

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 21 JULY 1915

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 21 JULY, 1915.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN.

The SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that in the panel of Temporary Chairmen tabled by me yesterday the name of Mr. Alfred James Jones, member for Maryborough, was inadvertently inserted in place of Mr. William Bertram, member for Maree, and I now lay on the table the correct panel.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION EXPENDITURE.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“What are the respective amounts of money spent on railway construction from the following ports:—(a) Townsville; (b) Cairns; (c) Mackay; (d) Cooktown; (e) Normanton; (f) Bowen?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Adamson, *Rockhampton*) replied—

“(a) Townsville Railway, £3,383,989; (b) Cairns Railway, £2,015,422; (c) Mackay Railway, £428,876; (d) Cooktown Railway, £367,283; (e) Normanton Railway, £283,556; (f) Bowen Railway, £268,138.”

POWER OF GOVERNMENT TO ACQUIRE PRODUCE.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*) asked the Premier—

“1. Can the Government acquire the butter product of the State or any part of it otherwise than (a) by ordinary purchase; (b) purchase under section 10, Control of Trade Act, and, if so, how and under what (if any) existing statute or power?”

“2. Can the Government, as the law now stands, acquire, without the consent of the owners, butter actually sold for delivery in another State, and, if so, can the same be acquired at a price less than the actual price sold at under the contract for sale?”

“3. Can the Government, in view of the provisions of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, lawfully prohibit the transport of butter to other States under sale contracts providing for delivery in such other States?”

The PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*) replied: With regard to questions Nos. 2 and 3, standing in the name of the hon. member for Toowong, as I understand it is not the practice to answer such questions, I desire to ask you, Mr. Speaker, for a ruling or expression of opinion on the matter.

The SPEAKER: In my opinion the questions are not permissible. It is not the practice to allow questions seeking the solution of abstract legal cases, and I rule that both questions come within that category.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Only another indication.

The PREMIER: You want the law tested.

COST OF PRODUCING BUTTER.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Premier—

“Will he inform the House of the basis on which the price of 196s. per cwt. of butter was fixed—(a) As to the cost of production per cwt., and (b) as to the margin of profit thereon to the producer?”

The PREMIER replied—

“The ‘declared price’ of butter was fixed on the report of the Board of Control appointed under the provisions of the Control of Trade Act of 1914.”

REASON FOR NOT FIXING RETAIL PRICES.

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*) asked the Premier—

“Will he inform the House of the reason for fixing the wholesale price to be paid to the producer, while leaving unfixed the price to be paid by the consumer to the retailer?”

The PREMIER replied—

“The Board of Control has made no recommendation as to fixing retail prices.”

CONDITION OF DREDGES NOW LYING IDLE.

Mr. FREE (*South Brisbane*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“1. Has he heard that the dredges now lying idle are in an unsafe and almost unworkable condition?”

“2. Will he have an investigation made?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

“1. There are no dredges lying idle at present.

“2. See answer to No. 1.”

DREDGE GRIP BUCKETS.

Mr. FREE asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“Is he aware that the grip buckets which were purchased at a cost of £4,000 are absolutely useless, and have not been used since the first trial, and at present they are practically scrapped?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS replied—

“No.”

VIOLATION OF RAILWAY REGULATIONS Nos. 34 AND 109.

Mr. FREE asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. Is he aware that rule 34, page 12, of regulations, Queensland Railways, is being ignored by the station-master at Woolloongabba, on purpose to cut out a shunter, and thus keep down expenses in his yard?”

“2. Is he aware that rule 109, page 35, is also being broken for a similar purpose?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“1. No. The number of shunters has not been reduced, but a rearrangement of their working is under consideration.

“2. No.”

LIGHTING OF TRAFFIC YARD, WOOLLOONGABBA.

Mr. FREE asked the Secretary for Railways—

“Is he aware that there is only one light in the traffic yard, Woolloongabba, which is insufficient?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“There are four lights on high poles; three of them illuminate portion of the traffic and locomotive sidings, and the fourth is of use to the traffic sidings only. The matter of insufficient light will be inquired into.”

SHUNTING AT RAILWAY WHARF, WOOLLOONGABBA.

Mr. FREE asked the Secretary for Railways—

“Is he aware that men are compelled to shunt single-handed at night at the Railway Wharf, contrary to regulations?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“There is only one shunter on duty at night, but he can obtain assistance from the other men when needed, and the regulations are being carried out.”

FIXING PRICE FOR BUTTER.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Premier—

“1. Will he inform the House if the price of 196s. per cwt. for butter was fixed by the Government or anyone representing the Government, or if it was fixed by Mr. Sumner in his capacity as Food Prices Board?”

“2. Is he aware that it is being circulated, on apparently reliable authority, Mr. Sumner has stated that he fixed the price by direction, and that he did not approve thereof?”

The PREMIER replied—

“1. See answer to question No. 4 of the hon. the member for Burnett.

“2. No. Nor has the alleged rumour any foundation on fact.”

RESCISSION OF RESOLUTION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*): I beg to ask leave to move a motion without notice.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member move a motion without notice?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: Perhaps the hon. member will give us some indication of the nature of the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, it is purely a formal matter. I moved a motion that certain papers be printed, and I find that they had already been printed. Consequently, I now move that the Order made on the 15th July that the regulations under the Fruit Cases Act be printed, be rescinded.

Question put and passed.

SUGAR ACQUISITION BILL.

INITIATION.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was formally resolved—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to ratify and confirm a certain proclamation relating to the compulsory acquisition by the Government of raw sugar; to authorise the compulsory acquisition by the Government of other commodities; and for other incidental purposes.”

COAL PROSPECTING AREAS.

On the motion of Mr. A. J. JONES (*Maryborough*), it was formally resolved—

“That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing—

1. The number of coal prospecting areas held in the Torbanlea, Torquay, Pialba, and Urangan districts.
2. The approximate area of each.
3. The owners thereof.
4. The amount of subsidy and grant applied for by each owner.
5. The respective amounts granted.
6. The arrangements, if any, made for repayments.”

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I desire to lay on the table of the House the return asked for in that resolution.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): In rising to speak on this question, I would like first of all to say that I feel proud to read this reference of His Excellency in his Speech—

“I have been deeply impressed by the fine spirit and temper of the people at this unexampled crisis, tried as they are at once by adverse local conditions and by the calamities into which every civilised community has been plunged by the insatiable ambition of our enemies.”

I am sure that the part that Australia is playing in the great events now taking place in the other side of the world will go down for all time in history. (Hear, hear!) I desire to compliment the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply for the manner in which they delivered their speeches. I cannot say that I agree with all the conclusions which they arrived at. I think that in some instances they were arguing from false premises. At the same time, we must all admit that their speeches were well thought out, and well delivered. I notice in the programme of legislation submitted for this session that it largely consists of amendments, some of which involve somewhat large issues. In fact, I do not think I am going too far when I say that the predatory talons of socialism may be seen coming through the velvet. First of all, I should like to say a few words about the events which led up to the change in the personnel of the last Parliament. I can quite understand that the Government

consider that they have got a mandate from the people of Queensland to abolish all freehold tenure, and in the institution of compulsory preference to unionists. I venture to say that such is not the case at all. I do not think that the majority of voters on polling-day took that into consideration at all. What weighed most with them was the price of food. I think that our opponents very greatly misrepresented the position in dealing with that question. The inference they made all through was that Queensland was in a far worse position than any of the other States, whereas at that time—although living has gone up since—living was cheaper in Queensland than in any State in Australia. Again, the fact that some of the Government servants did not receive their increases weighed very largely, but I should like to point out that the Treasurer in his last Budget Speech said that if events justified it those increases would be made good. I think that at such a time as that there was some occasion for hesitation on the part of the Treasurer, especially when many producers in Queensland were working their businesses at a loss. There was some grounds for waiting to see what our means were before we added to the pay of those in Government employment. At the same time I might point out that, as things turned out, there is no doubt that if the past Government had remained in office, the increases would have been passed the same as they are now. I think another reason existed for the defeat of the late Premier and many of those who supported him. We all know that the new liquor legislation introduced by the late Government clashed with the interests of a certain very large section, and I think that the Premier's downfall emanated from that. I should like to ask the very ardent temperance advocates on the other side if they take any pride in a victory which was achieved through such a reason as that? I am not offering any opinion on the merits of that legislation at all, but as that was what brought about the defeat of Mr. Denham, I am asking the ardent temperance advocates on the other side if they take any pride in a victory which was brought about by such means as that? I referred just now to the socialistic talons protruding through the velvet, and I am sorry to say that the Government have already embarked on a confiscatory policy. I noticed in this morning's "Courier" a statement that the Government have acquired £2,500 worth of butter at a price which they themselves fixed. If the producers of that butter had been allowed to sell it at the price they could obtain from the other States, and which the people of other States were perfectly willing to pay, they would have been able to get another £250. I take it that the recent action of the Government has reduced the price of butter by about 10 per cent., roughly speaking. In a transaction of that size, amounting to £2,500, another £250 would have gone into the pockets of the producers if no action had been taken by the Government. I might point out that the butter is the wages of the producer, just as the sugar-grower's cane is his wages, just the same as the 9s., 10s., 11s., or 12s. a day is the wages of the workers who are employed. There would be a general howl of execration if there was any attempt to reduce the wages of the workers.

Mr. FOLEY: Why should they have their wages reduced?

Mr. SWAYNE: Why should the wages of the farmer be reduced? I am waiting for an answer from the Secretary for Agriculture about the quantities of cheese and butter and the prices realised during May, 1914, and May of this year. When that answer is given, it will be found that the quantity produced this year is less than half what it was last year, and the cost of producing it at per lb. is greatly increased. The price realised, however, is not twice as great as what it was last year. Is it fair through any arbitrary action on the part of the Government to accentuate the position of the producer? Regarding wheat it is just the same. I noticed that there were a great many misstatements made during the last election for the purpose of attracting votes on this butter question. A friend on whom I can rely told me that in a certain shop the price of butter had gone up. He was told it was caused by the action of members of the late Government, who speculated so largely in butter and by holding large stocks of it. We know that that was quite untrue. That is only one of numerous such cases all untrue that were mentioned during the election. I would not be far out if I said that the last election was largely won on false pretences. (Government laughter.) Of course, those laugh who win. At the same time are they proud of winning by such tactics as that? I cannot say that I quite agree with them. We have heard a lot about wheat speculation. I should have liked to have had the report of the Commissioner. We have heard certain statements by the Chief Secretary, but there are two sides to every question. When we have the report of the Commissioner before us we shall find also that there is another side to that question. I have here a letter from the late Chief Secretary, Mr. Denham, which I think might be interesting as showing the other side of the case. I wrote to that gentleman after the election. I had been taken out of touch of public matters, and I wanted to know exactly what the position was regarding wheat.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may not read a private letter.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have heard other letters read in this House. I do not intend to read the whole of the letter, and I ask your permission to make one or two extracts from it. Mr. Denham points out in his letter to me—

"Wheat opened up at 4s. 9d., and we realised that wheat was going to be dear, and told the farmers in the wheat districts not to sell more than they were compelled to, as it was perfectly sure that as weeks went by the price would rise."

Whatever rise there was took place late in the year, and the producers were getting the advantage of it. It is alleged that the late Premier allowed large quantities of wheat to leave Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE: How much wheat was allowed to leave Queensland?

Mr. FOLEY: 30,000 bushels.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes. There was not a week's supply of wheat. After all that uproar and all that furor, only one week's supply of wheat was allowed to leave the State to the advantage of the producers.

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Mr. Denham continued—

“Our opponents have stupidly argued that wheat was bought for 5s. to 6s. by millers, and by Melbourne people, therefore the public suffered. They are wrong so far as millers are concerned; as long as they got wheat at the lower prices, they were selling flour at the lower price. I need only remind you that bread did not advance to 4½d. for cash and 5d. booked until March; so that the public did not suffer by the early operation of millers, whilst the farmers profited by the operations of Melbourne people, as directly the Southern men came on the market offering more money than the millers were offering, the millers had to advance the price to keep the wheat here.”

It brought competition from the other States into our markets, which was of benefit to the producers. He goes on—

“I doubt if we could under the Constitution have prohibited the export of wheat, but, allowing that we could have done so, it would not have been to the interests of the wheat growers to stop the export. With regard to better, we might have stopped the export, or we might have fixed the lower price, but then it would mean that the farmers would suffer. After all, it is only a question as to whether the producers or consumers should carry the load, and I am satisfied that the producer is having a pretty bad time, even with the high price. I doubt very much if the average farmer this year is as well off as the town and city workers.”

I think that that puts the position very fairly, and shows that the gentleman upon whom so much odium has been cast, after

all only had the interests of the [4 p.m.] producers at heart, and was acting in their interests in the action he took. The consumers may talk as they like, but before you can consume you must produce, and in a young country like this the producers are the backbone of the community. Coming, again, to the programme, I note it bristles with industrial legislation, and the question arises whether there is any very great need for that. I know a great many of us who are working on the land consider that the wage-earner at the present time is infinitely better off than the farmers, and as a proof, I would like to say that anyone who visits the farming districts will find numerous instances where farmers' sons are desirous of getting out of farming life and taking on Government or other employment. That does not look as if the wage earners are harshly treated. Of course, it has been made very apparent that the Industrial Peace Act is what is being aimed at. After all that has been a most successful piece of legislation, and I think my testimony on the subject is all the more valuable inasmuch as I am a member of one section which has been hit very hard by it. At the same time, leaving out that section, and taking broad results, that Act has been most successful so far as preventing industrial disputes is concerned. Take the position occupied by Queensland as compared with the other States, and what do we find under the type of legislation that I presume will be introduced here? We find that in New South Wales the wage-earners lost, under their legislation, during the years 1913 and 1914

1,175,705 working days and they lost £571,794 in wages through strikes. We find in Western Australia, which is a fairer comparison with Queensland than New South Wales, although their population is smaller, that they lost 137,677 days and they lost £76,176 in wages through strikes; while in Queensland, under this much-maligned Act we only lost 105,000 days and £50,000 in wages. Is there any class in the community, I ask, suffering any great injustice at the present time that industrial strife should be brought about? Of course, I take it that the object in view is to make membership of a union compulsory. Without endeavouring to detract in any way from the good work that has been done by trades unionism in the past, I venture to ask whether there is not some ground for thinking that they have outlived their day; that there is not the same need, in view of our present industrial legislation, with the Industrial Courts, and with adult suffrage, for these unions? We know that they are a very heavy charge on the community. In New South Wales, for instance, the levies that are imposed amount to well over £200,000—I think they go towards £300,000—and a considerable portion of them is expended in management. I notice that many of those who are loudest in their assertions that this state of things is necessary belong to the class who have the management of these concerns, and under the circumstances I do not know whether they can complain if we sometimes think that their statements in these matters have a certain degree of bias.

Mr. COLLINS: You tried to form a carter's union at one time.

Mr. SWAYNE: I did, and I believe in unionism, but it was more necessary then than now. At the same time, I never believed in compulsion, and I say the unions have no right to make it impossible for a man to earn his living without becoming a unionist, especially when they include political subjects in their objective. I mentioned when opening my address the false premises upon which some members opposite based their arguments. They build very extensive fabrications, but they are based on sand. For instance, I notice in the otherwise very good speech delivered by the mover of the Address in Reply that he states the introduction of machinery has not improved the condition of the worker. I should like to point out that in the sugar industry the position is directly the contrary. I have been engaged in the producing portion of that industry now for over twenty-five years, and I can go back to the time when our implements were very crude—when we had the old long-tailed plough and the wooden harrow, and so on, and I do not think any branch of agriculture has endeavoured more to keep abreast of the times, to get the most improved appliances, no matter from what part of the world they came, and I do not know that the condition of the farmer is any better now than then. But I do know who is better off. When our appliances were so crude the employee was getting £1 per week, and now the award, including food, is £2 15s. per week. Is that not a very big advance? Does that bear out the arguments of the hon. member for Oxley that the men have received no benefit from the improvements in machinery? Were it not for these improvements it would be impossible to employ anybody. The employer has kept himself abreast of the times, and

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has taken advantage of every invention pertaining to his industry, and he is not much the better for it, but most certainly the employee is, and therefore I am justified in contradicting the hon. member when he says that the employee is receiving no benefit from these improvements.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: He did not say that.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am simply making this point as showing the false grounds upon which so many hon. members on the other side base their arguments. Another matter that seems to afford them immense satisfaction is a comparison of the acreage under cultivation in the various States. They are always referring to Queensland, in the words of an hon. member who spoke yesterday, as the Cinderella of agriculture in Australia, and blaming the Liberals for it. It has been pointed out to members of the last Parliament who made such statements that owing to the lack of a practical knowledge of the industry they omitted to notice that in the case of many of our Queensland branches of farming, 1 acre, as far as the labour and the investment of money are concerned, is fully equal to 10 acres of theirs. For instance, take our principal agricultural industry—that of growing cane. One acre of cane, as far as the labour involved and the money spent are concerned, is fully equal to 10 acres of wheat. Therefore, when you compare the 149,000 acres that are under sugar-cane in Queensland with the acreage under cultivation in Western Australia, in order to get a fair basis of comparison, you would have to multiply those figures by ten.

Mr. COYNE: How do the profits compare?

Mr. SWAYNE: I am not going into that just now, but I may go into it later on, if I have time. What I want to point out now is this: That hon. members opposite are always using this as a means of belittling Queensland and disparaging us. I wish to say again that their arguments are not well founded. Further, I would like to point out that in other directions our progress has been very satisfactory, as compared with the other States. For instance, take butter; Queensland, from 1911 to 1913 increased her output by 7,341,00 lb., and in New South Wales, which has been under a Labour Government, there has been a decrease—they are making less than what they were, and there has been a decrease there of over 5,000,000 lb.

Mr. COYNE: They are going in more for agriculture there.

Mr. SWAYNE: Then, in regard to maize growing, I find that in Queensland from 1911-12 to 1913-14, we increased the area under crop by 40,000 acres, and when comparing the area under maize with the area under wheat you should multiply it by three to get a fair basis of comparison. In New South Wales they have actually decreased the acreage under maize by 10,000 acres during that time. This goes to show that there is not very much grounds for blaming the party that has held office in Queensland for Queensland being behind the rest of Australia in the matter of the area under cultivation. However, most certainly, so far as we are concerned, we can compare well with the other States. Before I sit down I should like to say a few words in connection with the sugar industry. We heard the Premier give notice of motion in connection with it, and I should like here to express satisfaction with the advance that has been made in the

price of sugar. And I should like also to congratulate him upon having become a convert to the Liberal ideas on the subject. (Loud Government laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: Why did you not do it?

Mr. SWAYNE: I am not surprised at new members laughing, but old members should remember what came from this side when hon. members opposite were sitting here upon this question last session.

The PREMIER: You think I have done as well as the Liberals could have done?

Mr. SWAYNE: I do not say that. I am just congratulating the hon. member on his conversion, on his being brought to realise that something should be done for the sugar industry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why did not your Government do it?

Mr. SWAYNE: Here is a fair sample of what we had on this side of the House last session on this matter. It will be remembered that Mr. Denham from the very beginning was very keen to get us justice in the matter. (Government laughter.)

The PREMIER: He never did anything. We did more in three weeks than he did all the time he was here.

Mr. SWAYNE: I thought that the Chief Secretary was beginning to understand something about the matter. Why did Mr. Denham not do anything? Because the sugar was not in Queensland. Does the hon. member think that Mr. Denham could have sent, say, a posse of police and taken possession of the sugar in the stores in Victoria and New South Wales?

The PREMIER: Why did not he do what I did for the growers?

Mr. SWAYNE: Because the sugar had nearly gone; the sugar was not here. If the hon. member will listen, I will tell him something that apparently he does not know. As soon as the sugar is made and leaves Queensland, it is shipped and goes into stores in Victoria and in New South Wales. When the Southern boards took the action which has brought all this about, that sugar was mostly out of Queensland, and how could Mr. Denham, or Mr. Ryan, or anyone else touch sugar that was not in Queensland? Really, the hon. member should have been able to see that. If the sugar which he is dealing with now had been already in New South Wales and Victoria, could he, as Premier of Queensland, have any control over it?

The PREMIER: It is not already in New South Wales.

Mr. SWAYNE: No; but the sugar you say that Mr. Denham should have dealt with was.

The PREMIER: Not at the time.

Mr. SWAYNE: Most certainly. It was not there after October, when the crushing was nearly over, and the intention to exploit us became apparent, and even then it was hoped the Southern boards would follow the lead given in Queensland and do us justice. Only that required for Queensland—about 12 per cent.—remains in Queensland, and the price was risen on that. The balance is put on board ships, and does not touch a Queensland port from the time of leaving the Johnstone River, or Mackay, or wherever it may be, until it reaches the Southern port.

The PREMIER: Do you mean to say that no sugar left Queensland between October and May?

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Mr. SWAYNE: I won't say that none of it did, but what did was a very small portion. The bulk of the crop had already left, because it is shipped directly it is made. The bulk of last season's crop left immediately it was manufactured, which is between, say, July and November.

The PREMIER: Why didn't you act last July?

Mr. SWAYNE: July and November, and we did not then know these low prices would be persistently forced on us. After November it was too late; they had the sugar. The sugar had already gone when action was shown to be requisite. However, as showing what the attitude of the present Government was, we have Mr. Theodore speaking, in reference to Mr. Denham, as follows:—

“Yes; the Chief Secretary wanted a higher price for sugar. That would mean dearer living for the people in the State. I do not think we can draw any other inference from their remarks.

“Mr. E. B. C. Corser: £2 a ton would not mean much more to the consumer.

“Mr. THEODORE: Here is another expression of opinion in favour of dear living. It may be only ¼d. per lb., but several pounds of sugar consumed each week would mean several pence increase, and the man on 8s. a day, who has to pay 11 per cent. more now for the commodities which he consumes than he did three years ago, cannot afford to do that. The hon. member advocates that he should be called upon to pay still more—for whose benefit? For the benefit of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.”

That was the attitude of the Opposition during last session—the gentlemen who are now claiming the credit for having got us this increase in price. When the then Premier urged that something should be done to get justice for Queensland canegrowers, that was the attitude of those supporting the Opposition.

The PREMIER: He never suggested anything like we did—never thought of anything like it, apparently.

Mr. SWAYNE: Speaking on that question—I am not now speaking from my own knowledge, but of what I am informed—Mr. Denham, when in the North, expressed his intention to commandeer this season's crop or, if not to commandeer it, to ask for legislation to finance the mills so that they would be enabled to hold it till they got their price, and to ask Parliament to pass legislation that would ensure to the grower a fair share out of any rise that accrued through this action of holding or commandeering the sugar, whichever was done. And he also spoke of legislating to abrogate, during the war, all cane agreements that had been made in the past, so that this could be done. That is what Mr. Denham had in view. He also told me that personally, and I understand he stated it publicly whilst on the platform during his Northern tour. Whilst expressing satisfaction that there has been this rise in the price of sugar, I would like to draw attention to the fact that, after all, we might have been better off if it had been so arranged that the price had been allowed to reach £25 per ton for refined sugar, under the ordinary arrangements. We hear now that 1A sugar is to be sold at £25 10s.

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I think it is likely to exceed that in some portions of Australia. Now, if it could have been arranged that the refineries should get that price under the ordinary arrangements that the mills make, they would have got £18 19s. 6d.

Mr. GILLIES: The mills have no agreements with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

Mr. SWAYNE: This has been the method of buying for a number of years, and there is not the slightest reason to think for a moment that there would be any variation in that form of buying. That has always been the basis upon which sugar has been bought—that if the price of £19 for refined sugar is exceeded, then out of every £1 the sum of 16s., or 90 per cent., should go to the miller. And, of course, we know that in many cases, where the mills are run on co-operative lines, it would have gone on to the grower; and I think I am justified in saying that in nearly every case a portion, and in some cases all of it, would have gone to the grower. I am more concerned in this matter about the grower than I am about the miller. But, with sugar at £25, the mills would be receiving £18 19s. 6d., instead of the £18 they are getting now. The question arises: What is to be done with that 19s. 6d.? Is it going to be made a present of to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company? I hope not. I suppose what will be done with it will be that it will be used to cover the loss that must be incurred through introducing some 14,000 or 15,000 tons of sugar that are requisite to bridge the gap between this last crop and the next. That is costing £31 per ton or more, and I understand it is going to be sold at £25 10s. a ton, so that there will be a loss on the transaction of £5 10s. a ton, and the canegrowers will have to pay it. I think I am right in saying that this 19s. 6d., which otherwise we would have got, is going to be used for making good the loss upon introducing 13,000 or 14,000 tons of sugar from outside.

The PREMIER: Who said he would have got the 19s. 6d. otherwise?

Mr. SWAYNE: I say he would, under the ordinary arrangements.

The PREMIER: You say so. I say he would not. Do you mean, if sugar was at £25 10s.?

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes.

The PREMIER: What guarantee have you for saying that?

Mr. SWAYNE: Queensland could have done this. We could have held the sugar, no matter who was in power, until we got a fair price.

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth would have taken off the duty. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. SWAYNE: I do not think that. The Commonwealth wants the revenue. They would have lost a revenue of £6 a ton upon 13,000 or 14,000 tons, but also upon 120,000 tons that will have to be brought in next year. They would have lost £700,000 or £800,000, and I think it is a matter for consideration as to whether the Commonwealth would have put up with the loss of that revenue.

The PREMIER: Your suggestion is commandeering in defiance of the other States; to compel the other States to come to your will.

Mr. SWAYNE: We could simply have held the sugar until we got a fair price, the same as any other seller would have done.

The PREMIER: You think that the rest of Australia would leave the duty on under those circumstances?

Mr. SWAYNE: Why should any exception be made in regard to the sugar industry as compared with other industries?

The PREMIER: Because you would be holding it in defiance of them.

Mr. SWAYNE: I take it that there is a bigger question underlying this matter than the question of a few pounds a ton. The question underlying it is the question of a white Australia, and Australia does not think for one moment that producers will turn out these products in the North without protection, exposed to the open competition with black labour grown products of other countries; and, unless those Australian producers can be protected, there will be no settlement in the North, and without settlement in the North there will be no white Australia. That is the question underlying the question of the protection of the sugar industry.

The PREMIER: And who was giving the protection to the whole of Australia?

Mr. SWAYNE: I give every credit to the hon. gentleman for what he has done. At the same time I would point out that this price is not really £25 10s. per ton, but is only equivalent to £24 10s. per [4.30 p.m.] ton under the ordinary arrangement. The industry is making good the loss that will be incurred by introducing sugar from outside.

The PREMIER: No; the industry is not doing it; the people of Australia are doing that.

Mr. SWAYNE: Making good the loss?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. SWAYNE: We are making good that loss out of the £25 10s. Why not say straight out that we are getting only £24 10s. per ton for our sugar?

The PREMIER: You are getting £18 a ton for raw sugar.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes, and under the ordinary methods following the industry we should have got £18 19s. 6d. per ton.

The PREMIER: Under Mr. Denham you had £14 9s. or £14 11s.; I am not sure which.

Mr. SWAYNE: Any other man would have done the same as Mr. Denham did under the same circumstances. He promised that when the new crop came in he would take such steps as would secure to Queensland producers a fair price for their products.

The PREMIER: Who was representing your case in this House?

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. gentleman should remember that our case was represented in the South by a delegation from this House. Perhaps it is as well that I should point out that the whole position has been brought about by the embargo imposed by the Commonwealth Government on the exportation of sugar. I can quite understand that that embargo was placed on sugar for very good reasons.

The PREMIER: How do you make that out when sugar can be imported ex duty under £25 a ton?

Mr. SWAYNE: It cannot.

The PREMIER: It can.

Mr. SWAYNE: It cannot be imported into Australia under £31 or £32 per ton duty paid, and there are other expenses as well.

The PREMIER: Sugar is imported at £25 per ton, and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are selling it at £23 10s. per ton; they are allowing a discount of 6 per cent.

Mr. SWAYNE: They always give that discount off market quotations.

The PREMIER: But they must make a profit, surely?

Mr. SWAYNE: I am merely giving the facts, and can say nothing about that matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not a discount; it is a commission for selling.

Mr. SWAYNE: It is generally agreed on both sides that the discount is made, but this extra discount to manufacturers is not going to be given this time.

The TREASURER: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company gave it last time.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes, because the circumstances then were quite different. That extra discount was given to manufacturers and jam-makers to induce them to buy Australian sugar when they could get outside sugars at a lower rate. They cannot get outside sugars just now, and that is why they are not given this special discount.

The PREMIER: I did not say that discount would not be allowed.

Mr. SWAYNE: No; in an interview with a representative of the "Courier" the hon. gentleman stated that a certain gentleman who had made some statements with regard to this matter had not taken cognisance of the extra discount given to the manufacturers, and he was under the impression that this further discount was going to be allowed. I understand that it is not going to be allowed.

The PREMIER: It may be allowed, but it is not going to fall on the miller or the grower; it will fall on the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

Mr. SWAYNE: I understand that it is not going to be allowed, but from what the hon. gentleman says it would appear that there is some doubt on the subject. But why should this extra discount be allowed to manufacturers this year when they cannot get sugar outside Australia? The world's prices show what chance they have of getting sugar from outside.

The PREMIER: What are the world's prices?

Mr. SWAYNE: I understand that the world's prices are such that you cannot land sugar in Australia at the present time under nearly £32 per ton. Therefore I ask why we should allow a further discount to induce those people to buy our sugar when we are selling it at £25 per ton?

The PREMIER: We get 14,200 tons for £31 per ton.

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. member for Mackay, when speaking about the sugar industry the other evening, referred to it as having been the shuttlecock of the Liberals. I do not think the hon. member has been a very great length of time in the country. My information is that he has been here only about four years, and I should like to tell him that he has been misinformed on this matter, and that if any party have made

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the industry a shuttlecock it has been the socialistic party. I have been directly connected with the sugar industry for nearly thirty years, and I remember that during the nineties, when we had an open market, and had to compete with sugar from other parts of the world grown by coloured labour, it was necessary, if we were to lay the foundation of the big white industry, which exists to-day, that we should employ a similar class of labour, and yet, although it was apparent that such labour was necessary, the fact that we employed that labour was constantly being made an electioneering cry. Since then the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has been used as the stalking-horse. I am not speaking of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company as millers, or making any reference to their position with regard to the growers, but I say that as refiners there has been no basis for most of the statements that have been made respecting their action. I notice that an hon. member belonging to the Labour party in another Parliament tried to bolster up a charge that immense profits were made by the company by watering shares. This hon. gentleman stated that the shares had been issued as £20 shares, and that they were paid up to £15, only leaving £5 to be paid by the recipients. That is the sort of exaggeration which has taken place all through the discussion on this matter. These particular shares were only paid up to £5, leaving the sum of £15 to be paid. Of course, none of us here had any particular reason for contradicting that statement, and we let it go. I should not refer to it now were it not for the fact that these misrepresentations concerning the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are used to the detriment of growers, and their supposed action quoted as a reason why justice should not be meted out to the producers. Personally, I do not care one jot about the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, but I object to misstatements being made about them which have a detrimental effect on the interests of the sugar-growers. It is a pity that the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Smith, did not take the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the conditions of the sugar industry before venturing to discuss the matter in another House. I notice that Mr. Finlayson went back to the Federal Parliament and that he made an absolute mistake in the facts. The hon. member said that if prices rose there was only one-sixth of the growers in Queensland who would get any advantage. That is not true. In the case of some mills, all the advantage would have gone to the growers, in the case of other mills two-thirds of the advantage would have gone to the growers, and in the case of others one-half of the advantage would have gone to the growers. I think there were only two mills in the whole of the State that had an arrangement under which they would get the whole advantage of an increase in the price of sugar. What the hon. member got hold of was a statement made by the general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company—a statement which has been distorted. That gentleman said that only one-sixth of their growers, who represent about one-fifth of the growers of Queensland, would benefit, and that statement was made to apply to one-sixth of the whole of the growers in Queensland, instead of to one-sixth or one-fifth of the growers; and that has been used as an argument against raising the price of sugar for some months. I hold that it is wrong

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for any section of the political party to use a stalking-horse of that kind for party purposes, seeing that in doing so they must injuriously affect large numbers of producers in Queensland. Again, in connection with the bounty and excise and the loss of over 2s per ton of cane that occurred. When the Labour party came into power in the Federal Parliament in 1910, at the expiration of the Braddon clause, they had a splendid opportunity offered to them for dealing with this matter in a way that would be fair to the growers, and satisfactory to the consumers, but, instead of doing so, they allowed the opportunity to pass, and that meant a loss for some years of £150,000 to the sugar industry. Contrast their action with the attitude of Mr. Cook when he held office for a short time in 1913. During the few weeks he was in office, before the bounty and excise were abolished, he equalised the bounty to the excise, and by his action put £30,000 into the pockets of the Queensland sugar-growers. If Mr. Fisher had done the same thing as Mr. Cook did, we should for three years have been receiving £150,000 more in connection with the industry. Then when the question of abolishing the bounty and excise was mooted, it was insisted that that should only be done on the condition that the sugar industry was singled out from all other agricultural industries, and brought under the operation of the Industrial Peace Act. We all know what has been the effect of the action of the Commonwealth Government in insisting that before the bounty and excise were abolished the industry should come under the provisions of the Industrial Peace Act.

Mr. GILLIES: They did not say that.

Mr. SWAYNE: The sugar-growers allowed the sugar industry to be brought within the scope of the Industrial Peace Act in order to get the extra 2s. per ton that all along should have been theirs. The sugar industry was the only agricultural industry which was singled out to come within the scope of that Act, in order to get the extra 2s. per ton. I could go on talking about this question, but I am afraid that my time will not allow. I will have other opportunities of enlarging on this subject, and of showing that, so far as the sugar industry is concerned, it has been the shuttlecock, not of the Liberals, but of the Socialists.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*), who was received with Government cheers, said: Mr. Speaker.—I congratulate you on the position which you now hold in occupying the Speaker's chair. I have known you for a number of years, and I am satisfied you will fill that position with credit to yourself and to the House. During this debate I have listened with attention to the arguments put forward by members of the Opposition as to the causes of the defeat of the late Government. I have heard it said that we won the election on false pretences and by misrepresentation.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I deny that. I say that we won this election as the result of a quarter of a century of uphill fighting—(hear, hear!)—as the result of a quarter of a century of organisation, and as a result of a quarter of a century of sticking to the principles which we are now about to place upon the statute-book. (Hear, hear!) That was the principal cause of our winning the election.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I do not believe that the butter question or the wheat question played such a great part in deciding the election as our friends opposite would have us to believe.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We know it.

Mr. COLLINS: I am afraid the hon. member for Drayton has not been taking notice of the evolution that is taking place in the working classes in the States, in the Commonwealth, and throughout the civilised world.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: That is a point which my friends opposite have been ignoring—the evolution of the working class movement. We have in our industrial union to-day nearly double the numbers that we had in 1912. At the last election in 1912, owing to the misrepresentations put forward by our opponents, we had only half the number of members that we have got here to-day. “As you sow so shall you reap.” That is a true saying. Because of the misrepresentation which was sown by our friends opposite in 1912, the people realised that they were not true, and that is the reason why they returned the Labour Government to power on this occasion. I really consider that members opposite have got more representation than they are entitled to at the present time. (Hear, hear!) They are purely representatives of the capitalistic class, a class that is dying very rapidly in this State, and also in the Commonwealth, and right throughout the civilised world. (Hear, hear!) There are two paragraphs in the Governor's Speech which attracted my attention. They are—

“My advisers, I rejoice to say, are resolved to take whatever steps are necessary to co-operate, as far as possible, in the Commonwealth effort to make Australian assistance to the motherland even more effective, by providing more men and munitions, and supplies for the front, and I am sure their exertions to secure that object will be warmly seconded by you with whatever legislation is required.

“I am confident that we shall prove ourselves worthy of our young heroes in the battle-line, by ensuring that none of them, on their return to Queensland, will be worse from a worldly point of view, than if they had shown less courage and self-devotion. The Government has set the example by guaranteeing that every Queensland State employee who has enlisted will have his position and status in the public service carefully safeguarded. As regards the Queensland recruits who were not in State employment, authority will be sought to enable the Lands Department to set apart areas of Crown land on which such of them as have an inclination for agricultural pursuits may be settled on their return to Queensland. Steps will also be taken to ascertain whether similar arrangements cannot be made on behalf of the ex-service men of our own kith and kin, who enlisted in other portions of the Empire for participation in this great conflict in the cause of freedom and justice against despotic outrage and aggression.”

There is a lot of shoddy patriotism going about at the present time. (Hear, hear!) Whilst special appeals are made from time

to time that the working class should enlist and get to the front, there are a lot of people in this Commonwealth who are shirking their responsibilities. There are a lot of people who have got something to defend, and who are continually writing articles to the daily Press urging the men out back, the pride of our nation, to go to the front, while they themselves remain in the background. I want to get some information about these gentlemen, and probably some of the hon. gentlemen sitting on the other side of the House will be able to supply me with the information. I find from “Knibbs Commonwealth Year Book” that there are ninety-five persons in the Commonwealth who own 8,418,508 acres of land. That is a fairly big stake in the country. I hope the hon. member for Drayton is listening to this. What percentage of those ninety-five men have gone to the front? I would like to know what they have contributed up to the present to the cost of this war? It is that class which should be made to bear the bulk of the expense in connection with this war. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why don't you put a tax on them?

Mr. COLLINS: Why don't we put a tax on them? Why didn't your Government, when they were in power, put a tax on them?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: There are 361 other persons who own 10,408,407 acres of land. How many of those 361 persons have gone to the front?

Mr. MURPHY: How much of that is leasehold?

Mr. COLLINS: I am talking about freehold. This is all freehold. There are 689 other persons who own 9,514,769 acres. How many of them have gone to the front?

Mr. TOLMIE: In Queensland?

Mr. COLLINS: No. I am talking about the whole Commonwealth. There are 1,567 other persons who own 10,754,656 acres. How many of them have gone to the front? It shows that we have in the Australian Commonwealth 2,712 persons who own 39,096,140 acres of freehold. These are the people who inspire the leading articles from time to time, and say that the working population should go to the front. They are calling on all our young men to go to the front, while they themselves remain behind. I have no time for their shoddy form of patriotism. I object to any reflection being cast on working class men in Queensland, or the Commonwealth, or in any other part of the civilised world. (Hear, hear!) The working class are the patriots. When you get down to the bedrock of patriotism, you will find it is the working class who are the patriots. What sacrifice does a man make by contributing a few pounds to the patriotic fund? What sacrifice does he make, even if we have a system of taxation imposed on them, as compared with the sacrifice that a man makes by going to the front to uphold the freedom which we Britishers boast about? Hon. members opposite talk about British freedom. What British freedom would they give when they introduced the Industrial Peace Act, and passed it through this House for the purpose of depriving Britishers of the freedom which we possessed for over a century?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Rot! Tommy rot!

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Mr. COLLINS: It is no rot at all. What do we find about those who own most of the wealth of the State?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: More farmers have gone to the front than any other class.

Mr. COLLINS: Last year 942 persons paid income tax on £3,910,650. That is taken from the income tax returns. It shows that less than 1,000 persons own nearly one-eleventh of the total wealth produced in this State. How many of them have gone to the front to fight the Empire's battles? What have they contributed towards the cost of the war? We are told that we are not likely to raise the amount in the old country or in the Commonwealth. What would be wrong in annexing the £910,000, and leaving them the £3,000,000? I hope the Government will take the £910,000. At any rate, I am strongly in favour of it. Here are all our own people sacrificing their lives in the trenches at the Dardanelles, and yet we have 942 persons in Queensland paying income tax on £3,910,000.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How do you know that?

Mr. COLLINS: I know the capitalistic class better than the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You know nothing about it.

Mr. COLLINS: As a rule, a capitalistic class are not the patriots. They only expect the likes of the working class to be patriotic. We all know that there are people making enormous profits out of the war. I noticed the other night that a high official in this State went out of his way to attack the working classes. Unless the statement should be doubted, I will quote from the Brisbane "Courier" of yesterday.

Mr. MURPHY: Don't take any notice of the "Courier."

Mr. COLLINS: But I happened to be there listening to the high official myself. (Hear, hear!) The "Courier" reports this high official as having said—

"What could be more lamentable than to see what was happening in South Wales, where the miners did not care one penny what became of our British fleet? It was enough to make anyone's blood boil."

Mr. TOLMIE: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I feel ashamed to think that the hon. member for Toowoomba should say "Hear, hear" to that. It is enough to make one's blood boil when we know that there are eighty coalmine-owners who are the cause of 200,000 men being out on strike.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: These eighty men should be interned if the British Government possessed any backbone at all. (Hear, hear!) They are the men who are making enormous profits out of the proceeds of the sale of coal. What care they about the British Empire so long as the profits go into their pockets! Perhaps the British Government are like our friends opposite, and their sympathies are with the eighty coalmine-owners. Their sympathies are certainly not with the 200,000 miners, who, under the best of conditions, only earn an average of 5s. per day. We have the same sort of patriots here, who talk about our great British Empire! It is only a shoddy form of patriotism. If the British Empire goes under, it will not be the fault of the working classes.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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Mr. COLLINS: It will be the fault of the ruling classes—the aristocratic classes, who for ages past have been making the profits out of the working classes. (Hear, hear!) Speaking as a representative of the workers, we have no desire to see the British race go under at any time. We have no desire to see that, and although we may not possess as great a measure of freedom as we ought to possess, we are on the eve of possessing it now, and we ob-

[5 p.m.] ject to any high official, no matter who he may be, casting reflections on the South Wales miners, or even upon the workers of Queensland. (Hear, hear!) After all, where would you be in this war if it were not for the workers? Your capitalist class—your "captains of industry," as they are called—have outlived their usefulness. (Hear, hear!) They have proved that in this war. Why, your Governments, if they were not possessed of so much timidity, would have taken over the means of production in the United Kingdom years ago; and I am not too sure, before this war is finished, that they will not find it necessary to take over the means of production in this great Empire. I am just going to read a quotation from a leaflet that was handed to me the other day. It reads as follows:—

"The history of nations does not move at an even pace; sometimes changes occur slowly, almost insensibly; at other times they come so fast that it is difficult for individuals and nations to follow changing circumstance with comprehension. Last year our lives pursued the even tenor of a way more or less in accord with Victorian times and traditions; this year witnesses that world-shaking disaster, the social revolution predicted long since by Karl Marx."

That is not a quotation from an I.W.U. leaflet. That is a quotation from the University War Committee here in Queensland. They recognise—being, I suppose, intelligent human beings—that we are approaching the social revolution as predicted by Karl Marx. I was surprised when I read that. I had not too much faith in universities in the past, so far as my class went; and I was surprised to think that here, in Queensland, we had such a radical University as to point out that we were on the eve of great changes as predicted by Karl Marx. I read Karl Marx as a young man, and narrowly escaped being put into His Majesty's gaol for having preached the gospel according to Karl Marx, and to think that, even now, the University recognises that great thinker—one of the foremost thinkers of the nineteenth century—who predicted the failure of the system under which we are now living, and who predicted the collapse of the capitalist system, which I hope will collapse, if not before this war is over, after the war, because it has outlived its usefulness. There is no need for me to quote at any length what Karl Marx really did say would happen, because I suppose you are all well acquainted with his books. He pointed out, at any rate, that the time would come when the expropriators would be expropriated, and that time ought to have come in Great Britain years ago.

Mr. CORSER interjected.

Mr. COLLINS: My friend there refers to Marx like a lot of other men, who I am confident have never read him—like a lot of men quote and condemn people, and yet have

never read the works of those people. It is just the same as the hon. member for Carnarvon's definition of socialism. You are likely to have State socialism right throughout the world, whether you like it or not, and it is going to be the salvation of civilisation.

Mr. VOWLES: Was not Marx a German?

Mr. COLLINS: My friend here wants to know: "Was not he a German?" You should not make these silly interjections for this reason: When I was in this Parliament a few years ago, I used to hear the late hon. member for Townsville, Sir Robert Philp, praising up the Germans over and over again—(hear, hear!)—and I want to say that I object to this shoddy patriotism. I have been in the far North; and I see the member for Toowoomba sitting there, and he was a member of the late Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Late lamented Government.

Mr. COLLINS: Lamented? Never! (Government laughter.) I have been in the far North, and what did I find? In the hon. member for Herbert's electorate I found no Britishers there to any extent. I was on the Herbert River last year, organising, and what did I find?

Mr. TOLMIE: Italians.

Mr. COLLINS: I found that, out of 420 cane-cutters, twenty-nine of them only could be classed as British Australians—twenty-nine of them—and the rest were foreigners. When you went a little further north, in the Innisfail districts, you found the greatest conglomeration of white races that exists in any part of Queensland—a conglomeration of races—and I saw men working in the canefields who were brought out by the Denham Government—aliens to the country—and brought here as against Britishers. In fact, it was a crime, to some extent, on the Herbert River to speak the English language. I walked through the streets of Halifax on a Saturday, and if I heard anyone speak the language which I profess to speak, I used to turn round with astonishment. (Laughter.) Why, in the far North last year—north of Townsville—you had 1,200 white foreigners working in your canefields, brought there by the Denham Government. One thousand two hundred of them! Yet these people talk about the British race, and do not encourage the British race, because I had been through the canefields seven years before, and I noticed that the native population was in the canefields at that particular time, and the late Government allowed a race of people to come in who are not up to our level, whatever may be said.

Mr. TOLMIE: What is this race you are talking of?

Mr. COLLINS: I told you they were a conglomeration. I could not mention all of them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is talking of the Denham importations.

Mr. COLLINS: I believe in the race to which I belong. I am proud of that race, and there are many men of my race beneath the soil of France. That is better than talking patriotism. I say that the expenses incurred by this war ought to be borne entirely by the wealthy classes in Australia, because they have got something to lose, and they are not going to the

front as they ought to go to the front. Coming now to the part of the Speech dealing with high prices. High prices! I could always point out the cause of high prices without any bother. It is easy to point out the cause. The cause is the profit made by the capitalist class. I will prove my case, as I am not in the habit of making statements unless I can prove them; and I am going to prove it from the income tax returns. If any hon. member looks at the returns for the year 1908-9 he will find that the people paid in income tax £9,187,846, and for the year 1913-14 they paid in income tax £16,274,500; or, in other words, from 1908-9 to 1913-14 the increase amounts to £7,086,654.

Mr. TOLMIE: £5,000,000 went into the Savings Bank during that time.

Mr. COLLINS: I am talking about the income tax return. That is, less than 14,000 people in Queensland have taken a very large proportion of the wealth of Queensland, as the hon. member knows. He knows that as well as I know it. I want to point out, in connection with our meat, that we pay too high a price for it at the present moment. It is no use talking about wages being on the increase, and so on. There comes a time when wages cannot increase any higher in connection with many industries.

Mr. TOLMIE: You bought a lot of second-class meat only yesterday.

Mr. COLLINS: More than likely we will require very drastic legislation yet to deal with this question in order to give the people cheap meat, however we may offend the friends of our friends on the Opposition benches by doing so. Are the pastoralists making a profit out of this war? Yes. What does the income tax return go to show, so far as the pastoralists are concerned? For the year 1912-13 we find that they paid income tax on £2,602,429, and in the year 1913-14 they paid income tax on £3,716,218, or, in other words, they increased their income by £1,113,789. And then people wonder at the high price of meat. Talk about the robbers of the Middle Ages! Why, there are no greater robbers than these, and in a time of war, too. Then they have the audacity to come along to a patriotic meeting and contribute £5 or £10 towards the patriotic fund. Talk about raising revenue—financing the State—why, it is quite easy.

Mr. MURPHY: If it is easy, why should they say the outlook is gloomy?

Mr. COLLINS: We know the cry that we are always beaten when we are not beaten. We are going to win, no matter how long the struggle may last. In the early days of this Labour movement, we used to fight a forlorn hope, but the British race is used to fighting forlorn hopes. I belong to the race that helped to blaze the track, to plough the fields and sow the seed, and I am very pleased I am here at the reaping of the harvest. (Government laughter.) I made a statement during my election campaign that when the complete returns for the year were made out in connection with the income tax, they would go to show that, notwithstanding the war, there had been a considerable increase. Now, I will give you the figures. Up to the end of June, 1914, they received £472,918 3s. 1d., and for 1915 we received £517,272 19s. 6d., and an increase

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of £44,354 16s. 5d. in income tax, and I am satisfied that when we get the complete returns they will go to show that at least the pastoralists have increased their incomes by another £500,000. They will go to show that the merchant classes have increased their incomes; and they will go to show that the manufacturing class have increased their incomes. In fact, those few people who pay income tax have taken too large a share of the wealth that is produced in this State. I remember, as a young man, in the year 1883, listening to Sir Samuel Griffith, when he said this—

“The great social problem is not how to accumulate wealth, but how to get a more equal distribution of it.”

That is the problem before this party at the present time, and that is the problem we have to solve—how to get a more equal distribution of the wealth that is produced in this State of Queensland. That is the reason we are going to attempt to deal with the regulation of prices. I quite agree that the value of a commodity is the value of the labour in the commodity. We do not take abnormal times, we take things under normal conditions. We take things on the law of averages, not just picking out “my farm,” where a drought exists. And I would like to remind the hon. member for Drayton, by the way, that I represent a district that is suffering from very severe drought, at least a part of it, from more severe drought than any other part of the State. But, notwithstanding the drought, I would like to remind him, too, that I have been returned by farmers, and I am just as much a representative of the farmers as the hon. member for Drayton, or even, perhaps, the hon. member for Burnett. We had a lot from the hon. member for Carnarvon about the supply and demand. We have got to ask ourselves the question when we are dealing with the supply of meat—Is there any shortage of cattle in Queensland? And in answer to that we find that there is no shortage of cattle in Queensland. The number of cattle in the Commonwealth is 11,087,513, and we find that we have no fewer than 5,369,741 in Queensland. Where does your argument come in about supply and demand? (Hear, hear!) Do you think I am concerned when I am told what the American pays for his beef or mutton? What I am concerned about is what we, as a self-governing State, are paying for our meat. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BERTRAM: Too much.

Mr. COLLINS: Of course, we are. Fancy a small population such as we are—a little over 600,000 persons—possessing nearly half the cattle in the Commonwealth, and then paying the enormous prices for meat that we are paying at the present time!

Mr. TOLMIE: You got in on it. Why don't you do it?

Mr. COLLINS: We are going to do it. The hon. member belongs to a party who do nothing but talk, talk, talk, but we belong to a party of action. (Hear, hear!) We are going to do things. We are going to make history in this State such as never was made before in the civilised world. We are out to make it—at least, I am out to make history—(laughter)—to do things no matter what you may call us. I am not afraid of being called this or that. I have been called

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names, but they have no effect on me. I want to see the lowest reach the level of a fair average.

Mr. MURPHY: The Secretary for Education is stopping home lessons.

Mr. COLLINS: He will have to go through his school-books and cut out all the parts which teach the people how to run their bayonet through another man's child, and those in other parts of the civilised world will have to follow his example. Leaving that aspect of the question alone for a few minutes, I want to make reference to our electoral law. Hon. members opposite say that it was a good law for us. I say it was not a good law for us. The absent vote was a long way ahead of the postal vote system—(hear, hear!)—because I know from my own experience that we had between 800 and 900 workers who had left the Burdekin three months or four months before the election, and will hon. members on that side of the House say that those 800 or 900 men recorded their votes by post? They are afraid of the postal vote.

Mr. COOPER: Afraid of what?

Mr. COLLINS: Eight hundred or 900 left the Burdekin and the part which I represent owing to the terrible drought which exists—I suppose the most terrible that has happened there since 1862—and those 800 men were disfranchised. And these men talk about being British! Why, all their actions in the past are un-British. I am one of those who stand for equal rights for all, but here we see your pioneering men, the men who were working in your canefields, the men who did a lot of your dirty work, so to speak, living under harsh conditions, deprived of the rights of the franchise, and I know what the conditions are under which they live, because I can claim that I have visited every canefield from Bundaberg to Mosman, and walked over most of the canefields of the Northern area. Therefore, I know the conditions under which the workers and the conditions under which the farmers have to live, and I knew at the time of the election that we were going to get the farmer's vote, and for that reason I am in this House to-day. Hon. members opposite cannot claim any more than we can claim on this side that they represent the farmers, because outside the hon. member for Mirani we represent all the sugar districts from Bundaberg to the Mosman. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The butter districts did not vote for you.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member can think of nothing else but butter; he seems to think there is no other industry. He does not think that the sugar industry is the most important that we have here, from an employing standpoint.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Or any other State.

Mr. COLLINS: And we are anxious to see our coastal districts settled with a white population, and yet these pioneers were deprived of their votes owing to the Elections Act passed by hon. members on the other side.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What are you howling about?

Mr. COLLINS: Another measure on the programme is the repeal of the Industrial Peace Act. The Industrial Peace Act was a

disgrace to any country which professed to be British. It contains a clause to take away from men the right to knock off work when they thought fit and proper. Talk about the Germans! I am inclined to think there is no law like that in Germany. At any rate, we intend to repeal it. I have some experience of that particular Act. I know it is not put into force. We were told that an award was equal to a law. Now, if an award was equal to a law, it was the duty of the Government to enforce the law. Did they enforce it at Goondi, as my friend the hon. member for Herbert knows?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Or in any part of Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: No; and the Australian Workers' Union had to expend its funds to get convictions against unscrupulous employers of labour, because there are unscrupulous employers, and very unscrupulous they are—men who employed Italians on the Herbert River, and tried to do them out of their wages.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about the hon. member for Drayton?

Mr. COLLINS: I do not know about him. He seems a fairly decent chap, so far as I am concerned, and I hope to convert him yet. (Government laughter.) I say that the award was not carried out. The Australian Workers' Union had to institute proceedings and pay the costs even after the matter had been referred to the department, and we were advised by the department to take action. I can mention two cases—Plane Creek and Pleystowe—where the prosecution of these companies by that organisation, even allowing that the union was successful and had a certain amount of force allowed by the court, cost the organisation over £40. That is in the district of the hon. member for Mirani, who only sticks in "by the skin of his teeth"—(Government laughter)—and I am satisfied that if I had been organising in the electorate for three years he would not have been here at all. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. APPEL: You know the tricks of the trade.

Mr. COLLINS: The same thing applies to the cases which the organisation was successful in prosecuting in the Bundaberg district. It cost the union a large amount of money to get the award enforced. We were not in favour of the Act. We were not carried away with enthusiasm of the Act, which only emanated from very small minds, indeed. Then, as to the sawmilling industry, an attempt was apparently never made to carry out the award. Within the last fortnight, the secretary of the Queensland branch of the Australian Workers' Union has to write to Messrs. Davis, Binnie, and Company, at Woodford, calling attention to the fact that the award which came into operation on 16th February had not been paid. He had also occasion to write to Messrs. Woodroo Brothers, of Caboolture, drawing their attention to the fact that they had not paid the award rates. What was the Government doing? Why did they not carry out their legislation which they were so anxious to put on the statute-book to the detriment of the workers of Queensland? In fact, all through, the policy of the department, until the Labour Government assumed power, had always offered inducements

to the employers to evade payments made by the Industrial Court, inasmuch as the employer continued to pay the less rate until the matter was brought under notice of the department. The late Government was simply a Government of plutocrats administering the law of this State in the interests of plutocracy. What surprises me is that hon. members opposite get into Parliament at all. The wonder is that they are able to gull the electors as they have gulled them in the past. The department, instead of prosecuting immediately and teaching the employers a lesson, simply agreed that as long as the back payments were made no prosecution would follow. The policy became very general of not paying the award rates until they were found out, and then simply paying the back time without interest. I do not intend to deal with the Industrial Peace Act any longer, but I will pass on to what my friend, the hon. member for Mirani, referred to—the sugar industry. Of course, we all know that the attention of this House from time to time has been occupied at great length by this great industry, and the Liberal Government, when in power, were always going to do this and that for the sugar industry, and for the sugar-growers, but they never did anything for them, only talk, talk, talk, and it has been left to this party to do something for the sugar-growers. We did more before Parliament met than the Liberal Governments did during their fifty years of office. I have already received letters from the sugar-growers at Proserpine congratulating the Government on the stand they have taken. My friend, the hon. member for Mirani, infers that under a certain set of conditions they would have got 19s. 6d. per ton more than they will get under the Government's proposal. Why did he not see that the Government which he sat behind for years provided that they got that 19s. 6d.? The sugar-growers have awakened from their long sleep. They saw their only hope was to vote for the Labour party. And here I want to offer a word of advice to the farmers' party. There is no need for a farmers' party in this House, because we on this side of the House represent the biggest farming industry in Queensland. I am surprised that the hon. member for Burnett interjects. The other night practically the whole of his speech might be summed up in these lines—"I am an individualist. I stand alone. I am a party of myself." Is that what he has been doing for the farmers? Is that the co-operation he has been teaching the farmers? I was organising amongst the men, and I told every farmer I came across, "Get into your organisation; get a union of your own; get away from the Australian Sugar Producers' Association. Get your own union organised and get better conditions the same as we have organised and got better conditions." That is my advice to the farmers, but do not organise outside the Labour party. (Laughter.) We are capable of looking after them, and I am quite satisfied that we will look after them better than they have ever been looked after in the past. At any rate, what is the position of the farmers of Queensland after fifty years of self-government in this State? Fifty years of Liberal government in this State? What do the income tax returns go to show? I remember making a speech in this House in 1911 dealing with that particular question, and I pointed out that only 1,400 farmers paid

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income tax in this State, and I find that for 1912-13 only 2,040 paid income tax, out of all the thousands, and we have nearly 5,000 in connection with the sugar industry. Then, we have thousands of farmers who follow the occupation of dairymen, and so forth, and yet out of the thousands of farmers [5.30 p.m.] we have in Queensland, after fifty years of Liberal Governments supported by members like the hon. member for Drayton, we find that in the year 1914 only 3,377 farmers paid income tax. I am prepared to say that after three years of Labour Government there will be more than 3,377 farmers paying income tax. Coming back to the sugar industry, I wish to point out to sugar-growers that we cannot right all their wrongs—that is the wrongs of fifty years—in one session of Parliament, nor in many sessions of Parliament. As I pointed out in my election addresses, if a Labour Government is to do effective work it must remain in office for a period of nine years, or three Parliaments.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is assured.

Mr. COLLINS: I believe it is assured. We are going step by step and proceeding, as it were, by evolution. The action of the Government in fixing the price of the raw products was a splendid move.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not for us.

Mr. COLLINS: Well, later on we will regulate the price of butter and cheese, and see that the farmer gets a fair price for those products, even in normal seasons.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You have acted to our detriment.

Mr. COLLINS: I do not want to weary the House on this subject, but I should like to read a quotation from the "Cairns Times" of the 3rd July, 1915, a Labour paper which is an authority on the sugar industry. That newspaper says—

"For the season 1913 the price secured by the Mulgrave Central Mill for their raw sugar was £15 3s. 11d., and last year the price was £14 14s. 4½d. per ton. This year they will get £18 per ton, which is equal to £2 per ton of cane on a basis of 9 tons of cane to the ton of sugar. If from that is taken the cost of manufacture equal to 8s. 3.7d. per ton, that will leave £1 11s. 8d. per ton to be paid the farmer for his cane. In this district the cane is a better average than that, and 8½ tons of cane will probably produce a ton of sugar. That will mean after deducting the cost of manufacture as of last year, 8s. 3.7d., that £1 14s. 0½d. will probably be fixed as the average price to be paid for all cane of that quality in this district, irrespective of whether it is crushed at the Mulgrave, Babinda, or Colonial Sugar Refining Company's mill, as compared with an average price of £1 8s. 10d. paid by the Mulgrave Mill Company in 1913, and £1 5s. 10½d. per ton paid for the 1914 crop.

"This means an average increase of about 8s. 1½d. per ton in the profits that will be secured by the farmers growing for the central mill."

Will the hon. member for Drayton say that we are not the friends of the farmers?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Prove it.

Mr. APPEL: Have they got as much cane this year?

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Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Albert interjects, "Have they got as much cane this year?" All Queensland is not suffering from a drought. I am tired of listening to what I term the "stinking-fish" party. In some parts of Queensland the farmers have fairly good crops. I represent what is perhaps the most drought-stricken district in Queensland, that is the Burdekin district, where the farmers have practically no crops, except in places where the land has been irrigated. If the Liberal party had done their duty in the past, the whole of that land would have been irrigated. I am sorry the hon. member made that interjection, as it has thrown me off the track. However, to return to the quotation, the writer continues—

"That means an average increase of about 8s. 1½d. per ton in the profits that will be secured by the farmers growing for the central mill, and as the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have usually paid their growers about 4s. 6d. less than the central mill, it will mean an average increase for those farmers of about 12s. 7d. per ton of cane."

That is, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company will be made to pay up; they ought to have been made to pay up long ago, as they have been crippling the development of the North. That we should be short of sugar in Queensland is a disgrace to past Governments in this State. I have travelled over the land on most of the coast line in the North, and I know that in the Herbert district alone there is sufficient good land to grow all the sugar Australia requires.

Mr. APPEL: You don't attribute the cause to the hon. member, do you?

Mr. COLLINS: No; I lay the fault at the door of the Liberal Governments of the past, of which the hon. member for Albert was a member. He may have been the best among the members of those Governments; at any rate, I know he was a radical during the election. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) I just want to refer to one other matter in connection with the sugar industry, and that is the number of persons employed in the industry. At the Pioneer Mill, in my electorate, I addressed a meeting of the men, and I inquired why it was that there were so few men present, and where were the others. The men said, "They are all here, Charlie; the others are Japs." The other workers were coloured aliens. At the Kalamia Mill the same condition with regard to the number of coloured aliens employed in the mill prevailed. In the district represented by the hon. member for Herbert you can see Chinese working on the tramlines, and coloured people of all nationalities working in the sugar-mills. The people who employ those coloured aliens claim to be patriots. They ought to be interned as traitors to their race. (Hear, hear!) Very few people are aware of the danger which threatens the far North of Queensland from the employment of coloured aliens. One of the reasons why I stopped there was that I knew the Government were undermining our work by encouraging their employment in that part of the State, which is the most fertile of any part of Queensland. I would make it a crime for any man to sit in this Parliament unless he has visited that part of Queensland and seen its fertility.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Have you ever seen any other part of Queensland?

Mr. COLLINS: The Government should pay the passage of members visiting the North, so that they may have a fair opportunity of becoming acquainted with the country and its resources. I wish now to refer to a few local matters. I asked a question of the Minister for Railways this afternoon with respect to the amount of money that has been spent on railway construction in different parts of Queensland. The answer was that in Townsville the amount was £3,383,987; Cairns, £2,015,422; Mackay, £428,876; Cooktown, £367,283; Normanton, £283,556; and Bowen—poor Bowen—(laughter)—£268,138.

Mr. KIRWAN: The Cinderella of the North.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes. Bowen is the Cinderella of the North. We have an extensive coalfield in the district.

Mr. APPEL: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I am glad to hear the hon. member for Albert say "Hear, hear."

Mr. APPEL: I had something to do with it.

Mr. COLLINS: I wish to read to the House an extract from the Townsville "Bulletin" of 1st July, 1915, with reference to that coalfield. The writer says—

"There are four workable seams on the field—viz., the Bowen, 20 feet to 30 feet thick; the Denison, 5 feet to 10 feet; the Scott or Kennedy, 4 feet to 10 feet; and the Garrick, from 4 feet to 8 feet; or, roughly, in the four seams, 40 feet."

Mr. APPEL: And coal of excellent quality, too.

Mr. COLLINS: As the hon. member for Albert says, the coal is of excellent quality. There is also a very large quantity available. The writer of the article from which I have quoted says—

"The coal necessary to supply the whole of Queensland for the next 500 years can be mined from this valley. Looking from an optimistic point of view, and allowing that Queensland in the next few hundred years had a population greater than the United Kingdom or the United States, and had a greater export trade in coal than either, and that no other coal was available for or to Queensland, this valley alone would suffice for 500 years."

There is a national asset, and the Government ought to see that it is retained as a national asset. The people of Queensland are the largest consumers of coal, as they require great quantities for their railways, and in the interest of the State we ought to possess a portion of the coal in that field. I notice that the Minister for Lands is in favour of building railways ahead of settlement. I would point out to him that there is no better place in which to try that experiment than in the Bowen River Coalfield. At the present time we have over 500,000 acres of land there, which can be resumed at once for closer settlement. I make no apology for quoting a letter by Mr. E. W. Lymburner, which appeared in the Bowen "Independent" of 9th May, 1911, because, although the letter is a few years old, the land is still there. Mr. Lymburner writes as follows:—

"Sir,—I have read with great interest Mr. Massy's remarks to the Minis-

ter for Railways as reported in your issue of the 15th ultimo, on the probability of the Bowen River country being well adapted for closer settlement, not only as a coalfield, but on account of the huge area of rich agricultural land. A large extent of the land on Havilah and Byerwen is first-class agricultural, and the same applies to large areas on Sonoma and Emu Plains. The Bowen River may be considered as one of the finest streams of water in North Queensland, from which immense areas could be irrigated at a very low cost. The country, in my opinion, is equal to the Darling Downs for wheat or cereal crops, and with a railway to the banks of the Bowen River, people would flock there in hundreds. There is no danger of flood: in fact, I firmly believe, with a railway to the Bowen River, there would be a second Toowoomba spring up in a very few years. In 1884 I surveyed a trial line to Sonoma with the intention of carrying it on to the top of the Leichhardt Range, via Parrot Creek, having previously made a flying survey of the route. Of course, at that time there was no Merinda Meatworks or bridge over the Don River, so I took a course midway between the Don and Euri Creek, and crossing the Bogie about 2 miles above Mount Pleasant Station, and through what was known as Pelican Creek Gap. In this trial survey the steepest grade was one in sixty-six. There are no engineering difficulties on the line, and by starting at Merinda, the only bridge in consequence would be the Bogie. I sincerely trust this matter will be kept alive, as the coalfields are a national belonging. In conclusion, I say, go for the railway, and get it.

"Yours, etc.,

"E. W. LYMBURNER."

Of course, they have not got the railway yet.

Mr. APPEL: Now it will be assured to them.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes, we hope that they will get it in the near future, as the people deserve it. There is a vast mineral field in the great Cloncurry district, which in the future will support tens of thousands of miners and hundreds of thousands of a population. I have faith in our State, and do not believe in crying "stinking fish." To develop that portion of Queensland we shall require cheap coal for its development. By constructing a railway from Bowen to this coalfield we can supply our own railways with coal, and we can supply our own sugar-mills, and in addition we can supply Charters Towers. We can also supply the smelting works in the Cloncurry district, and make that part of Queensland prosperous.

Mr. MURPHY: You can get it cheaper and quicker from Mount Mulligan.

Mr. COLLINS: I have been at Mount Mulligan, and I do not wish to say anything against Mount Mulligan, but there is only a 2 feet 7 inch seam there, and it is not to be compared with the seam of coal which we have got at this place. We have 500,000 acres of land there, which is stated to be equal to the Darling Downs, and it is fit for close settlement. It is also available at any moment. The only thing that stands in the way is the construction of a railway, and if we get that railway it will make that

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part of Queensland one of the most prosperous parts of the State.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FOLEY (*Mundingburra*): I move that the hon. member for Bowen be granted an extension of time to finish his speech.

Mr. COLLINS: I do not desire an extension of time.

* Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): It was with a good deal of dissatisfaction that I listened to the Governor's Speech, and heard the legislation foreshadowed for this session. It seems to have been made for the benefit of the Labour party, and not for the farmers' party. During the election we heard a good deal about the roads and railways that were going to be made for the benefit of the farmer, but these things seem to be left out of the programme altogether. From the farmers' point of view the legislation foreshadowed is for the benefit of the consumer. I would like to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply for the way they spoke. I cannot agree with all that they said, because, from a producers' point of view I could not do so. I was pleased to notice that the Minister for Railways expressed his own individual opinion against the guarantee system of railways, but I am sorry that no opinion on that matter has been expressed by the Government. I consider that the guarantee railway system is one of the greatest burdens that the producers have got to bear.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You did not say that when you were asking for the railways.

Mr. MOORE: It is one of the planks in the platform of the farmers' party to abolish the guarantee railway system. That is one of the things we hope to see abolished, and I am pleased that the Minister for Railways has expressed his own individual opinion against it.

Mr. MURPHY: He has got a guarantee railway in his own electorate.

Mr. MOORE: In connection with railway matters there is one other thing that I would like to have seen mentioned in the Speech. I would like to have seen some mention made of the connection with the Southern and Central systems of railway. I would like to have seen a connection made between the railways in the Kingaroy district. There are only about 10 or 15 miles of railway required to link up the two railway systems, and seeing that there is only that short distance, I hope the Government will bring about the desired communication.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have done very well in that district.

Mr. MOORE: We want to do better. We want to be able to get our stock conveniently from the Kingaroy district to the Downs, and vice versa without wasting time and money in sending them right round by the railway as it exists at present. So far as railways are concerned, I hope that the Railway Department will work more in harmony with the Post and Telegraph Department in allowing more facilities for the country districts than they are doing at the present time. Every regulation and expense is put in the way of the selectors at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Which line are you asking for?

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Mr. MOORE: I will allow the Minister to choose the route himself. I see it is proposed to refer all railways to a public works committee. I am quite satisfied that that committee will pick the best route. Then we come to the question of main roads. It is also a leading plank in the platform of the farmers' party. There is no mention of roads in the Governor's Speech. We would like to know if the Government intend to recognise its obligations in contributing to the cost of making roads which are used for hauling timber for the benefit of the Crown Lands Department. At the present time the Government haul their timber over the roads, but do not contribute one penny to the cost of the making or upkeep of those roads. I hope that an expression of opinion will be given on this matter by the Government, because we have heard it mentioned at different local authorities' conferences by Labour members, who have stated they would inquire into the matter as soon as they got into power, but we have never heard anything more about it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The matter of getting into Parliament was never mentioned at a local authorities' conference.

Mr. APPEL: A contribution from the royalty was mentioned.

Mr. MOORE: Then last, but not least, there is no mention made about the subject of prickly-pear, which is the greatest curse that Queensland has at the present time. The idea is held by a good many people that it does not matter, but a large area is becoming infested with it. I remember that a lady once asked her friend was anything being done about the prickly-pear, and the friend said, "There are two things that no one mentions, that is snow in Canada, and prickly-pear in Queensland."

The PREMIER: What do you say should be in the Speech about prickly-pear?

Mr. MOORE: I expected to see what legislation was foreshadowed on that question. At the present time I do not see anything about prickly-pear in the Speech at all.

The PREMIER: Will you suggest what legislation would suit?

Mr. MOORE: I will suggest it later on.

The PREMIER: Suggest it now.

Mr. MOORE: Well, I suggest that the land should be given to the man who clears it. When he clears a portion, he should get a title, and so encourage him to clear more.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have had that.

Mr. BERTRAM: Your leader expressed complete satisfaction with the policy of the Government.

Mr. MOORE: I dare say he did. I don't. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A dispute in the party already.

Mr. MURPHY: No party is satisfied with its leader. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: The legislation which is foreshadowed by the Government is for the benefit of the consumer and the unionist, and the unionist must be of the pure merino all-wool type. One day during the recent elections, a Labour organiser who was working for my opponent said he sympathised with

me, and I asked him why. He said, "The farmers are a lot of scabs, and the union will never get on. Unfortunately, there are a lot of farmers of that way of thinking. When the hon. member for Oxley was speaking the other night, he said that he was very pleased to see a farmers' party in this House to look after the interests of the farmers. Consequently, I was surprised to hear the outcry from the other side of the House, and Government members said that we did not have a monopoly of the representation of the farmers. They said that they had farmers' representatives over there. If their admiration and belief in unionism is sincere, why do not they join the farmers' union, and why do their representatives not sit on this side with the farmers' party? Evidently unionism for the protection of the farmer is one thing, and unionism for the despoiling the producer for the benefit of the consumer is another, according to them. I do not care about the fixing of prices of commodities. There was one thing that the hon. member for Mackay said which I would like to bring to the notice of hon. members. I quite agree with the hon. member, and I would like these words of his to be put on a tablet where every member could see them every day. This is what he said in the course of his speech—

"The Labour party supported the Bill on that occasion, not because it was going to bring a new heaven and a new earth so far as the sugar industry is concerned, but because it laid down a vital principle in the Labour platform—that the producer should have a say in fixing the price of the particular commodity he produces."

I am sorry that the vitality of that principle was so feeble that it died soon after its birth. If that principle had only been in operation when the wheat was seized in New South Wales, what a difference it would have made! If it had only lived till the price of butter and cheese was fixed, what a difference it would have made! The Food Price Commissioner states that he had no evidence to go upon in regard to the fixing of the price of cheese. He just fixed the price of cheese by guess, and he did it jolly badly. That is a vital principle with the farmers, and it should go side by side with another principle which used to be advocated from the other side, "equal opportunity for everybody." They used to think so over there at one time, but, unfortunately, that was killed by the more vital principle of preference to unionists. Those two very fine principles have been laid to rest without mourning. We are going to mourn them sincerely, because we think they are vital principles. There was one thing which the hon. member for Normanby mentioned which I might draw attention to. He said the farmer did not mind if the price of his commodities was fixed by the Government, and he gave as a proof of that the winning at a by-election a Labour seat in a farming constituency in New South Wales. I presume he referred to the Castlereagh seat. We know what happened there. A truce was arranged between Mr. Wade and Mr. Holman, and the Liberals decided not to put up a candidate, but the farmers were so annoyed at the action of the Government for seizing their wheat, that they declined to be bound by the truce, and decided to run a farmers' candidate.

Mr. KIRWAN: And he got badly beaten.

Mr. MOORE: In the "Daily Mail" of the 8th February, we find the following:—

"On Friday, Mr. Holman challenged Mr. Wade to say whether Mr. Blacket, who is to fight the Labour candidate in the Castlereagh by-election, would sit and vote with the Liberal party. Mr. Wade, as leader of the Liberal party, declared that Mr. Blacket was not assisted by the Liberal party, and was not a nominee of the Liberal party. Mr. Campbell, secretary of the Farmers and Selectors' Association, however, has claimed Mr. Blacket as the farmers' nominee, and that association was a distinct political party."

Mr. MCPHAIL: The farmers turned the farmers' candidate down.

Mr. MOORE: No, they did not. Mr. Blacket polled 2,369 votes. That was the farmers' vote. The Liberal vote, which amounted to more than 1,000, was given to the Labour man.

Mr. BERTRAM: Didn't the executive of the farmers' party congratulate the Labour member on having won that fight?

Mr. MOORE: I do not see how he could do that.

Mr. KIRWAN: What was Mr. Trefle's majority at the previous election?

Mr. MOORE: At the previous election, Mr. Trefle polled 3,815, and Mr. Blacket 3,466; at the by-election Mr. Arkins, the Labour man, polled 3,214. The hon. member for Normanby, in talking about the promises of the Government being unfulfilled in connection with food prices, said that goodness knows how high the prices would have soared but for the action of the Labour party. He said that the Labour party, at any rate, had put the brake on. Exactly. It is just like the man who put the brake on his heavily loaded cart in going up the hill so as to make the horse think that he was going down hill. It is the same as putting the brake on the farmers. You cannot get away from that. The members on that side of the House do not realise what is going on in connection with the dairying industry. I have been dairying for a good while, and I do not do it for a hobby. I have not met a man who goes in for dairying for a hobby. I dairy because it is the only thing that I can make a living on in that class of country. Some of it is so situated, unfortunately, as regards wheat-growing that the cost of cultivation is high, and the risk of getting a poor crop, or none at all, is out of all proportion. You have to do what you can with your land in order to make ends meet when you get hard times. Personally, I have been paying agistment for four years, and I had to sell part of the herd to pay for the cost of the agistment. It is not right that the producer should be robbed in order to give the consumers cheap food. There is a vital principle to be put into force, and that is, to allow the producers to have a say in the fixing of the prices of the produce they produce. If that had been done it would have been much better before the prices of butter were fixed. The hon. member for Oxley referred to the wheat industry, but I think he is labouring under a misconception of the case, because there are some districts on the Downs, and in other parts of Queensland, which have very heavy crops of wheat, and in those districts he will find that full use

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is made of the land. I know a man in the district not 40 miles from Toowoomba who has put in 800 acres of wheat every year for the last five years, and he has not received enough from that [7 p.m.] wheat to pay for the harvesting alone and give him sufficient seed for the next year. I claim that after a farmer has lived in a district a few years he knows what will suit that district best; he learns from the school of practical experience, and it is no use trying to force him to go in for other crops. The hon. member for Oxley referred a good deal to the necessity for the conservation of fodder. A good deal of what the hon. member said is quite right, but there is something to be said for the other side as well. In the Toowoomba district I know a man who paid over £150 to put up a silo, and for four and a-half years he had not a straw to put into that silo. The same thing occurred to a man who put up a shed worth £200 in the middle of a 200-acre lucerne paddock. He has never had one straw to put into that shed for the last four and a-half years, and naturally, when farmers see things like that, it makes them chary of spending a lot of money on which interest must be paid, and the risk of a return so great. I know the hon. member for Oxley is interested in a district that is particularly favourably situated. They have had a very good rainfall, and no doubt they have reaped the benefit; but 10 or 15 miles away there has been a drought for a considerably long period, and the farmers have not the money to pay for the building of silos and sheds of that description. Undoubtedly, it should be done, and we hope that, later on, the farmers will learn experience from these droughts, and build sheds, which will help to place them in a better financial position. When the hon. member for Mackay was speaking, he said he was very much interested in the amendment of the Local Authorities Act, and this was what he said—

“We have the property franchise now. We have here men who are able to exercise the plural votes. No matter how intelligent a man may be, he is not entitled to a vote unless he owns or rents certain property. That is altogether opposed to the way we claim the right to vote under any administrative Act. The right to vote should be the common basis of manhood. (Hear, hear!) If it is a good thing for adult suffrage to return members of Parliament, then it should also be a good thing with regard to electing members of local governing bodies.”

Great Britain had its quarrel with America because it tried to enforce taxation without representation, and the Government are advocating the enforcement of representation without taxation, which is equally unjust. In the towns it may be all right, as the people are payers of rent, but in the country there are a large number of nomadic workers, and why should they have a vote in the spending of money when they contribute nothing? If the Government said one word about an endowment or subsidy, it would be a different thing, as the general taxpayer would then contribute. Why should one section have to contribute, and another section have the spending of the money? You can quite understand what a lot of public-spirited men would come forward under that state of things. They would

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give large sums of money by paying men high rates of wages in order to get political support for the future. I think the man who “pays the piper” should call the tune, and I am very sorry to think that this amendment of the Local Authorities Act is going so far. I do not say that the franchise should not be widened. In some instances, perhaps, it should, but I do not think it should be widened in that respect.

Mr. COLLINS: Why not do away with the nomadic workers altogether?

Mr. MOORE: If they don't look out, the drought will do away with them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They seem to be an excrescence.

Mr. MOORE: No, we cannot do without them. If they contributed towards the revenue then they should have a say in the spending of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Don't they assist to produce anything?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, but they do not pay any taxes.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Do they throw their money into the river or do they spend it here?

Mr. MOORE: That has nothing to do with it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a form of taxation.

Mr. MOORE: No, it is a different form of taxation absolutely. There is one other thing that we do not agree with, and that is the leasehold tenure of land. The most prosperous settlers I have seen in Queensland, especially round about the Downs, are the men who got their selections under the old homestead conditions—that is, from 2s. 6d. to 10s. an acre. These men are the most prosperous settlers, and they are now asking what are they to do with their sons. They are asking are their sons to have the same privileges as they had. They had to work sixteen hours a day very often, and were prepared to do it, and their sons are prepared to do it, provided they get the same opportunities that their fathers had. There is a good deal to be done after taking up a selection. It is hard work, but they are quite prepared to go through with it provided they get facilities, and it is only fair to them that these facilities should be given. There is one other thing that the Labour party are keen on; they call it “the nationalisation of industries.” There is one thing from the consumer's point of view that I cannot agree with. The Premier, speaking not very long ago, said, “Would the rest of Australia permit prices to go up in times of drought?” That is just what we are afraid of. When the State is the only buyer, the consumers being in a very large majority, they won't permit the prices to go up. It is only reasonable to expect that, when you have a tremendous majority of consumers on the one side and a very small minority of producers on the other side, the consideration will be given to the consumer to the detriment of the producer. I do not think it is necessary to repeat what other speakers have said, and I wish just to state the facts from my point of view. I quite understand that we are in a minority, and I quite understand that the consumers are in the majority. All the same, I think the producers have just as much right to consideration as the consumers. The hon. member for Normanby spoke from the Farmers' Union point of view more than

from the point of view of the Labour platform, and I was very pleased to hear him advocate those things that we are working for and what we have come here to get.

The PREMIER: Didn't you know the Labour party had them already in their platform?

Mr. MOORE: We see what the producers in other States have got under Labour government, and we can only judge from that what we are likely to get. But if the Government wish to give us what we want here, we will help them; otherwise we will fight against them.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Keppel*): In listening to the hon. member who has just resumed his seat one would think that the Labour platform did not embrace the interests of the primary producers, but as a matter of fact nothing could be further from the truth, because the action of the Government since they have assumed control of the Treasury benches—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Robbery.

Mr. LARCOMBE: If it is robbery, it is a remarkable fact that the primary producers, and the cane producers in particular, have wired down from Mackay congratulating the Premier on the action he has taken in relation to sugar (Hear, hear!) If it is robbery, it is a form of robbery that the farmers of this State want more of. (Hear, hear!) We have the history of Labour in the other States, and we know quite well that Labour in New South Wales and Western Australia put forward and carried out a policy embracing every legitimate industry in the community. That is one of the features of the Governor's Speech, and what more striking tribute could the Labour Government have of their ability and the sympathetic nature of their work than the speech delivered by the leader of the farmers' party last night? Why, it is a direct contradiction of the speeches delivered by his followers. The hon. member for Albert took the Governor's Speech, plank after plank, analysed it, and intimated his approval and support of the programme, but he differed slightly in relation to the policy that should be pursued in carrying out that policy.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He was not speaking for me. (Government laughter.)

Mr. LARCOMBE: That is a very interesting intimation. We have another party in the House—the Bebbington party. I quite understand the deputy leader of the Country party speaking in that way, because I understand that he was only beaten by one vote for the leadership. (Loud Government laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are very easily gulled.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member who has just interjected did a good deal of gulling here to-night. I do not intend to do similarly, but I want to direct my attention to a few points that appear in the Governor's Speech, and offer a few general remarks also. We meet here this year under unique circumstances. For the first time in the history of the State a Labour Government with a majority behind it occupy the Treasury benches. That is the result of many years' hard work, many years of organisation, and of work through various other channels, and if the Labour party has had to wait in this State—it is the only State in Australia that has had to wait so long—there is this consolation: that we now have

in Queensland a larger Labour majority than any other Labour Government in Australia, so that is something to be proud of. (Hear, hear!) Just let me refer to the action of the New South Wales Government in relation to the Wheat Acquisition Act. It was designated by our opponents "The Wheat Grab Act." The Labour Government in that State paid the farmer a price for his wheat better than what had ruled for the previous twenty-five years with one exception. Not only that, but there were many farmers tied up by contracts who were compelled to supply the wheat at 3s. per bushel. The Labour Government stepped in, annulled those contracts, and gave the farmer 5s. per bushel. That is the way the New South Wales Government treated the primary producer. (Hear, hear!) Many reasons have been offered as to the cause of Labour winning at the last election. There are many contributing factors. There was the Elections Act Amendment Act, high cost of living, the attempt to interfere with the Constitution; there were all these immediate causes, and in addition the great general cause—the growing popularity of Labour economies and ideals in Australia. (Hear, hear!) There were all these factors, but there was also another factor, and that factor was the attitude of the Conservative Press in Queensland. They discarded all ethics of journalism, all principles of fair fighting, and they poured out their asphyxiating gases just as freely as the Germans are doing. But the people of Queensland realised the nature of the attack; they realised how unfair they were, and the result was that there was a revulsion of feeling against the methods of the Press with which hon. members' opposite are associated. I think the methods of their Press injured their cause rather than helped it. I want to congratulate the mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply. Undoubtedly, they delivered good speeches, as also did other new members who followed them, and they will certainly be an acquisition to the House. I also want to congratulate the Premier and his colleagues on their assumption of office. They are all men of ability and experience and have stood the test of many years' trial in this State, and I feel sure that their work will rebound to their credit and will be of great advantage to the State. (Hear, hear!) If they do not do anything greatly in a positive sense in the next three years, they will have done a good deal in a negative sense. They will have prevented the filching of the electoral rights of the people; they will have prevented a tampering with the Constitution in the direction of increasing the term of Parliament from three years to five years. (Hear, hear!) Thirty years ago the ultra Tories thought it necessary to reduce the term from five years to three years, and it remained for the most reactionary Administration that the State has known to attempt last year to revert to the five years' term. Fortunately, their actions have been frustrated. Again, certainly we have been saved from a good deal of general injustice, because this war will necessitate further taxation, State as well as Federal, and the burden will be more equitable under a Labour Administration than it would have been under the Denham Government or any other Liberal Administration.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What other taxes are available?

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Mr. LARCOMBE: I am not discussing which taxes are possible. Now, I wish to deal briefly with this cry for a party truce. It is nothing but organised hypocrisy, because members opposite had an opportunity last year of carrying into effect the wishes which they have expressed from that side of the House this session. If they believe in a party truce, if they believe our forces should be concentrated on one object—the successful prosecution of the war—how is it that they introduced the Elections Act Amendment Act of last session? (Hear, hear!) How is it that they continued party warfare in that way?

Mr. FOLEY: Bludgeoned it through.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Exactly! There are many arguments that might be urged to prove that they are not sincere in that claim.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We asked for a truce last year.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Yes, and we got a baton. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) Take the speech of the leader of the Opposition. He criticised the Governor's Speech and entered into a discussion of the controversial points. I hold that if he was logical and consistent, he should simply have moved an amendment that, in the opinion of this House, controversial subjects should be ignored, and the only subjects dealt with should be matters relating to the war. Instead, he entered into a long discussion of the merits or demerits of the Speech.

Mr. MACARTNEY: What chance had we got of carrying an amendment? We could only make suggestions.

Mr. LARCOMBE: It does not matter what chance the hon. member would have. He entered into party politics, the very thing he blamed the Labour Government for doing. "Two wrongs do not make a right," and it did not justify the leader of the Opposition's speech.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If we were to leave the room, would you go on with the business?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I hope they will not follow the idiotic example of their brethren in the Federal Parliament, and leave the Chamber. What attitude did he adopt on the first day we met? Was there not an indication there? The first scene in this House was created by hon. members opposite, and a disgraceful scene it was.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Created by the Premier.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Created by the hon. member for Burrum.

Mr. MACARTNEY: By the Premier not knowing what the position was.

Mr. LARCOMBE: If they desired a party truce, they would not have attempted to defeat your nomination, Mr. Speaker, and in order to show that they knew they had no chance, I will just refer to the leader of the Opposition's remarks. He stated that they had no chance of carrying an amendment in favour of a party truce.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We had twenty-two independent votes from your side.

Mr. LARCOMBE: That argument is unsound also, because the other person nominated from this side of the Chamber inti-

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ated that he did not desire to be a candidate, and yet in spite of that the leader of the Opposition and his colleagues attempted to force him to become a candidate.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Twenty-two of your friends wanted him.

Mr. LARCOMBE: What kind of bludgeoning tactics are these from a party who are never tired of talking about their freedom of action? Here they tried to compel one member to become a candidate against his own will. Then I want to emphasise the fact that they had no desire to bring about a party truce, or they would have loyally supported your nomination, Mr. Speaker, particularly in view of the declaration of the leader of the Opposition that he knew it was going to be a party vote. If he had that desire for a party truce, why did he strike a discordant note on the first time the House met?

Mr. MACARTNEY: We wanted to get you some freedom.

Mr. LARCOMBE: They wanted to get us, but they missed us. (Government laughter.) I want to point out that the Liberal party have continuously opposed the Labour party, have harassed them at every turn, and have not shown the slightest indication of a desire for a party truce; and in view of all these facts, we must realise how hypocritical their action is. It amounts to this: that the parties opposite are prepared to throw to the industrial "Huns" the wives and children of those who have gone away to the front to fight, because they are being exploited here by the high cost of living, and by other means.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Rot!

Mr. LARCOMBE: That is very elegant from the hon. member. It is the only interjection he is capable of. I know he is more of an authority on the subject than I am. Now, I want to deal briefly with the leader of the Opposition. The change of Government has brought about many changes, and one of those changes has resulted in the election of the member for Toowong to the position of leader of the Opposition. We recognise his ability and his experience, but, notwithstanding that, his appointment is hard to understand, because last session he hardly ever attended this Chamber, and when he did attend it was only to participate in a desultory way in the discussion, or tearfully claim that the Liberal party were splintering some plank of the Labour party's platform.

Hon. J. A. FHEELY: Was he not a round robiner?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I believe he was, and a successful one, too. He is the only one who has got anything out of the round robin. (Government laughter.) I want to point out that when he complained of the splinters flying from the platform to his side here, that if he stops there for three years he will not only see splinters flying, but most of the platform. We will pound and pulverise that so-called platform during our first three years on the Treasury benches that there will be nothing left but a mass of sawdust.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter

Mr. LARCOMBE: However I want to ascertain why the hon. member for Toowong was elected to the position. Then, there is

the hon. member for Toowoomba. Look at the bullocking work he did last session! He was the coming man. There was also the hon. member for Burrum. These men bore the heat and burden of the day, but now the hon. member for Toowong comes along and secures all the plums—only one, but still all of them, just at the psychological moment. (Government laughter.) And how nicely it was introduced by the Press. There was a notification, apparently through his son, that the hon. member intended to devote himself seriously to politics, and two days' later he was elected to his present position. No doubt it was a lesson in strategics, and I congratulate him on it. The election of the hon. member shows the trend of the party opposite. They are conservative in the extreme. They have elected the Hercules of toriyism in this State as their leader. (Government laughter.) The hon. member for Toowong is the Irvine of Queensland politics. I am not talking of his ability or his experience, but I say that he represents the reactionary sentiment in this State. He does it, perhaps, conscientiously, but, nevertheless, his principles, his political economy, are out of date, and it is hard to understand, therefore, in the face of all these things, that he has been elected to this position.

Mr. MACARTNEY: You are very much concerned about me.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I am. It is a very serious matter. I take the leader of the Opposition very seriously. (Government laughter.) I want to point out that hon. members opposite have never ceased to denounce this party because we have not practical men at the head of affairs. Fortunately, we have practical men in the hon. member for Maranoa, in the hon. member for Eacham, in the hon. member for Oxley, and in other hon. members who are practical farmers.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Is the hon. member for Oxley a farmer?

Mr. LARCOMBE: He owns a farm as big as that of the hon. member for Drayton. He knows something about the man on the land and his requirements, and the man on the land has the sympathy of the hon. member for Oxley.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: What about the hon. member for Murrumba?

Mr. LARCOMBE: The only farming that the hon. member for Murrumba does is farming the farmers. (Government laughter.) I want to point out that hon. members opposite are continually preaching this gospel of practical experience. How, then, is it that they elected an essentially city man to the leadership of their party, a man who knows absolutely nothing about the land? I do not say that in any derogatory sense, but his whole life has been devoted to politics and his legal profession, and he has had no opportunity to get on the land. Could the hon. the leader of the Opposition do a simple little task, such as milking a cow? (Laughter.) I am sure he could not. I am sure he could not leg-ropo her without a few lessons from the hon. member for Drayton. I want to emphasise this point, because the hon. member for Drayton and other hon. members opposite are never tired of denouncing this party because we have not practical men in charge of our affairs. It

shows insincerity when they make such a cry, and when they elect to their leadership such a man as the hon. member for Toowong, when they have amongst them country men like the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That argument cuts both ways.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I am dealing only with the arguments put forward by hon. members opposite. I wish to point out [7.30 p.m.] that it is quite evident why the hon. member for Toowong has been elected to the position of leader of the Opposition. He has been elected because he is the legal representative of the American meat trust, the representative of the shipping ring, and of the tramway monopoly, and of other combinations that have been exploiting the taxpayers of the State lately. The hon. member was elected outside Parliament altogether; he was elected by the commercial magnates of the State who insisted that he should be appointed to that position.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: What is your authority for that?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I have good authority for it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member justified in casting a personal reflection upon another hon. member?

The SPEAKER: I do not see any personal reflection in the remarks of the hon. member for Keppel.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is your judgment, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: If what the hon. member says is true, I am unfit to sit in this House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I rise to support the point of order raised by the leader of the Opposition.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: What point of order?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The leader of the Opposition asked a question on a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order before the House.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is only what you might expect.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

The PREMIER and GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! It is a reflection on the Chair.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not know what remark I am expected to withdraw. I think that what has occurred is what we might expect from the hon. member for Keppel; we might expect remarks of that sort from him, and if the Speaker does not understand that I cannot help it.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: That is an insult to the Chair.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: "Adding insult to injury."

Mr. MACARTNEY: I only wish to make it clear to the Speaker that I intended to cast no reflection upon him.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I strongly resent the suggestion that I am casting any personal

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reflection on the leader of the Opposition. I say his election was brought about in a certain way.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Without one tittle of authority for your statement.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I say it is absolutely correct, and the hon. member knows that it is correct.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must accept the denial of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I know that, Mr. Speaker. I cast no personal reflection on the hon. member. The information I received is authentic, and does not affect the leader of the Opposition personally. The influences to which I have referred may have been at work without his knowledge.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Then you should give your authority on the floor of this House.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Hon. members opposite have so often indulged in victimisation that I feel sure that if I gave my authority the persons who gave me the information would be victimised, and placed at a serious disadvantage.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LARCOMBE: We know what treatment was ladled out previously to men who dared to assert their rights or express their opinions. We know that the traditional enemy of this party in 1891 leg-ironed and gaol-ed men who dared to express their opinions in favour of the principles of this party, and that they attempted by victimisation and other means to strangle the Labour movement in its infancy. Now that the Labour movement has reached manhood, such attempts will not be successful. I am not going to give my informant's name simply because it would mean victimisation.

Mr. MACARTNEY: For the best of reasons—you cannot.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Why is the hon. member so certain that I cannot?

Mr. MACARTNEY: You know you cannot.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I could do so, and the anger of the hon. member is evidence that I have struck home.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Give the name and be a man.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I would remind the hon. member for Lockyer that he is not in the chair now.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: This is a sort of clown business. We expect something better than that. Be a man and give the name.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He is more of a man than you are.

Mr. LARCOMBE: It is very unbecoming for an ex-Speaker of this House to make such interjections.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: It is equally unbecoming for the hon. member to make a false statement on the floor of this House.

The SPEAKER: Order! Did I understand the hon. member for Lockyer to accuse the hon. member for Keppel of making a false statement?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I did.

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Withdraw, withdraw!

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Mr. ARMSTRONG: Order! (Loud laughter.) In deference to you, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the statement.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LARCOMBE: I realise that a qualified withdrawal only aggravates the offence, and the ex-Speaker knows that as well as I do. I wish now to deal briefly with the measures contained in the Governor's Speech. I shall not pursue the line of argument I was following, though I could prove my contention up to the hilt. I propose to deal first with the question of the high cost of living. It is pleasing to note that the Government have indicated their intention of grappling with this serious evil, and it is more gratifying to note that, by administrative acts since they have been in office, they have been responsible for a reduction in the cost of the necessaries of life. With the limited time at their command, they have already done a good deal in that direction. The leader of the Opposition complained bitterly of what he termed the misrepresentation and the unfair issue that the Labour party submitted to the country at the last election, and he condemned the leader of the Government and his colleagues for blaming the Denham Administration for the high cost of living. The leader of the Government had the highest authority in Australia for the statements he made in connection with this subject. The Commonwealth statistics show that the percentage of increase in the cost of living was abnormal in Queensland, and that in no other State of Australasia has the increase been so large as it is in this State. The reason for that was the acts of omission and commission of the Denham party. They were rightly charged with that sin, and they suffered for it. The electors of Queensland have appreciated the responsibility of the Denham Administration for the high cost of living, but I am certain that they will not expect any magical change, and that for the simple reason that there are abnormal conditions prevailing.

Mr. TOLMIE: Oh! when did they start to be abnormal conditions?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I want to deal with the question fairly. Will the hon. member for Toowoomba deny that the war has dislocated the money market, and trade, and industry?

Mr. TOLMIE: That happened when the war started.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I should like to refer to the disastrous drought from which the State is suffering. In the district from which I come there was not a single inch of rain last month, and the period from March to June was the driest ever experienced in the Central district. Those two very important factors will prevent any magical change being made in the cost of living. Another thing that makes that change difficult is that we have had, for nearly half a century, anti-Labour government—Tory government—and I would ask if it is reasonable to expect a radical change now that a Labour Government has just assumed office? Let us take an analogy. Supposing a member opposite was suffering from a serious complaint, and had suffered from it for almost a lifetime, and he suddenly changed his physician, would he expect a miraculous cure to be effected immediately? Would he not allow him time to effect a cure? I am sure he would

allow reasonable time to enable that physician to restore vigour and vitality to his limbs, and a general improvement in his health. I am sure also that the people of the State will give us reasonable time to eradicate the disastrous effects of the drought and war, and the conditions brought about by the legislation and administration of members opposite.

Mr. TOLMIE: That is very fallacious.

Mr. LARCOMBE: No, it is not fallacious. I would give one illustration to prove my statement. Take the question of the wheat supply. The Denham Administration permitted 100,000 bushels of wheat to be exported from this State when there was a natural scarcity of wheat in Queensland. That places the present Administration at a disadvantage, as the wheat has been exported from Queensland. Their position is like that of one who has to close the gate after the horse has gone.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Would you prevent producers exporting their wheat?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I say that the producer should get the full economic value of his product, but when there is a natural scarcity of wheat here, I would not allow a few middlemen in Brisbane—they are not producers, and the producers receive no advantage from the action of the middlemen—to export wheat to other States or countries. Last session the hon. member for Drayton stood up in this Chamber, and asked the Ministers sitting on the Treasury bench why it was that when wheat was going down in price the cost of flour was increasing. The price of wheat was actually going down at that time, and middlemen in Brisbane were exporting wheat to other parts of Australia. The Labour Government have treated the farmers better than any previous Administrations have done, and I am certain that they will continue to treat them fairly and reasonably. I have been somewhat apologetic so far, but I wish to say that the present Administration have shown their sincerity in the way they have dealt with this question by administration, and in the measures promised in the Governor's Speech. There is an intimation that a Monopolies Bill will be introduced at an early date. Members opposite promised time after time that they would bring in such a measure, but that promise was broken as often as it was made. The monopolistic interests of the State rose secretly, and prevented the introduction of the measure.

Mr. TOLMIE: The hon. member for Oxley said there could be no monopoly as long as there was competition.

Mr. LARCOMBE: It is certain that competition is fast dying out in this State and elsewhere. In the country where private enterprise and capitalism has been developed to its highest extent, you have trusts and monopolies which are stronger and more powerful than any combination in any other country on the face of the earth; and that is the policy advocated by hon. members opposite.

Mr. TOLMIE: No—advocated by the hon. member for Oxley.

Mr. LARCOMBE: No; the hon. member for Oxley advocates State control of all the utilities of life.

Mr. TOLMIE: Not while there is competition.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member is pledged to the Labour platform. In addition to that, I sat here and heard his remarks when he was moving the Address in Reply. The hon. member for Oxley pointed out clearly and distinctly that the fixing of prices is not the Alpha and Omega of the cost of living question. We will have to go further and do as the Western Australian Government has done. We will have to buy our own selections and grow our own cattle. We will have to establish State steamship services, and have our own butchers' shops and bakers' shops run by the State.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LARCOMBE: That is the policy which we will have to carry out, and there must be a greater extension of that principle.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: They sold all their steamships.

Mr. LARCOMBE: They did not. They brought down the price of meat in Western Australia by 1d. per lb. The transport of cattle which that steamship service has inaugurated in Western Australia has been tremendous. There has been a great increase over anything previously brought down from the far North-west. That is the way to deal with the question of the cost of living. Let the Government establish their own works, butcher shops, and baker shops, and gradually extend the principle, and in that way only will they effectively deal with the question. These are many palliative measures which will have to be introduced in the intervening period. At the present time we are faced with abnormal conditions. There is a scarcity of money, and there are other considerations which prevent us from placing the whole of the Labour platform into operation in one session, or even in one Parliament. I know the Government have the courage, and they will introduce the necessary palliative legislation in the meantime, and when they have the money they will establish State services in this State, like Labour Administrations have done elsewhere. The proposal to introduce a Monopolies Bill, and the administration generally, so far shows the sincerity of the Government in dealing with these questions. Look at the misrepresentation, and the unfairness of the attacks in the Press and elsewhere upon members on this side! Notwithstanding all that, the Government are going on courageously, and they will continue to do so until the consumers and producers in this State receive something like a fair deal.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LARCOMBE: If hon. members opposite had been returned with a majority, I do not think there would be any meat at all in Queensland in three years' time for the worker. (Government laughter.) We know that just before the elections the Government moved heaven and earth with the wholesalers and retailers to try to keep down the cost of living until after the election. If the Denham Government had been re-elected, the price would have gone up like a buoy released from anchorage.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The New South Wales Government are getting wheat from South America.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I think a suggestion made by the hon. member for Paddington

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was a very appropriate one. He suggests that we should send the hon. member for Drayton to South America. I am sure that that country would suit his temperament, and that he would succeed far better there than he does here in this quiet, peace-loving State of Queensland. (Government laughter.) I want to point out that an extension of the powers of the Federal Government also is necessary before we have effective control over the cost of living. There must be an amendment of the Federal Constitution conferring greater powers upon the Federal authority. This is not an election statement. I made this statement prior to the election. I laid down three conditions as being of fundamental importance in connection with dealing with the question of the high cost of living. The first was the carrying of the referendum proposals; the second, the defeat of the Denham Administration; and the third, the return of the State Labour Administration. The last two conditions have been complied with, and I feel confident that after the 11th December the first condition will also be carried, and the Federal Constitution will be stronger than it has ever been hitherto. (Hear, hear!) Not until then will there be an effective control of monopolies. In America, State action has been ineffective for a quarter century past. The States of America have passed Anti-Trust Act after Anti-Trust Act, but because such Acts were not passed in one State the trusts made that State the basis of their operations, and all the actions of the other States were ineffective. The same thing will happen in Australia if the referendum proposals are not carried. Suppose the five States of Australia where Labour Governments are in power pass anti-trust legislation, so long as the State of Victoria remains controlled by a Liberal Government, the trusts will make that State the base of their operations. The States and Federal Governments are working harmoniously to grant extensive power to the authority I previously referred to. This State intends introducing legislation, but it will only have a partly remedial effect. It will not be nearly as effective as it ought to be in protecting the interests of the consumer and the legitimate trader. At present the legitimate trader is the victim of circumstances. He is the victim of monopoly. In connection with the referendum proposals, I suppose hon. members opposite will repeat their argument from the platform that there should be a party truce. I trust that such a suggestion will receive the same contempt with which it has been treated by this Chamber, because it is a hollow and an insincere cry, and one which could not come from an Administration which professes to have a spirit of loyalty. I think one of the most important features of loyalty in Queensland, and in Australia, is to defend the people against the internal enemy, to protect them against trusts, combines, and monopolies that are exercising such a prejudicial effect in Queensland and elsewhere in Australia. I want to deal briefly with the Elections Act Amendment Bill. It is pleasing to note that the present Administration have quickly redeemed their pre-election promises in this regard. They intend bringing down an amending Bill that will confer electoral rights upon the people of this State without the previous irksome restrictions that were imposed upon them. The adult right and residence will be the only condition asked. It is not proposed that a man should possess

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a big freehold before he is entitled to get on the roll. The only claim that will be asked from him is that of age and residence. It should be every man's birthright to enjoy his full political rights. I am satisfied that the people of Queensland resented the last amending Elections Act, and I am sure it was a contributing factor in the defeat of the late Government. I do not say that without some evidence in support of my contention. Take the history of Australia, and you will find that argument proved up to the hilt. In Western Australia, the Wilson Government a few years ago passed an Elections Amendment Act, and also a Redistribution of Seats Act, by which they attempted to prolong their political existence. It looked at first nominally as if they had succeeded. The Labour Opposition, however, emphasised the injustice of the measure, and the result was that Mr. Wilson and his colleagues were defeated. They have since been defeated at another election in Western Australia. Take the case of South Australia last year. The Peake Administration also attempted to prolong their existence by means of an amending Elections Act and a Redistribution of Seats Act. What was the result? The result was a disastrous defeat for the Government. It was not only defeat, but humiliation, because they lost their Premier and two or three of their Ministers. Coming to Queensland, the same tactics were tried here. Liberalism or Toryism was defeated here, and not only defeated, but they lost their Premier and five of their Ministers. That is a record in the history of the world! Never before has there been such a bloodless revolution. I am sure that the Elections Act was one factor in bringing about that result.

MR. KIRWAN: They did not know the gun was loaded.

MR. LARCOMBE: No, they did not. They acted Frankenstein like. I warned them that they were bringing into being a great monster that would not be satisfied until it stood over their prostrate bodies. They built up this great Frankenstein and it brought about the death of the Denham Administration. I do not think there is any cause for lamentation there, as there is generally attached to a death. (Laughter.) It was really a cause for congratulations. It might seem a heartless thing to say, in speaking of four deaths—that instead of offering condolences, we should offer congratulations over the death of that Administration and the birth of the Labour Administration.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LARCOMBE: It is the finest thing in the history of Queensland. I know it will be a fine thing for Queensland and will also be a fine thing for members in Opposition. The hon. member for Toowoomba and his colleagues used to proclaim from the Treasury benches that they were sick and tired of criticism, and they would be pleased to get a good holiday. They have got it now. I think that the hon. member for Toowoomba is about the most optimistic member on the front Opposition bench. He is the only one who does not seem to be affected by the defeat of the Government. All the others appear to be very gloomy. They are snapping and snarling and fighting and raising points of order all night. (Government laughter.) In connection with the sugar industry it is pleasing to note that the Govern-

ment has done such splendid work. The Government also intend, by means of cane price boards, to give further relief. The question of the sugar industry was discussed at length by the hon. member for Mirani. He was very apologetic for the previous Administration, because they had not succeeded in doing what the Labour Government have done. The hon. member for Mirani said that if the Liberal Government had been returned to power, they would have done all these things. It is wonderful the lot of things they were going to do. It was so much gallery talk. Why did they not say during the elections what they intended to do? Why did they not intimate from a public platform that they intended to work the sugar industry in the interests of the people generally? It was our leader who first introduced the cane price board legislation in this Assembly, and it was our leader who received congratulatory messages from the cane farmers of Mackay and Mirani and other portions of Queensland also. Further, the hon. member for Burrum moved later on

[8 p.m.] a motion in favour of cane price boards legislation, and it is

obvious from what I am saying now that the then leader of the Opposition was unsuccessful with his motion in favour of cane price boards legislation. It was made purely a party question, and the amendment on the Address in Reply was defeated. Later on the hon. member for Burrum introduced a motion in favour of cane price boards legislation, and, with the support of the Labour party, he was successful in carrying it through to the second reading stage.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And then it was dropped.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Yes. That was an instance of legislation being passed by a majority of the people's representatives, and then the Premier rose in his place, as leader of the Liberal party, and stated indignantly and autoeratically that he would not permit that legislation to be carried any further.

Mr. TOLMIE: Did he say that?

Mr. LARCOMBE: He did, in reply to a question asked by the leader of the Opposition. The leader of the Opposition rose in his place and asked when the Committee stages of the Cane Price Boards Bill would be taken, and Mr. Denham, who was then Premier, rose in his place in this Chamber and said the Committee stages would not be taken that week, and certainly would never be taken while he was Premier of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The present leader of the Opposition said it would splinter every plank in the Liberal platform.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Notwithstanding that we are supposed to be governed by majority rule, that legislation was brushed aside and nothing was done to protect the sugar-grower. Yet, after the elections, now that a Labour party has been returned, we have hon. members opposite coolly claiming that they would have done the very thing that they turned down when they had an opportunity of passing that legislation.

Mr. TOLMIE: You are getting angry.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Yes, but I am not nearly as angry as when I was in Opposition. (Laughter.) I have only been a very short

time in this Chamber, and previously have been in the gloomy shades of Opposition, but now I am basking in the sunshine on the Government side, and I sympathise with the hon. member for Toowoomba and his party. I want to point out that the cane price boards legislation is based on a report of the Sugar Commission that sat in Australia some time ago, so there is a precedent and authority and the evidence of experts that this legislation was necessary and is necessary, and it remains for a Labour Administration to render this great service to a great number of primary producers by passing cane price boards legislation. Proceeding, I want to deal briefly with the proposed repeal of the Industrial Peace Act and the substitution thereof of arbitration and conciliation. I am pleased to hear that the odious Industrial Peace Act is to be repealed. It was conceived in iniquity and cradled in corruption, in an industrial sense. There is no doubt about that, and the object was to deprive the unionists of this State of a right which they have in New South Wales and in other States of Australia. The basis, the foundation, the corner-stone of all sound industrial measures is the recognition of unionism. You have great combinations of capital on the one hand, and combinations of labour on the other hand in order to counteract the strength of those great capitalistic combinations. But the late Administration of this State refused to concede that common right to unionists. They refused to recognise the unions, and that refusal was the basis of all their industrial legislation. It is true that the Industrial Peace Act has not quite fulfilled the predictions of the Opposition, but if it had a longer trial I am satisfied there would have been great industrial trouble and industrial strife in this State as a result of the passage of that measure. It has only been saved by a fortunate combination of circumstances and by the loyalty of the unionists in their determination not to create industrial trouble.

Mr. BOOKER: You don't see the loyalty of the unionists in New South Wales to the Labour Government there. Is there any loyalty there?

Mr. LARCOMBE: Of course, there is loyalty, because the unions are recognised. (Hear, hear!) The Labour Government of New South Wales have never attempted to refuse to recognise unionists in New South Wales.

Mr. TOLMIE: Last year Labour in New South Wales lost over £500,000 in wages owing to strikes.

Mr. LARCOMBE: A mere recital of facts shows nothing. We want to take the number of strikes that occurred previous to the return of Mr. Holman and his colleagues. I have looked up the returns time and again, and they show that there have not been nearly as many strikes under the Holman Government that there were under previous Administrations. That is a positive fact. I am pleased that this Industrial Peace Act is to be repealed. It is a recognition that the present Government are alive to their duty to the unionists of this State. The repeal of that Act and the substitution of compulsory conciliation and arbitration, and an amendment of the Trades Union Act, show that the Government intend to mete out justice to the unions of this State. I believe that compulsory conciliation and arbitration will be successful in Queensland as

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it has been in the Federal arena. The Federal Act has been responsible for awards covering thousands and thousands of workers, and in not one instance has there been a strike under that Act. Why? Because it recognises unionism, and because it recognises the industrial spirit of the age, and I believe the measure foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech will do similarly, and that we will have an era of industrial peace in this State such as has never previously been known. (Hear, hear!) I want now to leave controversial matters, and deal with a few matters concerning Central Queensland. Just take the fact that the present Premier, the Minister for Railways, and the Secretary for Public Instruction all come from Central Queensland. Is not that a recognition that the Government are prepared to extend justice and fair treatment to Central Queensland, and have not they given the North splendid representation in the Minister for Agriculture, the Treasurer, and the Minister for Mines also? It shows that this Administration is prepared to extend justice to all parts of this State. It is a well-known fact that, prior to the Labour party coming into power, there was only one Central Queensland representative in the Administration. For years there was no representative, but last year, and in 1912 also, there was only one representative, and he had to resign his position in 1912 because of the injustice being meted out to the Central district by the Denham Administration.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I remember when you had five Ministers out of seven from the Central and North.

MR. LARCOMBE: The hon. member is going back to the Stone Age now. I am talking about the last six or seven years, and the hon. member is going back prior to 1893, when there were practically no Labour members at all from the Central district. We know there has only been the late Minister for Public Instruction, Mr. Grant, in the Denham Administration for the last few years. He was in and out, and in 1912 he found it incumbent upon him to resign his position because he said the Denham Administration were scandalously neglecting the interests of that district. That is the way the previous Administration has treated the Central district. Now we have the Premier and two or three Ministers.

THE SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has occupied the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.

MR. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I rise to support the motion moved by the hon. member for Oxley. On the last occasion Parliament was opened, I was one of those that did not speak on the Address in Reply. My reason for not doing so was because I am perfectly satisfied that all the time wasted on the Address in Reply could be devoted to some more useful purpose.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that why you are speaking on this occasion?

MR. VOWLES: I am speaking on this occasion because many members of the House who stated last year that they considered the Address in Reply should have been cut out have spoken, so it appears to me we are going to adopt the old procedure, and I am going to have my speech, and ventilate my grievances like other members.

MR. BERTRAM: Why not make your protest and resume your seat?

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MR. VOWLES: I hope the hon. member will do that, because he is one of those who protested last time. The Address in Reply assures the Throne of our continued loyalty towards that Throne. I think there is very little occasion for us to impress the loyalty of Queensland upon the Sovereign of Great Britain. I think the fact that so many of our young men have gone to support the Empire at the Dardanelles and elsewhere will be sufficient guarantee of that, if ever that was necessary. Queensland has ever been loyal, and, as part of the Commonwealth, we have contributed our quota to assist the Empire in this great war as well as the other States. I know, as far as my own district is concerned, we have contributed not less than 300 men; we have contributed a very large sum of money as well as other support to the Empire. I know other districts have behaved as loyally as that. I have not congratulated all those young men who have done their duty in the district, as I have had no opportunity of seeing them, and I take the opportunity of doing it now. I admire them for what they have done, and I am very sorry I was unable to be with them. Now, with reference to the Speech and the legislation foreshadowed in it, I would, first of all, like to refer briefly to the remarks made by the hon. member for Burke yesterday in reference to your appointment to this Chamber. I must say that, as far as the hon. member for Burrum is concerned, I am quite at one with him. I am not a believer in obstruction, and I say that, had I been in his position I would have acted just the same as he did, because I am certain there was a bonâ fide misunderstanding, and he believed just exactly as I did, who was sitting immediately behind him, that he was rightly in possession of the floor; and I still think he was in possession. I have no brief for him, but I simply say that in his justification, because his name has been drawn into the newspapers, to my mind, unjustly. They did not give him the benefit of the mistake, which occurred through no fault of his; but if he did make a mistake—I do not think he did—and if he was out of order on that occasion, I do not think the Premier was any more in order.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Whom are you blaming?

MR. VOWLES: I am blaming our stupid Standing Orders, that do not make provision for occasions like that, and I think the sooner the Premier and the Standing Orders Committee take into consideration the suggestion thrown out by the hon. member for Burke, to prevent us getting into these ridiculous positions, the better it will be for all concerned.

MR. MACARTNEY: If the Premier had seen the Clerk indicate that the hon. member had the Chair, he would not have done what he did.

THE PREMIER: I think if the hon. member for Burrum made a mistake, he is the proper person to explain, not others.

MR. VOWLES: There is no mistake. That is my idea of it, and I simply say it because I want to justify his action, because I would have done the same.

THE PREMIER: You ought to bury it.

MR. VOWLES: It is not a question of burying, because if he was out of order, so was the Premier.

THE PREMIER: We hear you say so.

Mr. VOWLES: I say so now.

The PREMIER: Keep on saying so.

Mr. VOWLES: We will let that matter stand. There seems to be a current of apology coming from the Government side for the conduct of the last election. (Government laughter.) I do not know why they should have to apologise. It is unusual. When you find them going out of their way to do it, there must be some good cause. I know that I was done the honour during the election of having the Premier come to my electorate. I have read his speeches, and I must say if all the members misrepresented the subjects of the day as he did, then they are in a very unenviable position if they are going to carry out their promises on the hustings.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: They are doing it.

Mr. VOWLES: Then we had the last hon. member, the hon. member for Keppel, apologising for the future. He tells us that we cannot expect "Rome to be built in a day," so to speak. He tells us that he cannot justify the promises that were made on the hustings, and he asks us and the people of Queensland to forgive them if they are not able to do it. We were told that if the Labour Government got on the Treasury benches miracles were going to be performed immediately and prices were coming down to normal.

Mr. FOLEY: Who said that?

Mr. VOWLES: The Premier, amongst others, in Dalby.

The PREMIER: That miracles were going to be performed?

Mr. VOWLES: Not in so many words, but that the cost of living was coming down immediately.

The PREMIER: I did not say "immediately."

Mr. VOWLES: Oh, then, are we to wait ten years?

The PREMIER: No, in a reasonable time; but, as a matter of fact, they have come down immediately.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member has found that when people get into responsible positions they have to justify their statements. He cannot do so. He is in this position: That he will be able to put on the statute-book certain socialistic legislation—party legislation—legislation which is intended for the benefit of one side of the community only, to the disadvantage of the other portion of the community. That is the position he is in. That is what he and his conferees are gloating over. As regards these promises of a decrease in the cost of living, one of the first actions, or one of the actions, of the Government has been to deal with the butter question. We find that in order to justify their action they are telling us that there was not sufficient butter in Queensland for local consumption.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh, no! Who said that?

Mr. VOWLES: That was the basis of the right to come in and commandeer it, as it was being exported, to the detriment of the people of Queensland.

The PREMIER: If that is the basis of the right to commandeer, on what basis did you propose to commandeer sugar?

Mr. VOWLES: On what basis did I propose to commandeer sugar? I did not ask you to do that. (Laughter.) Speaking yesterday in this House, in reply to a question by an hon. member on this side, the Premier made the statement that since the price of butter has been fixed at £9 16s. per cwt., he has evidence of butter—first-class butter, too—having been sold at a less price.

The PREMIER: That is correct.

Mr. VOWLES: I should like proof of that. I am going to ask the hon. member, by question, if he will not do it now, to produce that proof. That same first-class butter can be sold at £11 15s. to-day in Melbourne, and he told us that last week, or since the price was fixed, he knew of concrete cases where butter was sold for less than £9 16s. per cwt.

The PREMIER: It is being done to-day in Brisbane.

Mr. VOWLES: Will the hon. member give us the cases or produce the evidence?

The PREMIER: Yes, I will give you the names of the persons who are buying it for less. The biggest grocers in Brisbane are buying it for less than £9 16s.

Mr. VOWLES: I am very pleased to have that assurance from the Premier. I am going to ask him more about it later on. I want the whole evidence, and I will ask him a question about it. I see it is foreshadowed here that we are to have an amendment of the Land Act again. The only indication that has been given to this House as to what that amendment is going to be is that we are going to have the principle of perpetual lease introduced in a way in which it does not exist now—it is not enforced now in respect to all lands. I would like to have seen some reference in the Governor's Speech to what I consider is, next to the war, the most important problem that Queensland has to tackle—that is, the subject of prickly-pear. There is no reference to it at all, and, surely, it cannot be through ignorance. Members on the Government side, particularly the Minister for Lands, must know what prickly-pear means to Queensland. He must know that during the last two years, while the people have been standing by watching for the results of the experiments at Dulacca, they were "hoping against hope" that some method might be devised whereby prickly-pear could be tackled economically. In the meantime that prickly-pear has been growing and growing and growing. Thousands and thousands of acres of estates have been taken charge of it in that time. With that knowledge, and the knowledge—I say advisedly—that the Roberts experiments have not come up to expectation—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Has it grown more than usual since the 22nd MAY?

Mr. VOWLES: I am not saying that. We were all standing by, marking time, as it were, waiting the developments of those experiments, and I think we are all satisfied that the developments are not going to be practical.

Mr. KIRWAN: Is that so?

Mr. VOWLES: That is my opinion, and it is the opinion of many other persons who

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have an experience of that particular pest, and it is time that the Government got a move on.

The PREMIER: You say that the late Government failed?

Mr. VOWLES: I will discuss that with the hon. member later on, when I have more time. I see from the newspapers that it is the intention of the Government to start State coalmines. Whether that is wise or not is a matter for them. History will tell us. Now, if they are going to establish these coalmines in the various centres, there is a matter I would like very much to bring before the Minister for Mines, and it is that we have very large coal deposits and mines in the vicinity of Dalby, Warra, and Chinchilla. If it is intended to establish a State coalmine in that vicinity for the benefit of the West, he has on the Jimbour Plains mines that have already been developed as far back as 1884.

Mr. KIRWAN: Is it good steam coal?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes. I do not want to belabor this matter, but this coal was exploited in Sir Joshua Peter Bell's time. I am talking about the matter simply to impress it upon the Government, and my district and Queensland generally will benefit if I can get what I am suggesting. This particular seam is 7 feet thick. It has been tried. Here is the report of Messrs. Jack and Etheridge—

“The quality of the coal is that known as ‘free burning, long flame’ or ‘cannel’ coal. It is hard and brilliant in fracture, does not soil the hands, and will stand exposure to weather or rough carriage without injuring or loss by waste. It ignites with great facility, burns freely with long flame and comparatively little smoke; it does not coke, but burns to white heavy ash without any cinder. As a steam coal it comes closely up to the average of the Ipswich now in use on the railway in regard to the work done per ton, but it has a great advantage in its superior hardness and weather-resisting qualities.”

The other report is a book by Messrs. Fryer and Gregory. The reason I mention that is that it is on the Jondowaie railway line, exactly half a mile from that railway. It is situated near the Jimbour homestead, where all the appointments are in existence necessary to carry on a State coalmine.

Mr. WELLINGTON: Is it on Crown lands?

Mr. VOWLES: No, but it can be resumed at a reasonable price if necessary, although I suppose the Government has the right to mine for coal the same as anybody else. At any rate, there is the manager's residence, a butcher's shop, and a school, a school of arts, and so on, right down to a cemetery, all ready; and in addition to that there is a very fine water supply close handy. That railway line is one of those lines that goes through Dalby as a centre. Good coal is being worked by private companies at Warra. The Commissioner is using it at present for his Western service, but the disadvantage is that it is more than 50 miles from Toowoomba, and it affects the Bell, Jondowaie, and the Tara lines, and the two lines going through in the other direction, east and west. If Dalby is going to be a

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coaling station, then by utilising the coal from this land you will be getting rid of the congestion which necessarily takes place if you are going to bring it backwards and forwards on the main Southern and Western line.

Mr. KIRWAN: And a saving of carriage.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, it saves 30 miles carriage each way.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Why has it not been worked by private enterprise if it is as good as that?

Mr. VOWLES: I will tell hon. members the reason. A company was formed, and just about that time the construction of the Jondowaie line was put off. Since then we have had such remarkably bad seasons that the money is not about to do it. I do not suppose that the hon. member realises what conditions we have been working under in the Dalby district for the last four years. We are suffering from a drought, considerably more intense than the big drought of 1902. It has not come on us suddenly, but gradually, and it is at its climax now. The thing is hopeless. We have not a hoof of stock in the district. We have sent 50,000 sheep to the Burnett; and our cattle, including dairying cattle, are in the railway lines on every side. That is where the unfortunate Jimbour selectors reside, and I want to say a little bit so far as they are concerned. I hope it will sink into the heart of the Premier, and I hope he will inquire, as soon as possible, into the conditions under which those people are labouring, and give all the assistance he can in reason.

The PREMIER: You know it is being investigated now.

Mr. VOWLES: I know it is, and I want to see that the investigation will be carried to a proper conclusion.

The PREMIER: You do not think that they will not be?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not want to see them shelved.

The PREMIER: There is no chance of them being shelved with this Government.

Mr. VOWLES: We know that in the purchase of that land the Government were actuated by the best of motives. It was the Kidston-Morgan Government that bought the land, and they secured it for [8.30 p.m.] closer settlement, but when the price was settled after the various lawsuits in connection with the estate, the Government had to pay considerably over £1 an acre more than they expected to pay for it, and that increased price has been passed on to the selector. Every member of this House who knows anything about the subject agrees that the price which was asked for the land was ridiculously high. Men should be put on the land for the purpose of keeping them there, and not for the purpose of getting what capital they may possess. The selectors on that estate have experienced such bad seasons that if they had got their land for nothing they could not have made a success of their enterprise. They have paid only one deposit in five years, or in some cases six years.

Mr. COYNE: They need machinery.

Mr. VOWLES: What good would agricultural machinery be to them when they

have no crops? It was bad enough for the unfortunate selectors to put their money into cows, which died.

The PREMIER: You are not blaming the Government for this?

Mr. VOWLES: No. I am asking the Government to give the matter every consideration.

The PREMIER: It is now receiving every consideration.

Mr. VOWLES: I advocated the case of the selectors before, and the Government met them in the way they asked. This was not that the purchasing price should be reduced, but that they should be granted an extension of the term of payment, and that the arrears should be capitalised. That was conceded by the late Government, but since then there has been a recurrence of bad seasons, which has made it absolutely impossible for any man to carry on at all, with the result that I induced the late Government, just before the end of last session, to agree to the appointment of a commission, who would go into the Jimbour question with the object of revaluing and reclassifying the land. That commission was appointed, and it has made some inquiries, and I understand that the members of the commission are going to visit the estate very shortly. I sincerely trust that the Government will give due weight to their findings, which can only be that present conditions are absolutely hopeless, and that there must be a substantial reduction granted to the selectors. The Denham Government did everything they possibly could to assist these men. They found them seed wheat, labour, and machinery, and did everything that was possible; and now, unless we get rain within the next few weeks, I regret to say that the whole of that money, labour, and seed put into the land will be lost. We have had only 5 inches of rain during the last six months. This leads me to another subject, and that is the connection of the Western country with the coast at some suitable point. That point should be the terminus of the Bell line, or the terminus of the Jondowaie line.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are a great believer in Dalby?

Mr. VOWLES: I am a great believer in Dalby. It is only 40 miles from either of these termini to the railway in the Burnett, and the engineering difficulties are almost nil. At the present time we get produce from Nanango, and, though the distance across the Bunya Mountains is only 60 miles in a straight line, that produce has to go from Theebine down to Brisbane, through Toowoomba, and up to Dalby, with the result that the produce costs a great deal more than it is really worth. If the connection which I suggest is made, stock can be taken to the Western district from the coast, where they will eat down the rank grass and make the country more suitable for sheep. We have driven more than 50,000 sheep across those ranges on to the coast lands, but if this railway connection were established those sheep and stock generally could be taken safely and quickly to suitable places for agistment, with practically no loss, whereas now they are dying wholesale. It is no uncommon thing to have a drought in Queensland. We know that droughts frequently recur in the history of the West, and if we see a means of preventing some of the losses which take place, at a compara-

tively small cost in the way of railway construction, then I say that such means should be seriously considered by the Government.

Mr. COLLINS: Your Liberal Government would not build the line.

Mr. VOWLES: We have at present surveyors there surveying the most practicable route for connecting the two centres to which I have referred. We have had all the members of the late Ministry and several members of the present Government visiting the country, and when they came back they all spoke in glowing terms of the beautiful country which they had inspected. There are large areas of Crown land on the other side of the Bunya Mountains that are worth £3 an acre, and if they were thrown open for selection they would be selected immediately, provided that railway communication was established. There are men on the ranges who have hundreds of acres of Rhodes grass, but unfortunately there is no water there. Those men have gone out into the wilderness and carved out homes for themselves there with the expectation that reasonable railway facilities would be given to them at an early date. I have consistently advocated the building of the line mentioned, but really there are so many railways required in my electorate that I almost feel as if I were asking for more than my share. The point I wish to emphasise now is the connecting line between Maryborough and the West. If the Government take that project into consideration and build the railway, they will be doing a good thing, not only for the electors of the Dalby district, but also for the electors of the Southern Burnett and Nanango districts, and they will give facilities to people of the West to get their stock on to good pastures.

Mr. KIRWAN: It should be a national railway.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member for Brisbane has been through the country and knows all about it. The hon. member for Marce and several other members sitting on that side of the House have also been through the country and know the need that there is for a railway; and I hope they will use their influence with the Premier to get it constructed. I trust it will not be very long before the present Minister for Railways will visit the country. If he does, I am sure he will come to the conclusion that the railway is necessary. I was rather amused to hear the speech delivered last night by the hon. member for Albert. I have read or heard some most remarkable speeches made by that hon. gentleman during the recent election. I understood that he was advocating the platform of the farmers' party. He came into my electorate, and because I would not knuckle down to and join the farmers' party, he sought to make mincemeat of me, but I am still here. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) Last night he claimed to be a State socialist. I do not know whether that will meet with the approval of the farmers' party.

The PREMIER: I have heard him say that before.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member has said a lot of things. He told the people of Dalby that he was a friend of the workers, and I read in one of the Brisbane newspapers that Mr. Appel had been appointed the

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leader of the farmers' party, and that he had contributed large sums of money to that party; in other words, that he had bought his job. When he was speaking last night I did not know whether he was speaking as the administrative head of the farmers' party, but I venture to think he was not, because I do not believe that is one of the planks of their platform. He said that members sitting on the front benches would find that they would be placed in a very peculiar position in having to support certain legislation—that is, legislation of which they did not approve. He told us at election time that he was placed in that unfortunate position and that he was the tool of the Denham party, that he was one of those unfortunate little boys who had to do what he was told. He discovered that after he retired from the Government, but not before. As a member of the Denham party I was not aware that certain things had occurred in connection with subsidies to hospitals, and I do not know whether any other member of the party—unless he was a Cabinet Minister—was aware of those things; and I regret that a member who was placed in a position of confidence as a Cabinet Minister—I am sorry that the hon. member for Albert is not present to hear what I say—should betray what he learned at a Cabinet meeting. He told us that the Denham Government had told a lie in connection with that matter, and in the very next breath he told us that he was the man who told the lie.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you going to have him expelled from your union?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not belong to the Farmers' Union.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I mean the lawyers' union.

Mr. VOWLES: I am very sorry to note that there are so many contentious measures foreshadowed in the Government programme. To my mind, this is not a proper time to create any sort of dissension. The hon. member for Keppel said that we brought forward a contentious matter in the form of an Elections Bill. What are the Government bringing forward now? They are bringing forward what one might call "revolutionary legislation." They are going to undo all that has been done in the past. Is this a time to be sparring at one another over such matters? Among the Bills mentioned in the Speech is one for the amendment, or repeal, of the Industrial Peace Act.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: It is all very well to say "Hear, hear," but I have never seen any evidence adduced by any speaker on the hustings, or in this House, which would justify an interference with that particular piece of legislation. The workers do not want it repealed. They are perfectly satisfied with it, because it has brought about the effects it was introduced for—that is, for the purpose of preventing strikes amongst workmen.

Mr. TOLMIE: It gave them peace and prosperity.

Mr. VOWLES: The history of New South Wales and Queensland in relation to industrial strikes in the last twelve months, or two years, is sufficient argument in itself for keeping that particular piece of legislation on the statute-book. Are we going to have the state of affairs existing in Queens-

land as exists in New South Wales to-day, where you have miners openly defying the law and you are not in a position to recover the penalties awarded? If we do that, then we are only tinkering with legislation. I see it is mentioned in the Governor's Speech that a Royal Commission will be appointed to inquire into the working of all branches of the public service. I think that is very desirable, and I suggest to the Minister for Lands and the Premier that, when they are dealing with that matter, there is one class of individuals in the Lands Department who should be given the benefit of the Public Service Act. I refer to the Crown lands rangers. I live in a country district, and I know all about the work that they have got to do. The salaries and allowances given to them are not sufficient to encourage good men to remain in the service. If you want good men, you want to offer them some inducement to rise.

Mr. CARTER: Why didn't you say that last year.

Mr. VOWLES: I did say it, and the Minister said he would give the matter consideration. I know their salaries have been raised, but their prospects of rising in the department are no better. The proper person who should become Commissioner for Lands is the man who started at the bottom of the tree and who knows all about his subject. Where do the members of the Land Court and all the other high positions come from? They all come out of the Brisbane office. What can they be expected to know about the practical side of land matters? We have competent men who have been there, and who are getting old in the service.

Mr. CARTER: You are criticising your own party.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, I know; but as the Government are inquiring into the public service, I am asking them to take notice of the position of the Crown land rangers. We hear about the curse of land monopoly, and this is a matter that comes under the jurisdiction of the ranger. We must protect the Crown assets, and we must offer these men inducements so that they will run straight. I do not say that they do not run straight, but we don't want men who have got into a groove, who have got no ambition, and who have got no opportunities to get on. A good deal has been said about the Elections Act. So far as I am concerned, I do not care how it is amended. I fought my battle against two different sections and won it. I was one of those returned on the contingent vote, and I say if you are going to have a contingent vote, which you must have when there are more than two candidates, it must be made compulsory. I see no objection to it at all. If a man is compelled to vote, as he is under the present legislation—

The PREMIER: Which you supported.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes—which I supported—he should be compelled to use the contingent vote.

The PREMIER: Did you contend that when the Bill was before the House?

Mr. VOWLES: No, you did not move an amendment, or I would have done so. It is proposed to amend the Local Authorities Act and alter the franchise. I cannot see any sense in altering the method in the direction asked. I quite agree that the franchise from the local authorities point of

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view should be made more liberal, but if you are going to allow every elector, whether a property-owner or not, to have a vote in connection with the borrowing of money, loans which are chargeable against the land-owner, the land being responsible for it, I say it is not a proper thing. If I have a property and somebody else is going to say, "We are going to borrow money, and it is going to put an incumbrance on your own land," there is no justice in it. If you are going to give everybody a vote, you will have to subsidise the local authorities so that those who vote will be contributing something indirectly towards running them. I do not propose to say much further, except to add that it is my intention to support all legislation introduced that is for the benefit of the State, and not for one section of the State. I will give the leader of the Government assistance in every way I possibly can to help him along, and to help along the work of this House, and I am certain that the party I belong to will do the same. I ask the Premier to go slow, and not go in for what, to my mind, is experimental legislation. He knows, and we all know, that Queensland is in a very peculiar position at the present time. We are going through a drought. Money is going to be hard to get. The Government will find that out when they go to look for their loan, and the public will find it out when the public works have to stop. We are faced with these difficulties. If this war keeps on, it will be still harder to get money.

The PREMIER: The Denham Government could have got over two and a-half millions last year.

Mr. VOWLES: You cannot get it to-day. You cannot get it from Mr. Fisher to-day. What is wrong? Has the State credit gone to pieces since the Labour Government got on the Treasury benches?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. VOWLES: Money is going to be hard to get, and these things will be hard to carry out. This is not the time to impose heavy taxation unnecessarily. We have the history of Western Australia so far as nationalisation is concerned. We know what has happened there, and we do not want to see our State in that position. I exhort the Premier to go slow, to take things steadily. If the Government are going to do as foreshadowed by private members—the private members all seem to know the contents of the various Bills—

The PREMIER: You do not suggest that I am fast, do you?

Mr. VOWLES: No, I do not. You are particularly slow. I simply offer that suggestion to the hon. gentleman to go slow. That is all we can do on this side—offer advice. Any amendment which we move can be bludgeoned by the members sitting behind the Government. I ask the Premier to use his might judiciously. There is a suggestion made by the hon. member for Keppel—he did not say it straight out, but he suggested it—that outside influence was at work, which brought about the appointment of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. LARCOMBE: You know it is true.

Mr. VOWLES: It is absolutely untrue, so far as I am concerned. There is no outside influence, so far as I am concerned.

The suggestion was that members of this party were "got at" by some financial institutions—by the Tramways Company, the meat trust, and several other institutions. The suggestion is that I and other members on this side have been bribed, and we were induced to go against our inclinations and support Mr. Macartney against our wishes.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Does not Mr. Macartney's firm represent the American meat trust?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know that there is such a thing as the American meat trust. I am dealing with the suggestion of the hon. member. If the hon. member suggests that I was approached by anybody, I say it is absolutely false. It is all very well for young men like the hon. member for Keppel to sit there and act like a clown, and criticise an old and well tried member like Mr. Macartney.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He has the same privileges as any other member.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, I know all members have their privileges, but you do not want to abuse your privileges.

Mr. LARCOMBE: You know it is absolutely true.

Mr. VOWLES: You want to be fair. At any rate, we have the satisfaction of knowing that the explosion has come early, and we know what we have got to face in the future. I invite the hon. member for Keppel to prove his statements, and to bring any evidence he possibly can.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I will do so.

Mr. VOWLES: I challenge you to do it. Let us have it early in the battle. Don't let us have it at election time, and have the electors gulled again. (Government laughter.)

The PREMIER: You asked me about the firm selling butter just now.

Mr. VOWLES: I asked you if you could substantiate a certain statement, and after some hesitation you said, "Yes."

The PREMIER: I will give you the name of one firm—Barry and Roberts. You can buy butter on better terms there than you claim.

Mr. VOWLES: You are drawing a red herring across the track. I have disposed of that part of it. I will ask the question in the House.

The PREMIER: I can give you the name of another firm—Park.

Mr. TOLMIE: From whom do they buy it?

The PREMIER: From butter agents.

Mr. VOWLES: I will ask the Premier the full question, and he can give me a full answer. When I was interrupted by the Premier, I was dealing with an attack made by the hon. member for Keppel on the hon. member for Toowong. Although we have a right to criticise, I think we should be fair in our criticism; we should be honest, and not make statements that we cannot substantiate. So far as the suggestions are concerned, they must not be actuated by a malicious motive.

Mr. LARCOMBE: They are true.

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Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member makes a statement that members on this side have been "got at." I know nothing about it. The hon. member suggests that underground engineers have pulled the strings, and that various members have been bribed.

The PREMIER: You are putting up Aunt Sallies to knock them down.

Mr. VOWLES: I am dealing with suggestions that have been made about the leader of the Opposition. If these suggestions had been made about the leader of the Opposition last year, I could imagine him rising with indignation and standing up here as a man of high virtue, who should never have such a suggestion thrown at him.

The PREMIER: Neither he should.

Mr. VOWLES: There is no difference. Now, I will conclude, and in doing so I would congratulate the Premier on his accession to the Treasury benches. I do not think anyone has congratulated him so far. He and his party have won the election, and we say when you are beaten you have to take your licking. We were licked at the last election. As to whether we were licked by misrepresentation or not does not matter. The future will speak for itself. The gentlemen in charge of the front Treasury benches have made certain statements. They have to carry out the promises they have made, and they have to justify their existence. They cannot do it all by putting legislation on the statute-book. And let me state here that, as far as my election is concerned, I am quite sure they will have to satisfy the Labour electors of Dalby that those statements the Premier made on the occasion he honoured us with a visit were correct. Since the prices of commodities have not fallen, and did not fall within a reasonable time after the election, and many of them are still on the increase, he will have to explain to the electors the reasons why he made those statements.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): I desire, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on the position you hold, because I believe you are well qualified to fill that position. I also desire to congratulate the Premier and other members who occupy the front Treasury bench. I desire also to extend my hearty congratulations to that section of the community whose loyalty to the Labour movement for the past twenty-five years, during which time they have been subjected to victimisation and suffering, has made it possible for their representatives to sit on the front Treasury bench to-night. I realise that never before in the history of this State were men called upon to take up a position of responsibility at a more critical time than the present. In the first place, we have the disastrous war bringing suffering and illness to the people, and naturally affecting the welfare of the people of this State. We also have the local trouble of drought in many parts of Queensland to-day, but the greatest difficulty that the gentlemen who occupy the Treasury benches have to overcome is the maladministration of the affairs of Queensland during the past fifty years. I have listened with a certain amount of interest to the speeches that have been delivered since Parliament opened, and, to my mind, the real gem that has been uttered in this House was the words of wisdom

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that fell from the leader of the seventh party. The hon. member for Drayton, while the hon. member for Oxley was speaking, interjected that in his particular electorate it was costing 5s. per lb. to produce butter. If the farmers of his electorate require an argument to show them that he and the party he supports had failed in their duty, when he made that statement he supplied it. Those who have lived in Queensland for any time recognise that we can expect a certain run of good seasons; we can just as surely expect that we will have a bad season; and it is a peculiar thing to find an hon. member who tells you that he is here directly representing the interest of the men in one particular industry, admitting that he had the ear of the Government, who were supposed to be the friends of the farmer, and yet, when a natural obstacle to the progress of that industry, which they could reasonably expect, comes along, they are so unprepared for it that they find themselves in the position of having to produce their commodity at a loss. I have listened to the various speakers on the other side, and the thought struck me that those hon. members, when dealing with the Speech delivered by His Excellency, were seized with the idea that the consumers of this State lived purely and solely on butter. (Laughter.) Every member on the Opposition benches who has spoken concentrated his efforts on endeavouring to prove that some injury had been done to the butter producers, and they practically indicated that the question of the cost of living was confined to butter. As a consumer who has had to work for his living, and who recognises the evils that the worker lives under to-day, I recognise that the high cost of living has not been confined to butter. I am quite in accord with those hon. members who have stated that the farming industry is a great asset to this State. To my mind, the greatest asset that any State can possess is to have a prosperous and contented rural population. (Hear, hear!) Hon. members on that side of the House have stated that they represent the backbone, as far as industries are concerned in this State, of Queensland, and I want to say that very often backbones get rheumatic, and they begin to bend, and I want to state that I represent the poorest section of that backbone. I represent a mining constituency, and for many years past it has been recognised that when the backbone of the country begins to bend, it is the mining industry that always comes to the assistance of the State. I regret to say that through the unsympathetic treatment the mining industry has received from the gentlemen who lately occupied the Treasury benches, it is not in a position to-day to do for the State what it would have been able to do had it received sympathetic treatment. Before touching on the proposals contained in the Governor's Speech, I would like to state that I am very sorry to see that the Government have omitted to state definitely that they intend to pursue a vigorous policy of prospecting to assist in developing our hidden wealth, and establish the mining industry on a firmer footing than we find it to-day. I sincerely trust that before the Estimates have been finally passed we will see that the Government intend to make an effort to re-establish the mining industry on something like the footing it previously occupied. To realise what a valuable asset the mining industry has been to the State of Queensland,

and to realise the position of that industry to-day, I would ask you to listen to one or two figures that show the exact position. The mineral wealth produced to 1914 represents a total of £112,712,048. That is the direct asset this State has received from the mining industry. But there is an indirect benefit greater than these figures disclose. There is the fact that we have been able, through the mining industry, to promote settlement, to encourage railway construction, and to employ thousands of men who were formed into consumers ready to receive the produce that our farmers would send them. If you examine the position of the district in and around Gympie, you will find that some of the most prosperous settlers in Queensland are there. Their prosperity has been made through the establishment of a mining community there, which enabled them to overcome their initial difficulties by giving them a ready market for their produce. The same thing may be said of Mount Morgan. In Mount Morgan we have a mining community, and branching out from Mount Morgan you will find the Dawson Valley line opening up a splendid belt of country. The selectors in that district go on the land with the full knowledge that right at their door there is a market for their products, and an industry that has done that amount of good for the State should not have been passed over in the light manner that it has been by the previous Government. I sincerely trust that when the Estimates are being framed hon. members on the front Treasury bench will realise that fact. The figures will disclose the fact that five years ago in Queensland the mining industry supported directly something over 20,000 men. To-day you will find that the figures have been reduced to 12,000. Any man who will look up the figures will realise how this unsympathetic treatment has brought the mining industry to the position it occupies to-day, and I want hon. members to realise that the mining industry cannot go down without indirectly affecting every other industry in the State. The gold production for 1904 totalled 639,151 oz. of fine gold, and in 1914 we find a reduction in the production of fine gold of 249,468 oz. This reduction has not only occurred as far as the gold production is concerned, because we find a similar reduction in other metals. In 1913 the mineral wealth, other than gold, amounted to £2,729,113. In 1914 these figures had fallen to £1,916,606. I think I am justified in saying that these figures are alarming, and if things are allowed to continue, it spells disaster to many of the settled districts of the State. I am not one who is going to criticise the action of the late Government unless I am prepared to offer a suggestion which I believe will overcome the difficulty. The suggestion I intend to offer is one that has been practised by the biggest mining company in Queensland to-day, the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, who some years ago decided to change their method of the treatment of ore. They decided, instead of producing gold by a chlorinating process, to enter into a smelting operation, and it was necessary, before expending a large sum of money on a plant, to go in a thoroughly business-like manner into the matter, and test whether fluxes could be found suitable to smelt the Mount Morgan ore. Under the system pursued by the late Government, they would have given some unfortunate prospector 4 lb. of flour, 2 lb.

of sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of tobacco, and told him to go and not make a beast of himself, and to try to find some new goldfield or another. (Laughter.) But the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company acted totally differently. They equipped a party, with a practical man at the head, and sent those men out to different localities with instructions to thoroughly search and prospect for the fluxes they required. Their duty was to send back to the company's works for assay properly marked samples of fluxes. If those samples justified it, the company sent a practical man to test the value and the amount of the ore in sight. Now, I suggest that if we are going to place the mining industry back on anything like the footing it previously occupied, we will have to approach the matter in a business-like way, such as I have suggested. Not only do we find that the late Government neglected to thoroughly prospect the State, or assist others to do it, but we also find that the small miners, through the neglect of that Government, are in the position that the necessary products to treat their ores cannot be purchased at a normal price, owing to the fact that the production of that product has passed into the hands of our enemies, and they have doubled in price. I refer to one particular product—namely, zinc shavings. Prior to the war, they were selling at £50 per ton. To-day I believe that you are compelled to pay as much as £110 per ton for that product. That means the difference between success and failure in working many a small show, and it hits the smaller miner in an unfortunate manner. Now, considering that we have ample material to produce and manufacture zinc shavings, I contend that the Government would be doing something of vast advantage to the mining industry if they would start to manufacture zinc shavings, so that the small man, who wants this necessary product, could obtain it at a reasonable price. And I want to say—before passing on to deal with matters contained in His Excellency's Speech—that I sincerely hope that when I return to my constituents in three years' time I shall be able to say that the Government of the day lent a sympathetic ear to any proposition that would advance the interests of the mining industry that the previous Government had neglected. (Hear, hear!) Previous speakers have touched upon many matters in the Speech that there will be no need for me to refer to. Representing, as I do, a purely industrial centre, I consider it my duty to-night to endeavour to place before this House some grievances which the workers of my constituency—in common with the workers of other parts of Queensland—are labouring under. In the Governor's Speech there appears a suggested amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act. And I want to say that that Act is one of the best pieces of legislation that we have on our statute-book to-day. The only unfortunate thing is that it is not broad enough, that it requires much amendment to make it as perfect as I would like to see it. I am going to suggest for the careful consideration of the Government a number of amendments which I believe will not only benefit my own particular constituents, but also many workers in the different industries of the State to-day. The first amendment which I would like to see placed in the Act is an increase in the death benefit. The sum of £400 is the capital value placed upon the life of a man, and it is the total amount that will be paid to those dependent upon him. I contend that £400 is not sufficient

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compensation, particularly when you consider the increasing cost of a home, and the increasing need for children to be brought up fit to battle with life, equipped with an education that will enable them to compete with the education that will be pitted against them. And so, £400 is not sufficient compensation to give to a wife and orphan, when the breadwinner is lost.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STOPFORD: I think it will be readily agreed both my members on that side of the House and members on this side that the time has arrived when the amount of weekly payment should be increased to £1 10s. a week; and I am not going to labour that point, because I believe that the policies of the Opposition and the Government both contain that necessary amendment. Now I come to an amendment that is of extreme importance to the workers of Mount Morgan. This amendment, which I believe exists in the New Zealand Act, and which I, in common with many other members of this House, hope will be incorporated in the Queensland measure, is that all injuries of a permanent nature, immediately they have been determined by medical evidence, should be paid for on a schedule rate in a lump sum to the worker. (Hear, hear!) My reason for advocating that is that for a number of years I was president of the Mount Morgan Hospital, and in walking down the wards I met many of my comrades who had been injured in the big mine, and I noticed that those men who were likely to be permanently injured were haunted by the fear that they would not get sufficient compensation. I have seen in Mount Morgan men who have lost an eye. I have seen them offered £5 in compensation. I have seen them, after placing their case in the hands of a solicitor, get £200. I have seen another unfortunate man content to accept £25 for a similar injury; and I have seen men, when they had lost an arm or a leg, worried as to whether the company would fight them or agree to give a lump sum. And to-day there is in Mount Morgan a young man who, unfortunately, when following his occupation, got crushed between two trucks. The hon. member for Normanby referred to this matter the other night.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Very pathetic.

Mr. STOPFORD: Yes, and to my mind very unjust. This young fellow, immediately he was released, sought to get a lump sum. The company—rightly, because the law says that they may do so—offered him a sum which he did not think was quite sufficient. The matter ended. The company decided to pay him £1 a week till the full compensation of £400 had been exhausted. That means that for eight years that man will get a bare living. At the end of the eight years the whole of his compensation disappears. And what does it mean to the company? It means that they will pay for the first year £52 in compensation. They have left £348 which they can invest, and they can practically earn in dividends the amount that they will have to pay, so that the whole of the expense resting on the company can be set at £150. Provided the Act were to give him £300 for that injury, the company would be paying £100 less than they would be paying at £1 a week. His position would be that he could invest that £300 in some small business, which he could carry on with the assistance of his

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family and prosper by. He would have a regular income, and if his industry were successful, at the end of eight years, instead of standing to-day without a penny of this compensation, he would be in a position of seeing the principal, or capital value, of his business increasing, instead of decreasing, and he would be able to keep and educate his children in a reasonable degree of comfort, whilst he was, by his own industry, increasing the capital value of the compensation he had legitimately obtained. Nor do I think there is going to be any member on the opposite side who is going to object to a proposition like that. Another thing that has come under my notice is that every employer of labour is not an honest man. You will very often find that an employer, although perfectly honest himself, has insured his employees with a private insurance company, and although the employer may be perfectly ready to recognise the responsibility that rests upon his shoulders, nevertheless, if the company refuses, the employer has to fight the case in court; and, if he is unsuccessful, the company will pay up. I claim that by having a schedule rate placed in the Act, half the legal expenses that the worker is compelled to pay to-day will not be necessary. (Hear, hear!) In the Mount Morgan Company's employment, there is a man kept specially for the purpose of bartering with injured men and seeing if he can reduce their claims.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: What is the amount they paid in dividends?

Mr. STOPFORD: It would be quite sufficient to re-establish the mining industry in Queensland, and that is saying a big thing! All I want to say is that this officer is paid a handsome salary to barter with the men who have been injured, to endeavour to induce them to receive a smaller amount than, perhaps, a man who was more cunning received for a similar injury perhaps six months earlier. I think that if we are going to return to the workers anything for the loyalty that they have displayed to this party, this will be one of the measures that will show them that we are true to the pledges we made when we occupied those benches there. I have referred to the fact that the employer, however honest, is at the mercy of the private insurance company. Not only is he at the mercy of the private insurance company in having to refuse an injured man his claim, but he has been compelled very often to pay a high rate for his insurance, when there was no necessity for it. The Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company and other huge companies have found it profitable to start a fund of their own, and so avoid being robbed in that way; but the unfortunate employer who employs only four or five men cannot [9.30 p.m.] establish a fund of that description, and he would reap the greatest benefit from a scheme of State insurance in connection with our Workers' Compensation Act. I trust that when amendments are made in the Act a clause will be introduced which will enable employers to insure with the State. It should be made compulsory on all employers to insure the men who work for them. The other day in Mount Morgan I had an unfortunate case brought under my notice. A woman had a son who was employed in the Mount Morgan Goldmine and who helped to support her. He was paid off and went out West and worked on a boring plant.

During his employment the boy was killed. The employer had neglected to insure the boy, and the result was that when the mother was about to make her claim the man went insolvent, and his estate paid something like 2s. 6d. in the £1. That woman was practically robbed of £350. Therefore, I say that if the Act is amended and we make insurance compulsory, it should be a criminal offence for any employer to refuse to carry out that provision. I believe, too, that an insurance claim should have the first claim on the assets in an insolvent estate. While we have for so long recognised the need for compensation to a man who has been injured in a sudden and swift manner, we have failed to recognise that there are other injuries which the workers suffer from and which also require our attention. No man who has worked in a mine or who has lived in a mining centre can help but realise that hundreds of men are just as much the victims of their employment as those men who are hurled to death in a sudden and swift manner. The only difference is that the man who meets his death in a painless manner leaves behind him a widow and children who are assured of sufficient to tide them over the first years of their grief, while the other men, at the same time and in the same community, are compelled to work in the bowels of the earth, breathing in an impure atmosphere, particles of dust, and dynamite fumes, and working in hot air. These men produce dividends just the same as other workers, but in the end they become not only a misery to themselves for years but perhaps a burden to their families, and no law protects them or provides that their dependants shall receive compensation, although they are just as much victims of their employment as the men who are removed in a swift and painless manner. I claim that if we are going to do justice to the worker in one direction, we shall fail in our duty if we shut our eyes to the needs of these other victims of employment. A few years ago there was a big accident in the Mount Morgan Goldmine. Telegrams came from the Premier and also from other Ministers, and from persons all over Australia, expressing the deepest sympathy for those that the workers who had been killed had left behind. I was in Mount Morgan at the time. The victims of that big accident were buried with a terrible lot of pomp and frill. A brass band headed the procession, and the miners walked four deep, testifying their sympathy with the relatives of the persons who had lost their lives in the accident. But the most pleasing feature to me was that under the Workers' Compensation Act the women who had been bereaved were assured of £400, which would give them some reasonable chance to give their children an education that would enable them to have, perhaps, an easier time than their father had before them. Inside of three weeks after that I was standing in the main street in Mount Morgan, when a funeral came along. I inquired of a man who was near me who was dead, and when the name was mentioned I remembered that the man had been off work for eighteen months. He had been knocking around the streets slowly dragging himself about during that time. There was no brass band to head his funeral procession, and no large number of telegrams received from

members on the front Treasury bench expressing sympathy with the bereaved relatives. Only one mourning coach followed him, and the thought that occurred to me was, that after eighteen months of misery, after being a burden to his wife and preventing her from earning a living for his children, he left this world with the knowledge that she and her children were unprovided for. Yet I claim that he was just as much a victim of his employment as the men I have previously referred to.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STOPFORD: I sincerely trust that the Government will recognise the responsibility of doing something for the dependants of such men. During the past two years, while I was organising in that district, I have filled in at least five or six claims for the invalid pension, and was able to obtain certificates proving that the applicants were unable to follow their occupation owing to the complaint caused by dust getting into their lungs. I hope that when the amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act are brought forward a provision will be included to pay compensation to such men, if that is possible in a measure of that kind, and that if it is not possible to do it in a Bill to amend that Act, the object in view will be accomplished by other means. When a man enters a mine, he should know that, if he becomes invalided by breathing impure air, the company which receives the benefit of his industry will hand back in return some of the dividends which his labour has assisted to produce. I do not for one moment believe that any money compensation can compensate these victims, or their relatives, for what they suffer, but I hold that if we are going to do anything at all in the matter we should take measures to endeavour to stamp out these diseases. While recognising our responsibility to provide for the relatives of men who are the victims of their employment, we should also take every possible precaution to prevent the spread of the complaints to which I refer; and I believe that could be accomplished by a better system of inspection, ventilation, sanitation, and water supply in the mines. I do not desire to say one word against the inspectors who are at work in Queensland to-day, but I claim that an inspector can only visit a big proposition like Mount Morgan now and again, and that there are certain things which require immediate attention. At the present time we have a system of check inspectors there, and I sincerely trust that when a Bill to amend the Mining Act is brought forward, provision will be made to give those inspectors greater power than they now enjoy. The men who act as check inspectors have to work in the mine, and before they can proceed to the scene of an accident, they have to report their desire to the management or one of the bosses. The result is that, when they go to inspect the scene of the accident, they are accompanied by one of the officials of the mine, and they cannot possibly carry on a conversation without being overheard by the official who accompanies them. My experience is that, while an employer may not be inclined to victimise his men, if the men think he will, that is just as bad, and, unfortunately, the check inspectors are not in a position to get the information they require without being accompanied by the

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shift boss, or, perhaps, the manager himself. What we desire is that power should be given the check inspectors to immediately visit any part of the mine that requires inspection. I cannot express the need for check inspectors too strongly. Let me state what the men entrusted with this duty in the Mount Morgan Mine did recently. The company brought into existence a new sort of fuse. They informed the miners that this fuse was no cheaper than the fuse they had been using previously. The check inspectors desired to test the fuse. Two feet of fuse were supposed to burn in one minute, but on testing it they found that it burned in fifty-four seconds. That, perhaps, does not appear much to a man who has had no experience in mining, but when it is remembered that when 2 feet of the fuse burned six seconds quicker than it was supposed to do, it will be readily seen that there might have been a disastrous accident if no test had been made. The check inspectors reported the matter to the mine manager immediately, and he decided to have a proper test made. The result of that test confirmed the result of the test previously made by the check inspectors, and the notice was altered accordingly. That fuse might have been in use for years before the regular inspectors would have even known that a change had been made in the fuse used. We have to bear in mind that mining to-day means the handling of large bodies of low-grade ores. If they are going to handle that low-grade ore successfully, they realise that they have got to have a big output to realise any profit. There are two ways of doing it. One is to apply modern science to their industry—to equip their mine with the best possible machinery, and to economise in another direction. The deeper a mine gets, the more need there is for ventilation, and if the company are not carefully watched, you will find that they are skimpy in matters necessary for the health and welfare of the men working in that mine. I therefore claim that when the Mines Act Amendment Bill is before the House, provision should be made to enlarge the powers of the check inspectors, to place them on a footing where it will leave them beyond the power of their employer. I am not in the position to say that the Government should pay them, but I suggest that, if any time is lost in carrying out their duties as check inspectors, they should be recompensed by the Government for that time, because, to my mind, the greatest asset the State can have is a healthy, educated, and contented community. (Hear, hear!) The best way to ensure that is to see that every precaution is taken to safeguard the men who are working in risky occupations. I sincerely trust that the matter will not be allowed to pass when the amending Bill is before the House, and that opportunities will be given to members to speak fully upon it. There is another matter I desire to speak upon. The hon. member for Dalby suggested that it would be a terrible calamity to the workers of Queensland if anything was done to the Industrial Peace Act. I have for the past two years been working pretty closely in touch with that Act. It was my duty to organise the workers of Queensland, particularly of Mount Morgan, to endeavour to induce them to join a union, and after very carefully watching the workings of that Act, I have come to the

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conclusion that it is an Act which aims at the very existence of unions. I do so for this reason: That it seeks to place on the shoulders of the worker what the unions have been endeavouring to teach him he should not be asked to do individually—to place on the shoulders of the worker the duty of fighting his case individually. The Industrial Peace Act will not allow him to fight his case collectively. I am in a position to prove this. According to the Industrial Peace Act, a given number of employees can get a board to sit, and very few boards ever sat that gave a final determination. Whichever side thought it was aggrieved took it before the judge, and then the judge gave his determination. We tried this Act in Mount Morgan. We had a body of men who were not very well satisfied with the conditions of the company, who, in common with men engaged in the same industry in Brisbane, brought about a board—that is, the electrical workers of the State. The Mount Morgan Company defied the Government, and the Government allowed the Mount Morgan Company to defy them for this reason: The employer is supposed to register his employees when called upon by the department which has charge of administering that Act. The Mount Morgan Company was called upon, in common with other employers, to register their electricians. They practically ignored the Government, and never registered their employees at all; and the result was that the Mount Morgan Company's employees had no opportunity of calling that board together or of electing representatives to the board. The board sat and they gave a determination. That determination was registered as an award. The registration of that award took place on the 25th of July, 1914. I was absent from Mount Morgan for some time, and I returned last February. The men did not receive one penny of the amount set forth in the award made for them. They made repeated efforts to get this award enforced in Mount Morgan, and they could not do it. The first recognition that the Mount Morgan Company gave of that award was on the 25th of January, 1915. The award was granted in the previous July. What do we find? We made repeated efforts, and placed the matter before the present Minister for Railways. He waited on the office in Brisbane, and tried to induce them to get justice for the men. We had this peculiar position: Hon. members opposite talk about the Industrial Peace Act of Queensland. I suppose that Great Britain could get peace to-day in the present struggle if she liked to pay a dishonourable price. (Hear, hear!) For the last three years we have had industrial peace in Queensland, but I claim that we paid too great a price for it, particularly the Mount Morgan workers. Let me resume: I took charge of that case. I waited on the manager, because it was a matter of vital importance. There were only twenty-five men affected, but these twenty-five men held the key to the industrial peace in Mount Morgan. If they were to leave work, not one of the 2,000 men could go to work, because immediately the electricians left work the whole of the operations would cease. I was seized with the responsibility of bringing about an amicable settlement. I endeavoured to get a settlement from the manager, but he adhered to his interpretation. I suggested that the Minister for Railways should be asked to get the department down in Brisbane to

send up an inspector to act as arbitrator on the question. Mr. Boyd agreed that if the inspector came he would put his state of the case, and I would put my side of the case, and the inspector would then arbitrate between us. What did we find? We found that the Chief Inspector stated he had no power to send an inspector, and that we would have to practically create a dispute before we would get any administration of that Act. That is the Industrial Peace Act. In order to get justice for twenty-five men, we would have to tie up the other 2,000 men before the department could move to administer their own Act. These are facts. There was another alternative: We could have taken a case into court not as a body. Only one man—the individual himself—would have to issue a summons for his back money, and when he sued, that individual knew that he was asking for the sack as well. Unfortunately, although we had been waiting for twelve months, all that he could sue for was thirty days' back pay.

Mr. KIRWAN: A beautiful Bill it is.

Mr. STOPFORD: That is one instance of it. I will give another.

Mr. VOWLES: The penalties were there.

Mr. STOPFORD: What is the good of prating about the legislation of your Government, when they never administered it! Since I have been elected as a member of this House, I waited upon the Chief Inspector, and he told me that his ruling is correct, that we would have to seek redress for our own grievances and show that there had been a breach of the award, and then he would come in and sue the company. What was the good of telling twenty-five men, who had been robbed of sums ranging from £20 down, that you would bring the company to court, and they would be fined a fiver? What was the good of that? We want an Act in substitution of that, where the worker will be able to get some measure of justice. I had another case in a sugar district, where I was organising, and the sugar workers' award came out. There was a mill in this district, and a boy was working there whose age I found was sixteen years and eight months. Although the award said that a boy under sixteen years of age should get 5s. a day, and over sixteen years he should get 7s. a day, this boy was only getting 5s. a day. The manager's interpretation of that clause was that a boy was sixteen until he became seventeen. (Government laughter.) I went to the inspector—the local sergeant of police—and told him that the boy was suffering an injustice, and the inspector said he could not move in the matter without instructions from Brisbane, and then he could only summons the manager for a breach of the award. I asked, "What about the boy?" And he said he could not do anything. I waited on the magistrate, and asked him if I could appear for the boy, and he said that I was scabbing on the lawyers. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: Did he use those words.

Mr. STOPFORD: Yes, he said I was "scabbing on the lawyers." There was only one lawyer in the town, and he was retained by the other side. The only thing to be done under the Act was for the boy to take action himself, appear in the court and conduct his

own case against a trained lawyer who would have bamboozled him in no time. (Hear, hear!) However, the mill manager was a very decent fellow, and he agreed that he would submit the matter to the magistrate for arbitration. It was so submitted to the magistrate and he gave his decision in favour of the boy. Had it not been that that mill manager was agreeable to submit it to arbitration, that boy would have to take his case into court and appear against the trained lawyer himself. When I pointed this out to the magistrate, he said, "Get a lawyer from Maryborough." I asked what it would cost, and he said "You can get a lawyer for £10." We could sue for thirty days at 2s. a day, amounting to £3 altogether. I asked the magistrate what lawyer's costs he would allow if we won the case, and he said £2 2s. So that for an expenditure of £10 we could get a verdict for £3 with £2 2s. costs. (Government laughter.) That is the Industrial Peace Act! I desire to see such a foolish piece of legislation as that wiped out altogether. (Hear, hear!) The workers said that it was only a matter of time when a Government which would pass such legislation as that would be wiped out themselves, and they proved to be good prophets. We want to pass legislation whereby these men can obtain justice, and right their wrongs, without having to pay a lawyer £20 or £30 to do so. That is a sample of the legislation that was enacted by the previous Government. I have heard reference to-night to the proposed amendment of the Elections Act. I want to go further than many of the speakers who have sup-

[10 p.m.] ported that measure. I want to see the qualification of three months only for a man who comes from another State. I consider that a man who comes here and who has been a citizen of another State, after he has been three months in Queensland, should be entitled to have a say as to who shall represent him in this Parliament. As far as Mount Morgan is concerned, the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, with the assistance of the late Government, imported a number of workers from Broken Hill. These men had their passages advanced to bring them here, and yet, when they arrived in Mount Morgan, although they became citizens of the State, and although the State agreed that they were a welcome addition to the population of the State, they had to remain in Mount Morgan fourteen to sixteen months before they could qualify for a vote. I do not think that is fair. I claim that we should give every man who has to obey the laws of the State, and every man who, by his industry, is helping to produce the wealth of the State, an opportunity to become an elector of the State; and as a member of this party, I sincerely believe that in the legislation we place on the statute-book during the next three years we need have no fear of giving the broadest possible franchise to the people of the State and awaiting their verdict. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. McMINN (*Bulimba*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at three minutes past 10 o'clock.

Mr. McMinn.]