularly in connection with pastoral matters that he was speaking—he made light of the fact that all men liked leaseholds. He said the most successful industry in the State of Queensland was an industry in which the men held leaseholds, and he referred to the

pastoral industry. I ask, What is the position with regard to the man who wants a home of his own? Is he satisfied with a lease? I do not think so.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I say, yes.

The TREASURER: All I can say in answer to the hon. member who interjects is, that it may so happen in his own district, but, generally speaking, it will be found that almost 99 per cent. desire to have the parchment rather than have a leasehold.

Mr. HARDCRE: Rather the reverse.

The TREASURER: What is the position round Brisbane? Would the people be satisfied with leaseholds? Are they not eager to get their bit of parchment? The very success of the Workers' Dwellings Act and the Agricultural Bank Act has largely been brought about as a result of the successful management of the Savings Bank, and we have consequently been able to help the poorest members of the community—the workers—in the most practical way in which it is possible to help them—namely, to get homes for themselves. I think I have dwelt sufficiently long upon that particular aspect, and I think I have proved right up to the very hilt the statement that I started out with—namely, that the attitude of the leader of the Opposition showed that his prejudice against the Liberal Government made him ready to sacrifice the best interests of Queensland, as far as the Savings Bank is concerned, and that his statement, instead of being borne out by fact, was evidently due either to a want of knowledge or a want of sympathy with Queensland. References are made in the Speech to the financial matters which, I agree with the hon. member for Herbert, are of the most serious import, and I confess that, whilst differing from the hon. member for Herbert in many matters, I recognise that he took up an attitude in connection with maturing loans which every member of the House should take up. First of all, let it be said that no member of this House, whether he sits on this side or on the other side, is responsible for these loans. That must be admitted, but the fact itself remains that we have loans maturing which must be dealt with by the Government in a way that will not embarrass or in any way hurt Queensland, and I think, therefore, it is pleasant to know that some members opposite, perhaps the whole of them, are exceedingly anxious that in this particular matter the very best thing should be done, so that when these loans have to be faced, they will be faced in a way which will not cause any serious loss to Queensland.

Mr. RYAN: It proves that we have the interests of Queensland at heart.

The TREASURER: This is outside the Commonwealth régime, and consequently they have a wider outlook. With regard to these maturing loans, the Government are taking every necessary step to deal with them. I think it is only fair to the commercial community and to those who are interested in this matter to make that statement to-night. And I do not for one moment think—and I say this advisedly—that with proper care, and watching the

[9.30 p.m.] loans as we ought, we shall have the slightest difficulty whatever in making the necessary provision for meeting them. But it does seem to me that there is one thing that we should certainly

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

safeguard, and that is that in making these renewals it should be carefully seen that all the loans do not mature at one given date.

Mr. LENNON: That is the present trouble.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is quite right—that is the present trouble. Three or four millions might have been comparatively an easy thing when compared with the conversion of the large sum that we know has to be faced.

Mr. RYAN: We are prepared to help.

The TREASURER: I am quite sure, however, whilst thanking the hon. member for his assistance, that we shall be able to manage this business pretty well ourselves.

Mr. RYAN: That reply is worthy of yourself only.

The TREASURER: Then I am very glad that the hon. member and I are agreed on that point, at all events.

Mr. RYAN: It is not complimentary.

The TREASURER: We shall agree to shake hands on that. Let me say that the State of Queensland is in a position in which no other State in Australia is in today. I think I shall not be egotistical when I say that the Government, by their action in connection with the finances, have been able to place the State in a position quite equal to, if not better than, that enjoyed by any other State. I know that a great deal of criticism was hurled against the Government when the last £2,000,000 loan was raised, but I ask now whether the Government were not well advised, and not only well advised, but whether they did not do the right thing in accepting the money that was offered to them? It would, I think, in the light of after events, have been a very unwise thing for the Government to have refused the money that was offered to them at that time, because they possibly would have had to pay very much more for their money if they had waited. Notwithstanding the criticism that has been hurled at the Government along those lines, the action they took has by after events been proved to be thoroughly justified. I feel sure that hon. members must have been impressed when the Premier was speaking last night by the very high position Queensland occupied on that table in regard to the flotation of loans, and it showed exactly how careful management had resulted, so far as Queensland was concerned.

Mr. LENNON: Your trumpeter is not dead.

The TREASURER: And while the hon. member for Herbert lives, I shall have a good companion; we shall be in the same street in that regard. The hon. gentleman did seem drawn towards me, notwithstanding his criticisms in one respect. Hon. members who have followed the question of finance generally, not only as it concerns Queensland, but who have looked at the old world and seen the demands made for money, must recognise that there is a good deal of stringency in the money market. I noticed a statement the other day that, in connection with the Balkan war, a sum of about one hundred millions would be required, and it is also a well-known fact to everyone of us here, that China has been borrowing largely, and that China has been paying a very considerable sum for her money. And money is like everything else,

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.

wherever the best price is bid there the money will go, provided the security is good.

Mr. LENNON: Even if the Labour party were in power?

The TREASURER: I do not know what would happen then, but I think that is a very long way off.

Mr. LENNON: Bulimba will tell a tale.

The TREASURER: And I might remind my hon. friend that, whilst they on that side have been making references to Queensland, in the neighbouring State of New South Wales, where the Labour Government is in power, the people have spoken in no uncertain way.

Mr. BOWMAN: You have got a Liberal Government here, and the people spoke very emphatically against you.

The TREASURER: The one is a good set-off against the other. When the hon. member for Chillagoe, Mr. Theodore, was speaking, he referred to the question of a meatworks. It is a noticeable fact that a good deal of criticism was hurled against the establishment of another meatworks in Queensland, and it is peculiar that the opposition should come from those who are receiving the greatest help from the establishment of it. I think it will be admitted that, at any rate, the establishment of these meatworks has meant the spending of a large amount of money, by which many persons have benefited.

Mr. FOLEY: That is always the cry.

The TREASURER: It is a true statement, nevertheless. So far it will be admitted that there has been the expenditure of a large sum of money.

Mr. RYAN: So far.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Chillagoe also quoted from Russell's book dealing with the American Meat Trust; but I would ask whether the conditions are the same here as they are in America?

Mr. FOLEY: They will be if things go on as they are.

The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman shows that he has no knowledge of the conditions of the two places. In America the railways were controlled by these meat companies. Even assuming that the company is an octopus, as the hon. member says it is, anyone who has read that particular book from which he quoted will know that any trouble that was brought about there was brought about by the control of the railways, by the companies being able to side-track this and side-track that, and altogether having the control of what was the key to the position. Now, is it likely that anything of that sort will happen here? And we do know this: that the Government of Queensland have ample powers to give a short and a sharp shrift to anyone who did what was not right, or against the best interests of the community.

Mr. FOLEY: Will they use them?

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Chillagoe used another argument, which showed that, so far as the prices of meat are concerned, the two positions are not analogous. In America, I think, all their own meat is consumed there, and I think, too, that if there was likely to be any trouble

here we could deal with it by the imposition of an export duty. It seems to me that it is the easiest thing in the world to deal with it if anything of the same sort should happen to Queensland. And what has been the experience in the past as to the coming into the market of another competitor? Is it not a fact that wherever you have more competition, there the man who is producing stock is going to get a distinct advantage? If there is only one person to buy, he will give you just the price he wants to give you, and nothing more. And the fact remains, after all, that it is the duty of the State to encourage those who are coming here to help us to build up our industries. Have we come to the limit of our cattle-raising or sheep-raising? And is it not in the interests of the community that we should do all we can to produce as much as we can?

Mr. HARDACRE: They tried to buy up two meat companies in Queensland; they might buy up the whole lot.

The TREASURER: Is the hon. gentleman sure of his facts? We are told that there are dangers in the meat company coming to Queensland, but I do not hesitate to say—I have said it on the platform and I say it here again—that the greatest danger that Queensland and the other States in Australia have to face is the danger of being controlled by persons outside Parliament, who are trying to dictate to Parliament what Parliament shall do. We know that in Sydney the other day it was sought to bring the McGowen Government to heel by a body that had no responsibility in the community. I say that the greatest danger the State Parliaments have to face to-day is the danger of irresponsible people who are trying to direct and control those who have been elected by the people.

Mr. BARBER: Does not Badger control the Government? (Opposition "Hear, hears!" and Government laughter.)

The TREASURER: The leader of the Labour party last night, evidently with a desire that he might so far capture the so-called farmers' party, read out to them what the Labour party, led by himself, were prepared to do for the farming community.

Mr. RYAN: I did not desire to capture the country party—I wanted the electors to know the effects of our policy.

The TREASURER: I just want to draw the attention of the House and the country to the fact that the hon. gentleman did not let the country know all the facts. I think we shall have to know them by their fruits. The hon. member for Herbert to-night made reference to certain things that happened, unfortunately, in Queensland about fifteen months ago, and it seems to me that if you want to know people by their fruits, you want to judge them by their actions at that particular time. I may be told that the Parliamentary Labour party were not responsible, and yet it is very significant that quite a number of that party were associated with those people on that occasion. What did they advocate? And are these the people who are going to be so friendly to the farming community? They said on

that occasion, "We will tie up your butter; we won't let it be exported." That was one of the evidences of their friendship.

Mr. BOWMAN: Have you not forgotten that yet?

The TREASURER: Then they say, "Give us preference to unionists." That is another way in which they show their love for the members of the farming community—a man has no right to live! By and by we shall be told that because a man belongs to a particular religion he will not be able to live—will not be able to get bread and butter.

Mr. BOWMAN: Don't introduce religion.

The TREASURER: Let me draw attention to another matter as evidence of their desire to help the farming community. What reception did men get who brought produce into the market? They were told to go home and let their produce perish. If they wanted to get anything for a day or two, they were told it was necessary in this free country of Queensland to get a permit. Those are the practical evidences we have of the friendship of the other side towards the farming community and the community generally. It would have been very nice if the Labour party had just sandwiched in a little of that amongst the policy which the leader of the Opposition read out; but very wisely he left that out altogether. I just want to deal with some matters which were touched upon by the hon. member for Brisbane. He made some reference in regard to the dry dock. I think the hon. member will admit that a larger dock than we have in Brisbane would be a distinct advantage to shipping people coming here.

Mr. KIRWAN: Hear, hear! For the city generally.

The TREASURER: There are several things to be taken into consideration, and hon. members who have been urging us to go slow will at once see that it is important when money is being spent to see that it is spent in the direction which will be of the greatest good to the community. It would be a distinct advantage, in my judgment, to construct a dock that would take larger vessels, but the question arises whether meanwhile, with our limited capital in the loan fund account, the money could not be better spent elsewhere in the construction of railways and the opening up of country. A great number of things could be done if we were prepared to launch out indiscriminately, and spend the money we have in hand. But I hold that that would be suicidal policy. I think that the policy of the Government should be to conserve as far as possible the moneys we have—to make them go as far as possible when spending reasonable sums in reproductive work, and get the very best for the community, and not at a later period to bring the construction of railway lines to a standstill by any policy of plunge meanwhile, which would mean disaster in the long run. Hon. members will agree that, while the dock is a necessity, there are other things which are more necessary in the interests of the community at present. If money could be got without any very great difficulty, it might be a wise thing to get money for the dry dock; but the dry dock is not the best business proposition. There are things you

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

cannot exactly judge by the exact return you receive from them, but it is a question of selecting the direction in which the money can be best spent; and whilst I agree with the hon. member that a larger dry dock for Brisbane would be a distinct advantage, we may have to wait a little while before it is brought about. Before I resume my seat, I can only say that any hon. member who finds in reading the Speech what is outlined in it, cannot but think that the Government of Queensland has realised its responsibility with regard to Queensland—that it is not attempting to cater for one particular class of the community, but that it regards the whole of the community as under its special care, and that it has brought forward a policy which will mean, when worked out, that it will be in the very best interests of Queensland itself. I am quite sure that the public generally will realise that in the policy there is that which spells prosperity for Queensland, and prosperity which will be along the lines of retaining, and continuing to retain, that Government which realises that the people as a whole are the people whose interests it is conserving.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): I move the adjournment of the debate. *

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

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