

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 24 AUGUST 1916

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 24 AUGUST, 1916.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that I presented to His Excellency the Governor Appropriation Bill No. 1 for the Royal assent, and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of His Majesty.

A message was also received from His Excellency the Governor assenting to the said Bill.

QUESTIONS.

SUGAR INDUSTRY AND INDUSTRIAL PEACE ACT.

Mr SWAYNE asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“Will he use the powers the Crown possesses under section 46 of the Industrial Peace Act in order to save the sugar industry from a serious injury before it is too late to intervene?”

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

“I do not consider it desirable to take the course suggested by the hon. member.”

ALLEGED STATEMENT BY CHIEF SECRETARY.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*), on behalf of Mr. Corser, asked the Chief Secretary—

“1. On what information did he base his statement, made at the dinner of the foremen engineers, as cabled from London early in May last, when he is reported to have said—‘Australia might have made itself safe by inglorious terms with Germany, but preferred the honourable perilous course to sink or swim with the mother country, at whose disposal Australia had placed all her soldiers and men’?”

“2. Is he not aware that Australia claims that no terms could secure us greater safety than that enjoyed by its magnificent loyalty to our King and Empire?”

“3. Would he inform the House what possible inglorious terms could have been made with Germany that would have been acceptable to loyal Australians?”

The PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*) replied—

“1, 2, and 3. The hon. member's version of portion of my remarks at the foremen engineers' banquet in London does not represent accurately what I said. I said nothing which would bear the construction suggested by these questions. The official report of my utterances on the occasion referred to will be found in the society's published proceedings.”

TRAVELLING EXPENSES OF MINISTERS.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*), on behalf of Mr. Booker, asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. What are the expenses paid by, or to be paid by, the State of Queensland, in connection with the visit of himself and his entourage to England?"

"2. (a) What Ministers visited the Southern States during the parliamentary recess; (b) what were the objects of each Ministerial visit; (c) what were the expenses incurred by each individual Minister?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 and 2. If the hon. member will repeat this question a week hence, I hope to be then in a position to give the House the particulars asked for by the hon. gentleman."

MOORABERRIE CATTLE AND CUBBIE SHEEP TRANSACTIONS.

Mr. VOWLES, on behalf of Mr. Booker, asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Will he lay on the table of the House all the papers in connection with the Mooraberrie cattle transaction?"

"2. Will he lay on the table of the House all the papers in connection with the Cubbie sheep transaction?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. No.

"2. No."

(Laughter.)

PATRIOTIC MOTOR-CAR ART UNION.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. At time of handing over to the entertainment committee of the Queensland patriotic fund the motor-car art union, what was the number and value of tickets sold?"

"2. What amount of money had been received from Alderman Jenkinson, Jean Super, or other persons on account?"

"3. What amounts have been paid on account of commission, printing, any other expenses, and to whom were the payments made?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1, 2, and 3. Permission was granted for the art union by the late Government. The particulars are very voluminous, but the hon. member may peruse the papers and the Auditor-General's report on the matter at his convenience."

SPINNING WHEEL IN ALLIES' CITY.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Assistant Minister for Justice—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to the spinning wheel in use in the Allies' City?"

"2. Will he take action to suppress same?"

HON. J. A. FIELLY (*Paddington*) replied—

"1 and 2. Inquiries are being made into the matter."

AMMUNITION MANUFACTURED BY RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What is the value of ammunition manufactured by the Railway Department?"

"2. What quantity and value has been accepted by the Defence Department?"

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

"1. Completed shells, £4,364 17s.; incomplete shells, £7,491 1s. 6d.; shells from defective steel, £6,699 10s. 10d.

"2. Completed shells accepted, 4,157 at £1 1s. each—£4,364 17s. The Defence Department have agreed to accept, at a price, all incomplete shells, and vouchers for these are now being prepared. A claim has been made on the Defence Force for the work performed on the defective steel, and on the manufacturer for a refund of the cost of defective steel in accordance with contract."

SPECIAL TRAIN FOR DELEGATES TO LABOUR CONVENTION.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Following the recent Labour Convention at Rockhampton, was a special train run from Rockhampton to Brisbane for delegates to such conference?"

"2. What was the cost of said train?"

"3. What was the amount of cash received therefor?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. A special train was run from Rockhampton to Brisbane for members of the Cabinet and members of Parliament.

"2. £76.

"3. The members held passes, same as other members of Parliament."

IPSWICH WORKSHOPS AND MR. H. COWAP.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremer*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"If his inquiries into the question No. 5, asked by the hon. member for Dalby (Mr. Vowles) to-day, show that the statements contained in the letter mentioned are correct, will he take immediate steps to dispense with the services of Mr. Henri Cowap, inspector of shops and factories, in whose district the Ipswich workshops dining-rooms are situated?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS replied—

"Inquiries are being made in this matter."

RELEASE OF ELSIE SHAW.

Mr. VOWLES asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Is it a fact that a woman, Elsie Shaw, who was recently convicted of murder and sentenced to five years' imprisonment by His Honour Judge Lukin, has been released after serving in all about nine to ten weeks' imprisonment?"

"2. Is she released on probation; and, if not, then on what terms?"

"3. Was the said judge consulted or asked to acquiesce in this woman's liberation? Who is responsible for her liberation?"

"4. Is it the intention of the Government to release all other prisoners now undergoing sentences for murder or manslaughter, or to revise their sentences?"

The PREMIER, on behalf of the Home Secretary (Hon. J. Huxham), replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. There were exceptional circumstances in connection with the case, and she was released on the undertaking that she would be taken charge of by relatives in New South Wales.

"3. Yes. He concurred in her release under section 675 of the Code.

"4. Each case will be considered on its merits."

BUTTER CONSIGNED TO LONDON BY GOVERNMENT.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. What was the total amount paid by the Government for the parcel of butter which they consigned to London last year?"

"2. Has that butter yet been sold?"

"3. If so, what amount did it realise?"

"4. What was the total amount of expense incurred in connection with the transaction, including commission, brokerage, cold storage, &c.?"

"5. What surplus or profit, if any, was realised on the transaction?"

"6. Has the surplus or profit, if any, been distributed?"

"7. If so, to whom?"

"8. Is it a fact that the principal public business for which the Premier visited London was to personally superintend the sale of this butter?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Lennox, *Herbert*) replied—

"1. £20,584 9s. 2d.

"2. Yes.

"3. £23,194 12s. 4d.

"4. £2,491 3s. 4d.

"5. £118 19s. 10d.

"6. No.

"7. See No. 6.

"8. This question should be addressed to the Hon. the Premier."

FEES PAID TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

On the motion of Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*), it was formally resolved—

"That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the fees paid to barristers and solicitors from 1st July, 1915, to 31st July, 1916."

CONDUCT OF AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*), in moving—

"1. That the Agricultural Department, having departed from the principles and objects for which it was established, discourages production.

"2. That, in the opinion of this House, all the powers and influence of the department should be devoted to assisting and encouraging production and settlement on the land,"

said: I am bringing this motion forward because of the action the Agricultural Department have taken up.

Mr. BERTRAM: I thought you were going to move for the abolition of the Agricultural Department?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I was going to move that, but by the advice of other friends the motion was diluted to its present form, and it will suit my purpose equally as well. (Hear, hear! and Government laughter.) People can judge by what I have to say this afternoon whether I am right or wrong. I always contend that the importance of the agricultural industry is so great that the Secretary for Agriculture—no matter what party he belongs to—should not allow even his own people to injure that industry. (Hear, hear!) The very foundation of our State—indeed, the foundation of Australia—is built upon its primary production. We have had it handed down to us by the wisest people of olden times who said, "Destroy your cities, burn your cities, and they will grow up again and be rebuilt, but destroy your farms and the grass will grow on your streets." (Hear, hear!) The Agricultural Department, as it is to-day, has put the axe at the root of that tree. They have made a great attempt to destroy the very industry which they were sworn to protect. The Agricultural Department was sworn to assist and encourage production, but, instead of doing that, they have turned round and seized the products which were produced, thus proving a Judas to the very industry they were sworn to protect. (Hear, hear!) They make all kinds of pretensions that they are assisting the producer. They had that fine exhibit in the Exhibition last week. I don't want to detract anything from that exhibit; it was a splendid exhibit. But what is the good of all that expense? What good is it to the farmer and producer?

Mr. CARTER: To try to educate them.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Educate them what for? To bring stuff for you to eat. (Laughter.)

Hon. J. G. APPEL: At their own price.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What is the good of educating them to produce stuff; to make them work fourteen to sixteen hours a day; to work their families and everything else in order to grow those products and then for the department to come along and play the Judas to the very industry it was sworn to assist? There are two things which a farmer cannot have on his farm. One is a cow that sucks her own milk, and the other is a hen that eats her own eggs, because the cow will knock off giving milk and will not be satisfied with drinking her own milk, but will drink the milk of other cows as well. The same with the hen; she will knock off laying eggs and will then eat the other person's eggs—(loud laughter)—the other hens' eggs. That is exactly the position of the Agricultural Department to-day. They have certainly done a little—they have given a little milk and, perhaps, provided two or three eggs, but they have not only eaten their own but are living on the other people's. (Renewed

laughter.) Henry the IV. said that he would wish for the time when every person in his dominion could have a roast chicken as often as he liked. That is what hon. members want, but they want the other fellow's chickens. (Laughter.) They want other people to produce them. Not only eggs—they are not used to having eggs. These things are so strange to them that they laugh when you quote facts. They have not had much experience in these matters. Compare the difference between the present administration of the department and the administration of the past. Under the past administration the officers of the department were welcomed because we knew that they would assist us. I am not going to say anything against the officers, but the action of the department has altered matters altogether. Now a farmer, when he thinks of the Government, instead of thinking of it as something which is sympathetic and helpful to him, his mind always runs back to some power that is going to rob him—that is going to seize the stuff he has produced—and when a Government official comes round, instead of being pleased to see him, he begins to hide his stuff. If he wants to select a site for a barn, he begins to think a cellar would suit him better, as the Government would not see it, and he begins to think of putting some defence round it for the time when he will have to defend his rights with a rifle. These are the things which enter into the mind of the producer now when a Government official visits his place. There was a time when we, in friendly competition, used to put the returns of our dairy herds and the returns of our factories in the papers, but we found that hon. members on the other side were filling their pockets with these reports. They were cutting them out and taking them as evidence that the farmers could pay more taxes—that there was something there to tax—because hon. members did not know the cost of production. They got certain reports showing certain cheques were paid to farmers and they calculated that he had made that much money. Those returns are just as unreliable as if you took a storekeeper's returns and took the whole of his sales as profits. There is no more profit about the one than about the other. Under past administration the visits of Government experts were welcomed as much as a nice shower of rain, but now they are looked upon with suspicion, and their presence is likened to a blasting wind or a hurricane—they leave trouble and disaster in their tracks.

Mr. CARTER: Rot! and Government laughter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is what the action of the Government is leading to, and the policy they are embarked on is likened to the track of a hurricane.

Mr. CARTER: Rot!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is true; you know nothing at all about it. You cannot grow corn in an hotel bar. What experience have you had?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: What do you know about corn?

Mr. CARTER: More than you do.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There are three things or three powers which go to create wealth. The first of these is labour, then capital, and then credit. The Agricultural Department has robbed us of all three of

them. I say you have robbed the producer of his labour; you have robbed him of his capital by taking his stuff at a ridiculous price, and you have robbed him of his credit, because the banks will not advance him money on account of the Government's actions. They have robbed the farmer of the three powers of production.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Nonsense, nonsense!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We must realise that the whole prosperity of Australia is built up on credit. Most of the business of the State is built up on credit; most of our houses are bought on credit, and most of our farms are bought on credit; and when you rob the producer of his credit you are taking away from him his means of living, and that is what the Agricultural Department has done. As I said before, it is the duty of the Minister for Agriculture to take the part of the producer even against his own Government. I want to ask: Has the Minister, as the representative of the agricultural industry, ever protested against the action of the Government?

Mr. GILLIES: The best man that was ever there.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did he protest when he knew very well in November last the Government were fixing the price of locally-grown wheat lower than the price of wheat introduced from the Argentine and grown by coloured labour? The Government fixed the price of flour made from locally-grown wheat at £9 10s. a ton in Brisbane, and they fixed the price of flour made from Argentine wheat, grown by black labour, at £20 10s. a ton, or equal to 8s. 2d. a bushel for wheat. Is that not fixing two prices for wheat—8s. 2d. for wheat grown by coloured labour outside the State, and 3s. 6d. for wheat grown by our own farmers. Did he protest against the Chief Secretary's actions in

[4 p.m.] that case? We will take it for granted that he did not, because

he is silent. When they fixed the price of wheat on the 1st of November, the millers started to buy wheat at that price—I have that from the miller who sits in this House, that that was as much as he could give. That price went on till the 2nd of December, when the price of wheat was raised in New South Wales to 5s. 1d. per bushel, equal to 5s. 7d. on the Darling Downs. During that month the Chief Secretary issued an order to the millers prohibiting them from grinding the farmers' wheat. They were not even allowed to grist a bit for their own use.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister knows that it is true. They told the farmer to keep it in his barn and eat the Argentine wheat flour, and he was compelled to do so. The millers had the whole of the wheat in stock that they had bought during November—there could not be any other result, because they were not allowed to grist it. The difference in the price from the beginning of November to the 2nd of December was 2s. 1d. profit on every bushel of wheat they had bought during November, so that, by Government orders, by the compulsion of the Government, the millers of Queensland were compelled to make 2s. 1d. on every bushel of that wheat out of the drought-stricken farmers of Queensland.

Mr. CARTER: They told you so.

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Mr. BEBBINGTON: You don't know anything about it. They do not keep mills in public-house bars. (Laughter.)

Mr. CARTER: Nor in Salvation Army palaces.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member would not be admitted there. (Laughter.) Let him make no mistake about that. Before the House met last year we heard all sorts of things about the frightful profits that the millers were making, and then, by their own actions, the Government compelled those millers to make a profit of 2s. 1d. out of every bushel of that wheat. The Minister cannot deny it, and members opposite know it is true.

Then the Government made it a penal offence for an auctioneer to take a higher bid for butter in the market than what the Government was paying. Can the Minister contradict that? Can the rich man pay in the market to-day more for the poor man's butter than what the Government is paying? No, and members know it. Did the Minister for Agriculture ever object to that on behalf of the producers? Did he ever say that it was wrong to keep down the rich man's bids and so starve the poor man? They talk about the middleman! Did ever a middleman do that?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Go down to the depths of eternity and bring them up again, the bad and the good, and see whether there was one middleman who did that. (Government laughter.) Is there one who ever limited the rich man in buying the poor man's stuff?

Mr. CARTER: You remember the Denham Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We are not talking about the Denham Government; we are talking about to-day. (Hear, hear!) I say that the present Government have robbed the producer, not only of his labour but also of his capital and his credit. They talk about the Agricultural Department and the Government doing that for the sake of the people! I say that they want abolishing, and if I had my way I would abolish the Government altogether. (Loud Government laughter.)

Later on our co-operative factories received orders for butter for Suez and the East at 170s., and, I think, up to 180s., but I will say 170s., to be well within the mark. The Government had fixed the price at the time at 126s., speaking from memory.

Mr. CARTER: You have a very good memory.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes; I have a good memory for bad actions like yours. (Laughter.) Did the Government allow the co-operative factories to fill those orders? Here were our cream suppliers and producers at that time, with their money all gone, having spent it to save their herds, and some without a shilling to buy food, whilst in some cases nobody would lend them any. Here they were with the opportunity of making a few pounds to pay their bills, but, in collusion with the Federal Government, this Government allowed New Zealand butter to come in, and they handed to the New Zealanders trade that had taken our people and merchants years to build up. New Zealand butter was brought in in

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bond, and sold at the higher price, and our poor producers, who had not clothes for their children, were compelled by the department to sell their stuff to the rich people of Brisbane at about £40 per ton under the value.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No New Zealand butter came to Brisbane.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It came to Australia, and we could have tinned our butter in Melbourne as well as here, but they would not allow us to send it there. We had orders to fill at the higher price, but the Government allowed them to bring in the New Zealand butter and take our Queensland trade, and so compel the poor drought-stricken farmers to supply the rich man at the lower price. Is not that drinking the other cow's milk—is not that eating the other hen's eggs? (Opposition cheers and Government laughter.) How can we build up a nation on such stuff?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You ought to sit on the eggs and hatch them.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: You will never hatch an egg, at any rate.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have dealt with the question of whether the Minister objected in those cases. I have mentioned only one or two, although I might have taken a hundred. On the other hand, the time came when the boot merchants made no secret of the fact that there was to be a rise in the price of boots of 10 per cent., and there was no objection. The boots were held up till the people paid the increase of 10 per cent.; there was no bother about that. Not a word was said about it, and the people simply had to pay the rise of 10 per cent. A few days after our co-operative companies, whose members had been fighting the drought, were anxious to make a little extra money. They wanted a few pounds extra for their butter, but the Government held it up and they could not sell it. What course did the Government take on that occasion? We have had all sorts of talk about the Traders' Association and the middlemen. They were denounced from one end of Queensland to the other during the last general election.

Mr. CARTER: So they ought to be.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, the middle grog man. I have here a report which appeared in the Press, from which it appears that the Acting Chief Secretary said—

“He had been informed that some twenty distributors had their supplies held up, and he had been asked to receive a deputation from the Traders' Association on the matter.”

He had nothing to say about the poor struggling farmer who had been fighting the drought; he had no sympathy for the farmer, but he had very much sympathy with the rich traders of Brisbane. Mark his answer—

“If the facts were as stated, the Government would not tolerate such a position for a moment.”

Oh, no! they would not tolerate that as far as the traders were concerned, but they would tolerate it where the poor farmers were concerned. When the bootmakers wanted an extra 10 per cent. on boots, the Government winked at the increase in price, and said not a word, but when the poor farmer

wanted an increase in the price of butter, such a thing would not be tolerated for a moment! I wrote a letter to the Agricultural Department in which I said that whoever seized the farmers' produce the department should not touch it, as the farmers were in the habit of looking to the department for assistance, and if the department tolerated the seizing of their stuff they would lose confidence in the department and would have no faith in it any more. We were told by the Acting Chief Secretary that—

“The Minister for Agriculture would probably take action and purchase the whole of the butter, and distribute it among the vendors, this course having been recommended.”

Did he take the boots manufactured by the bootmakers when they wanted an increase of 10 per cent. on their prices? No; nor did he take the stuff of the merchants, who had made millions of pounds by the rise in prices. Barbed wire has gone up 90 per cent. in price, and the cost of other things used by farmers has increased considerably. Let me quote some information as to the increase in prices which I have obtained from Mr. Galbraith, the secretary of the Cheese Manufacturers' Association. The Minister knows that gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, and I have helped him more than he has helped me.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I dare say. I asked Mr. Galbraith to send me official quotations showing the increase in the prices of materials used in the manufacture of cheese, and he gave me this information—

“The old price for rennet was 8½d. to 10½d. per lb.—7s. per gallon. The present price for rennet is £5 per gallon, and every prospect of going to £10.”

Did the Minister take any steps to prevent those increases? No, because the farmer had to buy those commodities; if he had had to sell them, that would have been a different thing, and the Minister would have interfered. Mr. Galbraith gave me this further information with regard to prices—

“Bandage—Old prices, 5d. to 5½d.; present values, 8d. to 8½d.; cotton market advancing rapidly.”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The war is still going on, and we are trying to stop it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly, but the farmers have to provide for these rises and pay exorbitant prices for materials used in the manufacture of their produce, and the Federal Minister for Customs practically insists that we shall take what is the price in London for the black-labour article. If our Secretary for Agriculture had been Treasurer or Premier he would have had some outlet for his energies, but in destroying the agricultural industry his energies are misdirected. At one time when fixing the price of butter the report of his own officer was on his table. Let me now give an extract from the Sydney “Bulletin” showing the position of the Queensland farmer—

“A Queensland farmer in the Brisbane ‘Courier’ comments on the Government fixing the price of butter at 1s. 3d. per lb. He shows, from the returns at Gatton College, published in the ‘Agricultural Gazette,’ that the college herd of thirty-two picked cows averaged 29 lb. butter per month, which

at 1s. 3d. returns £1 16s. 3d. per cow, or £58 3s. 9d. for the herd. The college figures show that it cost 2s. 4d. per cow per day for feed, or £112 per month for the herd, a loss of £64. If wages and the cost of natural pasturage be added, a Government which fixes the price at 1s. 3d. cannot produce butter at its own college for anything like the money.”

Those figures work out at 2s. 6d. per lb. of butter for feed alone on a picked herd of cows, without taking into account the cost of feed for dry cows and horses, and the interest on money invested. This thing means the life-blood of our producing community.

Mr. COLLINS: The Darling Downs.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Members who are interjecting are like a lot of school boys, with whom experience goes for nothing. They have had no experience in producing anything, and their minds do not go higher than an old hen. Here we have a case where the feed alone cost an amount equal to 2s. 6d. per lb. of the butter produced, leaving out of consideration labour and everything else, and the same Government that had these returns on their table fixed the price of butter at 1s. 3d. per lb. Now, is that a fair deal?

Mr. CARTER: Well, well! (Government laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am sorry if I lose my temper in dealing with men who cannot remain serious when I am referring to actions which are taking the very life-blood from the producing industries of this State. I may just mention a case that came under my notice during the recess. One evening I went into the house of a poor, struggling farmer, who was working night and day to make a living. He had two fine boys of school age. I found this farmer busy mending harness while his wife was washing. I did not see the boys, so I asked, “Where are the boys?” I heard some laughing in another room, and I went there and found the two boys naked in bed. They were laughing, and I said, “What are you doing in bed? Where are your shirts?” The father said, “The Government have got their shirts.” (Government laughter.) I said, “How can the Government have their shirts?” He said, “Of course the Government have their shirts. Butter is everything to us. Butter is feed for our cattle; butter is our banking account and everything we have to depend upon; and how can we get shirts for the boys if the Government take our butter?” The mother was washing the boys' only shirts, and so they had to remain naked in bed. (Loud Government laughter.) I should be very sorry to tell where those two boys live, because the Minister would send and take their only shirts off the clothes-line, and then the boys would have none at all. (Renewed Government laughter and interjections.) There are many things I could tell that I saw and heard on that farm.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members on my right to cease their interjections. The hon. member has a perfect right to place his views before this Chamber. He is quite sincere in his views, and I hope hon. members will allow him to proceed without interruption.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have already stated some facts

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in regard to butter. They are not only statements—they are facts; I am stating nothing but facts. I have read where the Acting Chief Secretary admitted that the Secretary for Agriculture was to take possession of butter and hand it over to the Traders' Association.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have not handed it over to the Traders' Association, and we have no intention of doing so and never had.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am only quoting from the Press.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The "Courier."

Hon. J. G. APPEL: You always seem to read the "Courier," and quote from it yourself.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: The German edition.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The day that butter was seized I met a Brisbane merchant who told me that his firm was offered from 190s. to 200s. per cwt for butter in Melbourne, and the Government took that butter over at 140s. per cwt.—a difference of 60s. per cwt., or £60 per ton! Was that a fair thing to do? Now, let me read a quotation from the Melbourne "Argus," giving the Melbourne market quotations for that date. I want the Press to make a note of this. I know hon. members opposite do not want to hear me, because these things are not palatable to them; but I want the country to know what the Government have done and the reason for bringing this motion forward. The Melbourne "Weekly Butter Report" of 29th June last said—

"Melbourne: Supplies are still shrinking and the market on Monday last advanced a further 10s. per cwt., the quotation now being 200s. per cwt. Some fair-sized parcels of New Zealand butter are due in Melbourne this week, and it is generally hoped that a repetition of last year's experience with importations from America will not be necessary. The arrivals of butter into Melbourne by rail for the week ended 16th June amounted to 2,266 boxes, as compared with 2,726 boxes for the previous week and 781 boxes for the corresponding week of last year."

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is not so.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This emanated from Dalgety and Co., and their reputation is quite sufficient guarantee of the accuracy of the statement. It seems to me that the Government took this butter from the poor farmers in order to give cheap butter to the rich people of Brisbane.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: The Labour party are the rich people of Brisbane.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Let me read a quotation from the Brisbane Press at the time the Government seized this butter at £60 per ton under its value—

"It is no exaggeration to say that the majority of the costumes, at any rate many hundreds of them, to be seen parading the block in Queen street any fine afternoon, cost not less than £10 each. The quite ordinary woman's costume these days must easily run into £12 to £15.

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"Now, Sir, what name should be applied to a Government that takes our struggling dairymen's produce and hands it over to people (who have nothing more to do than 'do the block,' as the report says, in from twelve to fifteen guinea costumes) at £60 per ton under its value?"

Here is another quotation from a letter just published in a Brisbane paper, headed "The Cost of Living":—

"RACECOURSES.

"Thirty-eight thousand one hundred and eleven pounds passed through the machine, an increase of £4,691 on last year.' Thus we read in your Monday's issue of the Queensland Turf Club races."

Just fancy the rich people of Brisbane putting £38,111 through the totalisator in one day when the Government are seizing the poor, struggling farmers' butter to feed those rich people!

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has now exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: May I ask as a favour for an extension of a few minutes, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be further heard?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I thank the House very much for granting me an extension. I shall not take more than a very few minutes. I desire to read just two more quotations—

"A firm of stock and station agents in Brisbane has received the following letter from the Killarney district, Darling Downs, and it speaks for itself:—Dear Sirs.—I have consigned to you from Killarney Station 11 bags of hides, containing 41 cow hides and 1 bull hide (salvage of a 30-guinea bull), and 4 calf hides. This lot is all I saved from £500 worth of cattle. I hope you will be able to realise a good price for them, so that I will be able to get some return. I leave them to you to do the best you can for me."

Then here is another quotation from "The Farmer and Settler"—

"The 'Farmer and Settler' comments: Now that the producers know that the Labour politician is prepared to take the butter from the owner to give to the said politician's friends in Sydney, the producer that votes for a Labour candidate is not a business man. He is either a philanthropist or a fool."

Those are some of the results of the seizure of farmers' produce by the Government.

As I said before, I have got some other things to bring forward, which I shall be able to get in on the Address in Reply, but I want to ask the Minister something very particular to-day. I want the Minister to assure the House that there is no butter which was purchased as first-class butter, and paid for as first-class, being [4.30 p.m.] branded to-day without examination as second-class, and sent to England as second-class. Or, is it a fact that butter belonging to a certain factory in Queensland, and paid for as first-class

butter, with the manager's reputation at stake, is now being marked second grade by the Government—an offence which, if charged against a factory, would cause them to be fined £500? Is the department guilty of branding butter second class which has been bought and paid for as first, to deceive the Federal authorities, and to risk the manager's reputation? After taking it at £60 per ton under its value, have they come to such a point that they are marking that butter second class and ruining the manager's reputation, and misleading the Federal authorities? I thank the House for the time they have allowed me.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I am impelled to second this motion after the very weighty arguments which have been adduced by the hon. member for Drayton, the deputy leader of the farmers' party. The object of the establishment of the Agricultural Department originally was that it should give every assistance to the primary producer, and afford him every instruction and help. Various Ministers were chosen in the first instance from their knowledge of agriculture.

Mr. COLLINS: Of cape gooseberries.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member may scoff at cape gooseberries, but he is fond of enjoying them if he can get them for nothing. (Laughter.) In the first instance, the Ministers of that department were chosen from what was considered their particular knowledge of agriculture and the requirements of the primary producers, but under the system which has been established by the Labour party that condition does not prevail. A certain number of that party are elected as Ministers, and the portfolios allotted. I think the hon. gentleman who occupies the position of Secretary for Agriculture to-day will admit that he knows nothing about agriculture.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you know anything about agriculture?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I wish the hon. member knew as much as I did about it, and would spend as much money as I have done on it. I feel quite satisfied that the hon. gentleman who occupies the position of Secretary for Agriculture to-day—and with no discredit to him, because this is not a personal matter—knows absolutely nothing about agriculture, and probably his sympathies from his bringing up are not with the primary producer. I remember it being stated last session by members on the Government side that the majority of farming electorates were represented by Labour members.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: Hon. members opposite agree to that by their "Hear, hears!" I want the public of Queensland to know that those hon. members who profess to represent the majority of primary-producing electorates of Queensland, on every occasion when primary products such as butter are referred to, make sarcastic interjections in connection therewith. In connection with the small primary producer butter is the staple product by which he makes his living, yet it is sarcastically referred to by hon. members opposite, who profess to represent the majority of the primary-producing electorates of this State.

Mr. CARTER: We do not speak of them with our tongue in our cheek, as you do.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member says he does not speak of them with his tongue in his cheek, but when he is selling a "crook" horse it sticks out of his mouth. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not want to be drawn off the track by irrelevant interjections. This is a very serious matter. I am not here for the purpose of stonewalling, but to second the motion of the hon. member for Drayton, who has a perfect and absolute knowledge of the question which is being discussed. The point at issue is this: Is the Agricultural Department performing the duty for which it was established? I repeat again that I say nothing against the Minister, but he has no knowledge of agriculture. From the way in which he is appointed by the caucus—

Mr. COLLINS: What did you know as Minister for Mines?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I knew a jolly sight more than the hon. member did. My father was one of the first miners in Australia. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am not condemning the Minister, or casting any aspersions on the administrative staff of the Agricultural Department, but I want to point out that the object of the establishment of the Agricultural Department was to assist the primary producer, and instruct him so that he could get the best use out of his land. The question is, has that been done?

Mr. SMITH: Yes.

HON. J. G. APPEL: What does the hon. member know about it? He is out to get the highest wage he can from the man on the land. I venture to say, without casting any aspersion on the present Minister, or upon the Under Secretary and his officers, that the feeling in Queensland amongst the primary producers is that the department has not been of the assistance to them which it was thought it would be. Now, naturally, the hon. gentleman who has moved this motion is more intimately connected with the matter than I am, and he is anxious to see some reform in connection with this subject, because it is of vital importance to the producer. I will take the Gatton Farm, for instance. That farm is supposed to instruct our youth in the proper methods of carrying on farming operations. It seems to me a most ridiculous thing that young men who wish to go and take up selections, and who have to start with practically nothing in their pockets, or with only a few pounds at most, are sent to a farm where the capital value of the implements of the farm approach something like £60,000 or £70,000. It seems a ridiculous proposition that young men who are to be trained to go into the scrub and fell the scrub and start operations with only a few pounds in their pockets, are to be instructed on a farm where such a vast amount of capital is laid out, so far as agricultural implements are concerned. How many young men are there who go out on the land with possibly nothing in their pockets, or with only a few pounds, to take up scrub selections and fell an acre of scrub, and then have to go out and take a job at fencing in order to make a few pounds to enable them to live until they have cleared their land?

Mr. COLLINS: Are you speaking from experience?

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am. Hon. members on the other side are very fond of scoffing at the poor man who has had to undergo that experience. Of course, members opposite are wealthy men, and as they are practically plutocrats they look down on the man who has no capital and no regular income coming in, and they scoff at the idea of a man having to undergo these privations. They don't realise, as I and others on this side do, what is the experience of the man who goes upon the land.

MR. COOPER: What do you know about the man on the land?

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman who interjects was not game to go on to the land. He adopted a much softer course of living. I don't blame the hon. member for doing that. I know if I had the same opportunity when I went on the land I know that I would have followed the example of the hon. gentleman and come into Parliament. But I am not speaking of the man who has been able to get into Parliament and sit upon these nicely upholstered benches, and have all the pleasures and enjoyments of parliamentary life. I am speaking of the men who have no prospects of getting better off save that of endeavouring to get the freehold of the selections which they have taken up. It seems to me a most ridiculous thing that when we propose to train up young men to be able to take up scrub selections and undergo all the trials and difficulties of going on the land, that instead of training them to plough with a plain furrow plough, that they should get a machine plough drawn by motor traction, which probably during the whole course of their lives they will never be able to purchase.

MR. COLLINS: Was it not your Government that purchased that machine plough?

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is quite possible, but your Government are continuing it.

MR. COLLINS: You are criticising your own Government.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, and I am game to do it. That was one of the reasons that I left the Government of which I was a member. That is the reason why other members of this House have left the Government they belonged to, because they did not agree with the policy of the Administration. I am sorry the Secretary for Railways is not here, because I want to tell him that there are members on the other side of the House who will stick to the Treasury bench no matter what differences of opinion there may be amongst members of the Cabinet. They will never leave the Treasury bench unless they are kicked out.

MR. BARBER: Did you fall out, or were you kicked out?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I like to obey your ruling, Mr. Speaker, at all times, but I am sometimes led away by these interjections. The Secretary for Agriculture, whose department we are discussing at the present time, is looking very serious, but probably he is not serious, because he does not care a pin for the primary producer and is never likely to do so.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He cares nothing for buffoons.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman considers that the farmers are buffoons. He

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thinks they are a very poor sort—that they are hayseeds. He looks upon them as something under the level. However, that is not the point we are discussing. The question before us is whether the Agricultural Department requires reorganisation or not. I certainly think it does. I earnestly urge the party now in power, and those who profess to love the primary producer, to show what they have done. We have been told during the past two days of all that has been done for the primary producer, and what good friends the present Administration are to the primary producer. We have been told of the thousands of pounds the Government have spent on them and what they propose to do for them. Look at the seed they gave them! At least I should say look at the seed which they sold to the farmers. Look how the Government have fathered the farmers, and taxed them and taken their butter, and regulated the price of their stock. They might think that all these things are benefits to the farmers. I recollect a friend of the Secretary for Public Instruction, who takes an interest in the primary producer, saying that the land tax was a good thing for the farmers. The Secretary for Public Instruction takes a great interest in the primary producer.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: I believe that once the hon. gentleman grew half a cabbage himself, and that causes him to take a great interest in the primary producer. (Laughter.) It was a friend of the hon. gentleman who said that the farmers could not grow a decent crop without a land tax. I appeal to those hon. members who are engaged in agriculture and who have gone out into the scrub and felled it, and who know something of the difficulties of going on the land—I appeal to them whether the land tax is of sufficient effect to produce a decent crop?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You see the land that has been thrown open as a result of it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The Secretary for Public Instruction tells us to see the way the crops grow on land on which a land tax is imposed.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The land the crops will grow on.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman has admitted my soft impeachment, and probably that is the policy of the Department of Agriculture—that by the imposition of a land tax there is going to be an improvement in the growth of crops in Queensland. We want the Secretary for Agriculture to show by what means under a land tax and under drought conditions they are able to improve the production on the lands of the State. We want a department which will show us how, by depriving the farmer of his butter—taking his butter at a decreased rate—by imposing a tax upon him, he is going to improve his condition. We want a department which will show how, by depriving us of our stock at decreased rates and by imposing additional taxation, we are to improve our condition. That is a perfectly reasonable proposition. We want a department which will show us how we are to get these improved conditions under the impositions which have been placed upon us by the present Administration. Hon. members on the

other side seem to think I know nothing about scrub-felling. I know they do not. (Government laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: What do you know about it?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I know the hon. member does not know much about it—he would rather go organising. If the opportunity had been offered to me at the time I might have adopted that particular profession myself.

Mr. KIRWAN interjected.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Here is the hon. member for Brisbane interjecting now. Of course, he knows all about scrub-felling. He knows all about cabbage growing and knows all about maize growing. We want hon. members like the hon. member for Brisbane to come along to the Agricultural Department and instruct the Minister—(laughter)—instruct him how to grow corn on a railway track. (Renewed laughter.) That is what we want to know. I think it is a legitimate desire on our part to want this information. The Secretary for Agriculture and myself personally have always been on very friendly terms.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: What are you smooching for?

HON. J. G. APPEL: From my knowledge of the hon. gentleman he is a man of great capacity undoubtedly, and taking the members of the Ministry outside the Premier and the Acting Minister for Justice—I hope the Secretary for Public Instruction and the Treasurer—

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will refrain from personal matters.

HON. J. G. APPEL: These interjections are apt to lead one astray. I have no desire to get off the track, because I want to discuss the proposition. Although seconding this motion I might, perhaps, not go so far as the mover of the motion, the deputy leader of the party I represent.

Mr. COLLINS: I thought you joined forces with the Liberal party.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have always been a member of the Liberal party.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. J. G. APPEL: You must realise that it is very difficult for me to continue a connected discourse when I am interrupted by interjections. I believe, if the department were to adopt a different line of policy—although, as I have already said I know from personal knowledge that the Minister has no knowledge of agriculture, still I believe he has sympathy for it—it may be only a kind of half-sympathy for the primary producer.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY interjected.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am sure the hon. member likes to eat a good cabbage or a good cauliflower, and in doing so he must think of the man who grew them.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: He does not like to eat a leek.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do, and I dare say the hon. gentleman often likes to eat a leek. (Laughter.) As a primary producer, I ask the administrative head of that department to take the matters which have been discussed this afternoon into consideration, and

to judge for himself whether the operations which are carried on at that particular State farm are likely to be of any benefit to the young fellow without capital who is going on a scrub selection. And, furthermore, I would like him to take into consideration the amount of capital which has been expended on that farm and the amount of money which is expended annually, and to get an estimate of the value of the produce grown upon that State farm. I venture to say that if he takes the two matters into consideration, no man is likely to go upon the land in Queensland as a primary producer. I challenge the hon. gentleman to produce to this House a return giving those particulars. I hope he will not, because the

result would be to absolutely [5 p.m.] discourage any man from going on the land. That is one of the objects of this resolution—that there should be such a revolution of methods, whereby, in place of showing such an absolute loss—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The resolution says I have departed from the methods.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am urging the Minister to depart from them.

Mr. MAY: From the methods of your Government?

HON. J. G. APPEL: From the methods at present in operation. The hon. member who has interjected, I believe, knows something of farming; he knows how to grow cabbages and peas, and wheat and hops—(laughter)—so that I regard any interjection that comes from him with a considerable amount of interest. Of course, hon. members are making a joke of this matter, but it is no joke with the primary producer. What we want, as representing the primary producers, is that the department should so reorganise its methods that it may be of some use to the man who is going upon the land and who is upon the land. On my last visit to the principal farm, which is at Gatton, I noticed the operations in connection with poultry, and I venture to state that if a balance-sheet was published of those operations, the result would show an absolute loss.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It would not.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am very glad to hear it. I know that when I was there, the conclusion I arrived at from my own knowledge was that it would be an absolute loss.

Mr. COOPER: That was under your party's regime.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not care whose regime it was under. I am asking the party opposite, who profess to be the friends of the farmers—

Mr. MAY: We are reformers.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I hope you are, and we shall judge by the fate of the resolution whether you are. I would ask the Minister to take the matter into consideration, with the object of seeing whether it is not possible to instruct the young men in the methods of agriculture which they will have to employ if they have no capital; for instance, instead of sending them out with a motor plough, teach them to plough with a share plough.

Mr. PETERSON: In my district, they send out instructors to teach them on the farms.

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HON. J. G. APPEL: Of course, the hon. member is particularly lucky.

MR. PETERSON: My people are satisfied, anyhow.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member is a member of the party, and apparently he can get men up there to show the boys how to plough with a furrow plough, and so on, and I only hope that the Minister will extend the privilege to all other electorates.

MR. PETERSON: The Minister cannot satisfy you unless you ask him.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not know that I should have to ask. I think it is the duty of the Agricultural Department to send out instructors everywhere. That was done by a Liberal Government. I think it was the hon. member for Mackay at the time—the Hon. Hume Black—who initiated the system of instructors, so far as butter producing was concerned.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He was not the first.

MR. SWAYNE: He established the dairying industry.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Whoever was the first, instructors were sent out to all electorates. My knowledge was that it was the Hon. Hume Black, but the Minister denies it, and I am bound to take his denial. That is only by the way; but I think it would be a very good thing in connection with the reorganisation of this department, if, instead of waiting to be asked these things, they sent out instructors into all agricultural districts to give instruction in all primary matters. I think the hon. member will admit that it is perfectly useless to teach young fellows to plough with a motor plough, when they will never have a motor plough. I know many a man who can plough with such a plough, but who cannot handle a furrow plough, because he has never been instructed. Of course, however, we all know that it is useless to expect any reorganisation, and that is why I am not particularly asking for it at this time; but I may simply observe, that I hope that the Minister, who is a business man, and although he knows nothing about agriculture, no doubt will be willing to take hints from men who have some slight knowledge of the matter, and from the hon. member for Drayton, who has an absolute knowledge, will be advised as to what the primary producer of the State wants so far as agriculture is concerned.

There is another matter, which is already being carried out—that is, the inoculation of cattle. This is a matter that has caused a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst primary producers. I am not referring to the department to-day, because it was done when the Liberal party were in power, but I am simply urging the Minister, when I have the opportunity to criticise, to go into the matter. I recollect that in my own district a desire was expressed by the settlers on a plateau called Springbrook Plateau, that their stock should be inoculated against tick fever. They thought that the best and surest way was to get the department to do it; and the department did it. What was the result? The whole of their stock died of blood-poisoning. An inquiry was held, and we all know what the result was.

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The department was exonerated, naturally, but the fact remained that the stock died of blood-poisoning.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Was that not during the administration of the late Ministry?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have said so; and I am simply urging this as one of the reasons why the mover of the motion asks that something should be done.

MR. COLLINS: You are doubtful of Mr. Bebbington's case.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am not. I am simply giving reasons why his motion should be considered seriously by the House, and passed. I remember my own individual case. I had a particularly valuable cow, so valuable that I thought I might get some good stock from her. I was not sure that she was inoculated, and I arranged with the department to inoculate her. They inoculated her twice, and told me that the cow would be absolutely immune six weeks or two months after the second inoculation. I sent her away to a sire, and the first information I afterwards received about her was that she had died of redwater. Of course, that is a matter for which the officer of the department may not have been responsible. In another case which occurred in my own electorate, a lot of cattle were inoculated, and I think about 60 per cent. of them died after the inoculation. I simply mention these matters to support the proposition made by the hon. member for Drayton, that the primary producer in Queensland has to a great extent lost confidence in the Agricultural Department. We all know that in many instances you get seeds from the department which are supposed to be of a certain class, but which, when they come up, are found not to be true to name.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is an absolutely reckless statement to make.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am glad to hear the hon. gentleman say so, but I am only mentioning facts. During the years I was at the Home Department, the different institutions which were under that department bred cattle and pigs, and on every occasion we beat the Agricultural Department at the principal show in Brisbane. If ever there was evidence that there is an absolute necessity to reorganise the Agricultural Department, that evidence has been given in abundance this afternoon. We all know that it is useless to expect this motion to be carried, but I take advantage of the opportunity to urge the Secretary for Agriculture—who I honestly believe may try to take an interest in the matter although he knows nothing about it—to consider the matters which have been brought forward for the purpose of improving the operations of the department.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*): I am rather in doubt as to whether I should take seriously the motion that has been submitted to the House, because the mover and seconder of it vied with one another in the absurdity and incorrectness of their statements. The hon. member for Drayton starts off by stating in his motion—

“That the Agricultural Department, having departed from the principles and objects for which it was established, discourages production.”

Yet the seconder of the motion finds fault

with the department for not having departed from its principles and objects, so that I am at a loss to know how to reply to both hon. members. To prove that we have departed from the methods of our predecessors, I may say that we have done everything possible to assist the man on the land to face the drought and the trying times we have passed through of late, and that we have done more for the man on the land than any preceding Government ever did.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and OPPOSITION dissent.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will give a summary of the money which is being expended entirely in the interest of the man on the land. I am not taking the cost of administration, but am giving simply the amounts spent on instruction and other work for the benefit of the settler.

The salaries of the instruction staff last year amounted to £5,791, and for the travelling expenses of those instructors we spent £1,436. On the "Agricultural Journal" we spent about £1,567. Will anyone say that that journal is not carried on for the benefit of the man on the land? We granted £221 for bursaries at the Agricultural College for students who have a liking for going on the land, so that they may be fitted and qualified to go on the land. On the printing of pamphlets we spent £637. The salaries and cost of the upkeep of the Agricultural College at Gatton amounted to £12,749.

This is the first time during my nearly ten years' attendance in this House that ever any suggestion has fallen from any member on the other side of the House with regard to the necessity for a reform of that college. One hon. member who has spoken has been in office himself, and yet such a suggestion never occurred to him before. He now tenders advice, very cheap advice, too, as advice from a gentleman who professes to know all about agriculture, though he, I understand, is a solicitor out of practice.

We also spent on the chemical laboratory last year the sum of £2,357. Under the Dairy Produce Acts the expenditure for last year was £7,952, and under the Diseases in Plants Act the expenditure was £3,624. On State farms we spent £9,942. We are prepared to give a subsidy for the erection of stock dips to the extent of £1 for £1, but the owners of stock have not made a very heavy claim on that fund. Still we have assisted them in that way to the amount of £100. Experiments have been carried on at Wallumbilla for the purpose of showing farmers that some kind of prickly-pear can be utilised for the maintenance, or, at all events, the preservation of stock from death. Experiments are being conducted with a view to ascertain to what extent such fodder can be used for fattening stock, also to ascertain whether dairy herds can breed and produce milk when fed on prickly-pear. These experiments have cost the Agricultural Department £1,223 during the past year, and the inquiry is not yet completed. Is that expenditure likely to be of any benefit to the man on the land? I think it is.

Then, we have assisted farmers with seed maize. Last year, unfortunately, the weather was so dry that it was not considered desirable to spend very much money in that regard. But we have assisted farmers to the

extent of £34,501 in supplying them with seed wheat, simply on the security of their promissory notes.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: That was not novel.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not claim that it was novel, but I do claim that that was very generous assistance—greater assistance than was ever given them before. I did not say that it was novel. If the hon. member tries to put words into my mouth, I will not allow it. Although I did not say that it was novel, I do say that it was unique.

We provided the farmers with fodder to preserve their dairy herds from starvation to the value of £15,292, and I state here emphatically and without fear of contradiction that no Government in Queensland had ever done the like before.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And then you took the butter made from the chaff. What is the good of doing a good deed and then taking the butter?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have done that for the benefit of the farmers during the past year, and then these loud-mouthed gentlemen ask us what we have done. I say we have spent £99,046—or nearly £100,000—for the benefit of the man on the land.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is all useless when you seize his produce.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think I interrupted the hon. member who moved the resolution once, though I was certainly very much amused at his eccentricities and at the recklessness of his statements, and I think he should allow me to pursue the even tenor of my way without interruption. I am not asking for any mercy from the hon. member at all. He said that I was sworn to protect the agricultural interests and that I have broken that trust. I think, what I have said, will show that I have discharged my trust more faithfully and with more generosity—if I may use that word—than any of my predecessors. And yet the hon. gentleman who seconded the silly resolution which has been submitted to us says that I know nothing about agriculture, and that I was put into office by the caucus.

The gentleman who preceded me in office had some knowledge of the subject, said this retired lawyer. Now, I will just give the names of some of the gentlemen who preceded me in the office, and ask the hon. gentleman to tell me what their special qualifications were:—Mr. Barlow; he was a banker, and served in the same bank as myself. Hon. A. J. Thynne—I think he was the first Secretary for Agriculture. He is a solicitor, I understand; Mr. Chataway—I do not know what he was; Mr. Dalrymple; he was a chemist.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: One of the "idle rich."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Denham—I do not know that he was a farmer; Mr. O'Sullivan was a barrister, and is now a judge. Mr. Tolmie was a school teacher.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Yes, but he had experience of agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know what a schoolmaster's qualifications are for filling the office unless it be

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that his knowledge of "training the young idea how to shoot" is to be taken as an agricultural qualification. I am not casting any reflection on the hon. gentleman, but I am within my rights in replying to the hon. member for Albert, who said that my predecessors had qualifications of a kind that put them far and away ahead of my qualifications for discharging the duties of the office I now occupy.

The whole trouble arises from the fact that the Government have seen fit to control the butter bandits of Brisbane.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No. You robbed the co-operative factories, and not the Brisbane merchants.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Certain butter transactions had been carried out—not by my department, but by the Chief Secretary's Department—which did not give satisfaction to the butter agents of Brisbane—any more than they gave satisfaction to the butter producers, or to the gentlemen who claim to represent them in this Chamber. Several deputations waited upon the Premier, and after some two or three of those deputations had addressed him at very great length he agreed, on certain conditions, to hand the butter business back to them. The understanding arrived at was that, if the Government would hand back the conduct of the business to the butter agents, they would undertake that the people should be supplied with butter at the proclaimed price.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why should they?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not answering silly conundrums; I am stating facts.

Mr. MOORE: Why should they, and rob the farmers?

Mr. LAND: They did not rob the farmers.

Mr. MOORE: Of course, they did. Whom else could they rob?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Thereupon that particular phase of the butter question came under my control. I naturally thought that the proper thing to do under such circumstances was to prepare an undertaking and ask the gentlemen who had given a verbal undertaking—who had given their plighted word—to the Premier that they would see that the metropolitan area was supplied with butter, would be willing to attach their signatures to a written undertaking. But, no, they would not sign anything. They were prepared to say anything, but they were not prepared to sign anything. They were prepared to say this, that, and the other, but, when you ask them, like honourable men, to be good enough to sign their names to it, they say, "No." Some of them even went to the extent of repudiating it, saying there was no such understanding at all. I am not going to produce any sort of evidence of the fact. I merely say that that is the opinion of the man in the street. Everyone of the four daily papers in Brisbane reported that such an understanding had been arrived at between the Premier and that deputation of the representatives of the butter producers. That should be sufficient. We know very well that the butter producers of Queensland are making a great noise through their representatives in this House—not for the purpose of getting any redress of their

grievances, but for the purpose, or in the hope, that they may do some political injury to this party.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You want their money.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member admitted in stating that he had intended moving the abolition of the Department of Agriculture, and he went on to say that he would like not only to abolish the Department of Agriculture but he would like to abolish the Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly, for their actions.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And he was supported by the hon. gentleman who followed him. Those hon. members have seen the green-eyed monster, and they are suffering from a sort of hallucination in that respect. The hon. member got into such a muddle over the shirt question that I think he is just as muddled on this question.

I would like to say that about four months ago the hon. member headed a deputation which waited upon me in regard to certain matters that were likely to affect the dairying industry, according to their view, and he stated that the dairymen during the recent drought had lost 50 per cent. of their dairy cows.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Some of them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member said that the dairying people of Queensland had lost 50 per cent. of their cows, and several other members of the deputation made the same statement.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Some of them lost 90 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have since discovered that the hon. member exaggerated things in a most extraordinary way. In fact, exaggeration is a habit of his. Not knowing the character of the hon. member as well then as I do now, I allowed myself to be influenced to some extent by his statements and the opinions expressed by those who accompanied him on that deputation. I really believed that possibly the dairy herds had been decimated to something like the extent claimed by these gentlemen. I took charge of the butter business and determined that, as the butter bandits—as I call them—of Brisbane had broken faith with the Government, I would take very good care that the people in the metropolitan area should not go short of butter. Consequently, I had to arrive at an estimate of the quantity of butter that was necessary to keep in store in Brisbane in order that those people should not be unprovided with butter.

Mr. VOWLES: Why the people in the metropolitan area particularly?

Mr. LAND: Because they supply the country people.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, when I mention Brisbane I mean Queensland, as Brisbane supplies the rest of the State. After discussing the matter with the experts in my department, I came to the conclusion that we could not afford to let [5.30 p.m.] the butter go out of the State, and that we must keep at least 5,000 or 6,000 boxes in Brisbane in case of a shortage by reason of the excessive falling off that we might reasonably expect during the months of June and July. Now, that estimate, of course, had to be considered with

very great caution, by reason of the statements made by these gentlemen who are so fond of exaggerating.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Those statements are correct, and I can bear them out to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We made some allowance in view of the fact that we had passed through a disastrous drought, and that no doubt there would be heavy losses of dairy cattle, and we anticipated a big falling off in production. I am just trying to show why it is. I do not possess prophetic knowledge, I cannot see into the future, and I cannot tell what the price of butter will be in London next month or the next fortnight, nor can I tell what quantity of butter will come into the market in Brisbane next month or next week; but I tried to protect the people of Brisbane by reason of what they have suffered from the butter agents.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Of course; you protect the people of Brisbane at the expense of the producer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Under the Control of Trade Act, the butter agent who refused to sell butter at the proclaimed price, when he had that butter in stock, rendered himself liable to a fine of £500; and I am very sorry indeed that he was not made an example of, and made to part up with £500 for breach of the law. I want to show the production during the year 1916, when it was anticipated that, by reason of the very serious drought—which some people say was a more serious drought than that of 1902, and in the face of the statements made by those who profess to represent the dairying industry—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And it was correct.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That there would be a very great falling off in production. I will show the production during the weekly periods I have recently named, from 24th June to 19th August, for 1915 and 1916, respectively. The figures are—For the week ended 24th June this year, 2,423 boxes, and last year 1,121 boxes; 1st July this year 1,301 boxes, and last year 1,196 boxes; 8th July last year 2,723 boxes, and this year 874 boxes; 15th July this year 2,448 boxes, and last year 658 boxes; 22nd July this year 2,189 boxes, and last year 848 boxes; 29th July this year 2,079 boxes, and last year 457 boxes; 12th August this year 1,691 boxes, and last year 614; 19th August this year 1,472 boxes, and last year 710 boxes. By reason of the number of cattle alleged to have died in consequence of that drought, there should have been a very considerable increase in the falling off of production, as compared with previous years; but instead of that, in every week during the whole of the seven weeks I have quoted, the butter production for this year increased enormously. I am giving that information for the purpose of proving that we devoted considerable care to the protection of the consumers of butter in Brisbane, although some people say we would not part with the butter as early as some people say we should have done.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is pure ignorance what you are saying.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I stated at the beginning that I consulted with the experts of my department—I do not profess to have all the knowledge on this

subject—I consulted with the best experts I could meet, and we arrived at that decision; and if it does not please hon. gentlemen opposite I cannot help it, nor do I care whether it pleases them or not. We are told by these people, by the Press, by hon. members who have spoken to-day, that I did not take prompt action in selling the butter; that I missed my opportunity; that the market broke, and consequently I was left stranded in Melbourne without being able to get a proper price for the butter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have a report here from Mr. Graham, the dairy expert. I think everybody in Queensland recognises his ability.

Mr. WALKER: Not as a butter-seller, though.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He sold it better than the hon. gentleman would have done.

Mr. WALKER: He may have; I am not a butter-seller, either.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I want to show that the statements made by hon. members in this House and outside, that I missed my opportunity, that I did not rush the butter down, are incorrect. I want it to be borne in mind that I had to keep butter here to make provision against the probable shortage by reason of the great decimation of the herds followed by the usual reduction that occurs at this time of the year.

Mr. WALKER: You need not have kept 20,000 boxes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not keep 20,000 boxes; I kept 6,000 boxes.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You did the whole thing in the interests of the people of Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am advised by Mr. Graham, who has just returned from Melbourne, as follows:—

“The actual arrivals of the butters from New Zealand indicate that negotiations for the introduction of these butters were completed at a date prior to the purchase of butter of Queensland origin by the Queensland Government.”

Mr. STEVENS: Because you would not let us export it before.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hon. members opposite, who are continually interrupting, are not sticking to facts at all. There were only a few thousand boxes of butter in store at this time—there were not 20,000 boxes then. It was only five days after I took charge of the department that I set to work and made inquiries all over Australia to see if I could place the butter, and yet I am charged with holding on too long, not taking prompt action to sell it, but the facts I am trying to give to the House will prove that they are making absolute mis-statements and do not know what they are talking about.

Mr. Graham says—

“Before any serious attempt was made to dispose of the butter it was evident from the tone of the Press notices that an effort was being made to depress the sale of the butter. The butters were referred to as being portion of aged stocks,

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and it was reported that in addition to the 2,000 boxes landed in Melbourne, a further quantity of 6,000 boxes was offering."

Those are the statements of the Press. Then—

"Soon after the advent of Queensland butter in Melbourne the market there was generously supplied with butters from New South Wales, and the weekly production of butter in Victoria was speedily increasing."

Now, mark that the New Zealand butter was ordered and was on the way before I took charge of this particular butter, and after sending telegrams to the various States of Australia, except Tasmania, asking them to buy butter, telling them that we held large stocks, and asking the various Departments of Agriculture to be good enough to make that fact publicly known in their States and to say that we were sellers of butter. That was done five days after I took possession of the butter, and yet I am charged that I did not take prompt action and missed my opportunity. Now, between 20th July and 14th August, over 4,000 boxes of Queensland butter were sold, and it is doubtful whether, from this report of Mr. Graham, such a large quantity of Queensland butter had ever been disposed of previously on the Victorian market in a similar space of time. Never before, in the opinion of Mr. Graham, has so much Queensland butter been sold in Melbourne as during that time, but I am charged with neglect of duty and incompetence and want of action and vigour in trying to place the butter. I want to quote some further figures. I want to show that I did not let the grass grow under my feet in the matter of placing the butter.

Mr. STEVENS: Why didn't you accept the offers which were made to you?

Mr. WALKER: Why didn't you let the hon. member for Oxley sell it?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He could have got 200s. per cwt. for it if you had let him sell it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He could not have done anything of the sort. I was not asked by the hon. member for Oxley to let him sell the butter. I was asked by a great number of other agents to let them sell the butter, but I may say that after my recent experience of these agents I was not going to trust them to sell the butter, and I determined to sell the butter myself.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And you bungled it.

Mr. T. L. JONES: And you are selling it to-day to one of those very agents you refer to.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Ah, ah!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, I sold some butter yesterday and also some days ago. I have sold some parcels of butter to those men.

Mr. WALKER: To the men you don't trust?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I would rather trust the agents than you.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot help that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The agents are more honest than the Government.

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The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When I took charge of the butter I did so because the butter agents had practically failed to supply the people, but they are now supplying the people. They find that if they are convicted under the Control of Trade Act that they will not be let off so lightly for a second offence as they were for the first offence, and they will probably be called upon to pay a fine of £500. However, they are supplying local requirements in Brisbane, and although I have my butter experts in Brisbane and Melbourne willing to sell as much as they can, the only customer I have for the butter is the much despised agent referred to by the hon. member for Oxley. I have to sell the butter to those who are prepared to buy.

Mr. VOWLES: Very lame.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not half as lame as some of the statements made on your side of the House. Without mentioning any of the names, I want to quote briefly a number of offers which I have had for butter. I may say that after inquiry in the various States we ascertained that butter was at a very low price in Sydney by reason of the fact that the Government had control of the butter there and kept the price down to 144s. per cwt., and the consumers of Sydney received the benefit of that proclaimed price. In Melbourne, however, owing to the scarcity of butter, the price was higher, and we had information that the Melbourne price was 200s. per cwt.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: So it was.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We then made inquiries from some of the butter merchants. We did not say we would sell our butter for 199s. or 185s. or 125s. per cwt., but we telegraphed to them to make an offer for 5,000 boxes of butter or any portion of that number. They could have applied for 50, 100, 500, or the whole 5,000 boxes. On the very day that the official advice came to us that the price in Melbourne for first-grade butter was 200s. per cwt. we got an offer from one of these butter agents for 125s. per cwt.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: But you were selling stolen goods.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not sell the butter at the price offered to me. It was a ridiculous offer, and if I had accepted it I would have come in for some more severe castigation that I have received to-day, if I can so regard the twaddle which has come from the other side this afternoon.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Didn't you try to get at their customers in Western Australia?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I will give you all the facts directly.

Mr. STEVENS: Yes, let us have them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If you will only give me time I will, but I am not going to do it at the command of the hon. gentleman.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: We command you, then. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The butter was taken charge of by me on the 21st of June, and on the following day, the 22nd June, we received an offer of 175s. per cwt., less 2 per cent., for 1,000 firsts. On the day that I took charge of the butter

I stated plainly that I was not selling butter. I was conserving the stocks of butter to protect the people of Brisbane, as that was necessary. I refused to accept that offer of 175s. On the 24th of June I received a further offer from the same source stating that the original offer of 175s. was a mistake, and that the offer should have been 185s., and was still open for 500 boxes. I replied that I was not yet prepared to sell. The local requirements had not then been estimated, and I would not accept that offer. On the 30th June I had offers of 185s. for firsts and 175s. for seconds. This offer was afterwards withdrawn on the ground that we were interfering with this person's business in offering butter to his customers in Western Australia.

Mr. STEVENS: Was that not true?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, it was not. We asked the Government to spread the news—the glad news, I may say—that the Queensland Government had butter for sale.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Stolen butter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. We asked the Government to spread the news that we had butter for sale, and that we wanted a decent price for it. That offer that was made to us on the 30th June was withdrawn, because it was stated that we were interfering with his customers. We did not go to any single individual, but we told the Government that we were prepared to sell butter. The hon. gentleman makes a mistake when he says that we stole the butter. We did not do so. We bought the butter and paid for it. The hon. gentleman talks as though we did not pay for it. We put something like £60,000 into that business, and some of it we have got back. We notified the other Governments that we had butter for sale, but when we found that concerted action was being taken against us, we thought we would take the butter to Melbourne ourselves and sell it there. I consider that I would have been quite justified in opening a shop in Melbourne and selling the butter retail by the pound there if I had so desired, but I did not do that. I sent Mr. Graham down to Melbourne, and he was followed by 2,000 boxes of butter, with instructions to get the best price he could for the butter. He found a combination against him in Melbourne, and he has furnished Press notices in proof of his statement. The Minister for Education was present at the sale of butter in Melbourne, and he could see that there was a combination to reduce the value of our butter. Mr. Tudor, the Federal Minister for Customs, was also there, and he expressed the opinion that it was perfectly evident that there was a combination there. I have never yet said myself that there was a combination there, but there were very suspicious circumstances pointing in that direction.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Was the butter not inferior through being kept so long?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I want to read some more of these quotations. On the 13th July, whilst we had this butter in Melbourne, and whilst we had a representative there willing to sell it, we received a telegram from a butter agent asking what price we wanted for the butter. We were offered 116s. per cwt., but I did not accept it. We had other offers, some-

times higher, sometimes lower, but they were ridiculous offers, and we had to turn them down. We went on with these negotiations, and we have sold parcels of butter locally.

And that reminds me that I want to reply to the question that was put with great solemnity and with great deliberation, although those characteristics are quite foreign to the hon. member who used them. He asked me if I had any butter in store branded as first-grade butter which had been altered by our department. To that question I say "Yes, it has been done." And I say it is not the first time it has been done, nor is it likely to be the last time it is likely to be done. That butter was stored before I had anything to do with it. The butter agents are not supplying the people, and I could not possibly ship the butter away, and it is held in store. When butter is stored, everyone knows it deteriorates, and it has been done before, and we will do it again if the necessity arises.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Was it examined?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, it was examined. Our Dairy Expert went down and examined it, and I authorised him, if he thought proper, to regrade the butter. We had another reason to see that it was done. We know very well that the present time from the advices I have received that the butter market in London is buoyant, and we thought we would like to get some of our butter there during a continuation of that buoyancy, and we have no permission to ship first-grade butter. The Minister for Customs, who has control of that matter, will not yet lift the embargo against the export of butter beyond the confines of the Commonwealth, and we know we could get a higher price in London for second-grade butter than we can get in Australia for first grade. And because I am availing myself of that opportunity and trying to get for the producers a higher price than they could get by any other means, I am blamed. They do not know how much good I am trying to do them. They thought they had a trump card with which to knock me out in that matter, and I say it has been done entirely in their own interests—not for the purpose of doing anybody any wrong, but to get every possible penny I could for the butter I have in store there which was bought and paid for at the rate of 140s.

Coming back to the point I was diverted from by these continuous interruptions from the other side, I had to go suddenly to Melbourne to attend a conference, and just having received one offer for butter, I left instructions in the office that they should await the result of the inquiry we had made in the various States to see if it was possible for us to elicit any offers in those quarters that we might accept in the interests of the butter producers in Queensland, and I said, should any such offers come from outside the State of Queensland, you are at once to send telephone messages to the butter agents in Brisbane saying we have offers for butter outside of Queensland, "What price are you prepared to offer?" That shows that I was trying to do the best I could. I was not going to give the men away who offered me a certain price in Western Australia or Sydney, but I thought the local butter agent, who lives by the butter produced here—and I might say lives in considerable comfort—should have an equal opportunity with those

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outside the State. I do not find any fault with him on that account, but I thought I would show him that consideration that I would not accept offers without giving him a chance as well. If they did better, they would get the business, and if they did not do as well as the man in Western Australia or in any other State, they would not get the business. I ask any sensible man, was not that a sane, business-like, common-sense, and just view for me to take? Of course, everybody knows it was. We know that seconds are permitted to be shipped, but I only knew that yesterday. I am not gifted with prophetic knowledge—I have no prescient knowledge of what will happen the day after to-morrow, and yesterday I sold a considerable parcel of second-grade butter.

Mr. STEVENS: Did you invite tenders for that?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, I did not invite tenders for it. I have never invited tenders yet. It is a matter of common knowledge that I am the only butter-seller in Brisbane.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And you could not sell.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And consequently, being the only holder of butter for sale—I ask any common-sense man if there was any person who held any commodity for sale, when he was known to be the only holder—would not the buyer come and say, "I want to buy some of this produce you are holding"? That has been the case. It has been going on constantly. There have been occasional daily interruptions, but hardly a day has passed that people did not come in to negotiate for butter. I was the butter man of Queensland for the time being, and they had to come to me because they could not get butter anywhere else. What is all this nonsense over there? Cannot they listen to common sense and reason?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: We want to know why you are using the trade name of all these butter factories if you are the only seller.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What particular name are you talking about? I have never mentioned one name.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You are selling first-class butter as second-class butter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What butter?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Kingston brand—Kingston brand.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do keep cool.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Keep cool; keep cool! Don't get excited.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have mentioned Kingston butter. I have not mentioned any butter, nor any name, but some of the Kingston butter, since the hon. member has mentioned the name, was classed as wood-tainted. Is that the butter you are referring to? That was agreed to by the butter experts in Melbourne. Not only our own butter expert but other butter experts agreed that it was wood-tainted. Wood-taint may be imparted by using wood green or not properly seasoned, and if you happen to hold that butter back and not sell it, it will not improve by keeping, and consequently it has to be sold at a lower price than other butter.

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That is not my fault. I am not defending that. I am merely stating a fact, and it was no fault of mine that that butter became wood-tainted; but it would have been a fault of mine if I had held the butter and refused to accept a reasonable price for it. It has also been stated that we sold butter yesterday. Of course we sold butter yesterday, and the day before, and last week.

Mr. VOWLES: You are doing quite a big business.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You will get the facts if you wait a few moments. We are trying to sell butter all the time, and very likely I will be blamed to-morrow or the next day that I did not get a higher price for the second grade; but if I had not sold it I would have been blamed also, so that it does not really matter.

There is no commodity that I know of in our agricultural products that is so variable in price as is butter. Look at the quotations from London. You find them jumping up 10s. to-day and down 15s. to-morrow, and so on; and I do not think that any person, no matter how clever he may be, can possibly be possessed of knowledge of what the price of butter will be next week or next month; and, consequently, when I received the best offer I have yet obtained from anybody, yesterday or the day before, for a large parcel of butter, I decided to accept it, and I did accept it. I put it to any common-sense, fair-minded man, if he has been dealing in any commodity very largely, and has acquired large stocks, and a whole lot of people criticising his actions all round the country, telling him he does not know what he is doing and the market is so peculiar—he does not know what will happen if he clings on doggedly to a very large parcel of butter—if he gets a reasonable offer for a large parcel, is he not wise and sensible if he accepts that offer and reduces the possible danger and risk on the balance? At all events, I am quite prepared to let some person share my risk, and I think this a very much wiser thing than clinging to it tenaciously, day after day, until too late, and find yourself in the position that you cannot possibly realise on your butter, and then get all these gentlemen who come from agricultural districts laughing at you, and saying, "What a blunder you made because you did not take that price."

Hon. J. G. APPEL: So you did.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: So you did; so you did.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members to obey my call to order, and not take advantage of the fact that the House is about to adjourn. I will take action to deal with hon. members who attempt to take advantage of such an opportunity.

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

* Hon. J. TOLMIE, who on rising was greeted with Opposition "Hear, hears," said: Mr. Speaker,—Following the usual practice on an occasion such as this, I desire to congratulate the hon. member for Fortitude

Valley on making his initiatory speech in this Chamber. In doing so, he has set forth the views of his party in a way that I think must commend him to the party. He has certainly endeavoured to put the best possible construction on the case which the Government have to present. It does not necessarily follow that I am in accord with the sentiments expressed by the hon. member, but I may say that one sentence arrested my attention when he was speaking, and I am sure it must have arrested the attention of most hon. members in this Chamber. In dealing with the agricultural industry, he said that the agricultural districts had felt the strain of the late drought. That was a sentiment with which we can all agree. It is unquestionably a fact that during the last four or five years the agricultural districts of Queensland have been suffering very much from the want of rainfall at the proper time. Each year has intensified the condition until the break up of the drought early in the present year, or at the end of last year. But prior to that agriculturists had suffered very much indeed from the effects of drought. There was a great strain on them because of it, and we can all heartily endorse that sentiment of the hon. member; but I think that the people of Queensland, in addition to endorsing that sentiment, will look beyond to see if there is not something more than that which has been a strain on the agriculturists of Queensland, on the producers of this State. And I, in common with others, am confirmed in the opinion that, notwithstanding the strain of the drought in the agricultural districts, the strain of the administration and legislation of the Labour party has been infinitely worse.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is the sentiment which I think is felt by most of the people of Queensland to-day. Whatever may have been their feeling in regard to the Labour party twelve months ago, whatever may have been their attitude towards the Liberal party then, there seems to be a consensus of opinion that the change has not been for the good. I cannot endorse the conclusion that has been arrived at by the proposer and seconder of the Address in Reply. Rather am I in unison with the conclusion which the outside public have drawn—that the present Government has been a signal failure administratively and legislatively—and I propose in the time allotted to me to show that the statements I made are capable of being sustained by proof, and to adduce that proof.

I have said that the public have come to some definite conclusions regarding the Ministry that is now occupying the Treasury benches, and in the public mind that Ministry is charged with moral cowardice, which is the leprosy of public life. It is a strong statement to make, and I intend to prove that statement right up to the hilt.

The PREMIER: That is the first count in the indictment.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It has also failed in the redemption of the promises made to the electors of Queensland when the party went before the electors of this State and asked them to return them to the position they occupy now. After being some months in power, when Parliament met last year, they asked for further time; they asked that they might not be judged on what they had succeeded in accomplishing during the few

months they had then been in office. They have now had nearly a year and a-half, and it is time to look for some definite results from them. They cannot now complain that they have not had an opportunity of learning what the conditions of Queensland are—that they have not had time to grasp all the facts in connection with the administration of all the offices of this State. That opportunity, that time, has been fully given to them, and the public are now demanding some definite results, good results, from the administration of the Labour party, and they have not been given to them.

Arising out of the two charges that I have made, that they have been guilty of moral cowardice and that they have failed to redeem the promises they made to the people, there is the third set of circumstances, and that is that the Government have lost the confidence of the general public; not only, may I say, the confidence of the general public, but also the confidence of its supporters as well, as can be demonstrated from the events of the past twelve months. They stand charged with bad administration and ineptitude, and extravagance of perhaps the worst kind.

I have told you that this Government can be charged with moral cowardice, and in regard to that I want to point out the indisposition which the Government have evinced to face public questions of great moment, public questions that are agitating the minds of the people of Queensland to-day, questions which have been shelved by the Government, or questions which they have tried to avoid answering by any means that they could adopt. We all know that there is a question that is to-day agitating the minds of the people of Queensland, that bulks largely in their thoughts to-day—that is, the question of early closing.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Is that a great question?

HON. J. TOLMIE: It is a great question. It is the people's question, and any question that is the people's question must be a great question, must be a question of some moment to a democratic Government or to a Government that claims to be democratic. At any rate, it is a question that should be of great moment to the Labour party. But I say that the Government are endeavouring to evade that question as much as they possibly can. The public opinion of the whole of the Commonwealth is made up on this matter to-day. The public mind in Australia knows exactly what it desires. Throughout the whole of the Commonwealth this question has received the attention of the people, and in quite a number of States—in fact in all the States except Queensland—definite action has been taken in regard to it. The public of the Commonwealth recognise to-day that such legislation is only for a certain specified time, but that it is essential that there should be early closing of hotels. They say that we should have early closing for the purpose of protecting the morale of our soldiers. It does not follow from that that our soldiers are any worse than other citizens in regard to the matters involved in this question of early closing. There are other citizens who are worse than any of the soldiers in that respect, but the public recognise that every protection possible should be thrown round our soldiers; they recognise that those men are doing a great work for Queensland, for Australia,

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and for the whole Empire, and that it is our duty to protect them in whatsoever way we can protect them.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why not make it a non-party question?

HON. J. TOLMIE: We know the effect that alcohol has on the nervous system, and that it has a destructive influence on our efforts to build up our soldiers before we send them on active service. We desire to send them as perfect types of manhood; we are training them to bring out the best qualities in them, mental and physical, and we want to have them so built up before they leave Queensland that they will be in a position to acquit themselves with credit when they enter into the actual conflict. And in order to do that we need to strengthen their nervous system as much as we possibly can, and to do nothing that will tend to break down that nervous system. Those are the reasons which are animating the men and women of the State who are asking for the early closing of hotels. There are thousands of them who do not believe in the principles of total abstinence, but who are very strong on this point—that until the expiration of the war early closing should be adopted, and that question should be faced courageously by the Government. There are two ways in which the Government may face the question in a manner that would be satisfactory to the people. We are competent in this Chamber to pass the necessary legislation. We know what the public mind of Australia is on this subject.

Mr. MAY: What is it?

HON. J. TOLMIE: That there should be early closing. That is the public mind throughout Australia wherever a referendum has been taken. We are capable of taking action in that direction without any referendum whatsoever. The Federal Government, recognising the importance of this question, intervened themselves in New South Wales, and fixed the hour for the closing of hotels, regarding it as their duty to the soldiers whom they were sending out of the country to take that action. The Government of this State will have the public opinion of Australia behind them if they choose to deal with the question, but they have made no attempt to deal with it in the direction I have suggested. Another way in which they might deal with it is to bring down a small resolution asking the House to affirm that a referendum should be taken on the question. Such a motion could be put through this Chamber in one day, just as easily as other legislation is put through the House in one day, and the people would then have an opportunity of giving expression to their will. But do the Government seize either of those opportunities for dealing with this matter? Far from it. They try to cover it up, and tell those who are seeking a referendum that they will pass a general Referendum Bill—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: In the hope that the Upper House will throw out that Bill.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. GILLIES: That is not a fair statement.

Mr. KIRWAN: You say, "Trust the people," but your friends next door do not trust them.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Government in this matter are showing moral cowardice,

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and are balancing between two parties in the State—the liquor party and the temperance party.

Mr. MCPHAIL: What proof have you of that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The same proof as I have of the hon. member's relation to the public servants. The Government have been asked by not one but two large deputations to introduce a straight-out referendum measure dealing with this question. In the first case the Premier, and in the second case the Acting Premier in his absence, told the deputation that the Government are prepared to introduce a general Referendum Bill—that is, that they are prepared to balance between the liquor party and the temperance party. They are prepared to say to the temperance party, "Look, we are willing to give you a Referendum Bill, but somebody else has thrown it out"; and they are prepared to say to the liquor party, "Well, we did the best we could for you; we mixed up this question with other questions in such a way that there was every possibility that it would be thrown out."

Mr. T. L. JONES: Do you say it is going to be thrown out?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Government can say to the liquor party, "We are mixing this question with others in such a way that we are giving you every possible chance"; but if they can succeed in carrying their general Referendum Bill they will not care a scrap for the liquor party or the temperance party.

The PREMIER: Do you object to a general referendum?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do. The Government are at present balancing between the two parties I have mentioned, so that they will be in a position to say to the one, "The House refused to give a general referendum," and to the other, "Well, we cannot help it; the general referendum was carried; it was part of our policy; you will have to go to the wall; but we are very sorry for it." That is how it appears on the surface. The Government are asking that a general Referendum Bill should be carried. No persons know better than the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury bench that such a measure will be an amendment of the Constitution, and that as such His Excellency the Governor cannot give his assent to it—that it will have to be sent home, and that it will probably be thrown out.

Mr. KIRWAN: What rot!

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am speaking of what I know. A general Referendum Bill will be an amendment of the Constitution Act, and it will be necessary to reserve it and send it home for the Royal assent. It may take twelve months to get the Royal assent—sometimes it takes two years; so that the Bill may not be assented to before the war is over. That is the way hon. gentlemen opposite are dealing with the question of early closing, and for that reason I accuse them of moral cowardice. Instead of giving the people what they want, they are trying to deprive them of it by a side issue.

The PREMIER: An ordinary referendum is just as much a change of the Constitution.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: That is not so.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I come now to a second very important question which is agitating the public mind. This is a question dealing

with the war. If you take up the Governor's Speech you find almost every paragraph makes some reference to the war—something that the Government have done, something that individual members of the Government have done, something that they propose to do in connection with the war. Last year whenever the question of the war came up, we were told with bated breath, "You must not say a word in connection with it because it is going to spoil recruiting," or "It is going to interfere with the prosecution of the war in some way or other." If the word "war" was mentioned, one of the Cabinet Ministers would arise in his place and say, "Whist, the bogey man!" (Laughter.) We were young in the war in those days, and, perhaps, we were timorous, and we were afraid of the bogey man; but we have seen how this war has grown upon the people; we have seen how it is eating into their very vitals.

MR. FOLEY: Why don't you stop it, Major? (Government laughter.)

HON. J. TOLMIE: We realise that every effort must be put forth in order to stop the war just in the same way as the electors of Townsville realise that they are going to stop the hon. member having a seat in this Chamber. (Laughter.)

MR. PETERSON: Brennan will shove you out.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There has grown up in the public mind a demand that the whole of the utilities of this country shall be used in the interests of terminating the war, whether those utilities be human or whether they be material. That is the question that is agitating the public mind to-day—that there shall be universal service—which means the adaptation of every man and every material to his or its best use in connection with this war—that there shall be a proper co-ordination in relation to it, so that each person shall be called upon to do that which he is best fitted to perform, and that everything we possess shall be employed in its proper place. This question has been growing stronger day by day in the public mind. We have seen the leading statesman of Australia—the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth—forsake the principles of a lifetime in relation to this matter. We have read where he has declaimed, not only here but oversea, upon this question. We have seen public men in all the States of the Commonwealth gather round him and offer him their very best services.

MR. GILLIES: Mostly Tories.

HON. J. G. APPEL: No—his own Labour men.

MR. COLLINS: What rot!

HON. J. TOLMIE: To-night he is, perhaps, treading the path to his own political Gethsemane. I believe that at this very moment he is right in the very midst of it. And we find the leading men of Australia all around him. We find a man like Sir William Irvine saying, "I am prepared to stand by the Prime Minister of Australia in the action which he has taken in regard to this matter."

MR. POLLOCK: Why don't you give it its proper name?

HON. J. TOLMIE: Only the other night two such leading men in the Labour party as Mr. Meagher and Mr. Holman met at a

banquet at which Mr. Hughes was present. You know the relationship that is supposed to exist between those two men—each the leader of a section of the Labour party, each feeling strong in himself. But they sink their personal differences and stand side by side in connection with this movement.

MR. POLLOCK: More shame to them.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The more shame, say you?

MR. POLLOCK: Yes.

MR. BEBBINGTON: Go to Germany.

MR. POLLOCK: They would not have you there.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Mr. Meagher said, speaking of Mr. Hughes, "If he is prepared to follow the light we are prepared to follow him." And Mr. Holman said, "I say, tell us what Australia is to do to be worthy, at your own time, in your own manner, when you please, and how you please. You set the task for Australia to perform, and democracy will rally round and will never flinch until the task has been completed." How does the attitude of those men contrast with the attitude of the present Government of Queensland? Where do they stand in regard to this movement? They talk in this Speech that I hold in my hand very glibly about the war and what they have done. There is a passage there which, if it means anything, means everything; and yet the actions of the Government, with the exception of a few members, are very different to what is implied by that passage. I am not going to include every member on the other side. There are men there who are as strong on this point as I am; there are men there who are stronger, for the simple reason that they have their sons at the front. So in what I am saying I am not dealing with all the men sitting opposite. But I ask the question: Where are the Government in this crisis? Are they strengthening the hands of Mr. Hughes in his endeavours to secure universal service for the Empire?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Has he said that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I ask that question for the reason that in my own city of Toowoomba nearly a fortnight ago, a meeting was held to which an invitation was extended to the Acting Premier of the State, and, failing him, to some other member of the Ministry, to come to that meeting and show by their presence that they were heart and soul with the movement that was continentally wide. The Acting Premier wired back that he could not come, and that, if those who were holding the meeting wanted the assistance of any other Ministers, they must approach those other Ministers individually.

The TREASURER: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: The public can only place one construction upon that. The man who holds the position of Premier of a State holds the whole of his Ministers, as it were, in his hands. If he has the proper direction of affairs, he is there for the purpose of telling his colleagues how they can best render service to the State, and, when the people of the second city of the State ask for the presence of a Minister at a public meeting, then they have a right to demand that the Premier shall show them some courtesy and some attention, and not tell

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them, "I am not going myself, and, so far as my colleagues are concerned, you can ask all round until you can find one ready to go."

Mr. KIRWAN: You are not so fond of getting Ministers always as you were on that occasion.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It was a meeting for the purpose of strengthening the hands of the Prime Minister of Australia in the duty which he is called upon to perform at the present moment. Ministers showed their cowardice on that occasion. Is it because that at a meeting held at Townsville a few days previously they took up an antagonistic attitude on this question? This is how that meeting is reported in the Press—

"Three hundred members of the Australian Meat Employees' Union met in a public meeting to-day to protest against conscription. Mr. Anthony Ogden, secretary of the union, was not present. Mr. Kearney, a union official, said the Labour party had been panicky since the war. The men would have an opportunity of dealing out 'stoush' to the Federal Government, and when the opportunity came they would put the two State members for Townsville in their right place.

"Mr. Dare urged that there should be conscription of wealth before men were conscripted.

"Mr. Neilson objected to a 'parasite' like Mr. Hughes pushing conscription on them. They should knock out parasites like Mr. Hughes and put in the industrialists.

"Mr. Crawford said the Labour party was not worth a pinch of manure."

At 7.25 p.m.,

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Coyne, *Warrego*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That was the attitude assumed in connection with that meeting at Townsville. I am not going through all the statements that appear here, but I say that influences of that kind keep the Ministry in a see-saw position, and they have not all the moral courage that some of them have to come forward and say clearly and distinctly how they stand on this question. This is not a time for men to blow both hot and cold; this is a time for men to say whether they are hot or cold in the movement, and not to be lukewarm, praising people who are in favour of this one moment and telling them what fine men they are, and when the next opportunity comes, going right back upon it. I say that that is an exhibition of moral cowardice of which this Ministry is guilty.

I say they have failed to meet their obligations, and that again they have shown moral cowardice in relation to the strikes that have taken place in Queensland during the past twelve months. There is an Act in force on our statute-book which would have prevented those strikes assuming the proportions they did, and which would have prevented the loss of labour that there has been. The operation of that Act would have prevented the loss that has taken place in the production of wealth. If at any time it was necessary that there should be industrial peace at home, it is at the present time when we have war outside our borders. Although

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the Industrial Peace Act is in force, Ministers never had the courage to take advantage of it. I have pointed out that the Ministry, since it has been in power, has failed to carry out the obligations into which it entered with the public when they were entrusted with the reins of government. They have failed to carry out industrial development without additional burdens being placed upon the people of this State.

Mr. FOLEY: They won't allow our Bills to pass in the other place.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Last session we allowed Bills to pass to the extent of the imposition of nearly £600,000 of additional burdens on the people of Queensland. I told the Government last year that those measures would mean an additional taxation of £600,000, and that is how it is turning out. That addition amounts to nearly £1 per head of the population of this State. Such an amount of taxation is unprecedented in the history of the State, and notwithstanding the fact that the Government have this very large amount of money, they have been unable to carry out a policy of industrial development which the people expect from them.

They have failed to satisfy the public service generally. There is an outcry from the public servants, who just a little over a year ago rejoiced in the thought that there was to be a change of Government, because the gentlemen who are now occupying the Treasury benches held out some inducements to them which have never materialised. All you have to do is to take up the public prints which are published in the city of Brisbane, where there is a great number of public servants, to find that day after day complaints are being made against the Government because of their failure to redeem their promises. They have failed to satisfy the teachers, warders, and other public servants. The Minister for Public Instruction is receiving deputations asking him to put into practice the theories that were enunciated by him prior to the Government taking office. Hon. members opposite found fault with the late Government because they did not pay what was called the "automatic" increases, and to-day, in the public Press, you have the same charges being hurled against the very men who asked to have the reins of government entrusted to them in order that they might give the automatic increases to the public servants. Deputation after deputation has met the Minister for Public Instruction, and urged upon him the necessity of doing something more for the teachers than he has been doing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He is going to do it. (Opposition laughter.)

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is the answer that comes from the whole lot of them—"We are going to do it; give us a little more time," and all the time these servants are suffering privations. They are suffering from the recent increase in the price of food, because the Government have failed to carry out the promises they have made to them in relation to their salaries. Deputation after deputation has waited on the Minister, and they have laid down the sound principle that a Government which can afford to find £40,000 to build a couple of hotels ought to be able to find the amount of money that is necessary for the public servants.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: Perhaps it is not the fault of the Minister for Railways, but the Government have failed to satisfy the demands of the railway employees. To-day there is the same outcry made that has been made before. Along certain lines improvements have been effected, but what is the good of benefiting one if you do not benefit the whole? Is it not raising up further contention? When the Minister for Railways gets a deputation before him, he throws the responsibility upon the Cabinet, and in a few days comes down with the intimation that the Cabinet has yielded, and the railway servants get what they want, and I rejoice that they do get it. Then there are other sections which are not satisfied, and they come down and make demands. Was the Minister for Railways not told to-day that there are unsatisfied demands on the part of the employees in his department?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There were far more under your Government.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Have these employees not written the Minister that if certain conditions are not complied with there is going to be no work as far as the department is concerned? Had they not threatened you, and are they not threatening you now?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They also threatened you, too, when you were in power.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Never mind what they did to us. That is not the question before the Chamber. We have ceased to be the administrators. They were dissatisfied with us, and now they look with dissatisfaction on hon. members opposite. The position to-day with regard to the public servants is that if we lashed them with whips then the hon. gentleman lashed them with scorpions.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is deliberately untrue.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Is the hon. member justified in saying that the statement which I have made is deliberately untrue?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the Secretary for Railways to withdraw that statement.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I withdraw the expression "deliberately untrue" and say that it is incorrect.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is another direction in which this Government has been a signal failure, and that is that it has failed to obtain loan money to carry on the public works of this State of Queensland. At such a time when the Government are launching out in a big policy for the repatriation of soldiers they ought to have the wherewithal to carry out their objects.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: So we have.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is no evidence that hon. members have got the wherewithal, but there is evidence that they are making demands upon the generosity of the public in regard to this particular matter. This is work which the Government should carry on themselves without depending on anyone else whatsoever. It is a matter that requires money. When the Premier was in London a few weeks ago he spoke at a banquet about the illimitable resources of the State and the great possibilities there were for settling soldiers upon the lands in Queensland after the war. He also said that Queensland was

not prepared to do that herself. He said, "We have got the land if the British public will find the money."

THE PREMIER: I said no such thing.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is recorded in the Press.

THE PREMIER: You quote from the speech where I made that statement.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am not quite certain of the hon. gentleman's words, but I will quote from his speech.

THE PREMIER: Quote me accurately. I spoke about the need of money for railways.

HON. J. TOLMIE: This is what the hon. gentleman said—

"Mr. Ryan, in his reply, said that Australia was concerned in the war even more than Britain was. If Germany won, that nation would look for prizes in other countries. Australia had a great duty thrown upon it in overseas settlement. Of the post-war problems one of the greatest was the settlement of soldiers. He looked to the Imperial Government to help the soldiers, whether by commutation pensions or otherwise, so as to provide funds to enable the men to start afresh. He thought it was a fair thing to give the overseas dominions some representation in the consideration of the peace terms."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: Is that not what I said?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He said he looked to the Home Government to find the means. That is exactly what the hon. gentleman has done. He said it was the duty of the British Government to provide the means by commutation pensions or some other means. If we are going to discharge our obligations to these soldiers then Queensland should obtain the money, especially as the money is so easy to obtain in the home country. Did we not see in the public Press of this State a statement by the Premier that, so far as he was concerned, he could get plenty of money if he wanted it? He said that at the banquet at which he was present the money was practically offered to him in an illimitable quantity. When he was asked why he did not take it, he said because he was desirous of carrying out his obligations to the Commonwealth, and if the Commonwealth cannot find him with the money then the money has got to be found elsewhere. When I read that paragraph I wondered at the modesty of the Premier. I only thought that if the Premier of New South Wales had been in the position of the Premier of Queensland and all these money-bags were handed to him he would have grabbed them without any hesitation whatsoever.

THE PREMIER: I never said that.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Well, you are reported to have said it, and the important thing is that all these charges that are made against the Premier are said to be false. Nothing that has been reported concerning his position is true in that respect. They are all incorrect. Another reason why the people of Queensland realise that this Government has failed in its duty is because they failed to keep faith in regard to giving employment

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to the people. That is a very serious matter. Perhaps it is not a serious matter to hon. members on the other side, who are—I will not say in a lucrative position, because I do not think they are—but they are in employment. As regards the men looking for work in the State of Queensland, I may say that the first thing I did when I returned to Queensland was to go to the Labour bureau in Toowoomba for the purpose of discovering the position in that city so far as unemployment was concerned. I found no less than twenty working men with families around that door reporting themselves as being out of employment. Just fancy! Twenty men out of employment on one morning.

Mr. FOLEY: What are you growling at?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am not growling. I am surprised at the attitude the hon. member adopts towards the working men of the State, particularly as he is a man who claims to have been a working man himself, and who occupies the position he is in to-day by virtue of the confidence the working men of Townsville have shown in him.

Mr. T. L. JONES: He did not say "growling"; he said, "What a crowd."

HON. J. TOLMIE: We have also cause for complaint in that the Government did not call Parliament together earlier to redress the grievances that have been growing up in the last twelve months. If unemployment is rife and men are unable to get work, then it is the duty of the Government to call Parliament together so that they may adopt some means of relieving that unemployment. And they have failed to do that. That is one of the charges that have been made by the workers of this State—that the time has gone past when Parliament should have been called together. The House should have been called together, but it was not called because the Government have not got the wherewithal to carry on a public works policy. They have failed to secure the necessary money to do so. Contrast that with the condition of things prevailing during the time the Liberal Government was in power. There was no cause for unemployment then because we kept the people going the whole time. Railway construction was going on in all parts of the State. We had a sufficiency of public money at all times to carry on the government, and we saw that that policy was maintained. We heard the Treasurer of this State say in this Chamber that he had a sufficiency of money to carry on a works policy on the lines that they had set out. The lines that the Government have set out are considerably narrower than the lines which were set out by the previous Government. Although the people are looking for work, the Government are not going to find so much for them to do as did the late Government, for the reason that they have not sufficient money. Do you not think that when the Premier had the opportunity of securing this money in London that he says he had—and as an honourable man we have to take his word—when he says the opportunity was given him to get as much money as he wanted—do you not think, if he was true to this State of Queensland—if he had in mind the fact that the people of this State were wanting work—if he had in mind that all these illimitable resources of which he spoke required development, and that it was money that was required to develop those resources—do you not think, if he fully realised the

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importance of the situation, that he would have made arrangements to borrow the money? The gravamen of the offence of the Liberal party last session was, "You did not leave us enough money," although we left them sufficient to carry them on for nearly twelve months. The Minister for Public Instruction and other Ministers got up in this Chamber, and other members got up, and said, "Why did not you borrow more money? Why did not you borrow a great deal more money than you did? Why did not you take the £2,000,000 offered by Mr. Fisher?" and at a time when we did not want it—when we had three or four millions of money already. "Why did not you take this money so that we might have possession of it now?" It was not good administration to do that; but here the conditions are altogether different, when men are looking for employment. The Minister for Lands and the Treasurer go out into the country and reel off long lists of the thousands of acres of land suitable for the settlement of soldiers when they build railways to these lands. But when are they going to build railways to these lands if they have no money with which to do it? Are the soldiers to wait three, four, six, and seven years before the land is ready for occupation? That is the stuff the Government are giving out to the people in the State of Queensland, and that is why we charge them to-night with having failed in the discharge of their duty. That is one of the reasons why the public of Queensland have lost confidence in the present Government.

Then the people have lost confidence in the Government because they have failed to carry out their promises in regard to the cheapening of food. As you are aware, I have here a lot of literature issued by Mr. John Fihelly and Mr. Edward Theodore, who, I believe, are members of this Chamber and are on the Treasury benches. They issued this broadcast at the last general election, and told the people what they would do if they were only returned to power. They were going to give them cheap fish, and the Treasurer went post-haste to Sydney to start fish markets going last year, even before the ink was dry on his commission. The hon. gentlemen have been crying out that they were going to cheapen the cost of living. Let us see what the position is. This is a little pamphlet issued a little time back in which the Labour party had a great deal of confidence.

HON. J. A. FIHELLY: We put you out of power.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Yes. They succeeded because they deluded the people behind them by the promises they were making in regard to the provision of work and the cheapening of food. Not only have they not provided work, because unemployment is rife, but I am going to show from Knibbs, who is recognised as an authority, that even during the short time they have been in office the cost of living has increased. Take the first quarter of the year 1915—that was the first quarter of the last year the Liberal Government was in power. The purchasing price of money in that year as compared with the year 1911, taking the sovereign as a basis, was £1 1s. 1d. That is in those four years the cost of living had gone up 1s. 1d. in the £1, and in the first quarter of 1916, that is twelve months afterwards, the purchasing power of the sovereign had declined to such

an extent that at the end of March of this year it would take £1 5s. 2d. to purchase £1 worth of food.

MR. COLLINS: That does not fit in with the statement of the hon. member for Drayton.

HON. J. TOLMIE: £1 1s. 1d. in the first quarter of 1915 and £1 5s. 2d. in the first quarter of 1916. My authority is the Labour "Bulletin" published under instructions from the Hon. K. O'Malley by Mr. G. H. Knibbs, C.M.G., an authority that is recognised in all assemblies of this kind throughout the world. And therein he has pointed out that in the twelve months that this Government has been in power in Queensland the cost of food has gone up from £1 1s. 1d. to £1 5s. 2d. How has this Government carried out the promises it made to the people of Queensland?

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Didn't you hear the member for Drayton say we were giving them cheap butter?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I know a lot about the hon. member, but I am not dealing with the hon. member for Drayton; I am dealing with the statements made by the Statistician of the Commonwealth of Australia, in which he says in the State of Queensland the increased price of food, during the past twelve months, has been from £1 1s. 1d. to £1 5s. 2d. That is one of the reasons why the people of Queensland—those people who placed confidence in them twelve months ago—are now turning in quite the opposite direction. They say our position is worse than it was before. The position is, as I pointed out to the Minister for Railways, that if we chastised the people with whips then the present Government are chastising them with scorpions. They have increased the cost of living by practically 20 per cent. That increased cost has been all along the line; that increased cost has been in meat particularly. Now, last year when the Government got their own State butchers' shops, we were told that there was going to be a general reduction in the price of meat, and everyone was going to be thoroughly well satisfied on that point, and yet we find that such is not the case; that the cost of meat has increased very materially.

MR. COLLINS: What would have been the price if your party had been in power?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The price, if my party had been in power, would probably have been very much lower than it is at the present time. I am not going to quote the whole list of the prices of meat, but I want to show what the price was in February [8 p.m.] last year and what the price was in February of this year. The order of February, 1915, contained a number of prices not contained in the order of yesterday, but a comparison will show that the latest order is an increase of from ¼d. to 2d. in the pound. That has been the effect so far as the present Ministry is concerned, notwithstanding the fact that we have Government butchers' shops in the city of Brisbane and notwithstanding the fact that the Government have gone to those who have had meat and commandeered their supplies, practically stolen their supplies out of the chilling-rooms and sold it in their shops. For instance, the price of roast beef, sirloin, was 7d. per lb., and now it is 7½d. per lb. It is not necessary for me to quote the prices in all cases, but in every case there has been

a distinct increase of from ¼d. to 2d. per lb. And yet this Government say that they have carried out their obligations to the people!

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Do you think we ought to have pulled down the price of cattle?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I will probably deal with the price of cattle before I sit down, or others will, and the purchase of cattle as well. Again, I charge this Government that they have lost the confidence of the people of Queensland through their subserviency to the Trades Hall. Very early in their existence that was evidenced. We saw last year that the Premier of the State of Queensland went up to the house on the hill and took his orders from there. That is exactly what was said was going to take place by the meeting at Townsville. One of the speakers said there—

"Mr. Davis said he was an internationalist. The workers only wanted what belonged to them—the earth."

"Mr. Smith said the passing of a motion would not kill the Labour party. They must fight, and Parliament must be the Trades Hall where the workers got their desires."

They are, indeed, justified in asking that when they have a Ministry that will subserviently go to the Trades Hall and be dictated to there as to the policy which is to be carried out throughout this State of Queensland. That is what is being realised by the best of those in the Labour party, those men who have some intelligence, and who have embarked their capital in enterprises, not only for the benefit of themselves, but also of their fellow-men to whom they are seeking to give employment. They are realising that the dictation that is taking place under present conditions is not for their own welfare nor for the welfare of the people to whom they give employment.

Take another instance in which the Government is losing the confidence of the people, in the matter of the appointments that have been made during the last year. It has been found necessary to go outside the limits of the public service in order to secure men to carry on work that could have been performed by men in the public service. What are our public servants devoting their lives to the service for? Surely in order that they may get some preferment, if preferment is coming, but when a good opening presents itself, when there are public servants capable of filling it, hon. members on the other side of the Chamber make a solemn declaration over their own signatures that there is no person in the public service capable of carrying on that work.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Did you not make that when you appointed Henri Cowap?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I say that these gentlemen make that declaration—that there is nobody in the public service capable of carrying on that work. When appointments were made by the late Government the public service was searched through, and we gave the opportunity to the public servant of bettering his position.

MR. BERTRAM: You did nothing of the kind.

HON. J. TOLMIE: A man may be friendly with one of the Ministers; he may have been his best pal on the football field or some-

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thing of the kind, and because of that the public servants have to suffer in consequence. That is what has been done.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Would you prefer defeated candidates?

HON. J. TOLMIE: And then we come to the question of defeated candidates. I think little of such an action, but the hon. member thinks so, because they appointed George Ryland to a very important position in the public service, and was not he a defeated candidate? The hon. member can never open his mouth unless he defeats himself.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: He is a retired public servant, retired by Joe Cook.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: A retired Commonwealth servant.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is another charge which is levelled against the present Government, that of differentiation in the price of meat for the soldiers as compared with the meat sold to citizens. That is a very grave charge to make against a Government, but it is made. It is a charge that the Government, who have tried to live on the sentiment of the soldier, take every opportunity they can do to do him an injury. When it was necessary to renew the contract for the supply of meat to the Imperial Government, the Government hung up the question from day to day and week to week in order to force the meat companies into a certain line of action. And this is what they forced them into. When the companies were prepared to give an all-round low price so that the cost to the British Government of maintaining the war, so far as meat was concerned, might be less, they forced the companies to make a low price for the meat consumed here and a higher price for meat for the Imperial Government. For the Imperial Government the prices were:—Approved and passed ox beef, 4½d. per lb.; approved cow beef, 4¾d. per lb.; passed cow beef, 4½d. per lb. I do not know what they mean by "passed cow beef"; apparently it is something that is not approved, something of an inferior quality. But when it came to getting meat for the citizens, the prices they arranged were:—Frozen beef, 3½d. per lb.; fresh and chilled beef, 3¼d. per lb. That is a difference of nearly 2d. per lb., a difference of 1½d. per lb. between the meat that is to feed the men here who did not render service to their State or were not prepared to render that service that was thought necessary, and the meat for the men who went across the sea to defend, not only the British Empire as a whole, but this individual portion of it as well. And that is one of the reasons why the people are dissatisfied with the present Government. Do hon. members think for one moment that the father of a son who is fighting for the Empire across the sea would prefer to have his meat cheaper than the meat going to feed his son? No; he would give all that he possessed in order to assist his son. That is what is done by fathers who send their sons across the seas, and yet this Government differentiate between the price of the meat that is being sent to him and the meat that is utilised here! Do hon. members think that the working men and women of Queensland, who have sons fighting over there, do not realise the difficulties which the Government have put in their way and

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that they will not estimate the Government at their proper worth when they have an opportunity to do so?

Again, this Government has lost the confidence of the country because they have been the means of the destruction of the Federal spirit. There is no question about that.

Mr. McMinn: Have they not done what you have been trying for years to do?

HON. J. TOLMIE: That shows the ignorance of the man! I say that they are instruments for the destruction of the Federal spirit. It is shown by the conflicts that have taken place in this State, caused by this State, between State and State, and between State and Commonwealth. We had Mr. Tudor coming up here and complaining bitterly of the conduct of the Queensland Government in relation to the butter supplies of the State. There are business men in this community who have suffered because of engagements entered into or on the other side which the action of the Government prevented them from carrying out. The Government absolutely refused to allow any stock to pass over from Queensland to the neighbouring State, even if it was for the purpose of sustaining the lives of the people of that State. Is that the Federal spirit? We have heard the Minister for Lands complaining about the Federal restrictions on the export of butter which would not allow butter to be sent over the sea, and yet that hon. gentleman himself set the example of that kind of thing last year when he commandeered the butter of the producers of Queensland. Then, what has this Government done, not only in regard to the embargo placed on the exporting of stock, but in regard to other matters? They have created industrial discontent among those engaged in the development of the State. We had a discussion this afternoon, originated by the hon. member for Drayton, in the course of which we heard the Minister for Agriculture declaim in a loud voice that he was the only man who held butter in Queensland, that he was the great butter monopolist.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The butter king.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Yes, the butter king.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER intimated that the hon. member's time had expired.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: I move that the hon. member be allowed time to conclude his speech.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be allowed to conclude his speech?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: I shall not detain the House much longer. All I wish to say is that the policy of the Government is wonderfully destructive of the best interests of the people of the State. That has been shown by the treatment meted out to the meat producers, the butter producers, and our primary producers generally.

Dealing now for one moment with the policy put before us in the Governor's Speech, I ask: Is there anything in that policy of a constructive character? Is there anything in it which will be an inducement to persons to put capital into enterprises in Queensland, or anything which will give confidence to people who are desirous of

developing the resources of the State? There is absolutely nothing of that kind in the policy which the Government have placed before the House—nothing to assist the development of Queensland. There is no policy of railway construction—that is not even mentioned. There was to be a policy of water conservation, but nothing is said about it in the Speech. The Bills put before us are nearly all amending Bills, or Bills which are not designed to assist in building up the industries of the State. If there is anything which is wanted at the present time it is a policy which will give confidence to the man who has capital and desires to embark that capital in the industrial development of the State. We need that because we see unemployment all around us, and because all the ready money in the State is vanishing, and the people are getting poorer by reason of the fact that they are contributing so much to the war.

HON. J. A. FHELLY: Where do you see unemployment?

HON. J. TOLMIE: In the city I represent and everywhere. There is nothing in the policy of the Government about opening up the country by means of railways—nothing about carrying out a vigorous railway policy. All we know on that point is what the Treasurer told us last night—that the Government are going to work on narrower lines than the late Government worked. Working on narrower lines means less expenditure and a continuance of unemployment. For these reasons, I believe the Government at the present time have not the confidence of the people of Queensland, and that the people have come to the conclusion that the Government, in accepting office, undertook a task which they are unable to carry out in a proper manner.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. H. F. Hardacre, *Leichhardt*): I must apologise, on behalf of the Premier, for his not being physically able to follow the leader of the Opposition. As hon. members know—and as I am sure everyone regrets—the hon. gentleman has been attacked by a severe cold, which makes it physically impossible for him to undertake the task of replying to the leader of the Opposition. Personally, I would wish for nothing better than that the Premier should be in his usual form, in order that he might expose the weak stuff we have had from the leader of the Opposition. I am called upon, at the last moment almost, to undertake that task, but really I do not think there is much necessity for any preparation to reply to the incapable and imaginary attacks on the Government that we have heard this afternoon. Those attacks consist of nothing more than a lot of arguments which were given us ad nauseum last session, and which have been repeated in the country during the recess. The fact that he has dared to bring such weak arguments before this House shows his utter incapacity to see the facts as they are and to deal with the situation. The leader of the Opposition seems to have adopted the method once characterised by Macaulay as that of forgetting half, multiplying that by two, and reiterating it in a loud voice, thinking he has made an effective attack. It must have been painful to members who know the facts of the case, and who desire fair criticism, to listen to some of the accusations founded upon imaginary conditions. But the most

painful thing of all was to see high and moral issues—great burning questions that are to-day disturbing the minds of the people of the whole Commonwealth—dragged into the mire of politics for purely party purposes. (Hear, hear!) The leader of the Opposition spoke about protecting our soldiers from the effects of drink and the necessity for 6 o'clock closing of hotels. Everybody knew that he was using that matter purely for party purposes. Then, on the still greater question of conscription, it must have been painful to hon. members to see such a high and important question dragged down into the mire of party politics. When I heard the hon. member speaking, I could not help being reminded of those lines of Tennyson in "Sea Dreams," in which he characterised the religious hypocrite in these words—

"He never used the name of God except for gain;

And so he never used that sacred name in vain."

The hon. gentleman introduced great moral issues, simply for the sake of attempting to make some political capital against the Government.

Dealing with the question of 6 o'clock closing, he said that because we have not introduced a Bill to submit that question to a special referendum, we have violated our pledges, and have forfeited the confidence of the people. I say that this party is keeping the pledge it gave to the electors in the Barcardine programme, and it is showing greater confidence in the people than the party opposite, because we propose to fulfil our Barcardine pledge and carry out the platform we have placed before the people for years by the introduction of a general Initiative and Referendum Bill, so as to enable the people to express their opinion upon any question, and we shall abide by the result of their decision. We have shown greater confidence in the people than the Opposition, because they want to narrow it down to one particular issue. We have seen the cloven hoof underneath the cloak of the leader of the Opposition when he said that he would not support the general Initiative and Referendum Bill. He shows that he has no confidence in the people, and that he wants to submit this question to the people for party purposes and for the purpose of making an unfair attack upon the Government.

We are going to keep our pledges to the electors; we are not going to be dragged out of our course or abandon the bigger measure. And we are not only going to keep our pledges to the electors by doing that, but we are going to give the electors an immediate opportunity of taking a referendum under that Bill upon the particular issue which the leader of the Opposition accuses the Government of not daring to face.

MR. MACARTNEY: Two years from now.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The Initiative and Referendum Bill will be the first Bill to be introduced this session, and then the leader of the Opposition can get a referendum on this special question and on any other question.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Why do you desire to waste time?

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I desire to waste no time. If the general Bill is thrown out in another place, as the leader of the Opposition says it will be, then it will be thrown out by his friends and not by the friends of this party.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman is misrepresenting me. I never said that the Initiative and Referendum Bill would be thrown out in another place.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: You did.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. McMINN: You inferred it, if you did not say it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister must accept the disclaimer of the leader of the Opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I accept it, and say that, if the hon. gentleman did not say it, he said that he charged the Government with introducing this measure, because we knew it would be thrown out by the other Chamber.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I said you believed it would be thrown out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Well, if it is thrown out in that place, it will be thrown out by the friends of the party opposite.

Then we are charged with introducing the Initiative and Referendum Bill because it will cause delay. Everyone knows that within a week after the Bill is passed by both Houses of Parliament it can be sent home by cable and the Royal assent can be cabled back, and we can have the result within a week.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Do you think the Constitution will allow you to do that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If it does not, do you think the licensed victuallers will allow your special referendum to go through? Passing from that, I wish now to refer to the bigger question of the attitude of the Government with regard to the war and the great need of this State, of the Commonwealth, and of the Empire in the most critical time in our history. Whatever criticism may be levelled against this Government, at least nothing reasonably fair can be said against this Government so far as our loyalty and patriotism in regard to the war are concerned. This Government has two of its Ministers upon the Recruiting Committee, and those Ministers and other Ministers have addressed numerous recruiting meetings. We have given special trains to the committee; we have assisted them with literature and financially, and we have assisted them by giving them servants of the State to enable them to carry on their work. I may say further that the two Ministers who are on the Recruiting Committee have received the special thanks of the committee for the services they have rendered to the cause of recruiting. Besides that, no less than four of the Ministers are on the War Council, and the work done by those Ministers has been recognised by the members of the council, who have expressed their appreciation, and only the other day the Governor-General expressed his admiration of the results of the labours of the

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Queensland War Council, and said that we led all the war councils of Australia in the work done. The leader of the Opposition knows that I stood with him on the platform in Toowoomba and addressed one of the largest recruiting meetings ever held there, and I will say that the hon. gentleman failed in his duty in the matter of recruiting by deserting his post on the War Council.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: I gave my reasons.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: You deserve a reprimand for that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I consider that it is improper for any State Government, whilst the issue hangs in the balance, to take sides upon that question. We know that the big issue, if it arises at all, will rend Queensland in convulsions; will cause contentious irritation and antagonism; will split up families; will split up parties; and that, instead of unity in this State we shall have bitter antagonism amongst all classes. We know that the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth has come back from Great Britain knowing the whole of the circumstances, knowing whether it is necessary to introduce conscription or not. He knows; no one else knows. As the Premier of New South Wales said, "We are waiting for you to give the word." Under such circumstances it is not for this Government or for any other responsible party to say that this ought to be done or that ought to be done. Only the Prime Minister knows the circumstances, and knows whether it is necessary to introduce the question or not.

Mr. BARNES: Will you follow the Prime Minister then?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: When the Prime Minister does give the word, then it will be time for this Government to take a side on the matter, and I do not think this Government will be found wanting.

Mr. BARNES: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: They will make you shell out for the war loan—without interest. You will soon squeal.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There is one thing, in doing our duty—

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: What is your duty?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Our duty will be to do what we think necessary at that time. We have done our duty so far, and done it far better than some of the members on the other side. I have addressed more recruiting meetings than the hon. member for Lockyer.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: I have not addressed one.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Then the hon. member should hold his peace.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Oh, no! I have a perfect right to say what I think.

At 8.25 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I now come to somewhat lesser issues. The leader of the Opposition

charges the Government with having lost the confidence of the people because of our financial administration. It is quite true we had to raise no less than £600,000 of additional revenue from the people of Queensland by way of taxation, but much of that was caused by the bungling administration of the late Government in leaving us a tremendous increase of public debt to meet without any revenue. By their mismanagement of the maturing loan in going to the London market and being compelled to pay higher interest, we had to meet a bigger public interest bill this year, without any increase of revenue. That increased amount of interest which has been placed on us by the late Government would alone have enabled us to pay the increases to the public servants in full.

It is quite true we have raised this revenue of £600,000, but not by taxation of the people. We have imposed taxation scientifically, and in such a form that the masses of the people in this State have not had increased burdens placed upon them.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The producers have, and they are not rich.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We have taxed the rich profits of wealthy companies. We follow the example of Great Britain in taxing war profits made out of the savings of the people, and that increase was not passed on to the consumer. We were faced with the continuation of the war which intensified and increased prices, with a falling revenue through drought, and with an increased public interest bill left by the last Government, and we were not able to pay in full the automatic increases last year, but we did better, under much worse circumstances, for the public servants than the last Government did. The last Government, in better times—with the war having only just commenced—stopped all automatic increases over £110. We gave increases on salaries up to £250 last year, and we gave £10 increases to £200 salaries this year, and dealt with them in a far more generous way than the last Government did in better times.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You dealt badly with the producers, anyhow.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: As an example of the kind of criticism indulged in, the leader of the Opposition, who has been a member of an Administration, and ought to know the difference between loan money and the consolidated revenue, charges the Government with not having paid the automatic increases, because we proposed to spend £40,000 out of loan fund. We do not pay wages and salaries out of loan fund. If we spent £100,000 or nothing at all out of loan fund it would not make any difference as to our ability to pay out of consolidated revenue. We got the £600,000 by taxation to enable us to pay the public servants their salaries, and we are criticised and condemned because we have been enabled to do that. The last Government would not have imposed that taxation, and the public servants would not have got their increases.

Dealing with the loan fund, we are accused in that imaginary way with not having obtained loan money to carry on the public works of this State. We know the impecunious state in which the late Government left us. The late Treasurer, Mr. Barnes, declared on the floor of this House, supported

by the hon. member for Murrumba, that the last Government left us only sufficient loan funds to carry on public works for three months up to the end of September. In spite of that, without going to the London market for one penny of loan money, we managed to carry on the public works of this State to a much greater extent last year than the late Government did, and this year we propose to carry them on as fully as our predecessors did the last year they were in office.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Nonsense!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If the late Government had been in power they would have retrenched the public servants.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: You have retired them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member for Murrumba told us last night that we were spending too much loan money, that we were going too fast and ought to have cut down our expenditure. But the business community, the public servants, and the general mass of the people of Queensland ought to go down on their bended knees and thank Providence that at the last election they put this party into office, when the last Government would have thrown the State into financial embarrassment and dislocation.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You will see how they will get down on their knees when they come to-morrow.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The views of the people were indicated by the result of the Fortitude Valley election. All the usual platitudes were put before the electors there by the party opposite, but they did not believe them and returned a member to support this Government by a majority of 1,400.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You got a diminished majority.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The Government are accused of having lost the confidence of the people because we have not fulfilled our election pledges in reducing the cost of living. I am sometimes reminded of the precedent that was set by a great British statesman. Some of his colleagues in the Cabinet disagreed as to whether a certain measure would increase or reduce the price of a commodity, until at last the Premier got his back to the door of the room, and said, "Now, gentlemen, you must settle the matter before you leave this room. The question is, is it going to reduce or to increase the price; you are not going to leave this room before you settle which it is to be." I think the Opposition might take that example to themselves, because on this particular question they are absolutely contradictory. One section accuse the Government for not having reduced the cost of living, and the other charge the Government for having done it. The leader of the Opposition contradicted himself by declaring that we have reduced the price of meat by preventing stock from crossing the border.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I gave you your own authority.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If they would only make up their minds which we have done, we would take up the issue.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: "Knibbs" has made up his mind for you.

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am glad the hon. gentleman has referred to "Knibbs," because, as usual, in his argument he has utterly misrepresented the figures. There is an old saying that you can make figures prove anything.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Did I misquote Knibbs?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No; but it struck me that you use figures just as it is said that Satan sometimes quotes Scripture—to justify the position you take up. According to the latest "Bulletin," issued by Knibbs in July, 1916, we find that so far as groceries are concerned, the figures show that there are two States in which the figures for groceries are lowest, and at the time of the publication of the "Bulletin" those States were controlled by Labour Administrations. Western Australia is the lowest of all so far as the cost of groceries is concerned, and Queensland comes next lowest. These are the figures which are given with regard to groceries:—New South Wales, 1.419; Victoria, 1.337; South Australia, 1.295; Tasmania, 1.317; Western Australia, 1.242. Western Australia is the lowest of all, and the next lowest is Queensland with 1.259.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I ask you to quote the figures for last March and March of this year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am pointing out that according to the latest "Bulletin," the cost of groceries is cheapest in Queensland of all the States in Australia but one. On page 21 you will see that, so far as the purchasing power of the sovereign is concerned, Queensland is the second best State in Australia.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Never mind about any other State. Quote Queensland for March, 1915, and March, 1916. Last year in March Queensland was the lowest of all the States.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am showing that Queensland under a Labour Administration is a cheaper place to live in, so far as groceries are concerned, than any other part of Australia except Western Australia, and the purchasing power of the sovereign is greater in Queensland than any State in Australia except Western Australia. Under this awful Labour Administration which has been denounced by members opposite, it is shown that Queensland is one of the best places to live in so far as cost of living is concerned. The hon. leader of the Opposition says that it has gone up since March of last year. Every member of this House knows that we have had most adverse circumstances to contend with in Queensland since then. We have had a drought raging in Queensland such as scarcely existed in the State before, and it did not exist in any other State. If there has been an increase in the cost it is only microscopical.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Twenty per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: In spite of that we have made this the best State to live in in Australia.

I just want to deal with the question of fixing the price of meat. We are charged with having most unpatriotically differentiated in the price of meat charged to our soldiers as against our own people in this

State. We fixed the rate at 4½d. per lb. for our soldiers in the trenches, while at the same time we obtained a lower rate for ourselves. I would like to ask hon. members if they remember the deputation of pastoralists which waited on the Premier when they asked that the price of meat to be supplied to the Imperial authorities for the use of the troops should be fixed at 5d. per lb., and at the same time they wanted to charge a higher price for our people in this State. What this Government has done is that it has succeeded in not only reducing the price for our own consumers, but in getting a lower rate for the Imperial authorities than the pastoral authorities wanted. If we had accepted their request then meat would have been dearer for both our own people and the soldiers in the trenches. We are also accused of breaking the Federal spirit in refusing to permit stock to cross the border. This immediately followed the charge that we were charging an increased rate to the Imperial authorities to feed the soldiers in the trenches. As a matter of fact, the stock were prevented from crossing the border just because we wished to be able to supply meat at a cheaper rate to the Imperial authorities. We were asked by the Imperial authorities to conserve the supply of meat owing to the depleted herds, in order to feed the soldiers, and we acted upon that request. If the stock had been allowed to cross the border, then the civil population in the other States would have received meat at a cheaper rate, and it would have depleted the quantity for consumption by the soldiers, and instead of our troops being the best fed troops in the world we would have had them struggling on without their meat supplies.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Did they not refuse to take meat from you?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is as unfounded as any statement the leader of the Opposition has made.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: They said that instead of giving you cattle they would give you meat.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They would not do either. We are maintaining the attitude we took up, which is to supply the soldiers in the trenches with our meat. We are doing this in conjunction with the Imperial authorities under an Act which was passed by the leader of the Opposition when he was in power.

I do not think there is much more to say in reply to the leader of the Opposition, except to make one or two remarks about the programme submitted to the Assembly for this session. We are accused of not proposing anything which will make for the prosperity of the State. I say that the confidence given to us by the electors at the last elections has been justified by our actions. We have saved the State from calamities by our actions and by our administration in the Agricultural Department, the Education Department, and the Mines Department. In fact, every branch of administration has shown originality, efficiency, energy, and progress in their administration, with great results so far as the position of this State is concerned. If there was anything more, in addition to what was done last year and the conduct of affairs during the recess, to show that this Government deserves the confidence of the people, it is

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the programme put before this Parliament. I say, never was a programme introduced by any Government in times past so full of substance or so full of business or so full of important measures—

HON. J. G. APPEL: Like the barber's cat.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That will result, if passed by this House and another place, in prosperity, and to a large extent undo the maladministration of conservative Governments for the past fifty years, and set this country on the highway of prosperity which it deserves, and which the good administration of this Government will bring about if the programme is carried out.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): In the first instance, I would like to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address upon the manner in which they performed the duties imposed upon them. Of course, we cannot have so much sympathy for them, because, although one is a new member of this Chamber and the other a comparatively new member, they are both old campaigners. The member for Fortitude Valley is a gentleman who for many years has taken a leading part in local authority work, and also in political work, and the member for Gregory likewise has taken an active part in connection with politics. I do not propose to refer at any length to what those hon. members have said. The hon. member who moved the adoption of the Address to a great extent dealt with parochial matters, and, so far as that is concerned, he can rest assured that Fortitude Valley is a place that cannot be set back, no matter what party may be in power. It is singularly well situated for trade and commerce, and there is no doubt that, whether a Labour or a Liberal Administration is in power, Fortitude Valley is bound to go ahead.

But the hon. member stated that the provisions of the Contagious Diseases Act were no longer in force, and for this information—I assume he had not obtained the information—I may tell him that the provisions of the Health Act, which were substituted for the provisions of the Contagious Diseases Act, are far and away before the provisions of that particular Act. To-day we have notification from everyone who is suffering from that particular disease, and it is absolutely necessary that there should be notification, not only from the women but also from the men who are suffering from that disease. It is absolutely necessary, and it is a penal offence if the medical man who attends the patient does not give notice, and we have erected—I say we, because it was done in my time—we have erected a ward in the grounds of the Brisbane Hospital where that disease is treated as any other disease, and there are free dispensaries, where everyone is able to obtain the necessary treatment; and I may tell hon. members that the number of public women who are now treated under the provisions of the Health Act is something like four times as great as the number treated under the Contagious Diseases Act. The reason for that is that, under the provisions of the Contagious Diseases Act, the women were practically imprisoned, and they would not disclose the fact that they were suffering from the disease. Furthermore, our Health Act has received commendation from all the health authorities in the Commonwealth of Aus-

tralia, and in some of the other States it is proposed to enact similar laws to those which we have enacted. It is only by making notification compulsory, and by providing the necessary treatment, that we are able to cope with that frightful disease that has caused such ravages amongst our fellow men and women.

In connection with what fell from the hon. member for Gregory, I recognised in his speech the pen of the Assistant Minister for Justice.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is pure imagination.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It may be that there is a great similarity in their expressions. So far as prison reform is concerned, I may say that prison reform was inaugurated in Queensland before the present Administration came into power. As the administrative head of the Prisons Department, I recognised that prison reform was necessary, and everything has been done to enable a man to raise himself from the mire in which he has fallen, and I hope the present Administration will carry out the policy which was pursued by the late Administration, of which I was a member.

I am sorry that there was so much heat imported into this debate by the Minister who replied to the leader of the Opposition. We know how amiable the Secretary for Public Instruction is; but he got excited and once or twice tangled himself up. I do not suppose there is a more amiable gentleman in this House, or outside the House, than the Secretary for Public Instruction; but, as usually happens when he speaks, he is fairly verbose, and he generally tangles himself up. It is amusing to notice the way in which he deals with deputations from those unfortunate school teachers to whom he is unable to give those increases which they deserve. For many months they really believed that he intended to do something for them, but I see by the "Education Journal" that they have come to the conclusion that there is very little in his promises. Nothing but wind.

It is an unfortunate thing at this period that controversial matters should be introduced. I think it is a great mistake, in view of the trying times that this State, as a part of our great Empire, is going through, that controversial matters should be introduced.

It is a time when party politics [9 p.m.] to a great extent should be dropped, when we should all unite for the purpose of upholding justice, humanity, and Christianity, which our great Empire represents, and it is a great pity that these controversial matters should be introduced. The hon. gentleman spoke on the question of conscription. I remember, when I was interviewed as a Minister, I stated that I was not in favour of conscription so long as voluntary effort was sufficient; if that failed then conscription must come. I think we must have conscription, Mr. Speaker, when our boys in the trenches are calling out for reinforcements, when we know, according to the wastage that is going on, that the voluntary effort has not been sufficient.

Mr. COLLINS: Wastage! Of human life!

HON. J. G. APPEL: Quite so; but this is a matter where blood counts for nothing. It is a matter of principle, of such high principle that every man who is able to go

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to the front should go. And when we consider that something like 150,000 able young men in the Commonwealth of Australia have failed to do their duty and that our boys are calling out for recruits to replenish their ranks, to assist them in the great fight, in one of the noblest and greatest fights that any people have ever made, then I say it is absolutely necessary to have conscription.

Mr. COLLINS: All the men over the age are advocating it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: When we were under the age, we might have had to go. I was a member of a volunteer force and I was quite prepared to go, but they told me I was over the age—too old. I am prepared to go to-day, and to take any duty that may be given to me in that connection. When our boys have gone to the front and have done such noble work and have made the great name they have for Australians, when they call for their mates to go and assist them, do hon. members not think that any man who has any loyalty to the Empire that stands for so much should see that that wastage is made up and the number of men we have pledged ourselves to send is sent? And I say that the only way to deal with those who are failing to do their duty is to say to them, "If you will not go voluntarily, then you should go compulsorily."

Mr. H. J. RYAN: What about raising the pay?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I think, when we realise the amount of pay that is given to the British soldier, and the amount of pay that is given to the soldier of our allies, we are doing our best; but if we can do more I say let us do it. I am proud to see that the Hon. Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, is taking the stand he is taking.

Mr. COLLINS: What stand is he taking?

HON. J. G. APPEL: He is taking the stand that he promised a certain number of men on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia, which he represents, and that the wastage should be made up, and I am glad to see that at those meetings which he has addressed, men who, perhaps, a few weeks ago were opposed to conscription, are prepared to join with him in any action he decides is necessary. When we realise what Mr. Meagher, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, said the other night, after that great meeting which Mr. Hughes addressed, I think there should be no question between party and party, but we should all unite with that man, the leader of our Commonwealth, in whatever action he thinks is necessary, and if he thinks that conscription is necessary then every man amongst us, whatever his politics may be, should follow him and see that the name of our great country is upheld.

Mr. COLLINS: We want no Kaiser in this country, whether his name is Hughes or anything else.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is not a question of Kaiser or anything else. I have endeavoured to explain that it is a matter of principle, the upholding of the aims of our great Empire, the Empire that has stood for freedom and liberty, political and religious.

Mr. PETERSON: Would you believe in Mr. Hughes taking money without interest during the war?

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HON. J. G. APPEL: If people are able to lend money without interest, why not?

Mr. PETERSON: Ah! Conscription of money.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Why not? Apparently I have here on my left a number of gentlemen who are opposed to conscription.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: However, they will have to come to heel. I have no doubt they will come to heel.

Mr. COLLINS: Who is going to bring us to heel?

HON. J. G. APPEL: However, what I want to point out is that this is not a question of party politics, though those who are opposed to conscription apparently regard it as such. I do not regard it as such. I think it is a matter about which there should be no controversy. I simply brought it up in consequence of the remarks made by the Minister in reply to the leader of the Opposition, and I can only reiterate that I shall be proud, as a member of the Liberal party and a member of the Opposition, to follow in the footsteps and do what I can politically and otherwise for our great Prime Minister—(Government laughter)—who has made—

Mr. McMINN: You would kill him.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That might be, but you will come to heel. I dare say I will see you running at his heel yet. I dare say, if he came to Brisbane, the hon. members who are interjecting would be the first ones to run at his heels; and to lick them if necessary—that is politically.

Mr. PETERSON: Who is doing the licking now?

HON. J. G. APPEL: However, I say it is not a matter of party politics.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why was it introduced?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not know. The Hon. the Minister dwelt on it. According to the Speech, the leader of the Government is in accord with it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The leader of the Opposition made a party attack on the Government.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Well, I am not making a party attack on the Government, because, as I have said, I do not think it is a matter of party politics.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is what I say.

HON. J. G. APPEL: And we should not indulge in recrimination so far as that is concerned. Those who do not believe in assisting the Empire, who do not believe in doing their duty to the Empire—let them stand up. Let the goats be separated from the sheep. I do not regard it as party politics, as a political matter, and I say here on the floor of this House that I do not care who the man is, whether the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth is the leader of the Labour party or not, when he is carrying out his great and patriotic effort he will have my vote and influence at all times while he is acting so nobly and patriotically for the Commonwealth and the great Empire to which we belong.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: Will you vote for him at the next election?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Very likely. On this question, undoubtedly and unquestionably.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Will you support him against Sir William Irvine?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Join our party.

HON. J. G. APPEL: In carrying out that policy. I have had something to do in a good many Parliaments in producing a Speech, and I must confess that when I listened to this Speech, one hon. friend said, "Why, it is like a barber's cat." Unfortunately, parliamentary rules will not enable me to tell hon. members what a barber's cat is. If any member desires to know what it is, I will tell him outside or in the refreshment-room after I have finished my speech. I venture to say that this is the most verbose and lengthy document of its character I have ever heard read. There is no doubt that the Administration have taken full advantage of the opportunity it affords to laud themselves to the very highest point. I am not going to detract from anything they have done.

MR. FOLEY: It is an old game of yours.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is not an old game of mine.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Do you remember how you praised the last Governor's Speech?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do, and I remember that I said that if the Government would carry out the policy enunciated in that Speech I was prepared to support them. But what did they do?

MR. STOPFORD: They brought you to heel after you made that speech.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not think anyone ever brought me to heel. The hon. member thanked me for what I had done at the last general election to assist his party, but I can tell him that I did not intend to assist his party. But this is irrelevant. My time is limited, and I hope that hon. members will allow me to continue. As I was saying, the Speech is a most verbose and lengthy document. I have looked through and through the Speech, but I must confess that I have been disappointed with it, because, as you, Mr. Speaker, will remember, when the party now sitting on the Treasury benches were in opposition, they were always anxious that there should be passed a Trust and Combines Bill. I have looked in vain for such a measure in this Speech. I promised to support it, and naturally it was one of the things I looked for in the Government programme.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: You promised to introduce it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I did, but I looked in vain for it in this Speech, and one has to judge of the honesty of a party by their actions, not their professions. Though hon. members now on that side of the House always advocated the passing of a Trust and Combines Bill, yet now they have the opportunity of introducing such a measure, they say nothing about it. What is the reason they are now silent on the matter? Is it that the tobacco trust have influenced them? I am not going to say, because hon. members well know what connecion there has been between the tobacco trust and the Labour party. The man in the street can tell you.

There is another matter that I thought would have been dealt with in the Governor's Speech, and that is a measure dealing with the metropolitan tramways. You will recollect how members supporting the Government spoke about the necessity for dealing with the metropolitan tramways when they were on this side of the House. Why is that measure not embodied in the policy of the Government? They complained day after day and week after week of the overcrowding of the trams, and called down condemnation on the Police Department and the Home Department, which administers the traffic laws and regulations, because the trams were overcrowded. There is greater crowding on the trams to-day than there was two years ago.

MR. COOPER: And there are fewer trams being run.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is even worse. Members opposite admit that there are fewer trams being run than there were under a Liberal Administration, and yet no proposal is made in the Governor's Speech to deal with that matter. I believe in the two measures I have mentioned, and I thought that hon. members opposite were genuine in their advocacy of them. I thought the Assistant Minister for Justice was genuine in what he said on this matter, but I think the electors will now begin to doubt whether he was genuine, because now that he has the opportunity to carry out his views, the Government of which he is a member are silent regarding the introduction of such measures. The matter of the tramways is a most important one to the citizens of Brisbane. It does not affect me personally, because, except for part of the week during the session, I do not live in Brisbane, but it affects the public generally, and more particularly the workers of Queensland. During the last day or two, going home to my place I have found the trams so crowded that people were sitting on one another's knees, and even crowding the gangways. I blame the Administration for not putting these matters in their programme. I say it is necessary to judge them by their actions, and, in view of their failure to carry out the views they have so forcibly and on so many occasions laid before the public as their policy, the electors of Queensland must come to the conclusion that they are guilty of *malâ fides*.

In reply to the leader of the Opposition, the Minister strove to make it appear that, if the Initiative and Referendum Bill—which involves an alteration of the Constitution—were passed, the Bill could be cabled home and the assent of the Executive of the Sovereign could be obtained in such a short time that we could have a special referendum in regard to 6 o'clock closing almost immediately. In making that assertion, the hon. gentleman may deceive himself; he may deceive his own party; he may even deceive the people for a time, but he cannot deceive them for all time.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We certainly could get the assent cabled out.

HON. J. G. APPEL: If the Bill is passed, it will certainly have to go to Great Britain for consideration by the Executive of the Empire.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: In six weeks.

HON. J. G. APPEL: What is the good of talking in that way to one who has been a member of the Executive for six years?

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They cannot cable the Bill home. It is a matter that the Executive authority would not deal with in that slipshod way. The hon. gentleman may think he can deal with matters in his own department in a slipshod way. I have no doubt he does, judging by the letters I have received from State school teachers; but that is not the question. The home authorities will not deal with such a Bill in that way. The hon. gentleman must know—or he is deceiving himself—that, if that Bill is passed, it will be at least eighteen months from now before it can become law.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It will take eighteen months before the approval of the Executive of Great Britain is received, and before the whole matter can be placed before the electors of Queensland it will be a matter of two years.

MR. POLLOCK: Rot!

HON. J. G. APPEL: You are rotten yourself. (Laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It can be done before the end of the session.

MR. POLLOCK: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in stating that I am rotten? I would ask him to withdraw that.

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

HON. J. G. APPEL: I certainly do not believe the hon. member for Gregory is rotten, and I have no hesitation in withdrawing the statement, if he thinks I referred to him. (Laughter.) I repeat that it will take at least two years before a referendum could be taken. Now, we know that it would be possible for a resolution to be passed in this House in one day. I am not in the confidence of the Legislative Council, but I am certain that a referendum could be taken on the question of 6 o'clock closing within three months at the outside. I have always believed in the principle of the referendum. I trust the people. I have good reason to trust the people. They have trusted me, and why should they not be given the opportunity of deciding this question? There has been a bonâ fide request made by a great number of people for a referendum on this important question, and, if the hon. members who constitute the Government at the present time are genuine, why do they not introduce and pass a measure to submit the question to the electors? I feel satisfied that we would be willing on this side to suspend the Standing Orders to allow the measure to go through in one day.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: If hon. members on the other side are genuine—if they bonâ fide believe in the policy of the referendum—why cannot they pass this measure next week? It would go through the Council without delay, and then the Government could make arrangements for taking a poll, and, at the longest period of time, within three months a vote could be taken. In New South Wales the Labour Government did not hesitate to take a referendum on the subject, and it was stated that they, like the party in power in this State, were placed in office by the influence and the pecuniary assistance they received from the liquor

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party. Then why should the Government hesitate here? The people want it, and why should they not be allowed to express their opinion?

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Where did you get the big donation from that you gave to the Country party?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Out of my own pocket, where all that I spend comes from. That is probably more than the hon. gentleman can say. (Laughter.) Unfortunately, I have always had to put my hand in my own pocket for anything I have spent. I am not in the fortunate position that the hon. gentleman is in. I wish I was.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Don't you think you were generous in giving several hundreds to assist a political party when there were several patriotic funds about?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I know where the money came from.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: So do I.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am quite satisfied the hon. gentleman never gave any contribution to any party out of his own pocket.

MR. CARTER: He is not a licensed victualler.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: I know where you got that cheque from.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I would like to refer again to the matter of the police, and particularly to the treatment of the Commissioner of Police, who is a highly situated officer, and who has been trusted by every Administration which has been in power.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: You led him a dog's life.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not know whether I did, but I have always valued him very highly.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Mr. Macartney says you did.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member for Toowong may have been in error. I consider the Commissioner to be a most valuable officer; a man who is capable and fearless.

and one who was always prepared [9.30 p.m.] to do his duty when he was ordered to do it. He did his duty as he was ordered to do it on a certain historic occasion, and I should be sorry to think that the action which has been taken and the humiliation which has been placed upon him is out of revenge for the action which he took at the direction of his Ministerial head. I considered it necessary, as the administrative head of that department, that the Commissioner should be provided with a motor-car. He has to make visits of inspection extending to something like 100, 150, and 200 miles in the vicinity of Brisbane, where there are no other means of communication, and it is also necessary that he should be in his office when called upon at the earliest possible moment. It seems a singular thing that he has been deprived of that means of communication, which is absolutely necessary for the efficient carrying out of the onerous duties of his office. We will allow the public to judge whether the treatment of that highly placed officer is of a character which should be meted out to him by the Government of the day. As administrative head of the Commissioner's office for a little over five years, I have no hesitation

in saying that he is a most honourable and efficient officer, and I can only regard the action taken as one of revenge. I believe it was forced on the Government by their supporters. As long as the late Mr. Bowman retained the office of Home Secretary he would not permit it to be done, and I want the people of this State to know that.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Why make an attack on the Home Secretary when he is away?

HON. J. G. APPEL: A great deal has been said in the Speech as to what has been done in regard to the public servants. We remember the great majority which composed the Government under the Hon. W. Kidston's regime. What was done during that time, when the surpluses had run into hundreds of thousands of pounds, to improve the position of the public servants and the State school teachers? Absolutely nothing. When the Liberal Administration came into power they immediately commenced to give increases according to the amount of the finances available to the lower-paid servants of the State, and that went on from year to year without any increase of taxation; but the present Government, which says that it has the interests of the taxpayers so much at heart, has increased the taxation by £600,000 odd. We find that the school teachers are not receiving their increases, even with the additions. We increased their pay from year to year, but even with those additions the pay is inadequate. With the increased revenue which the present Government has had from extra taxation, what have they done for the lower-paid school teachers? The Minister is waited upon day after day by deputations of school teachers, who are paid less than a labourer's wage. Men who have to pass examinations, and who are in charge of the education and training of our youth, are receiving less than a labourer's wage, and they appeal in vain to the Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Would you put more taxes on to pay them?

HON. J. G. APPEL: No. I would not have erected State grog shops. The amount of money required for the erection of one of these State grog shops would give all the money necessary to increase the salaries of the lower-paid public servants.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you know that that does not come out of loan money at all? We do not pay salaries out of loan fund.

HON. J. G. APPEL: We know that, but if you have a large increase of revenue, why not give these unfortunate school teachers something of that increase?

Then there are the railway station-masters, who have onerous duties, and who are responsible for the receipt and custody of a large amount of money. We find that a man working on the line has got a larger income than a man in charge of a station.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: What did you do when you were in the Ministry?

HON. J. G. APPEL: We brought them up from year to year, and as the money was available we increased the amount of their emoluments. Hon. members opposite, who accuse us of not attending to these matters,

said, "If we get into power, see what we will do." What have they done? They have appointed a lot of their partisans to nice fat billets, one as an inspector at £600, and another as manager of refreshment-rooms at a high salary. All the Labour organisers have got good Government billets at the expense of the unfortunate lower-paid State servants. The teachers and the unfortunate railway station-masters are penalised simply to enable the Administration to appoint their organisers and partisans to good fat billets. I know one gentleman—I am not going to mention his name—who was considered to be too aged to be employed by a certain newspaper in the Labour interest. I understand that he has now got a Government billet at £400 a year, although, when he was capable and able to do his work. I am informed he did not get more than £300 from that particular newspaper.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: You have been misinformed. They have been pulling your leg again.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman cannot pull my leg. The boot is on the other foot as far as he is concerned.

MR. BERTRAM: Who appointed Mark Plumb?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I did, on the recommendation of the Commissioner for Public Health. I dare say that the Assistant Minister for Justice has taken the trouble to look up that recommendation. That recommendation was taken before the Public Service Board, of which the hon. gentleman is now a member, and the appointment was then made. What his politics are I do not know.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: He is a friend of yours.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He is an acquaintance.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: How did you persuade the Commissioner for Public Health to recommend him?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I could not persuade the Commissioner to recommend anyone he did not wish to. I remember trying to induce him to withdraw a prosecution in one case, but he simply told me he would not do it. The hon. gentleman will find that he cannot get round the Commissioner in that way.

Reference is made in the Speech to the action of the Government in searching for oil. One would think that the present people in power were the first who initiated that industry. In the first Mineral Oil Bill which I introduced into this House I reserved all oil-bearing country on Crown lands for the Crown. In fact, the whole of the plant that is now in operation was ordered and purchased by the late Administration, yet people would be led to believe that the present Administration are the men who first conceived the idea of undertaking the exploration for mineral oil, and of acquiring the plant and putting it into operation. I was Minister for Mines, and in self-defence it is necessary for me to give this information so that the electors of Queensland can see what flimsy evidence the present Administration are building their case on.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: You never went in for it seriously.

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HON. J. G. APPEL: I never regarded the hon. member seriously.

The Government claim a great amount of credit for their action in connection with the starving stock, but we know that every Administration has done the same thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We improved it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: You did not. You are practically trying to lead the electors of Queensland to believe that you were the first Administration who ever gave reduced rates for starving stock to enable them to travel to country where there was grass. It is just as well for the electors to see that other Governments have done the same thing, and that this Government is just carrying out what the previous Government carried out. We know that the Secretary for Public Instruction is just carrying out the same policy that the Hon. James Blair carried out. There is just one difference in connection with that department, and it is that, in my electorate, I receive four or five letters a week saying that this teacher has been changed here or that that teacher has been transferred there. They seem to be very active in chopping and changing their teachers about, but I do not get any information that they are receiving any increase of salary when they are so transferred. Is it to receive the amount of wages that they should receive that these young girls and lads go to the expense of transferring themselves from one place to another?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It seems extraordinary that they are shifted about. I don't know the reason for it, or whether it is political or not. So far as I am concerned in my electorate, I do not care what are the political opinions of my electors. I represent the whole electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Their expenses are paid when they are transferred.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I hope they are. What is the reason for all this chopping and changing about? If there are as many changes in other electorates as there are in my electorate, I should think it would be better for you to keep that money to give them increases and allow them to stay where they are.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is at their own request that they are removed.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: It is because they want to leave your electorate.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The State apparently wants to enter into the business of fire insurance. (Hea., hear!) I don't know whether they propose to enter on that business on the same conditions as they did in connection with accident insurance, and make it compulsory.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: No.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I hope not, at any rate. If they propose to do that they will inflict a gross injustice on a large number of shareholders who have speculated and invested hundreds and thousands of pounds in shares in fire insurance companies. So far as the general principle is concerned, I have

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already said that I think it is quite a proper thing for the State to engage in fire insurance—that is, to enter into competition with other companies.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Then you support our policy?

HON. J. G. APPEL: But it would be a most improper policy to make it compulsory for everyone in the State to insure with the Government, and also to confiscate all the funds of the fire insurance companies and their offices.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: We will not do that this time.

HON. J. G. APPEL: With regard to the accident insurance, we are told that the rate which has to be paid is less than the rate which had to be paid to private accident insurance companies. I cannot see that at all. Although there was no necessity for it, I always insured those who were in my service in an accident insurance company. That was before the present legislation came into effect.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Did you insure your parliamentary party?

HON. J. G. APPEL: You had better get your party to insure you. Under the private company you only paid on the amount of wages actually paid, but under the State insurance you require to add 15s. a week to the amount of the emolument paid. Say that a poorer member of the community pays 5s. a week for the service of a little girl, then he has got to pay insurance on £1 a week. It is very easy to make the thing pay when you have to add 15s. a week for board and lodging to the amount of wages actually paid. I brought this up more particularly because I want to get some information. The Income Tax Commissioner only allows 10s. a week to be deducted for board and lodging for those employed by a taxpayer. I take it if the State requires a taxpayer to add 15s. a week to the wages, that instructions will be given to the Income Tax Commissioner to allow 15s. a week to be deducted for board and lodging for those employed by the taxpayer in connection with income tax. It is just as well that the public should realise that the Government on one hand value board and lodging at 15s. a week, and on the other hand at only 10s. a week. Under these conditions if the institution does not pay then there must be mismanagement somewhere.

There was another matter that was brought up, and it really is connected with the State butcheries. It was stated by the Premier last night, in connection with the cattle deal, that 600 head of cattle had been bought at £12 a head, and that the cattle were worth £13 a head; that practically the owner had presented the State with £600. Well, he was very philanthropic, and I venture to say I would not have done it. The Premier further stated that at that time these cattle were worth 75 per cent. more in the market, and he stated that a profit of £600 had been made. Where did the rest of that profit go—the difference between £12 plus the 75 per cent, and £1 a head? I would like to know, and I dare say the man in the street would like to know, by what mismanagement that amount of profit was lost.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: You are using harsh terms to-night.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The present Government have established State butchers' shops, and it is as well for us to know where the loss comes in, because there should have been a very much greater profit. It is a most extraordinary thing, to my mind, where that difference went. However, I have mentioned it so that the public of Queensland will be able to go into the matter and judge for themselves as to whether the present Administration are such excellent business managers as they say they are.

In the Speech they say, "It is proposed to increase the expenditure on roads and bridges in opening up new lands for selection, and at present a large amount of this work is in hand in the Northern, Central, and Southern districts." If the Government had been fair, they might have said, "Following out the policy of the late Administration," that work is being continued. But to put it in the way in which they do, they would naturally lead the electors of the State to believe that they have initiated this policy. Why, this policy has been carried out for years and years throughout the length and breadth of the State. It is only a few years ago that a new bridge was built over the Barron River, above the falls, and roads have been built in lands which have been thrown open for selection all over the State. It is simply a policy which has been carried out for years, and there is nothing to commend it, so far as the State is concerned, because they add the amount of money so expended on to the price of the land; but they would lead the people to believe that this is a benevolent expenditure for the benefit of people who select land, whereas the people have to pay every fraction of such expenditure, with interest added. It is a proper thing to do, but I object to the present Administration claiming that they are the ones to initiate this policy.

We all realise that there has been a great loss of stock in the State of Queensland—

The SPEAKER indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I desire to make a few observations in connection with His Excellency's Address, but before doing so I wish to refer particularly to some of the remarks which have emanated from members on the other side of the House. The longer I am in Parliament, the more I am convinced of the utter hypocrisy of members on that side of the House who claim to be the friends of the men on the land. I have seen two members, who pose as the representatives of the man on the land, to-day make an exhibition of themselves in irrelevancy, in immature facts, and in statements which cannot be borne out by facts. They claim all the virtues as being farmers' representatives, and they sneer at members on this side of the House.

Mr. STEVENS: All the sneering is on your side of the House.

Mr. PETERSON: Early in the afternoon, who was it that cast sneers over to us, and said that we could not have any sympathy for the man on the land?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why did you take their stuff from them?

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. member reminds me very much of a gentleman who was run down with nervousness. He went

to his doctor, and asked his doctor what would be good for him, and the doctor suggested that he should take whisky and hot water every morning. He said, "I cannot do that, because my family are prohibitionists and I am a teetotaler." The doctor said, "You shave, don't you?—and you can sneak it up every morning with the shaving water." So the old chap tried it, and a few days afterwards the doctor called, and met one of the family at the door, and asked how his father was getting on, and he said, "Father seems to be all right physically, but we do not know what is wrong with him. He is asking for hot water all day long." The same with our friend here. He seems to be harping on a particular thing all the time, and has become so obsessed with it that he really believes we are stealing the stuff.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: So you are. Why don't you knock off stealing it?

Mr. PETERSON: I am going to show members of this House the result of a meeting of the Oakey District Co-operative Society Butter Company, as [10 p.m.] reported in the "Daily Mail" of 12th June, 1916. That is since the Labour party has been in power, and I believe this district verges on the hon. member for Drayton's district. We were told last session that the policy of this Government was going to drive men off the land—that it was going to ruin them, but I am going to show what has happened on the hon. member's own Darling Downs. Let him deny it if he can. This is the report—

"The monthly meeting of directors of the Oakey District Co-operative Butter Company was held last week. During the month, 15 tons of butter had been manufactured, and the payment decided on was: A1 butter, 1s. 1d. per lb.; No. 1, 1s.; and No. 2, 11d. per lb. The total amount passed for payment was £2,189. In accordance with a resolution passed at the annual meeting, the directors allotted new shares in the proportion of two to every five original shares held. A considerable number of new shares had also been applied for."

And yet the hon. member has told us to-night, as he told us last session, that all the factories on the Darling Downs have been closed down. I am giving him a report from his own district, which shows that the shareholders of one factory watered their stock, gave themselves more shares, and others applied for new shares. Are there the downtrodden, drought-stricken men for whom the hon. member complains?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They are compelled to do it.

Mr. PETERSON: Does he think that the people of Queensland are deluded? I challenge him to come to my electorate and talk that "tripe" there.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are showing your ignorance now. Right through, you know absolutely nothing about a butter factory.

Mr. PETERSON: I know nothing about a butter factory! I think I handled an old churn long before the hon. member knew what a cow was. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And never got beyond that.

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Mr. PETERSON: I am going to show later on how the party of the hon. member has retarded the butter industry and the progress of the State. Let us go on a little now with the report of his own factories.

"Messrs. W. D. Buckley and W. A. Webber reported having waited on the directors, as a deputation representing the farmers in the vicinity of Lanewood, with a request that the Oakley Butter Company consider the erection of a cheese factory at Lanewood."

Great Scot! And we were told that the Government were driving them off the land.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If you like I will give you the names of three cheese factories which have closed down.

Mr. PETERSON: I am giving actual facts as they appeared in the daily Press, which have not been contradicted. I am not for a moment going to detract from the seriousness of the drought conditions which have prevailed in Queensland in the past. I am one of those who hail with delight the entrance of better seasons, who say that with them and the Government we have in power now, the outlook for the producer is brighter than ever before.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: The more one comes to look into the matter, the more one is convinced of the utter hypocrisy of the hon. members opposite. I was in one part of my electorate about two months ago, which is a strong Liberal centre, and one gentleman there, who is a producer, told me that he went into the office of one of the firms in Rockhampton, controlled by a gentleman who was in this House in the last Parliament, right in the middle of the period when the dairyman was wanting fodder, and said, "How much are you asking for wheaten chaff?" and was told £15 a ton. "Well," he said, "I have a bit to sell; what will you pay for it?" and they scratched their heads and told him £5.

Mr. ROBERTS: You know that is not true.

Mr. PETERSON: The electors of Normanby know that it is true.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Do you not think that anybody would have jumped at chaff at £5 a ton at that time?

Mr. PETERSON: These firms were asking the stricken dairy farmer £15 a ton, but when this gentleman—his name is Barnett; I do not wish to hide his name and neither does he; he is a Liberal, or was—(laughter)—when he offered his chaff to them, they would only give him £5, and said that they had plenty. Who is it that finds the money to fight us at election time? The very men who are fighting us and the farmers at the same time.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Are your farmers doing well?

Mr. PETERSON: No, and the reason is that your Government refused to give them water facilities—which they have got now.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: I remember the Hon. John White, ex-Minister for Agriculture, when he went to the Dawson Valley, was asked whether he would give the settlers assistance to procure water, and what did

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he say? What did the friends of the farmers, the men who cavilled at the Labour party, say? He said, "No, it is not possible for the Government to give them assistance." But now a steam boring plant is operating in that district—as a result of Labour rule—and those people will say, when the time comes, that the Government who sit on the Treasury benches to-day have been their friends. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There have been boring plants all over Queensland during the last eight years.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not operated by the Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have put down 500 bores myself.

Mr. McMINN: There is one bore that has not been put down. (Laughter.)

Mr. PETERSON: I am not talking of private bores, but of Government bores. The leader of the Opposition, in the speech which he delivered to-night, seemed to me to take a monopoly of patriotism. One would think that all the patriotism in Queensland was vested in the Liberal party. I wish to read a few extracts from a letter which I have received from a friend named W. Furness, just to show that, instead of the Labour movement being sneered at, it is owing to the Labour movement that we have so many men at the front to-day. (Hear, hear!) Men have come to this House and said that if it were not for the fact that there was a Labour Government in power they would be afraid to leave their wives and children behind. (Hear, hear!) What was the position before this Government did get into power? The cost of living was going up; the prices of bread, flour, butter, and meat were soaring, and one Minister, then on that side, said that he hoped to see meat 1s. per lb., and he got his wish. This is what one man writes back to me from Egypt—

"From what I can see, our boys will come back stronger and more staunch than ever they were before. There are six Australian Workers' Union men in our tent alone, and we intend to do our utmost, if we return, to see that the Labour party is returned stronger than ever."

Further on in the letter he says—

"If ever you want to take a trip, well, do not come to Egypt. My advice to anyone is to stop in Australia. It is the best place I know of, and Queensland for preference, so long as the Labour party is in power there, which I hope will be for many years to come."

That is a voice from the trenches.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What have they done since they have been in power? Stolen our butter.

Mr. PETERSON: I will show the hon. member what they have done. When I was in my electorate, one Liberal gentleman came to me and said, "I thought you were elected to reduce the cost of living?" I said, "It had a great deal to do with it, although I did not fight my election on that issue, but on the stagnation of the old Liberal party." This man has a family of six children, and the result of Labour rule is that his bills have decreased as follow:—Bread, 3s. 6d. a

week; butter, 4s. 6d.; flour, 1s.; meat, 3s. 6d.—making a total of 12s. 6d. a week saved since this party came into power.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I suppose he eats less.

Mr. PETERSON: No, he does not eat less. Right throughout my electorate when I have been questioned on this subject and have placed the facts before the people, they have admitted their truth; and I say that it is to the credit of the Labour Government that they have fulfilled their pledge in this respect as far as it was in their power to do so. The leader of the Opposition laid great stress on the argument that we had not reduced the cost of living. The hon. member for Drayton, in referring to the Department of Agriculture, stated incidentally that the farmer was being robbed of his produce—in other words, that the farmer was getting too little for his produce. How does that harmonise with the statement of the leader of the Opposition that the Government have not reduced the cost of living? The deputy leader of the Country party says the Government are robbing the farmers, and the leader of the Opposition says the Government have not robbed them enough. Those two arguments are irreconcilable. What has been the position of the workers since the Labour party have come into power in the various States of the Commonwealth? Those members who remember the strenuous times of 1902 cannot fail to remember the huge number of insolvencies which occurred at that particular period, when there was no war on. But what do we find now, with the Labour party in power in the Commonwealth and in various States? We find that there have been less insolvencies during the past year than there ever were before. That shows that there must be somebody guiding the destinies of the States and the Commonwealth who are able to guide them in a proper channel. There are a little over 4,000,000 people in the Commonwealth, and of these 2,055,957 are depositors in the Savings Banks of Australia. Those depositors have to their credit not less a sum than £33,537,000. Who are the people who deposit their money in those Savings Banks? The workers, because the interest is not attractive enough for wealthy speculators.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That is the argument we used to use in connection with the Savings Bank.

Mr. PETERSON: I do not object to your using that argument, but I give those figures to show that the rate of progress has been greater under Labour regime than it was under a Liberal Administration. Those figures show that there is nothing in the cry of members opposite that the policy of the Labour party has been detrimental to the progress of the people of the Commonwealth, and of the workers in particular.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Go to the Downs and see the bank accounts there.

Mr. PETERSON: I was through the Downs a few months ago and saw the drought conditions which prevailed there; and I yield to none in my sympathy with the men who worked as the settlers there did to stave off the effects of the drought.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They sold their chattels to buy clothes for their children.

Mr. PETERSON: If the statement made by the hon. member that those men would not produce any more is correct, how is it that a paragraph appeared in the "Courier" stating that we were to expect a record crop this year?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Because of the good season.

Mr. PETERSON: But the hon. member advised the farmers not to produce any more, and said he was going to be their leader and would come down here and blow us out. New South Wales, with a Labour Government in power, has a yield of 65,000,000 bushels of wheat last season, and I venture to say that when the Government of that State again appeals to the people they—and not the so-called friends of the farmer in Sussex street—will again be entrusted with the administration of the country.

I desire to thank the Government for the considerable amount of good which has been done in my electorate, though it is rather history now. With regard to the carriage of fodder for starving stock, I admit that the previous Government lowered the rates for that class of traffic, but I mention the matter now to show that our Government did not withdraw that privilege from the men on the land in times of distress. Many settlers in my electorate had to get their fodder from the South, and they got a reduction in freight down to 75 per cent., and for that also I desire to thank the present Government. I am pleased that the Government abolished the railway guarantee tax. There are in my electorate three railways which were operating under the railway guarantee tax. I have always held that a tax of that description is not a fair tax, but that it should be borne by the citizens as a whole, and not by one part of the community, as railways are national matters. The Government in abolishing the guarantee tax relieved the settlers of a payment of £220,357 per annum. In my electorate there are numerous settlers who were supplied with seed maize, not only last season but this season, and the Government also assisted them as far as lay in their power in obtaining wire netting. Previously under the old Government, farmers' children had to go without education. Some time ago there was a wedding in my electorate, and the farmer's daughter who was getting married could not sign her own name. These people had asked for a school for years, but right throughout the Normanby electorate the request of farmers in this connection was ignored under Liberal Administrations. Since the Labour party came into power fifteen schools have been established in the district; yet I am asked to join a party like that which refused them schools. I would sooner be shot. I prefer to remain with the party whose aim is the betterment of all and the protection of the farmer. Let the dairy farmers, and other farmers, form themselves into a union, not under the Queensland Farmers' Union—which is managed by barristers, ex-bank managers, and commission agents—but a union of their own—under their own management—which will secure them reasonable prices for their produce. I am in favour of that system. Let the farmers form themselves

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into unions like other sections of the community, and then they, too, will get the results of their own industry.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How can they get the results of their own industry while your Government is in power?

Mr. PETERSON: If the Government had not protected the people of Queensland with regard to the butter, the big majority of the centres in my electorate would have had to eat fat. I would not stand up in this House and see the people of Queensland or the stricken farmers on the Dawson Valley exploited by any section of Roma street agents.

I also desire to thank the Government because they have at last seen the wisdom of assisting settlers in regard to water. Previous Governments believed in settling people on the land. They believed in doing a lot of things on paper; but they dropped the settler just at the point where he could have become revenue-producing for himself and for the State. The result was that many hundreds of settlers throughout Queensland have suffered through past misgovernment at the hands of the Liberal party.

I desire also to thank the Government for having increased the allowance to the Meteor Park Orphanage in my electorate. There are about 300 children in that orphanage, and the Government have increased the allowance from 5s. 10d. to 6s. 6d. I am also pleased that they have increased the allowance to widowed mothers for their children from 4s. to 9s. and 10s. per week. The previous Government considered that 4s. was ample for a mother who had been bereft of her breadwinner, and they allowed her to go out to the washtub to supplement their allowance. This party hold that an ample allowance should be made in such cases, and that a widow should be provided with reasonable facilities for having her children educated and for looking after them herself.

Then we have to thank the Government for the allowance they make to victims suffering from phthisis. Men who contracted this disease in quarries, stonemasons, lead workers, and men working in mines, in their dying days have been absolutely dependent upon the 10s. a week that was allowed by the Commonwealth. This Government allows 10s. a week to these unfortunate people. As a result, these unfortunates are not now worried in their dying days by fears of what is going to happen to their wives and children. They are now able to say, "Thanks to a Labour Government I am able to spend my last days in comparative comfort."

I am very pleased that it is the intention of the Government to reintroduce the Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill. Hon. members opposite give it as their reason for opposing that Bill that they do not believe in granting what is known as the parliamentary franchise in connection with local government. I am one of those who do not subscribe to that doctrine. I believe that every man and woman who is a lodger is entitled to a vote in local government matters. After the Bill was introduced last session I received a number of letters from members of shire councils, most of whom were squatters, asking me to vote against the extension of the parliamentary franchise. I know for a fact that by far the larger

proportion of recruits are coming from the country districts, and it appals me to think that many of these young fellows, whom these squatters are content to allow to fight their battles and defend them, their families, and their property, are not considered entitled to have a voice in the management of local affairs.

Mr. GUNN: Have no squatters gone to the front?

Mr. PETERSON: Yes; but where one squatter has gone 10,000 workers have gone. And if squatters have gone, they have only done their duty, and I make bold to say that we would hear a good deal less of conscription if the age for military service was raised to fifty years. And when Mr. Hughes comes out with a declaration that he is going to take the money from these people, they will soon turn round and say, "We are going to object to this kind of thing."

I am pleased to notice that provision is to be made for consolidating the Agricultural Bank, the Workers' Dwellings Board, and the Savings Bank. I hold the leader of the Opposition responsible for the anomalies which exist in connection with the administration of the Agricultural Bank Act. I believe I have more to do with the Agricultural Bank than any other member of this House, and I have taken the trouble to look into the causes of these anomalies, and I have found that they are all due to the hon. gentleman. I do not say that he is personally responsible for them, but, owing to his being a city member, he was not in close touch with the settlers when he was administering the department, and so he was not familiar with the disabilities under which settlers labour. When the hon. gentleman was in charge of the work, he took away from the Agricultural Bank the control of its inspectors and placed them under the Lands Department. Many delays have arisen from this cause. How can you expect things to be conducted properly when the bank has no direct power over its inspectors? The other day I came across a case in point. A farmer wanted an advance upon the security of the work he had done. He reported that he had almost completed his dip and his stockyards. After a delay of some weeks the ranger went out—it was quite close to Rockhampton—and he reported that no work at all had been done. I procured affidavits from quite a number of reputable citizens, including justices of the peace, stating that the work had been almost completed, and that the inspector had never been there at all. If that system is allowed to prevail, whether it be a Liberal or a Labour Government that is in power, anomalies are bound to continue.

Another cause of delay in connection with the bank arises from the fact that the Crown Law Office does the legal work for practically all the Government departments, with the result that there is a considerable amount of congestion in the work of the office. I have often thought that these delays could be obviated if the Agricultural Bank's legal work was done by a special officer who was not called upon to undertake any other work in the Crown Law Office. If those two matters were remedied, most of the present anomalies in connection with the bank would be swept away, and settlers would be a great deal more satisfied than they are at the present time.

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The next matter is this: The Agricultural Bank, as at present constituted, has no power in regard to the appointment of its own workers. I understand that they have not even got the power to sack the [10.30 p.m.] office boy. If any success is to be achieved, the bank will have to be vested with the same power as the New South Wales Bank, where the commissioner has the sole right in the appointment of his officers. All I can say is that, in my district alone, since the Labour party has been in power, there has been a greater amount of money expended in the way of loans than hitherto, which is only right. I regret to see that, as far as the Workers' Dwellings Board is concerned, taking last year's figures, the amounts advanced by way of loans for dwellings exceeds that given to agriculture by £408,000. I hope that in future that position will be reversed, because it is far better to see land development going on at a greater rate than city development. If these suggestions are embodied in the amending Bill, I believe they will make the conditions much easier for the settlers than has previously been the case. I had occasion to complain last year with regard to the treatment meted out to some of the settlers. Accusations have been made against the bank by certain people. I approached the directors, and later the Minister for Lands, and he agreed to send Mr. Deshon up to the Dawson Valley to see if some of the anomalies could not be rectified, and I am pleased that, as a result of the visit of the secretary and accountant of the Agricultural Department to that district, many of the anomalies have been removed, and things are going on more smoothly than before. I hope the Bill will provide for an increase in the amount which will be lent to farmers. Some hon. members think we are giving this money to farmers, but they have to pay 5 per cent. for it, and are expected to meet the interest payments when they become due; they are, therefore, under no compulsion to the State, for they are developing the country more perhaps than other sections of the people. Many persons have been appointed inspectors in the past who are not practical farmers, and who never knew what it was to put up fences or milk a cow. They were political appointments—men who had been taken out of offices in the cities and given jobs to get them out of the road, and I lay the bad working of the Agricultural Bank at the door of these men. I am thankful to the Minister for Lands for having appointed on the Dawson Valley, some time ago, a ranger who is a practical farmer, and who understands how to value for the purposes of the Agricultural Bank. These appointments show that the Government are working in the interests of the men on the land.

I am pleased to see that there is provision made for a State bank and a State Insurance Bill. I have always believed in that principle. I think the "Daily Telegraph" happily pointed out a few weeks ago, in commenting on the amount of money which had been subscribed to the war loan, and referring to the part each State had played in subscribing, that, while Queensland showed up very badly, there was a reason for it. It was because the financial institutions which had branches in Brisbane subscribed that money from Sydney and Melbourne, and those States got the credit for

money which was earned in Queensland. Practically all the headquarters of the private insurance companies are out of Queensland, and the bulk of the premiums collected go to the other States and are lost to Queensland; but with State insurance the money will be kept in the State, and be used by way of trust funds for the development of the State. The same arguments apply to the State bank as apply to the State Insurance Bill, and I do not wish to labour that subject.

The hon. member for Murrumba yesterday cautioned the Treasurer to go very carefully with regard to trust funds. That meant that the hon. member advised the Treasurer not to lend so much money to the farmers. The hon. member for Murrumba last year also asked the Government to desist from spending money on more schools.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: What he pointed out was the position of the trust funds.

Mr. PETERSON: I am comparing the statement of the hon. member with regard to State schools last session with what he said last night. The hon. member, who poses as a master of finance, suggested that the Treasurer should be more careful with regard to trust funds.

I also wish to refer to the increases which have been given. Hon. members opposite have stated that we have not increased the salaries of the workers engaged by the Government. I have a list here, which I do not intend to read at length, which shows that the increases withheld by the Denham Government, but which were granted by the Ryan Government as one of its earliest acts in the financial year 1915, including all items, amounted to £55,508, and these increases were distributed amongst 6,192 people. Where does the argument come in that none of these people have received increases from the Government? The leader of the Opposition knows quite well that his Government kept back the automatic increases. The Government have done all that was humanly possible, not only for the public servants, under the circumstances, but also in connection with construction workers. These men had asked repeatedly for increases, on account of the conditions under which they worked, and they were denied to them by a Government of which the hon. member was a Minister. Altogether, the increases totalled £215,941, of which the wages staff in the railway got £121,548, the automatic increases to the clerical staff in receipt of under £200 per annum were £31,393, and the increases to construction workers, at the rate of 1s. a day from 1st July, amounted to £63,000. As I have said, that makes a total increase given to the public servants of £215,941. How do hon. members opposite square that with the statement they made that the present Government have done nothing whatever? I believe that there are anomalies, and one anomaly is in connection with the station-masters and night officers.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: They were worse off under the late Government.

Mr. PETERSON: Yes, the regulations militated against them under the late Government, and prevented them from getting increases. I am hopeful that these injustices

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will be removed, and that the men in charge of important stations, and the night officers, will receive increases to which they are justly entitled.

I am pleased that there is a Police Offences Bill projected. Time and again the Commissioner for Police has asked for further powers to be given to him in connection with immoral houses and street betting. I hope that that Bill will come forward this session and be given effect to. From what I have seen in the neighbourhood where I live, the time is now ripe for action to be taken against immoral houses and sly grog-selling and also the gambling element. It is time these things were dealt with, because they are sapping the moral fibre of the people. I hope that the Government will give effect to that Bill immediately.

It is not my intention to speak further. I am pleased to observe from the Governor's Speech that the farmers are going to get their share from the Government, and that there is an amendment of the Agricultural Bank Act proposed. I am hopeful that there will be increased financial facilities and that officers will be appointed to carry out specific duties to avoid the long delays that now take place.

Another measure which I hope will be passed is the Land Bill. I have many prickly-pear selectors in my electorate, and they were deeply grieved that members opposite, assisted by their friends in the Upper House, turned down the Bill which was introduced last year, and which granted the selectors an extension of their term of lease from twenty-five years to forty years. The hon. member for Murilla thought he was going to hoist the Government on a petard by originating a conference of prickly-pear selectors, but the members of that conference waited on the Premier to-day and, according to the "Standard" report, one of the number spoke as follows:—

"Mr. J. W. Newberry (Central Council, Queensland Farmers' Union) stated that they were thankful to the Labour Government for having introduced a measure last session which promised very material assistance. They all read of the Government's proposal last session with joy, but they had met with bitter disappointment. They knew the sincerity of the Government in desiring to help the army of fighters who were battling with the worst pest Queensland had—prickly-pear.

"So severe was the distress, stated Mr. Newberry, that people were living on wallabies and dry flour, children were clothed in rags, for ordinary purposes going about almost naked, with no money to find anything to eat. The situation was absolutely deplorable. They asked that their leases should last for forty instead of twenty-five years."

Mr. VOWLES: I have supported that for years.

Mr. PETERSON: Hon. members prefer to help the wealthy squatter rather than agree to the prickly-pear selectors getting an increase of their leases from twenty-five to forty years.

Mr. VOWLES: Will the Premier introduce the Bill dealing with prickly-pear selectors by itself?

[Mr. Peterson.

Mr. PETERSON: The Premier will be subordinating his position if he allowed himself to be dictated to by the Upper House. He is the Premier and leader of this party, and we object to him being dictated to by the Upper House as to what class of legislation should be put through. If hon. members think we are going to put legislation through in piecemeal fashion, they make a great mistake.

Mr. VOWLES: Is that the way you are going to deal with the returned soldiers?

Mr. PETERSON: I read a letter just now from a returned soldier saying the soldiers were coming back to fight the battle for Labour. When I was in the hon. member's electorate the other day, a returned soldier told me that he had come back to work for the Labour party there. According to that paragraph in the "Standard," we have electors on the verge of the hon. member for Dalby's electorate saying that they know the Government are sympathetic to the man on the land.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Why should they not be sympathetic? I increased the term to twenty-five years.

Mr. PETERSON: I am pleased to hear it, but we are prepared to go twice as far as you. Last year you had a chance of increasing it to forty years, but the Upper House turned it down. I predict that now we are going to have good seasons, all the fulsome talk of hon. members opposite about the reduction in the amount of production will prove to be mere twaddle. We will find that as a result of the Labour Government and good seasons that we will have prosperity. I was pleased to notice at the show that there was a great demand for bulls, cows, and stallions from people from all parts of Queensland. They bought the cattle to go in for dairying. I was pleased to notice the fine display of vegetables from Wallumbilla. It shows that since the Labour Government have been in power we have had bigger vegetables produced than were ever produced before. (Laughter.) You could not lift the turnips, and the beets were also large. Hon. members know perfectly well that the price which has been obtained for cattle, that the price which has been obtained for pigs—

Mr. MOORE: £18 17s. 6d. per head for cattle, which is a record.

Mr. PETERSON: I say, with these prices and good seasons ahead of us, we can look forward with confidence to the future, and when next election comes round we can say that with the aid of Providence particularly and a very good Government we have been able to send Queensland ahead far greater than ever she was sent ahead before.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SMITH (Mackay): 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 Tuesday next.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at nine minutes to 11 o'clock till Tuesday next.