

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST 1917

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST, 1917.

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

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—

Report on Government relief for 1916-17.

PROPOSED QUESTIONS.

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): I desire to ask the Chief Secretary question No. 1 standing in my name.

THE PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*): I do not propose to answer any questions until the motion standing in the hon. gentleman's name is disposed of.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE RECENT RAILWAY STRIKE.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE MOTION.

HON. J. TOLMIE, who was received with Opposition "Hear, hears," in rising to move the motion standing in his name, said: The time has now come when it is desirable to discuss the attitude of the Government in relation to the recent strike. When the strike took place the Government assumed an attitude that commended itself to the people of Queensland.

THE PREMIER: And they continued that attitude to the end.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Government stated that it was going to act in a constitutional way, and was going to uphold sound and good government in the State of Queensland. When that statement was made it commended itself to all phases of public thought. Public men throughout Queensland recognised that the Government were taking up an attitude which was a right and a sound one. (Hear, hear!) Whether they agreed with the Government in politics or not, they were determined that the Government should have a fair show to carry on the negotiations in connection with the strike and to see it through.

THE PREMIER: You never do express any approval of our attitude at any time.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Chamber of Commerce here in Brisbane passed a resolution approving of the attitude that had been enunciated by the Government.

THE PREMIER: Did the Opposition ever say that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: When we consider the constitution of that body, and know that it stands for the business community of the capital city of Queensland—

MR. COLLINS: A self-elected body.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And also emphasises the opinion of thoughtful men throughout Queensland, even though they may be a self-elected body, then I say the weight of public opinion behind the Government ought to have given them courage to do the right thing. In relation to the interjection about

a self-elected body, I shall have something to say about that matter before I have finished. I believe that even the National Political Council, a body absolutely opposed to the Government—(Government laughter)—passed a resolution stating that so long as the Government were actuated by high principles they would receive the support of that body.

MR. McLACHLAN: Is not that the body which said that nothing but the best will do?

HON. J. TOLMIE: Hon. members on this side refrained from taking up any attitude that would hamper the Government in connection with the business they had in hand.

THE PREMIER: You were afraid of taking action.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We were prepared to take any action for the maintenance of Constitutional principles, and if hon. members opposite behind the Premier required our assistance, we were prepared to give all the assistance we could.

THE PREMIER: You were very successful in concealing it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman has stated that we did not play the square game with him, as leader of the House, during the period when the strike was on. The Premier never made any approaches to hon. members on this side asking for assistance in connection with the matter. If he had made that approach, I am quite certain that hon. members on this side would have actively co-operated with him, as they did passively co-operate with him during the period of the strike. Was it the function of the Opposition to approach the Government, and ask the Government to allow them to participate in the management of the affairs of the State, in the administration of the Government? If the Government needed assistance from the Opposition, was it not the right and equitable course for the Government to approach the Opposition? That they did not do, and from that the inference can be drawn that they did not want the assistance of the Opposition.

MR. McMINN: They did not need it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Very well, I take it that such is the case. But notwithstanding the fact that they did not want or need the assistance of the Opposition, that assistance was ready and would have been forthcoming at any time that the Government required it.

THE PREMIER: Up to what stage had they the passive assistance of the Opposition?

HON. J. TOLMIE: You had the passive assistance of the Opposition until the period you departed from constitutional principles.

THE PREMIER: What date?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I will give you the date. There was no desire on our part to gain party credit at the expense of the Government. During the time the struggle was on we made no overt or any other action in that direction. Sitting in his place in this Chamber last Thursday the hon. gentleman made aspersions against the character of those who fought politically against him, stating that they were endeavouring to put obstructions in his way in dealing with the strike. He made reference to a case which occurred at Cairns—in your own electorate,

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Mr. Speaker—where an organiser named Mr. Williams had made certain overtures to the men engaged in the strike, asking them to continue to act in the way they had been acting. I have here a telegram from Mr. Williams, in which he says—

“Lettergram re Cairns received. This is absolutely false. No such statement made. Writing fully.”

The PREMIER: We want to hear the lettergram to explain the telegram.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The telegram sent to me, as the hon. gentleman knows, was the substance of the charge which was made by the Chief Secretary on Thursday afternoon.

The PREMIER: You ought to read the lettergram, which speaks for itself, I presume.

HON. J. TOLMIE (reading)—

“In the Legislative Assembly on Thursday last the Premier made a statement regarding the Nationalists’ attitude towards the Northern strike. In the course of his speech he quoted from the Cairns ‘Times’ of 15th August, an alleged remark by Mr. Williams, a National Political Council organiser, who was stated to have said, ‘This railway strike has sounded the death knell of the Ryan Labour Government.’”

There is no question about that. (Loud Government laughter.)

“Following this was a prediction that the Ryan Government’s resignation would be handed in if the strike continued.”

That is not likely to happen so long as the Government have a chance of place or power.

“The National Political Council telegraphed Mr. Williams, quoting the report above referred to. Mr. Williams replied as follows:—‘Lettergram re Cairns received. This is absolutely false. No such statement made.’”

The PREMIER: Why don’t you quote the statement?

HON. J. TOLMIE—

“Referring to the matter last night, an official of the National Political Council stated that there was evidence to support an inference that the Cairns ‘Times’ report was nothing more than an invention. To prove this he quoted the following paragraph, which appeared in the ‘Times’ on 8th August, two issues earlier than the one in which Mr. Williams’s alleged remarks were quoted:—‘It may be that the Ryan Labour Government have treated the employees of the railway well, and we much regret that they have gone on strike. We consider it an unwise step, and are rather of opinion that it has been largely engineered by anti-Labourites inside and outside the railway service. Now that this has eventuated Tories are jubilant, boldly stating that the strike has sounded the death knell of the Ryan Labour Government. We feel confident that the bulk of the railway workers have no desire to see that come about, and whether the prediction of the Tories would prove correct or not largely depends upon the developments of the next few days. The position is very grave, and requires the deepest consideration of all parties concerned.’ Thus the ‘Times,’ two issues before it

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accused Mr. Williams, used the words which it afterwards, in a general way, put into his mouth.”

There is no evidence that the hon. gentleman can produce, or that the hon. gentlemen sitting on the other side can produce, to show that any party opposed to the present Government did anything to obstruct them during the period of the strike.

Mr. LAND: Of course you did.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There was no attempt whatever made by the Opposition to hamper the Government. That is quite patent, not only to hon. members sitting in this Chamber, but to persons outside the Chamber as well. The appeal we are making here is not made to hon. gentlemen opposite. They will express their confidence in the action of the Government. That goes without saying. The probability is that they will move some resolution grandiloquently praising themselves for the attitude they have assumed in connection with the strike.

Mr. FOLEY: Don’t anticipate.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That will be quite in keeping with the Government and their supporters on the other side. We are appealing here to a broader Parliament—to the people outside, to whom the hon. gentleman will have to render an account before many months have passed away, and in whose minds their actions in connection with the strike will be quite clear at that time. All that we could do in a reasonable way to assist the Government was done. If our assistance had been asked in a larger way it would certainly have been forthcoming.

The PREMIER: Tell us anything you did.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Government were given an absolutely free hand to conduct that strike right from the beginning to the end, and they failed to act constitutionally throughout.

The PREMIER: The men have resumed work.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is evidence that right from the beginning the Government have been in the hands of unconstitutional bodies outside this Chamber. As a result of that the Government have flouted their own laws. Is not that indictment sufficiently severe? If hon. gentlemen on the other side were guided by principles of sound government it would cause them to move in a body from the support of the Government. The Government passed legislation and then flouted their own laws to gain their own ulterior ends. In doing that the Government have humiliated their own courts. When the Government descend so low as to humiliate their own courts, then they must lose the esteem of all right-thinking men and the general public outside. It will be shown that this Government, in its desire to retain the position it now occupies, has surrendered its powers to an administration—not even to hon. members in this Chamber, not even to the men behind them in this House—but to an outside body altogether, an unelected body, a body whose election is not recognised by the people. I feel certain that the hon. member for Bowen will join with me in regard to that matter.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Bowen will never surrender his powers to any chamber of commerce. (Hear, hear!)

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. member says he will never surrender his powers to any

chamber of commerce. The hon. member for Bowen is quite prepared to show subservience to an outside authority, and to a delegated authority at that.

MR. FOLEY: What power are you referring to?

HON. J. TOLMIE: That points to the degradation of the Government now sitting on the front Treasury benches.

The PREMIER: Are you quoting from the "Courier" leader?

HON. J. TOLMIE: We might ask ourselves when did the degradation of the Government commence? We have only to throw back our minds a year or two when the hon. gentleman who is leading the Government to-day was taken forcibly to the bullring at the Trades Hall by the hon. member for Ithaca, Mr. Gilday, and there a lesson was read to him impressing upon him that he was to take his orders, not from his Ministry or from the party in the House, but from the Trades Hall. From that time right up to the present we see that the Government have been controlled in all their actions of any importance by that outside body. That was the point of commencement of the degradation of the Government. But when we come down to the point of culmination we see that they reached a depth which is the lowest that can be sounded by any political party. They commenced when they surrendered themselves to certain unions, and it culminated when they abrogated the laws of the land to secure place and power, when they submitted to the dictation of the railway porters at Wallangarra as to how those individuals should conduct their duty, and when they submitted to the Northern strikers taking possession of the railways of this State. I put a question to the Minister for Railways as to whether the railway strikers of the North were in possession of the railways, and he informed me that such was not the case. The next day the Minister's statement was wired to the North, and I received this telegram from the Chamber of Commerce at Herberton—

"Coyne's reply you re railways absolutely incorrect. Refer you district traffic manager."

I again asked the Minister for Railways if the railways in the North were in the possession of the strikers. Yesterday he told me that he was going to make inquiries. I do not need the hon. gentleman to make inquiries now, because I have a statement here which appeared in the public Press in regard to that matter—

"MASS MEETING OF RAILWAY MEN HELD IN THEATRE ROYAL.

"Townsville, Monday.

"A mass meeting was held this morning at the Theatre Royal, and after a short discussion, the meeting was adjourned till 2 o'clock. Considerable amusement was caused by the members of 'outside' unions rushing the gallery where pickets had not been placed."

Even the outside unions were not allowed to be present.

"The gallery was finally cleared. A number of addresses were delivered.

"Replying to an interjection 'Are you a member of the I.W.W.?' the secretary (Mr. Rymer) said he had not yet reached that stage of education. (Cheers.) But for all that, there were some things we could learn from that

body. A member of the House had asked Mr. Coyne if it were true that the strike committee was in control of the Northern railways. He was sure if the gentleman who asked that question could see our pickets at the station, and the request from various bodies for permits to do various things, he would have realised how ridiculous his question was. 'We have absolute control,' he said, 'and I hope the time will come when the men will always be in control.' Besides the matter of retrospectivity, they must consider future control. They came out as an organised body, and would return as such."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have returned.

HON. J. TOLMIE: When a section of the public servants can get up in public meetings and tell the Government to their teeth that they are in control of the Government, it looks pretty bad.

The PREMIER: As long as they are not in control of the Government that is all I am concerned about.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is the statement of the Chief Secretary—that as long as they are not in control of the Government he is satisfied. His actions in connection with the strike were all directed in the direction of handing over the control to outside bodies.

The PREMIER: If they had had control of the Government they would have had their retrospective pay and their pay while they were on strike. You are only sorry that they have gone back to work.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. T. TOLMIE: There are a number of things to be taken into consideration. There is a party which sits on the Government side of the House and there are the Government themselves and the individual Ministers. During this strike the Chief Secretary has been chiefly in the limelight, and the Minister for Railways has occupied a more subservient position, inasmuch as a good deal of the control of the strike passed into the hands of the Chief Secretary. The Secretary for Public Works was sent up to Townsville to see what he could do, but he returned without doing anything. When he left Townsville there was no one to say farewell to him. He left the place in disgrace so far as the workers in the North were concerned. He had not been in touch with them for a considerable time he was in the North. They practically sent him to Coventry, and he remained in a state of splendid isolation waiting for a boat to take him back to Brisbane. If we trace the history of the strike we will see that the real strike commenced when the Minister for Works broke relations with the strikers at Townsville. Then we have from that on the conduct of the business by the Premier. On 7th August the Premier made the declaration that he was going to stand by the Arbitration Act and for constitutional principles. In furtherance of that statement, he said—

"It appears to me that the men have been ill-advised on the action they have taken.

"He did not know on the information before him how they got the impression the award would be made retrospective.

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"He conceived the duty of the Government would be perfectly plain, and they would be backed in their attitude by public opinion. Strikers through the court had been benefited to the extent of £450,000 per annum."

That was a true statement of the position. The PREMIER: It is still the position.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That was the attitude assumed by the Premier when he had visions of doing his duty to his country and doing his duty to himself, when he had the moral courage to stand up and face the gathering storm, and he did that which he ought to have done sooner.

The PREMIER: I did it all the time.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It is of no use the hon. gentleman getting angry with me. (Government laughter.) He will have an opportunity of defending himself, if it be possible to defend himself for such a dereliction of duty as the Premier and his colleagues were guilty of. On the 10th August the Premier made certain remarks with regard to a cardinal plank of the Labour platform and the basic rock on which it stood. He said—

"The Government intends to uphold the principle of industrial conciliation and compulsory arbitration, which is a cardinal principle of the Labour party's platform."

On the 13th August he issued what was practically a manifesto declaring what was the position in regard to the retrospectivity and justifying the action taken by the court.

Up till that time no fault could [4 p.m.] be found with the attitude taken up by the Premier, but on 25th

August, which was last Saturday, the condition changed.

The PREMIER: Last Saturday?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The 25th August, which was last Saturday. In a statement which appeared in the public Press on that date the Premier said that the Government had decided to refer the question of retrospectivity to the Arbitration Court, and further, that he was going to refer to the Arbitration Court also the question of whether these men should be paid their wages for the period during which they were flouting the laws of the country and not discharging their duties. But he went further, and he said that the president of the Arbitration Court welcomed the attitude that he was taking up.

Mr. POLLOCK: It shows how broadminded he is.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Does it not show that he was temperamentally fit? How could the president of the Arbitration Court say that he welcomed something that was flouting his authority—something that was degrading his court? I think that the Premier was ill-informed when he made a statement of that kind.

The PREMIER: Does it not show his confidence in his decision?

HON. J. TOLMIE: If it did show confidence in his decision, whatever the decision was, he had a right to stand by his court and to stand by himself. The hon. member passed a measure last year placing him in an impregnable position, and he has departed from that position of his own volition if the statement made by the Premier is true; and in departing from that position he is degrading the high position of the court.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are not doubting that it is true, are you?

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HON. J. TOLMIE: I am doubting that it is true. I do not doubt that the Premier may believe that he was making a true statement in connection with the matter, but it is just possible that the Premier may be mistaken in regard to his attitude. I do not for one moment think that the president of the Arbitration Court would degrade himself and the position by saying that he welcomed the intervention of an outside irresponsible authority to oversee his work, and to overrule the decision at which he had arrived. When the Premier is asked by the Prime Minister of Australia to put his house in order, what does he do? Instead of saying, "I am attacking the position in a statesman-like way, in a fearless way, and am dealing with the question that has arisen at the border," he tries to evade it altogether and wires to the Prime Minister "that there is trouble somewhere else; try and get them to settle their trouble."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that not true?

HON. J. TOLMIE: It may be true, but if it be true a thousand times over, is it not the duty of the Government of this State to see that the public servants of this State carry out their duties in a proper manner?

The PREMIER: The proper thing is to strike at the root of the evil.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Then we have the transition of the Minister for Railways in regard to the position. In the first place he said he would see that the strikers generally observed the award of the court. A month or two back he said the Government had specially considered the question of retrospectivity. The Government were observing the award and the strikers must do likewise. That was the right position to take up, and that was the attitude that commended him to the general public, but he joined in the surrender on the 25th. The Government had to back down and he joined with them, and he goes even further.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Was not that the day of victory?

HON. J. TOLMIE: He advised the New South Wales Government on the 28th that they had decided to allow the porters at Wallangarra to dictate as to the manner in which they shall perform their duties.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Be fair.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am fair, and I am always fair. No one can say I am not fair in any indictment I make against the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then you are unfortunate in your deductions.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman wired to the Acting Premier of New South Wales telling him that if anything was sent to the border in the way of heavy luggage or heavy parcels they would not be carried on the Queensland Railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I never communicated with the Acting Premier of New South Wales at all. You are entirely wrong.

HON. J. TOLMIE: If the hon. gentleman did not communicate with the Acting Premier of New South Wales, he communicated with the Commissioner or the Government of New South Wales, and that does not destroy the fact that he communicated with the Go-

vernment of New South Wales, that he had lost control of the Railway Department, and that, unless the Government of New South Wales concurred in the conditions that were laid down by the railway porters at Wallangarra, it would be impossible for much of the passengers' luggage and other produce sent from New South Wales to come into this State.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In effect I told him we did not want to be in the position that they were in.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am only considering the effect of the statement on the public service of the State and upon the conditions prevailing here. The indictments that have been preferred against the Government are such as I believe will be substantiated by public opinion throughout the State. The hon. gentleman in charge of the Government has been very anxious during the last few days to conciliate public opinion and to try and carry public opinion over to his side. When he announced that the strike had terminated, he said that no doubt there would be universal gratification throughout the State of Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am prepared to admit that there is gratification throughout the State that the railways in the North are running, but there is a feeling of shame throughout the State that the Government should have brought about the running of the trains in the way in which they did. The indictment against the Government is its failure in the discharge of its constitutional administrative functions, and a Government that fails in that respect has no right to occupy the Treasury benches. We further indict the Government with a conspiracy with law-breakers to secure the degradation of the Arbitration Court for the mutual benefit of each other at the expense of the honour and of justice to the rest of the community.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: We further indict the Government with the surrender of its powers as a Government to trades unionism; and we indict the Government with taking orders for the conduct of business from the porters of Wallangarra; and we indict them for neglect of and injury to the whole community. First of all, there was a failure of the Government, when the strike took place, to resist aggression. They knew the strike took place, and they knew what their duty was, because they stated that they were going to carry out their duties as a constitutional Government.

The PREMIER: We did.

HON. J. TOLMIE: But when the strike occurred, and when these strikers told the Government to their face that no more trains are going to be run in the North of Queensland until we declare that they shall run, what action did the Government take? What action was taken by the Acting Premier of New South Wales when a similar condition was brought home to him? Did he not say, "So long as I am here in my position as Prime Minister of this State I will carry on the administration of the Government in accordance with the laws of New South Wales." And he has carried on

the administration of the Government of New South Wales in accordance with the laws of that State.

The PREMIER: Would you like to have a similar state of affairs in Queensland to-day?

HON. J. TOLMIE: When persons declared that they would not go on with their employment, he said, "The work of serving the public must go on, and if you, the public servants, who have had this work on hand for so long, decline to go on with that work, then we must get someone else to do it."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Scabs.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And what was the result? The public of New South Wales realised that he was striking a high and a true note, and the public came to his assistance and said, "We will see you through your difficulty."

Mr. McMINN: They are not doing it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And they are seeing him through his difficulty. The railways are running, and the other services of the State are being carried on. That is the attitude, when the unions of the North assumed an aggressive attitude, that the Government should have taken up—the attitude that was taken up by the Premier of New South Wales. And then, again, in relation to the failure of the Government to discharge its constitutional administrative duties, I have to point out that not only did they fail to resist aggression, but they failed to exercise the authority that was vested in them. They failed to enforce the award of Mr. Justice McCawley as between the Commissioner of Railways and the railway employees. It was the province of the Government to exercise authority. They are placed in a position of power and authority in order that they may exercise such, but when the strikers refused to carry on under the award, they refused to exercise that authority that rightly belongs to them. After that there was a failure to discharge their ordinary routine duties. The railways of North Queensland have to serve the interests of that portion of the State. There are thousands of people that have to be supplied with necessities through the medium of the railways, and notwithstanding that such was the case no supplies were sent to those people. The Government remained inactive during that time—that is, they made no attempt whatsoever to put into power the authority they possess, and that was to get other persons to carry on that service if those in charge failed to do so.

The PREMIER: How is it that the railways in North Queensland are not still idle?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman will be able to tell a waiting public when the occasion is presented to him. He can tell them the reason why the railways remained idle so long, and the reason why they are running to-day, and he can also tell the public, if he feels so disposed, how that was brought about by the surrender, by the Premier and those associated with him, of those high principles of government which they should have maintained and upheld, if not for themselves, at any rate for their successors.

Mr. D. RYAN: You had a longer strike three years ago.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Now, we have indicted the Government with having surrendered its constitutional principles, to the

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degradation of the Arbitration Court. When the Arbitration Bill was before this House in 1915-1916 an attempt was made by those sitting on this side of the House to try and provide for an appeal from the Arbitration Court. The hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill resisted that in every direction. It will be seen from "Hansard" that I made an earnest appeal to the hon. gentleman who was in charge of the Bill that provision should be made for an appeal court. I said, speaking on page 743—

"Later on—dealing with that point—I am going to show you that the fact that legislative power was given to the court has been the downfall of the Arbitration Court under the Federal Government. There is a clause which says there is no limit to the powers of the court. This court will possess powers such as Cæsar never possessed. It will possess powers which the Kaiser, in his wildest dreams of power, has never dreamt of possessing. There is no appeal from this court. We know that hon. gentlemen on the other side of the Chamber have for years past come down with resolutions urging that there should be courts of appeal for the railway men, courts of appeal for the public servants, courts of appeal for the policemen, and courts of appeal wherever it was possible to make courts of appeal.

"Mr. Foley: Why not?"

"Hon. J. TOLMIE: Why not? I quite agree with the hon. member. But here, when hon. members opposite have an opportunity, for the first time, to provide a court of appeal they take away from the workers of Queensland the right of appeal. Is that in conformity with the utterances we have heard from them time and time again when they were sitting on this side of the House—when they were asking for wider powers and greater liberty for the working men of Queensland?"

Later on I said—

"We gave the railway workers an appeal board. We also granted appeal boards in other instances. The spirit of the age is to ask for the power of appeal. But here, for the first time—those who claim to be the people's Parliament, those who claim to be the workers' Parliament, those who claim to be put there by the working men of Queensland—the first time they have the opportunity, they begin to put chains on the men who put them there."

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Who said that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I said that when the Arbitration Act was going through this House; and if hon. gentlemen on the other side had been guided by me they would have accepted the position and would have made an opportunity for an appeal. But the hon. gentleman in charge—the present Minister for Works—said that they desired most emphatically that there should be no appeal—that once the Arbitration Court had spoken, once there had been an appeal to the Full Arbitration Court, then there should be no appeal against the decision of the court.

The PREMIER: You think there ought to be an appeal against its decision?

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HON. J. TOLMIE: I am not speaking to-day of what I think ought to be the case; I am only speaking of the law as we find it, or as we made it; and I am only speaking of the way in which the Chief Secretary has been the instrument of the degradation of the Industrial Court of this State. Then we come to this question—what action has been taken to avert the strike? The leader of the Government, who stood forth and told the public, "I am going to act in a constitutional way, and I am going to see this strike through to the end," lost his courage, turned tail on the attitude which he had taken up—the right attitude which he had assumed—and endeavoured to find a way out of the difficulty in which he was placed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In other words, he kept his word.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In other words, he endeavoured to buy people back into the service.

The PREMIER: What price was paid?

HON. J. TOLMIE: He asked for the assemblage of a congress of trade unions to come to Brisbane to take up the duties of the administration of the Government.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That congress met here in Brisbane, while hon. gentlemen passed in and out of this Chamber with looks downcast—(Government laughter)—indicating the position in which they were when the congress turned them out. And then came the surrender of the Government to this outside body. The Government said, "If the strikers will go back to work, we will break down all constitutional principles; we will make the laws of this State of no effect; and we will ask for another arbitration tribunal." Where, I ask, is the authority for another arbitration tribunal? The laws of the land have fixed the Arbitration Court of Queensland; the laws of the land make no opportunities for the election of another tribunal while the present is in force; and instead of coming down and wiping out the Act and passing legislation that might give them an opportunity of dealing with the matter in a legal way—in a constitutional way—they attempted to take down the public, and to take down the men who were out on strike. This is the position with regard to these men. They have said, "If you go back to your work we will guarantee you two things"—

Mr. PAYNE: Why didn't you urge them to assist the men on strike?

HON. J. TOLMIE: "We will guarantee that this matter of retrospectivity will be referred again to another Arbitration Court; that is one thing. We will guarantee you—and we will guarantee that notwithstanding the fact that you have been breaking the laws of the land; you have been causing misery to the people of this State; you have been causing industrial depressions—notwithstanding all these things we will ask the Arbitration Court to adjudicate on the question as to whether you will be paid for the time that you have been doing all those things." It was on these two distinct promises that the various unions in North Queensland decided to return to work. It is corruption, and corruption of the basest and lowest kind. (Hear, hear.) And the unions of North Queensland are expecting

the Government to carry out those conditions. The Government say that they are going to invite a gentleman from another State. We all know that he occupies a high position in Australia, and he is a man of great attainments. What I think is this—I may be wrong in my judgment of him—I don't think that this gentleman is going to come to Queensland on the conditions that are laid down by the Chief Secretary to this matter.

The PREMIER: What made you think that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I said I think he will not. I may be wrong, I said, in my estimation of his character. But I don't think a man occupying—

The PREMIER: You have a different estimate of his character to what I have.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Well, all right; I have a different estimate on a good many things to what the hon. gentleman has; and I am very pleased that there is such a difference.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is why you are there.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am not going to be dragged away from the thread of my argument. I don't for one moment think that the gentleman that is referred to—that is, the Judge of the Industrial Court of the Commonwealth—is going to come to Queensland to adjudicate on a matter on which he has no jurisdiction, and on which there is no power to give him jurisdiction; and on a matter on which he cannot enforce his decision. That is the position. They are going to ask this gentleman to come here to be practically a tool, a plaything, for a Government that has failed to meet its obligations to the public, such as this Government has failed. I don't for one moment think that Mr. Justice Higgins is going to put himself in that position. If he comes to Queensland without jurisdiction, without power to enforce his award, what is going to be the effect when he gives an award against the strikers—as the hon. gentleman in charge of the front Treasury bench interjected was likely?

The PREMIER: I did not say that at all.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Oh, well, when I spoke about the lamentable position in which the President of the Industrial Court here in Queensland found himself in agreeing to this thing and welcoming it, the hon. gentleman interjected that he knew what the result was going to be.

The PREMIER: No, no; that is wrong. I did not say that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He did not.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He did, certainly.

The PREMIER: What I said was that he had confidence in his decision.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is the position that is taken up. That is the position which, I believe, will be taken up by Mr. Justice Higgins—that he will refuse to be a party to such a matter as this.

The PREMIER: You are evidently trying to block him.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Oh, I don't know; I certainly have no such intention.

The PREMIER: I suppose that is the next move—to try and block him?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I think that, although I don't know him, the hon. gentleman has sufficient character—sufficient determination of character—to do that which he thinks is right, irrespective of what my views may be, or what may be the views of the Chief Secretary.

The PREMIER: Quite so; that is the correct view.

HON. J. TOLMIE: But take the other side. It is not certain that Mr. Justice Higgins is going to come here for the purpose of adjudicating in a matter where he has no jurisdiction and where he has no power to enforce his award. If he does not come, what is the attitude then of the Government in relation to these men who have been sent back to work?

Mr. PAYNE: That is a matter between the Government and those men.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I know it is a matter between the Government and the men. At any rate, the men will find that they have had dust thrown in their eyes. The hon. gentleman, in surrendering his rights and all constitutional principles in regard to administration, has placed himself in an unenviable position in regard to this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In what you have said you have encouraged the men to break the law again.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Minister may say that I encourage the men to break the law. That is the position that prevails in his own department at Wallangarra. I know this morning that a family of seven who had been residing here in Queensland returned to the Southern States, and had to leave their luggage behind—and on the advice of the railway people, too, that it would be desirable they should send it by boat from Queensland rather than they should trust to taking it to New South Wales by train. Here the hon. gentleman is the head of the carrying service of this State, and yet he is absolutely under the control of the latest joined recruit at Wallangarra. And we are told that this is a constitutional Government; that we are governed by a Government that is strong—that has the power to enforce its authority—when the condition of things is such as I have stated! Is it not a disgraceful position for Queensland to be in, when, in response to a request that comes from the Prime Minister of Australia, she has to send a reply that somebody else is in trouble, and so long as those people are in trouble we cannot go on with our work; that we are afraid to put into operation laws that should be operating here in the State of Queensland? That is the attitude the present Government has taken up. It does not matter who the Prime Minister is in a sense, or what may be the quarrel between New South Wales and Queensland. He has a high duty to discharge. He has to see that interstate trade is carried on; and I have not the slightest doubt that the powers that are invested in him will be exercised in the direction of trying to induce the Premier of Queensland to stand up to the collar and to act in a constitutional way, too. New South Wales is able to bring all the commodities needed by this State right to our very back door; and yet we are unable to take those things up at our back door and carry them through the State. Is that not a deplorable position in which the

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country finds itself; and what attitude is the Government taking in relation to bringing a change about? What attitude was it to adopt?

The PREMIER: You ought to tell us.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It should adopt the attitude which is adopted by the Premier in New South Wales. (Government laughter.)

Mr. D. RYAN: Chaos! He is still in the wilderness.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Of course it is chaos. When it comes to a Government not administering the laws of a State over which it has control, is not that chaos, and how is there going to be a return to Cosmos? (Government laughter.) The hon. gentleman has said the condition is chaos.

The PREMIER: Chaos in New South Wales.

HON. J. TOLMIE: If we administer the law, is there going to be chaos here?

The PREMIER: No.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Is there not chaos here when I cannot get the goods I require from New South Wales, and if I wish [4.30 p.m.] to travel over the border I am not permitted to take that quantity of luggage or other goods that I may feel disposed to take? If the Government were imbued with a sense of the responsibility it owes to the people it would put an end to this condition of things, even though it had to bring about worse conditions. (Government dissent.) What is the condition of Queensland under the present Government? Is it not the condition of the Roman Empire when it was tottering to its fall—(Government laughter)—when those in authority had to buy off the attacks of their opponents? Is not that the condition of the present Government towards the public servants? It has to buy off the attacks of the public servants; it has to give them concession after concession in order that it may carry on. How long is such a condition as this going to be maintained? How long is the control of the country to remain out of the hands of the Government?

The PREMIER: You believe in the bludgeon?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I believe that when the people have an opportunity of deciding this matter when the reference is made to them, they will say that they will have nothing to do with a Government which has not got the moral courage to put into effect the laws of the State.

The PREMIER: That is not a fact.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do not care what the hon. gentleman believes; I am speaking of what I believe. I have confidence in the public, who want to see things done as they ought to be done. We are told that if a traveller comes from New South Wales, with baggage which is 10 lb. overweight, he must leave it behind, otherwise the whole of the machinery of the Government in this State will come to a standstill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have got a most vivid imagination.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am stating the facts. The hon. gentleman himself has urged that travellers cannot carry anything beyond the amount of luggage that is usually allowed to passengers coming into the State. If you take 10 lb. beyond that, then the whole of the railway service is going to be absolutely dislocated, and Queensland will have to stand

still. If Queensland is to stand still, if her industries are to be disturbed in the way in which they are being disturbed, is it not right that the standstill should take place now once and for all. (Government laughter.)

The PREMIER: You agree with that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I agree that there should be a return to constitutionalism—that we should have a constitutional Government, and that we should administer our affairs in a constitutional manner. If a section of the public take possession of the whole of the State and say, "You must not do certain things, and if you do them then we are going to bring the whole of the wheels of the machinery to a standstill," it is time that the Government should deal with people of that kind, and say that this thing is not going to be allowed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How do you propose to deal with them?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I will tell you how the hon. gentleman has been dealing with them. He has been dealing with them in a way that will encourage them to come again. When they find that they have a supine, spineless Government which will agree to any pressure which may be put upon them—which will be absolutely putty in the hands of the public servants of the State—then the public servants are going to come and come again in order that they may force the Government to do the things which they wish to be done. How long is this going to continue, and is it to be for the general well-being of the State? If it is going to continue, then the Government must stand up to their responsibility. If they cannot stand up to their responsibility, then they must face the electors, and tell them that they have arrived at such a condition that they have to do what I have already stated—that is, to buy off the attacks that are being made upon them by the public servants, and by other outside unions. That is the whole position so far as this Government is concerned.

Mr. COOPER: You would not buy them off; you would bite them off.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. member has quite enough to do to look after the commissionership which he desires. (Government laughter.) I ask hon. members to consider for a moment what has been the effect of the general strike upon the industries of the State. The Government have viewed it with a considerable amount of complacency, and, as I pointed out, they have departed from all constitutional principles in dealing with the strike. When they started off they adopted a high plane, and they had behind them the public, who believed that they were doing right; and whilst the Government declined to indicate what line of action was to be taken, although it might have been considered outside that they were adopting an unwise principle, yet under the circumstances no comment was made, and an absolutely free hand was given. All the time the Government were not doing those things which were essential to the well-being of the State. All we have to do is to go back to the condition of Northern Queensland at that time. The people of Northern Queensland suffered privations and losses because of the action of the Government, and I believe that the people of North Queensland would have willingly suffered those losses and privations

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if they had thought there was going to be a return to constitutional government in the State—

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: And that the Government were doing those things, that a right Government should do. But they have been disillusioned. They were suffering all the time, and they find at the end that the Government have been paltering with the matter, and instead of dealing with the strikers in the way they should deal with them they have been buying them off. What has been the result? We are told that the men in the constituency represented by the hon. member for Townsville will lose something like £20,000 in wages, unless this Government is going to pay the strikers for the time they were out.

Mr. D. RYAN: Do you suggest that?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do not suggest that the Government should pay. I suggest, on the contrary, that it would be a very wrong thing if they paid.

Mr. D. RYAN: What do you suggest, then?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I suggest that the hon. member should pay a little more attention to his duties. Not only have these strikers lost a large sum of money, but there has been suffering caused to the general community. There has been a dislocation of business which has caused a good many persons to be thrown out of employment, and there has been a consequent loss of wages. There has been worse than that. The action of the strikers at the present critical time has been detrimental to the interests of the war we are carrying on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It did not last long enough for your liking.

HON. J. TOLMIE: All the great mining centres to which we are looking at the present time for the supply of war munitions were held up.

Mr. COLLINS: Wave the flag.

HON. J. TOLMIE: No work has been carried on in the Cloncurry district, represented by the hon. member for Flinders, which is one of the richest mineral areas in Australia, and where great quantities of minerals were being obtained. All that has been stopped, and there is a chance that there will be a loss to the British community, inasmuch as they will not be able to get their supplies. Coal supplies were locked up in the same way. Transports could not be loaded, and food could not be taken from the coast to the outback districts. All this is the result of the strike that was maintained to a great extent by the Government during the last few weeks. I say maintained by the Government, because they did not take the action which a right-thinking Government should have taken. Just as they have succeeded in the North in stopping the traffic, so they have succeeded in the same way in stopping the business down here in the Southern part of the State, in connection with traffic over the border of New South Wales. The Government have not faced the position and said that the trains shall be run in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Railway Department. Just as a last word or two—

The PREMIER: We are prepared to move an extension of time.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do not want an extension.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Played out.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In conclusion, I desire to say that the Government have failed to carry out the laws of this State. They have been wilful actors in degrading the position of the court of this State. They have failed to carry out their responsibilities to the people of the State in providing them with the needful supplies, and, inasmuch as they have failed in all these respects, they have earned the disapprobation of this House and of the people of Queensland. If we cannot get justice done in this House, then we appeal to the people of Queensland to say, when the opportunity comes, that this Government have recklessly departed from the duty of good government, and that they no longer possess the confidence and support of the people of the State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: I beg to move the resolution standing in my name.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I rise for the purpose of seconding the motion which has been so comprehensively and yet so moderately moved by the leader of the Opposition. In doing so I have no feeling of political animus in connection with the recent events which have caused this motion to be moved. It is rather with a feeling of regret that I have to do so, realising that it is a matter of duty on my part, and on the part of every member of the Opposition, to make a protest, in view of the failure on the part of the present Administration to take action in regard to the strike.

The PREMIER: More in sorrow than in anger. (Government laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is the feeling I have in this connection. There is an obligation cast upon the Opposition in connection with all legislation. It is their duty to criticise the action of the members sitting on the Treasury benches. In connection with this particular matter the Opposition has hitherto refrained from in any way embarrassing the Government, so long as they were prepared to carry out the law of the State in a constitutional manner. Our obligation is just as great in this connection as is the obligation of the Government to maintain the law of the State. A duty is cast upon the occupants of the Treasury benches when they accept office. Under their oath of office they undertake to fairly and impartially administer the laws of the State. It is the duty of the Opposition, so far as lies in their power, to see that that obligation and that oath are observed. Unfortunately, owing to numerical weakness, we have not always been able to see that those obligations have been either carried out or realised by the occupants of the Treasury benches. To my mind, to-day the position is an unparalleled one in the history of Queensland or any other State in the Commonwealth. Never has an Executive or an Administration made so timorous and abject a surrender of its functions. Never has a Government allowed its functions to be dragged in the political mire and degraded as the functions of constitutional government have been degraded on this occasion. Never has a Government proved itself to be so absolutely pliable to be moulded as putty by a section of the

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public servants of the State as the Ryan Administration. A declaration was made by the Premier, as leader of the Administration and representing the party sitting behind him, and that declaration apparently denoted political strength.

The HOME SECRETARY: It actually denoted it, too.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I say that because the declaration was one which was absolutely warranted by the unwarranted action of a section of the community who broke the law, who took the law into their own hands. When the Premier declared that he would stand or fall by the industrial laws of the State, it was a brave declaration and worthy to be made by the leader of a party who claim, and whose followers claim, that he was a strong man—the strong man of the Legislature of this State.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: How has he proved that declaration? How has he proved the bona fides of that declaration? We know how he has proved it—by an absolute surrender of his principles, by an abandonment of his own enacted law dealing with industrial peace. It was an absolute abandonment of that clause which he himself caused to be accepted by the Legislature of this State. He has tacitly flouted the court and the personnel of the court, and has given apparent evidence—judging him by his actions—of the useless character of this special piece of legislation and its inutilty. I propose to deal in the short time at my disposal with the position from two stand-points. The first is the abandonment of the law and the desertion of the specially appointed court, and the gentlemen who were appointed to conduct the business of that court. The second phase is the failure of the Administration to carry on this great public utility, causing loss to the primary producer and causing a failure in the supply of metal and food to our troops at the front. The public memory is very short, and a retrospect of this particular piece of legislation is necessary so that the public, whose memory is so short, may be able to realise what this legislation was, what it was stated to be by hon. gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches, and to realise how they have abandoned that legislation which they especially urged in the second session of this Parliament when it was forced through this Chamber. In volume cxx. of "Hansard" for 1915-16, we find the Secretary for Public Works making use of these words in introducing the Industrial Arbitration Bill—

"The decisions of this court are to be final. Much of the lack of the success on the part of arbitration tribunals is brought about by the fact that its proceedings may be upset, or may be varied, by appeal proceedings—by proceedings for prohibitions against orders or awards of the court. It is sought in this Bill to make it quite impossible for the proceedings of the court to be in any way questioned, so long as the court acts within its jurisdiction. It is supposed to have full jurisdiction, without the possibility of challenge, in connection with all matters within its jurisdiction."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is all right.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I want the members of this House to especially observe the

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remarks which came from the hon. gentlemen on that occasion, as they represent the opinions of the Government, of which the hon. gentleman is a militant and leading member. He goes on to say, quoting from the Bill then before the Chamber—

"Every decision of the court shall be final and conclusive, and shall not be impeachable for an informality or want of form, or be appealed against, reviewed, quashed, or in any way called in question in any court on any account whatsoever."

"I think that will be recognised to be a wide power.

"Mr. Tolmie: Very wide.

"The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is necessary that the court should have special protection, and there is no doubt that is as it should be, because what is the use of going to the trouble of formulating the arbitration machinery and trying to create an effective court, if an affluent employer, or a corporation, or a company can upset the awards of the court by proceedings on appeal, by moving for injunctions against the decisions or orders of the court, or by undermining it in any other direction?"

"Mr. Tolmie: Are you making sure that it is compellable on both sides?"

"The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: One of the great weaknesses of the present court is that its proceedings may be flouted, as they are now being flouted."

And, I say, as they are now being flouted. (Laughter.) The Secretary for Public Works then went on to say—

"For instance, whenever an award is made affecting the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, that company never rests until it defeats the award."

What an extraordinary thing! In this particular instance it is the railway servants of the State who flouted and apparently defeated the award. The hon. gentleman goes on to say—

"It obtains the best legal talent in the land to see whether there are not loopholes in the award, or loopholes in the proceedings of the court, or loopholes in the constitution of the court that made the award, or some other loopholes under which the award may be challenged and suspended and then the general objects of the Act defeated. Those are the kind of things that we have to try to safeguard ourselves against. If employers and employees recognised that legislation of this kind should be observed in spirit and that they should not look for loopholes and quibbles, it would be far better for the general peace of the community. (Hear, hear!) I know that the majority of the employers in the sugar industry are prepared to observe the general spirit of an award when it is made; but not so the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. If you take practically every central mill in Queensland, they have never attempted to question the validity of the award that was made by Judge Macnaughton last year."

Then he goes on to say—

"We are trying to make this absolutely water-tight against a case like

that, or employers of that kind. We may not succeed, but we will do the best we can."

Then, later on, the hon. gentleman said—

"I have no doubt that the awards made by this court will be rigidly observed by employers and employees alike. I think that this court is founded upon a correct foundation, and with the confidence established between both parties there will be no question but that the awards will be observed without the possibility of anyone ignoring them."

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was a good speech. Who made that speech?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am quoting the words used by the hon. gentleman himself—(laughter)—in connection with his reasons why the award should be final and why there should be no appeal and no flouting of the court, and why there should be no attempt to flout an award when it was once delivered in a court established under this particular piece of legislation. On page 575, the hon. member further goes on to say—

"The appeals come from one side or the other, according to the nature of the award. If the award is in favour of the employers, they will appeal against it."

That is simply emphasising what I have already said as to the necessity that there should be no appeal, and that the award given by the court should be final and conclusive. Then, again, on page 576, the hon. gentleman says—

"There is what is known as an authorised strike or authorised lockout, the same as there were certain strikes and lockouts permitted under the Industrial Peace Act. A strike will not be considered to be authorised unless it has been sanctioned by a majority of those who are concerned in the proposed strike. They must be given an opportunity of participating in a ballot."

And on page 577 the hon. gentleman further says—

"Under this Arbitration Bill, if it is given a fair trial in Queensland, we will find that all the differences in all the industries can be settled peaceably and amicably without this final resort to brute force. There are appropriate provisions in the Bill to secure the due observance of the awards and to punish appropriately those who fail to observe the awards."

Those are the deliberate words used by the Secretary for Public Works, who was in charge of the Bill and who represented the party sitting behind the Administration of which he is a member,

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and one of the reasons why the Opposition to-day are criticising the Government is that although these assurances were given as to the objects and powers of that legislation, when certain circumstances arose they failed to carry out their pledges which they had given to the House and to the electors of the State. The hon. gentleman said the Bill would secure industrial peace, and if awards were not observed "punish appropriately those who failed to observe the awards." At that time Mr. Roberts

interjected "Is there any penalty for the employees?" The Secretary for Public Works replied—

"The hon. member will find that there is a £10 fine as the maximum penalty for employees for a breach of an award."

Further on on the same page the hon. gentleman concluded his remarks by saying—

"It is not introduced in any partisan spirit; it is introduced with a desire to bring about permanent peace in the industries of Queensland, and to establish a system which will entirely do away with the industrial dislocation and disruption that has occurred from time to time in the past under the more imperfect system which has prevailed. It is desired to reach the objective of a permanent and lasting industrial peace."

Mr. COLLINS: You wanted batons.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Why did not the hon. member object, when the Minister behind whom he was sitting and for whom he voted, made the statement "and to punish appropriately those who failed to observe awards"? What is the good of hon. members, who sit behind the Government who passed this legislation through by means of the closure, interjecting to-day when they agreed with that statement which fell from the Secretary for Public Works as the representative of their party? What greater reason can we have to urge on the electors of the State—and it is to the electors of the State of Queensland that we speak—that despite the pledges which were given by the Executive as to what it was possible to do under this particular Act of legislation, they have absolutely failed to carry out its provisions?

Mr. D. RYAN: How long did it take you to settle the 1914 strike on the Townsville railways?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I know it would not have taken me very long. I had something to do with a former strike here and that did not take very long to settle, and the law was observed and constitutional government upheld.

Mr. COLLINS: You are something like the Czar of Russia.

HON. J. G. APPEL: This is the position: the Bill became law and the court which was to carry out all these duties as near perfection, according to the statement of the Secretary for Public Works, as possible, was appointed, the president of which was stated particularly to be temperamentally fitted for the position. I do not think there is any member in the community, however prejudiced he may be, will say that the president of that court is biased against the workers. I challenge any member of the community or any hon. member of this House to say that Mr. Justice McCawley is in any way biased against the workers of the State. We have this particular court, constituted, I have no doubt, by the direction of that outside junta which controls the administration of the Labour party, with a gentleman presiding over that court who is in every way fitted, without any bias or prejudice, and we find that a certain section of the community came before him and made their claim. After due consideration a tentative decision was arrived at. The matter was referred back to the court and it was reconsidered by the president of the court, who

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then made an award which, as was explained by the Secretary for Public Works, then became a common rule and had the force of law, and if any member of the community affected by that award struck he became a lawbreaker, and if the hon. gentleman was bonâ fide in the pledge which he made on the introduction of that measure it became the duty of the Administration to see that the law was carried into effect. The hon. gentleman urged that there should be no appeal. He quoted the fact of large companies always appealing and attempting to upset awards. He specifically named one particular company. He talked of large employers having capital at their backs being always prepared to appeal and endeavour to flout the court, but when it comes to the employees failing to observe the conditions of an award and desiring to vary it by an appeal, which is not provided for, he refuses to carry out the law. As was pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, he urged that there should be the right of appeal. All the protests that came from this side of the House had one object and one aim, but the Minister in charge of the Bill and those sitting behind him insisted that there should be no appeal. Is there to be one law for the employer and another law for the employees?

Mr. COLLINS: We had that for centuries.

HON. J. G. APPEL: In the very oath which every member of the Executive has to take when he assumes office, he pledges himself that the law shall be equal so far as every member of the community is concerned. Does any member sitting on the Treasury bench mean to tell me that if that company which the hon. gentleman mentioned, or any other large employer of labour, had broken the law that he would have acted in the way he acted in connection with those employees who flouted and broke the law? I venture to say that, had they done so, action would have been taken immediately, and properly so. But when their masters strike—

Mr. COOPER: Who are your masters?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Thank God I have no master save One above and my conscience. I am not controlled by any outside irresponsible body or by any junta who hold their sittings in secret in the way that that unspeakable and arbitrary council of ten held their sittings.

The PREMIER: Who are they?

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman knows whom I allude to when I refer to the notorious council of ten. This junta, who control the administration of the party sitting on that side of the House, hold all their proceedings in camera; secret as the grave and relentless as death—(Government laughter)—so far as other members of the community are concerned.

The PREMIER: Who are these ten men?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Name them.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It seems to me that there is rising and growing in this State of ours a power which controls the administration of a certain party when they obtain office, a power compared to which the power of the Strelitz guards, the Janissaries, and the Mamelukes was a mere circumstance.

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(Government laughter.) I have no hesitation in saying so, and we have to-day an object lesson in that connection. We find that the present Administration have become accessories to a most serious breach of the law.

Mr. POLLOCK: There has been no breach of the law.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member should pay a little attention to what has taken place during the last few weeks. I know full well that the Premier realises the position as well as any member of the Opposition. He realises, I feel quite satisfied, that he has committed a breach of the trust that was placed in his hands as Vice-President of the Executive Council and Chief Secretary of the State of Queensland. I feel quite satisfied that in his inmost heart he rebels, as much as it is possible for a man to rebel, that he has been compelled to take the action which he has taken, and that he to-day is feeling that there are some positions which are not worth having when a man cannot act independently and cannot act according to his oath of office and according to his conscience. There is no question about it, and the fact is well known, that the executive which represents that outside organisation, unfortunately more and more, is getting into the hands of the members of that notorious body known as the I.W.W. (Government laughter.) There is evidence of that fact—that the members of that notorious body are gaining the control of a large number of the unions of the State and that they are more or less controlling the executives of those unions. (Government dissent.)

Mr. KIRWAN: You cannot mention one union.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is perfectly futile on the part of members on the other side of the House to interject that it is not so. We know very well—and they know as well as we do—that the Executive of this State to-day is not in a position to act according to its conscience and to the oath of office which its members have taken, but that they have to take their instructions and their orders from an outside body that has not been elected by the electors of this State and that is not responsible to the electors of this State. That is the reason why I stated, when I rose to second this motion, that I deeply regretted having to do so; because I realise the depth of debasement and degradation into which constitutional government has sunk, when it is a patent fact that that is the position of affairs. Now, what has been the action of the Administration so far as the condoning of this breach of the law is concerned?

Mr. COLLINS: Conciliation.

HON. J. G. APPEL: We find that they invited delegates. And I may say this—I would go far myself upon conciliation; but when that conciliation degenerates into servility, then it is degrading; when, at threats, the Executive of the State are prepared to surrender and to throw up their hands, then, I repeat once more, it is the duty of the Opposition to criticise their action, so that the electors of Queensland may have a perfect knowledge of the condition of affairs which exists so far as the constitutional government of the State is concerned to-day. Now, instead of the law being invoked in the way in which the Hon. the Secretary for Works stated it would be invoked if there

were breaches committed of the sections of this Act, what do we find? That first of all the militant member of the Administration—the Hon. the Secretary for Works—is sent away on a delegation, or as a missionary—shall we put it that way?—he is sent away as a missionary of peace, and conciliation, and servility. Fancy that militant politician in the Administration here having to bend his militant backbone and bow down to those strikers and endeavour to appease them! Well, as was pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, apparently he failed—that silver tongue of his failed—to induce them to come to a sweet spirit of reasonableness. What do we find then? That a congress was called—we will call it a congress—a congress of delegates is invited to sit in the Executive chamber; a secret conference to sit on one of the most important matters of administration that has ever presented itself for decision. A secret conference is held, and, if I am correctly informed—if I am in error I withdraw the statement—without any legislative authority this congress of delegates representing no one but themselves and their own selfish ends are paid their expenses by the Administration. They sit in secret conference, and we have the spectacle—the abject spectacle—of Ministers of the Crown going in an abject manner and pleading with that secret conference, urging them to discontinue the breaking of the law.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You will fall out with the "Courier" if you don't call it a junta.

HON. J. G. APPEL: You can call it a junta, a camerilla, or anything you like; it is the form of demagogue to be condemned by any man who desires to see responsible government upheld in the State of Queensland. What do we find? Ministers of the Crown going day after day in an apparently humble, servile, and abject manner, endeavouring to soothe the feelings of the delegates. I am not going to say that the amount which they receive was not such an amount as their expenses amounted to; but I notice that one of the delegates in Townsville stated that they had been splendidly treated; they had had a splendid reception; they had been soothed.

The PREMIER: The sugar-growers say the same thing.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Ministers had shown them their absolute humility. Their only desire was to please them, to get them to go back. There was no question of vindicating the law which they themselves had introduced and passed; no question of vindicating the President of the Court whom they themselves had appointed. They abjectly pleaded in secret with this gathering and urged them not to break the law, holding out promises to them to appoint a tribunal which they had previously refused to appoint (a court of appeal), giving excellent reasons for not appointing one—an action which was "hear-heard" and supported by every member sitting behind the Government. They suggested, "We will appoint an outside legal authority to arbitrate in connection with this particular matter; and for which there is no legislative power to deal with these law-breakers." And this, in spite of their principles, in spite of their own legislation, promising them. "If you will only go back to work we will appoint such an outside legal

authority to arbitrate in connection with this particular matter and we will submit to that outside legal authority the question as to whether you are to be paid for the time that you were breaking the law. You are not going to suffer any penalties for breaking the law, but rather we are going to allow the judge—this outside authority—to have the say in connection with the matter." There is no legislative authority for that outside authority to deal with this matter by way of appeal. The law states distinctly there shall be no appeal in connection with any award.

The PREMIER: What objection can there be if both sides agree to his acting?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Why didn't the hon. gentleman alter the law? It is the duty of the Administration to observe that law; and, as I have already stated, instead of observing that law they have become accessories with the law-breakers. That is one of the reasons why it is the duty of this Opposition, and every member of this Opposition, to protest against the maladministration, in this connection, of the present Administration. We know very well that with that servile majority which sits at the back of the present Administration, and with the orders which they have received from their irresponsible masters outside, they dare not say anything. Whatever those orders are, they are like sheep led to the slaughter; and there is no doubt about it, some of them will come to political slaughter within a few months. They are prepared to do anything. They were prepared in the first instance to support no appeal; to-day they are prepared to support an appeal.

The PREMIER: Who said that?

HON. J. G. APPEL: The action of the hon. gentleman in suggesting that there shall be an outside court of appeal to deal with this matter, and not only a matter which has already been adjudicated upon, but in connection with the matter as to the payment of wages while those strikers were breaking the law. Now, we all know that the present Administration have granted a very large sum of money—approaching half a million of money—for increases to our railway employees.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Do you object to that?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I think at the present time it was a very ill-advised thing, on account of the present condition of the finances of the State.

The PREMIER: Are you speaking for the Opposition now?

HON. J. G. APPEL: When we have a deficit, Certainly I admit the deficit was caused by the maladministration of the present Government. I think it was very ill-advised that at the present moment such a very large inroad should have been made in the revenue received from our railways. I have no hesitation in saying that. I am not averse to giving increases and never have been; because I have proved that, if it were possible to do so, increases should be given. Were those increases justified when we have the hon. member for Brisbane, Mr. Kirwan, a short time ago stating that savings of from £150,000 to £250,000 could be made in the railway service? We have that from an hon. gentleman who has a very large

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and comprehensive knowledge of railway matters—(laughter)—and who, because of that knowledge, has been appointed a commissioner to inquire as to how it is possible to run our railways more effectively and economically. When we have that statement from the hon. gentleman, and find that despite that fact increases to the extent of nearly £500,000 have been granted to our railway employees, I say again, that the time was ill-advised to make so large an increase, considering the financial position of the State.

Mr. COLLINS: You would have retrenched them.

HON. J. G. APPEL: No; I would sooner sack them. I think when the time comes it is far better to do that with a small number of men than decrease their wages. Now, we have this large body of men who have received a very large increase. I am surprised that they should have exhibited such an amount of selfishness at the present time after having so largely benefited; that they should, by their breaches of the law, actually involve a very large loss indeed to the revenue of the State through this great public utility. To my mind it is a warning against the further entry of the State into any industrial concern; because it must convince every thinking man that, if the number of State employees is going to increase; if they can control the Administration as they have done to-day; if they can commit breaches of the law without being punished; then I say that the sooner we desist, or close this House of Legislature, the better. Now, that is the principal reason why we are protesting against the action of the present Administration; protesting, as I have said already, not to the members of this House—because we know that we might absolutely convince a member sitting on that side of the House and he dare not act according to his convictions.

Mr. FOLEY: Be just.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member knows that he has to obey orders; and if he had not done so he would not have retained his seat for the constituency he represents for the length of time that he has. Now, it is right that the electors of the State should know and realise it. It is by these actions that we have the multiplication of strikes which exist wherever a Labour Administration administers the affairs of the State.

Mr. COLLINS: What about New South Wales?

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is only recently that men have come to their senses there, and a National party holds the reins of office; and I venture to say that a very different state of affairs will exist there in a very short space of time. The people of New South Wales are at the back of Mr. Fuller, who is upholding the Constitution and observing the law, and who is [5.30 p.m.] going to see that the law is carried out, which the Government who holds the reins of office here have failed to do.

Mr. D. RYAN: And he is still in the wilderness.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He may be in the wilderness, but unfortunately a large number of poor, misguided men, led astray by perverted organisers, will find themselves in the

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wilderness. What has been the effect of the strike? Not only an exhibition of the absolute weakness of the Administration, but a proof that they are prepared to subvert and surrender their legislative functions to a section of the State servants of Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: Lloyd George has done the same thing.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Lloyd George is the wrong man to surrender any of his rights. The Administration has become accessory to these breaches of the law, and humbly entreating the strikers has persuaded them to return to their work. But we find that when the permanent head of the Railway Department in Townsville requested the clerks to return to work at once to enable the time-tables to be arranged, the militant strikers said, "No, you shall not return until midnight when we all return," which will mean a further loss before the wheels of that great State utility are put in motion. Then, we have the degrading political position that the servants of the State in this department have issued another ultimatum, to the effect that no goods outside the merest passenger luggage will be carried on our State railways from New South Wales, or foodstuffs carried to New South Wales. I am credibly informed that at Toowoomba the bacon factory had a wagon loaded with bacon and hams, which were to be carried by the Railway Commissioner to New South Wales, but the railway servants would not perform their functions as servants of a public carrier, and refused to take the produce to New South Wales, and the truck was unloaded. I ask who is in charge of the administration of the State when a section of the employees of the State have the power to dictate, not alone to the individual Minister, but to the Administration, as to what they are going to do, and what the Minister shall do? In this instance, the Premier may consider that his answer to the Prime Minister in connection with the telegrams which required that all mails and parcels per post should be carried on the railways was a very clever one. He may think that it was very clever to direct the Prime Minister to the Acting Premier of New South Wales, but, to my mind, it was a most discreditable action on the part of the hon. gentleman who administers the affairs of this State. I think it was a most disgraceful exhibition of his inability, and the inability of his colleagues, to realise the responsibility which they owe, not to the executive of the Trades Hall, but to the electors of the State of Queensland, by virtue of the sanctity of the oath which they swore when they accepted office as Ministers of His Majesty's Government.

The PREMIER: Are you a disbeliever in arbitration?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am not a disbeliever in arbitration. The hon. gentleman and his Government do not believe in it, because after the aid of the court has been invoked and an award has been made, they have failed to see that the award is carried out. I believe in it, and that is a reason why I am protesting against the Administration for having failed to carry out the conditions of the Industrial Arbitration Act. Whether the Executive were justified or not in the action which they took in regard to what they call conciliation—I call it servility—towards the strikers is concerned, there is one matter that they are not justified in, and

that is in allowing the great carrying service of the State to remain idle. Who were the people principally affected by their failure to realise the responsibility which they undertook when they accepted the administration of the affairs of the State? We know that on the Atherton tableland the producers and dairymen found that their cream was going sour, and their produce going rotten, because this great public utility was tied up, and yet the Government stood by and did nothing. No arrangement was made for the transmission of the mails, without which the business of the community could not be carried on. How have these unfortunate men who settled in the Atherton and other scrubs in the Cairns district been treated by the Administration—men who, after years of sweat and toil, are just beginning to gain the reward for which they have worked? To-day, owing to the criminal, political, and unconstitutional neglect of the present Administration, when there is a chance of getting a reward for all their labour which they have put into their selections, nothing is done for them, and their cream goes sour and their produce is rotting. We know of other instances where produce has been carried a certain distance, and left rotting in the different stores of the railway. Why should one section of the community be permitted to so control the Executive of the State that the unfortunate primary producer, owing to whose labours the State has developed to its present position and without whom the State cannot prosper, and who are laden with all the burdens which can be imposed by way of direct and indirect taxation, to be further punished, because the present Administration, acting under the orders of their masters, have failed to carry out the law which they themselves enacted, and which they declared in this House was going to be effective? Is that a position which should exist under a constitutional Government? That is the reason why I say that the constitutional and administrative functions of this State have been dragged in the political mire, and have been disgraced and degraded by the gentlemen who occupy the Treasury benches, and by the members who sit behind them, who are prepared to support them to-day on a question and to-morrow to support the very negative of what they voted for the day before.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Dreadful!

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is dreadful, and that is the irony of the whole thing. They say that is democracy; but I say there is no democracy in that. Hon. members opposite are fond of saying that they are the only members of the Legislature who represent the true democratic spirit of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Remember Coolangatta.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, and you remember it, too. (Opposition laughter.) You will probably remember a few other places that you accompanied me to.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I never accompanied you anywhere in my life.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Not to Gympie? (Opposition laughter.) Is that the true spirit of democracy which allows an Administration to be controlled by one section of the community alone, and to legislate for one section of the community? I have always claimed that I was bred as a democrat and

I am proud to be a democrat. (Government laughter.) If this is democracy, then, I say, perish democracy.

Mr. McLACHLAN: You are a State socialist.

HON. J. G. APPEL: So I am. (Government laughter.) The hon. member does not know what a socialist is. I have no doubt that some of his colleagues would like him to give a practical illustration that he is a socialist. I say that the reprobation and condemnation of every member of the Opposition, and of every member of the community, should be given to the present Administration for their action in this matter, and for their failure to carry on the operations of this great public utility of Queensland.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): Evidently the Government are quite unable to answer the charges contained in this motion. (Government laughter.) They apparently realise that whilst "speech is silver silence is golden," and that the least they say the better for them. They realise that their case is so bad that there is really no defence at all. (Renewed Government laughter.) The motion having been moved and seconded in two very effective speeches puts the position of the Government before the electors, and proves that they are utterly unworthy of the position they hold, yet there is not one man on the Government side who can get up and reply. I quite expect that after what has been said they will get up for shame sake. (Government laughter.) The fact remains that in spite of the grave charges levelled against the Government, charges showing that they are unfit for the high office they hold, they are quite prepared to allow judgment to go by default. They know that, so far as this Chamber is concerned, they have got a majority. They know that they can carry any vote, but, as we have been reminded this afternoon, there is a tribunal outside this Chamber that will judge them and their acts, and deal with them accordingly.

Mr. GILLIES: You know that you are sitting in this Chamber on a minority vote—the only one in the Chamber.

Mr. SWAYNE: Charge No. 3 levelled against the Government reads as follows:—

"Failure to maintain, or attempt to maintain, the railway services in North Queensland, in whole or in part, during the strike, and to meet or endeavour to provide for the necessary requirements of the people, and more particularly the people in the area affected."

Unfortunately, the North has thirteen members sitting on the Government side of the House, and thirteen is a most unlucky number.

Mr. FOLEY: You are one of them.

Mr. SWAYNE: I said there were thirteen sitting on that side of the House, yet not one member has been able to get up to defend the Government, and prove he has been doing his duty to the electors he represents in the North, who have lost hundreds of thousands of pounds through the ineptitude of members opposite during the past few weeks. Take the hon. member for Eacham. He has been unable to get up and say anything to explain his attitude in connection with the strike in his electorate.

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He is unable to defend the Government. Take the hon. member for Kennedy. He is in the same position. The constituents of these hon. members up North have been brought to the very verge of starvation in the last few days, yet they sit there silent. Then, charge No. 6 reads as follows:—

“Agreeing with the strikers to refer the question of paying the strikers, during the period of the strike, to Mr. Justice Higgins, in defiance of the provisions of the Act mentioned, and in the absence of any reasonable or equitable ground.”

If by any chance the strikers are conceded their pay during the time they were on strike, we will know what to expect in the future. We know very well that one of the things that deter men from going on strike is the fear that they will lose their pay. If these men are allowed their pay during the time they were on strike, it will be an encouragement for others to go on strike, because they will know that they will get their pay. It is a most dangerous precedent to lay down. I think that we are entitled to some explanation from the Government on the possibility of such a precedent being created, yet they have not a word to say in defence of that. Coming to the more important aspect of the whole question, even leaving out the position of the North during the last few weeks, I would like to know what is the position of Queensland to-day? We find that the Government, in spite of their strong majority, are utterly unable to uphold the law and protect the rights of the people. Their idea has been simply to give way to these men and encourage syndicalism of the rankest kind. We know that these men believe in syndicalism to the extent that everything in the shape of property should be abolished. It will be just as well if I put before the House the aims that the syndicalists have in view when they go on strike, so that the people of Queensland may realise what will happen if these aims are accomplished. No attempt has been made by the Government to prevent these aims from being carried out. I have here a book called “*Syndicalism and Labour*,” and on page 10 I find these words—

“The teaching of syndicalism may be summarised in one simple precept—that those who have, and who pay wages, ought to be deprived of their property for the benefit of those who have not, and who receive wages. Its doctrine is thus directly antagonistic to the elementary principle which is the corner stone of social morality, respect for the right of personal property.”

That is the action of the strikers in the recent strike in North Queensland. Then, again, it is laid down in this work—

“It must never be forgotten, that although the ultimate objects of the State socialists, communists, syndicalists, and anarchists, differ fundamentally, and are indeed mutually exclusive, and although they regard each other with hostility and contempt, they are consciously or unconsciously acting in consort in attacking society, and in opposing all that hinders their operations. One object is common to all. To each the destruction of the existing organisation

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of society is an indispensable preliminary to the accomplishment of their designs.

“Everything, therefore, which injures our social system, everything that tends to discredit it and to weaken its hold upon the people, is equally welcome to all of them.”

The Government have shown themselves utterly incapable of making any stand against people who have such an object as that. So far as being able to protect the people of Queensland, they are unable to do it; another power has taken charge. Look at the statements that were made at the beginning of the strike. The Premier spoke, and said that he would insist on constitutional methods being adopted. I have here some utterances of his.

The PREMIER: Read what I said. You will find that it will be the best part of your speech.

Mr. SWAYNE: This is what the Premier said in connection with the strike, as contained in the report of the “*Courier*” of 7th August—

“The Premier, when interviewed in regard to the matter, said that he had received a telegram from Mr. Theodore, stating that he had addressed a mass-meeting of the men, and had put the position before them, but apparently, added Mr. Ryan, the men had made up their minds to go on strike. Mr. Ryan remarked that he understood Mr. Theodore would leave Townsville that day by the ‘*Bingera*.’ ‘It appears to me,’ said Mr. Ryan, ‘that the men have been ill-advised in the action which they have taken.’”

The PREMIER: So it was.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yet you encouraged them.

The PREMIER: I did not.

Mr. SWAYNE: You did. Your action in giving way to them encourages them in their ill-advised action. The Premier continued, according to this report—

“I do not know, on the information before me at present, how they got the impression that the award of the Arbitration Court was to be made retrospective till February last. The whole matter was submitted to the Arbitration Court, and the president of the court, after hearing the case, and the specific claim in favour of retrospectivity, gave his decision. Now it appears that the men in the North have decided to go on strike, notwithstanding the conditions of the Arbitration Court award, and it is regrettable that they should have decided to take such action in view of all the circumstances.”

Then the hon. gentleman talks about adhering to constitutional means, and tried to delude the people of Queensland that he is going to act on constitutional lines. Then, in the “*Daily Standard*” of 1st August, we find these words—

“The question at issue in the Townsville difficulty is whether the men have a grievance acute enough to call for a strike. On the evidence before us it must be said that they have not.”

Then later on the same day the "Standard" also says—

"The terms of the award were calculated by the Minister for Railways to mean an increase of £450,000 a year. Dissatisfaction seems to be confined on the monetary side to the refusal of the court to grant retrospective pay. Whilst there is no doubt that the men have been sweated under past conditions, the award generally is of such an excellent character that it seems a reasonable thing to expect that the matter of back pay, which was left subject to the court's decision, should not provoke an upheaval to the extent of a strike. The workers can never give up their right to cease work, but if there is to be an admission that arbitration is of value to the workers, the strike weapon should only be used in extreme cases. Otherwise the whole edifice of arbitration tumbles to the ground."

This condemnation is from their own paper. We were told when the arbitration legislation was being introduced that there would be no strikes, and that men would have their grievances settled by arbitration. If the strikes take place just the same, what is the use of our voting large sums of money year after year for the upkeep of these courts if they do not carry out the purposes for which they were brought into existence? We thought that these courts were going to do away with strikes, but if strikes are going to occur just the same and whole districts put on the verge of starvation, there is no need to continue the cost and expense of maintaining these courts. As again showing how utterly uncalled for was the action of the men who went on strike, I will quote from the award of Mr. Justice McCawley—

"Dealing with the question His Honour said, 'The award will take effect from 1st July, 1917. Reasons were strongly advanced for dating the award back, but, taking into consideration all the circumstances, including the absence of delay in making the award, and the fact that the financial year commences on 1st July, I have decided on that as the day on which the award shall take effect.' On 23rd July, the Northern branch of the Q.R.U., represented by Mr. Moroney, made application for a variation of the award so far as it related to the Northern Division, to make it retrospective as from 19th February. His Honour refused the application, stating that he had fully considered the matter in making the award, and that no new arguments had been brought which would induce him to alter his decision."

That shows that the strike was quite uncalled for. I should like to point out what happened in the North at the very beginning of the strike, and from that we can gauge the position has become accentuated since. Going back to the 7th of the month

I find an Innisfail item sent down [7 p.m.] to the Brisbane Press to the effect that the Mourilyan Mill would soon have to stop crushing. That is over three weeks ago. A day or two later I find a Cairns item dated the 10th to the effect that the timber trade was dislocated, and that butter had to be packed on packhorses. We can readily understand what state that butter would be in after being packed on a packhorse in a tropical climate. I also

find a Mackay item on the same day which says that the chamber of commerce point out that utter ruin will result to the farmers through the cessation of the cane traffic. In all those places the mail services had been dependent upon the despised private enterprise. The people have had to resort to private enterprise to carry their mails for them because the Government has so completely broken down in regard to State utilities. Again, I find a Charters Towers item dated 11th August. It states that at the Towers butter was unobtainable, potatoes were scarce, and that there was only a fortnight's supply of flour. Also that there was a great scarcity of tinned milk for children. I understand they largely depend on tinned milk there, and in that essential for children they were short through the action of the Government, and they were short in all other lines as well. It is about up to Northern people to ask the thirteen—a most unlucky number, as I have already pointed out, or, at any rate, most unlucky for the North that they have such representatives at the present time—what they were doing while their constituents were starving, and while the producers there could not get their cream to the factories and could not get their maize away, and while the timber trade was stopped, and the mills stopped because the railways could not be carried on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What would you have done?

Mr. SWAYNE: All through this debate it has been asked, "What would you have done?" The Government make a very poor showing, but it is infinitely worse when they have to go to the Opposition for instructions how to deal with a crisis of this kind. But I will tell you one thing they might have done: they might, at any rate, if they were unable to prevent the State railways from being taken away from them, have tried to provide some substitute. I have a wire that I laid before the Premier some days ago asking, as the railways were unable to carry out their obligations to the people, if he could do something in the way of subsidising motor traffic. There are twenty-one Government motor-cars round about Brisbane, principally employed in joy rides by hon. members on the other side, and I think some of those twenty-one cars might have been sent up North. They, no doubt, would have helped to relieve the position to some extent. I would like to point out that, even though the Northern railways are running, there is some considerable trouble as regards mails. There is only one regular boat going North at the present time. Of course, the Government are under no legal obligation to the people of Queensland in regard to the carrying of mails, but in an emergency like this they might have attempted to bridge the gaps that now exist in the Northern railway system by motor-cars in order to get the mails through.

The PREMIER: Don't you think the Commonwealth could do something in that matter?

Mr. SWAYNE: Coming again to the main question at issue—that is, the censure of the Government which was so ably moved by the leader of the Opposition, I would like to point out that their attitude for years back has been leading up to such an occurrence as this. Go right back to the strike of 1912, which was engineered by an hon.

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member who now holds a portfolio. They say now that the strikers are acting in an unconstitutional manner, but they only seem to realise that when it is up against the State. The same thing occurred in 1912, when they were promoting a strike. The reason they say it is unconstitutional now is because we have tribunals to deal with these disputes, and they rightly say that men should not strike when there is a court to do them justice. The same position prevailed in 1912, and you never heard hon. members on the other side say that the strike was unconstitutional then. A case had been cited before the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, and yet the men went on strike. From the time the present Government took office, right up to the present day, they have condoned strikes. They have shown that there is one law for one side and another law for the other side. I have heard the Minister for Works get up in this Chamber and boast of the number of successful prosecutions carried out against employers, but they say nothing about breaches of the law committed by the other side, all of which have been condoned by the Government. That is the sort of thing that has led to an increase in strikes. After the passing of the Industrial Peace Act strikes were almost unknown in Queensland until the present Government took office; then breaches of that Act occurred and no notice was taken of them. I remember quite well that they were not in office many weeks when a strike occurred at Mossman amongst the cancutters, and it was repeated next year. I think I saw in one of the papers that there have been over sixty strikes per annum under the Ryan régime. Their conduct of things all through has tended to bring this about. Just now of all times it must be borne home to us what an evil strikes are. At the present time more than at any other time we should stand united, and, as far as possible, avoid differences amongst ourselves in order that the work of the Empire should go on. Several charges have been made against the Government, but after all perhaps one of the gravest is at the end of the motion. I notice that the 9th count in the indictment is as follows:—

“And generally for insufficient action and failure in relation to the strike, resulting in the dislocation of industrial and commercial interests of this State, and inconvenience, privation, and loss to the people of Queensland, and an increase of the difficulties of supplying food necessities and other materials for the purposes of the war.”

Any strike that hinders us in our war operations is nothing short of high treason. There is no other word for it, and the Government have assisted in bringing this state of things about through their ineptitude and through their refusal to carry out the laws passed by this House to punish strikers. We find that they have simply sat still and allowed these things to happen. In to-day's “Daily Mail” I find the following:—

“TROUBLE AT MACKAY AVERTED.

“Mackay, Tuesday.

“There was a change for the better to-day in connection with the waterside workers' dispute, which threatened to hold up the sugar coming from the mills, as well as the cargo of coal brought by the ‘Ceduna,’ which was awaiting transhipment at the anchorage. When the men failed to respond to the demand

for labour on Monday Secretary Hogan discussed the matter with them, and as a result of his arguments prevailed upon them to work the sugar from the railway trucks to the Adelaide Company's shed. They declined to handle coal. This decision means that sugar will be transferred from the railway trucks to the shed, but there it will remain, the object being, it is understood, to prevent any of this cargo from reaching the refineries beyond Queensland.”

Yet the people South want their sugar. They will soon be without sugar if they do not get it. The article goes on to say—

“With regard to coal, the men were given an assurance that it was mined in Queensland, but this did not induce them to alter their attitude. A start was made on the sugar this afternoon, but it was expected that the ‘Ceduna,’ which was prepared to take 490 tons of sugar South, will be compelled to continue her voyage without discharging coal or taking sugar aboard. Cargoes of foodstuffs will be handled, but, owing to the strike of seamen, most of the coastal steamers are held up in the South, consequently Mackay cargoes are limited.”

We know that the great need of the Empire at the present time is ships. If one thing more than another is hampering the Allies at the present time it is the want of tonnage, and we find—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must connect his remarks with the motion.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am dealing with the ninth count of the charge.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is dealing with the waterside workers' strike at Mackay. This motion specifically deals with the railway strike, and the railway strike only.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think, Mr. Speaker, in reading over this motion you will find that it refers to strikes in general, too. I think that the ninth count has been drawn up comprehensively enough to cover strikes in general.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member will read the first part of the ninth paragraph he will see that it says “in relation to the strike.” “The strike” means the railway strike.

Mr. SWAYNE: I do not want to stress the matter. I just want to say that anything that interferes with shipping at the present time is tantamount to treason against the Empire. I have argued generally that the tendency to strike for nothing has been largely brought about by the actions of the party who now hold office. They have condoned offences in the past, and I do not think that the Minister can assure me that the railway strikers have complied with the law at the present time. So far as my information goes, the provisions of their own Act have not been complied with. I am reading from the Industrial Arbitration Act, page 7573 of the Acts of Parliament of Queensland, 1917—

“A strike shall not be deemed to have been authorised until all the members of the industrial union who are engaged in the calling and in the district affected, have had an opportunity of participating

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in a ballot taken at a general meeting duly constituted in accordance with the rules of the union, and a majority have voted in favour of such strike."

Again, it says further on—

"Provided further that no strike or lockout shall be deemed to have been authorised unless or until the result of the ballot or voting thereon of the persons concerned, together with the details of the voting, have been communicated to the Registrar."

Now, can the Minister tell us if all those provisions have been complied with—if the men concerned had an opportunity to vote and if the Registrar has been notified of the result of that ballot as laid down by the Act? I very much doubt it. That opens up another point—and that is showing how their policy is directly answerable for what has taken place in Queensland; where the policy of us on this side is so different and where, if our policy had been in force to-day, this would have been avoided. We always held on this side of the House that as far as the State employees were concerned it was not wise to bring them within the scope of these provisions; that they had Parliament to deal with, and that the State was not likely to exploit them as a private employer might; that the same reasons did not exist for them having an outside legal remedy against the State, as in the case of a private employer. As long as this party was in office they maintained that policy, and as a result strikes were not known in big Government departments—at any rate, nothing akin to what we are suffering from at the present moment. They took office and they brought into force their policy, bringing all Government employees within the scope and within the jurisdiction of these tribunals; and what had happened as the result of the carrying out of their policy?—The loss and distress that has occurred in Queensland during the last two or three weeks amounts to hundreds of thousands of pounds. The conditions which have prevailed in the North have been brought about by their bringing into effect a policy which was so different to ours; and I say that on this point, as on many others, it could be shown that the policy of the party on this side is superior to theirs, and is better for the people of Queensland as a whole. I do hope that before we go any further some attempt will be made from that side of the House to reply to the charges that have been made from this side. The Premier has allowed three speakers to get up from this side without showing any disposition to get up and reply. The speeches of the hon. the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Albert contained matter which he ought to answer, for the sake of his position, if not for the sake of himself. It seems to me that the question would have gone through if another speaker on this side had not got up; they would have let the question go through, because they shirked it and evidently did not want to speak on it. They realised that the case was so bad that the more they said the worse it would be. I do hope now that even at this late hour they will make some reply to the charges which were made by the hon. the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Albert. They must realise that there is matter in those speeches that calls for a reply upon their part.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I just want to have a few words on this matter. In the first place it is very difficult to realise what the trouble in Southern Queensland is about at the present time. We have realised something of the matter of the Northern strike, but apparently—according to the Premier—that is practically settled; but as regards the trouble in the South, it is difficult to realise what it is about.

Mr. COLLINS: Ask your friends in New South Wales.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I need not ask the friends in New South Wales. I have a copy here of the time card—the card—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The Taylor ticket?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You can call it exactly what you like.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to discuss the New South Wales card system.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I believe this is the cause of the strike—(Government laughter)—and we are here to-night to discuss the strike and the Government, and the injury which is going to be piled up upon the producers at the present time. Surely we have the right to discuss the cause of it?

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member if he has read the motion?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have.

The SPEAKER: It has to deal with the railway strike in the North, and the New South Wales strike so far as it affects goods coming over the border; that is all. I don't intend to allow the hon. gentleman to deal with the special strike in New South Wales.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am representing the producers of this State to a certain extent. (Government laughter.) I have a perfect right to voice their grievances here; and if the Government is sitting down and laughing at their difficulties and at their losses, then I say it is their funeral, which will very soon come—there is no question about that. (Renewed Government laughter.) I say that any person who will go on strike for a card like that is a fool and does not consider the interests of his State or anybody else. It simply shows the time the man goes to work.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will obey my ruling.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will; and I will hand it to the Press when I have finished. (Government laughter.) I am showing that the thing is so trifling; that the Government have lost control of our great highways of trade, and that they have handed those highways of trade over to a few irresponsible people. I say it is time we had some liberty in this House to discuss the losses which are being brought upon our producing public at the present time. We have for a long time realised that there has been a power somewhere; it has been a power that many people could not define.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The workers.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It was a power that was influencing this State, and now and again it showed its ugly head so that we could see who was at the bottom of it. (Government laughter.) The people who

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are at the bottom of this intrigue and everything else are a class of people who glory in the fact that they own neither God nor country. It is from this crowd that the trouble has come. It is a strange thing how just a few of those people are leading the workers astray and how, when they have got something bad which they want to accomplish, they always use the workers. Now, if this was in a country where we had no Arbitration Courts; if it was in a country where the workers had no redress for their grievances, we could understand it. But when it is in a country where the workers rule and where every election—I don't care when it is held—every general election in this State is dependent upon the workers of this country, and the workers of this country are in the majority and have the right and power to redress their grievances, it is a thing which we cannot understand. Well then, if that is so, here, why have recourse to these things? Why do the workers strike; why do they bring the Government into disgrace like they have done at the present time? Why do they do these things, when they have the power? Now, let us analyse this power and let us analyse its influence. What is it that brings men like many men on that side—like our Premier and others—what is it that brings those men down to the position they are in at the present time? What is it that brings men of such high standing and character as they are, into the position they are in this evening—having lost control of the position and having handed their office over to a few railway porters? (Government laughter.) Yes, the railway porters of Queensland have refused to handle our produce, and while during the present war time we want to encourage production and everything else, the producers are being penalised and practically ruined through the Government's neglect. There are men on that side who are supposed to represent country districts, who ought not to be there. There are men who are upholding the ruination of the producer to-day who ought to be the first men to stand up for him and lift their voice against the thing; but they are agreeing to the ruination and to the holding up of this kind of thing. Let me give you one case. Take the Toowoomba Bacon Factory to-day—a very large co-operative company employing a very large number of hands; and the producers are dependent upon the success of that company for paying their debts and meeting their obligations in respect to their land. I want to say this—that land that was once sold for £4 10s. an acre in those districts, since this Government came into power those farms are left to the wallabies and the prickly-pear, and the people have come down to Brisbane to look for a job. Now that is one of the things in which the Government have lost the confidence of the people. If you doubt that, I will give the hon. member for Dalby the names of the people who had the farms and where they are. (Loud Government laughter.) They laugh at the producer's downfall; they grin and laugh at the ruination of the men who work to keep them. The only thing they can howl about is something to get cheap food—something that the producer has earned and worked for, and which they want to take from him; and they laugh at the ruination which is caused when we see them leave their farms, which once were sold for big amounts of money, and the people coming

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down to Brisbane to look for a job. I can give you another farm in the hon. member for Toowoomba's electorate.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: We don't want it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No. You would starve on a farm. (Laughter.) That farm, which was once sold for £8 10s. an acre, has been offered to me this last week for £5 an acre cash. That shows how the producers are being ruined. And I say that the action of the Government in this strike in delaying the produce and preventing the people from getting it to market is only aggravating this thing and causing a rush of more people into the city. Now, I will take the effect upon the Co-operative Bacon Factory at Toowoomba. That company employs a large number of men; it takes the pigs from a very large district, say for miles and miles around Toowoomba; it has been the means of assisting hundreds and hundreds of farmers to pay their way and thus increase the prosperity of this State. Their market is Sydney. Their cold stores are limited—very limited—and when you have 3,000 or 4,000 pigs a week coming in they very soon fill up a large amount of cold storage. Now, the other day—only yesterday I believe—they loaded a consignment of bacon in the ordinary way which was to go to Sydney. That money would come back and be distributed among the farmers, enabling them to pay their way and spend their earnings among the business men of Toowoomba. What was the result of the Government losing control of the highways of trade and handing them over to two or three railway porters? Those porters had the right to notify the Government that they would not handle that bacon; that it could stop there and rot for all they cared. That is the way the producers of Queensland are being encouraged. What is that power that is behind all this? Surely, it is not the power which two or three railway porters hold. There must be some power behind that. [7.30 p.m.] It is the ungodly, disloyal section that are ruling this State at the present time, and it is their influence that is being brought to bear upon the Government. That power is simply a withering, blighting, blasting power, which brings down men of high character to the position they hold at the present time, and the longer they remain under that influence the worse will they become. There is only one hope for them, and that is to get away from that power, and put the interests of the State first. When they are themselves again and acting under their own volition the people will be proud of them, but so long as they remain under this blighting and blasting influence they will injure the State. (Government laughter.) That is the power that is ruining our producers and the Government. I hope with all my heart that they will come out from it, and leave these ungodly disloyal people to go their own way.

We talk about bringing about a better state of things between employers and employees by means of the Arbitration Court. For my part, I say that the Arbitration Court is an absolute failure. It has failed to do what we expected of it, perhaps on account of the spirit which is prevailing at the present time. I will put one question to the Premier. We are led to believe that under the Arbitration Act the Government

have agreed to pay two sets of wages to avoid trouble, one to unionists and one to non-unionists. I want to know what is the position of the worker who has been turned out of the union because he voted for conscription?

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to deal with the motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Quite right, Mr. Speaker, I will. (Laughter.) The motion is that the Government have lost the confidence of the people, and I am giving reasons for it. I am giving as a reason that the Government do not know where they are when they come to discuss these things. What are you going to do with the unionist who was turned out because he was loyal to his country? Are you going to pay him a less wage?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has evidently not read the motion. If he does, he will see there is nothing about the position of unionists and non-unionists.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We know that the Railway Union has assumed the functions of the Government at the present time. The Government is handing over the management of our highways of trade to the Railway Union, which is in a position to say what goods shall be carried on the railways and what shall not be carried. We are looking to the Minister for Railways to say what shall be done. What I want him to do is to cut away from them. If the Government face the position in the right way, we will help them.

The PREMIER: You coax, and do not threaten.

Mr. FREE: Are you in the Farmers Union now?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly, I am, and a paid-up member. (Government laughter.)

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You believe in unionism?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly, I do; but I do not believe in unionism seizing the highways of trade in our State, and assuming the functions of Government. I believe in the unions assisting and sending the Government here to represent them, and in leaving things to the Government. I would be in favour of abolishing the Arbitration Court altogether.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Of course, you would.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is no good as it stands. It is flouted by the Premier himself, and he refers back to another State. When the Arbitration Court is flouted and turned down by the Premier of the State what good is it? You want something else in its place. I believe it would be a better means of settling difficulties if we had two or three commissioners sitting continually to hear cases, and it would not cost unionists anything to bring their troubles before the commissioners. When workers have a grievance it is wrong that it should cost them so much to get justice. It is wrong that they should have to spend so many thousands of pounds on law. What did the secretary of the Australian Workers' Union threaten the local authorities with in court? He said, "You will have to set aside a couple of thousand pounds a year for law costs." Is that a right thing? It is not. The sooner we have the Arbitration Court abolished, and have com-

missioners appointed to sit continually and deal with the grievances of the workers, the better it will be. The costs of the proceedings should be paid by the State, and the unionists would then not have to say that it cost them so much. Every man has a right to get his grievances redressed. The sooner we get this system into operation, and extend our co-operative system of employment, the better it will be. But the Government has ignored at every point the co-operative movement, which would give our workers their share of the wealth they produce. The Denham Government passed a Bill, under which the sugar-growers were to be advanced money to erect their own factories, so that they could get the whole of the profits from their industry.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say that is the best way to settle these industrial disputes, and if we push on with our co-operative methods it will be very much better than any other way.

The PREMIER, who was received with Government cheers, said: The motion moved by the leader of the Opposition has reference to the recent industrial trouble in Northern Queensland between the railway employees there and the Government. That difficulty has been satisfactorily settled. The railways are now running, and the employees are at work, and the people of Queensland are satisfied.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARNES: Is it settled?

The PREMIER: The Government have gained a good deal in the estimation of a number of the public who hitherto supported the Opposition.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: At this late stage, the leader of the Opposition comes forward with his belated motion, under nine heads, attempting to discredit the Government and to regain some of the small prestige which the Opposition previously possessed but now have lost. (Opposition laughter.) The leader of the Opposition, during the course of his speech, referred to the fact that the Chamber of Commerce and the National Political Council had passed motions at their meetings supporting the action of the Government, as indicated by me in the references to the matter which I made to the Press and in some public utterances which I made. But he has not stated that the Opposition at any time have passed any resolutions approving of the proposed action of the Government with regard to the matter. That trouble lasted for about three weeks, and yet the Opposition have remained silent all the time. They have not offered one word of encouragement to the Government at any stage of the proceedings. In fact, they remind me of the House of Peers in Lord Mountararat's song in *Iolanthe*—

"When Wellington thrashed Buonaparte,
As every child can tell,

The House of Peers throughout the war

Did nothing in particular,
And did it very well."

That is what the Opposition have done throughout this trouble. They have not declared themselves at any time. In fact, the leader of the Opposition frankly admitted from his place in the House that they had not declared their position at any stage.

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of the proceedings; that they had given us a passive assistance. (Government laughter.) Now he comes forward and absolutely condemns the Government from the beginning to the end of the proceedings.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: No.

The PREMIER: I would like the hon. gentleman now to tell me the date from which the condemnation begins.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The date on which you departed from constitutional principles.

The PREMIER: When was that?

Mr. MACARTNEY: From the jump.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Toowong says, "From the jump." The leader of the Opposition says "from a date which he does not name. The fact is, the Opposition cut a very sorry figure in this business.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I am quite sure the people of Queensland realise that. Let us trace the attitude of the Government from the beginning. The first announcement I made with regard to the attitude of the Government on the question was this: that the Government intends to uphold the principle of industrial conciliation and compulsory arbitration, which is a cardinal principle of the Labour party's platform.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That is what we set out to do. I do not hesitate to say here what I have said all through—what I have said to the public, to the industrial conference, and what I say now—that I think the men were mistaken in their action. I think it was an ill-advised action, and that they were wrong in their action, and that is why the Government took the stand which they did.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Up to that point we are agreed.

The PREMIER: There are two methods of dealing with a situation such as arose there—there is a right way and a wrong way. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You bought them off—that was a wrong way.

The PREMIER: I contend that the Government acted in the right way. The result proves it, and the people of Queensland believe it.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Now, what has the leader of the Opposition and those who followed him this evening succeeded in doing. The leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Albert showed the attitude of the Opposition to the public and to the men. In other words, we have been afforded an opportunity this evening of being able to say, if we take them at their own words, and they cannot ask us to do more than that, we know what would have happened if hon. gentlemen opposite had occupied the Treasury benches during this particular crisis. (Hear, hear!) The railway employees know it and the public know it. I propose to face the attack of the Opposition from those two points of view so that the men themselves on the one hand, and the public on the other hand, will know what they would have got if the leader of the Opposition had occupied my position. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Drayton, they are like the flowers that bloom in the spring—they had nothing

to do with the case. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Let us follow the steps from the beginning. I might lay it down here that I conceived it to be the duty of the Government, in strenuous times like these, to have regard to the whole situation. (Hear, hear!) These are abnormal times, and Governments have to have regard to all the considerations that affect the public interests in dealing with any great question. (Hear, hear!) I conceive it to be the duty of the Government to preserve the efficiency of the country and to utilise the energies of every man so far as it is possible to do so. The Government should endeavour to prevent industrial and commercial dislocation. They should, at the same time in doing that, endeavour to preserve harmonious feelings amongst the communities. These are necessary things, and I contend that we have succeeded in doing them all.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: At a price.

The PREMIER: The proof is that the railways of Northern Queensland are running to-night as they ran before.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARNES: They were three weeks idle.

The PREMIER: If hon. gentlemen opposite had been in charge of the reins of Government the Northern railways would not be running yet, and the other railways in Queensland would not be running, and we would have had industrial and commercial chaos.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The men will realise this, that if hon. gentlemen opposite had been in power the bludgeon and the baton would have been used against them.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: And gatling guns.

The PREMIER: That is what the hon. gentlemen opposite would have done instead of adopting a policy of conciliation and arbitration. They would have immediately called in free labour, with the result that the employees on the rest of the railways of the State would be taking sides with the strikers, and the whole of the country would be in a state of chaos. The leader of the Opposition practically admitted that he would bring the country to a standstill in order to uphold what he calls some principle. Fancy bringing the country to a standstill. I conceive it to be my duty, while I occupy the position I do, to see that the country is not brought to a standstill and to see that things are kept going.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARNES: A section of the country was brought to a standstill.

The PREMIER: Yes, a section of the country was brought to a standstill for a short while. It was impossible to prevent that, but we prevented it as soon as it was possible for us to do so. (Hear, hear!) Let me trace the history of the strike. On the 24th July I received a telegram from the representatives of certain unions in Northern Queensland as follows—

"24th July, 1917.

"Townsville.

"Premier Queensland,
"Parliament House, Brisbane.

"Mass meeting railway employees held twenty-second the following resolu-

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tion was carried that this meeting of unions emphatically protest against the action of the Industrial Judge in not granting the award rates to all employees retrospective to the nineteenth February.

“ J. Dash, A.W.U.
“ F. A. Timson, Q.R.U.
“ T. C. Winning, B.U.
“ E. Bloomfield, E.B.F. and C.
“ H. Purcell, A.S.E.”

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You sacrificed the judge.

The PREMIER: We will come to that later on. I prefer to deal with this matter in my own way. I am dealing with an important question, and I think I will satisfy the people of Queensland, before I sit down, that I have not sacrificed the judge. I have not sacrificed the men, and I have not sacrificed the people of Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: On the 27th July, I acknowledged that telegram, and amongst other things I said that I trusted that the railway men would see the wisdom of doing nothing that would tend in any way to break down the system of arbitration. On the 31st July I received another telegram from Mr. Rymer, secretary of the combined unions in Townsville, reading as follows:—

“ Combined unions committee passed following resolution last night that unless retrospective payment is assured to all sections before Saturday next the whole of the Great Northern Railways will cease work at midnight Sunday the ballot resulting in a ten to one majority for strike.”

I replied to that on the 1st August as follows:—

“ In reply to your wire 31st ultimo I trust no steps will be taken in pursuance of railway men's ballot until position has been put before you by Minister for Works who administers Industrial Arbitration Act. He will arrive Townsville on Friday morning.”

A similar wire was sent to the representatives of the other unions, the A.W.U., Q.R.U., B.U., E.B.F. and C., and A.S.C. As you all know the Secretary for Public Works proceeded to Townsville. It was felt at that stage that it might be possible to prevent the men from taking part in the strike. Unfortunately for the men themselves, they were not persuaded to abandon the course which they had decided upon, and they went on strike. It then became the duty of the Government to deal with the situation. As I say, I believe the men were ill-advised. I am not mentioning any particular person or persons of having wrongly advised them, but their action was mistaken. We dealt with the situation which then arose. It was necessary for us to uphold the plank of our platform upon which we were elected, namely, industrial conciliation and arbitration, and do not forget, as hon. members opposite seem to forget, that conciliation is part of our plank.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: There is no end to the time that conciliation might be used. It must run through the whole proceedings and the whole negotiations.

Mr. VOWLES: After the final decision?

The PREMIER: As the principle involved is a very important one, because of the men striking after an award of the court had been given, the Government thought it desirable, and thought it was a wise course to pursue, to summon representatives of every trade union in Queensland. The trade unionists were summoned and they represented 70 per cent. of the unionists. They met in Brisbane, and the attitude of the Government was put before them. It was very necessary, in taking a stand in a matter of this sort, that those affected by awards should have an intimation made to them of the policy of the Government, and also have it indicated to them that their own awards were liable to be attacked if the award in this particular case was not to be adhered to. I am glad to say that a great deal of assistance was derived from that conference. I am glad to say that there was a spirit of reasonableness shown by them, and a spirit of common sense. (Hear, hear!) Indeed, it was an inspiring thing to me to feel that that conference had within it the elements which were capable of government, the elements which showed that they were able to insist upon the observation of laws which were passed in the interests of the people. They were entirely behind the Government in the attitude which they took, that the principle of conciliation and arbitration should be upheld. Let us take the next step. When that conference was summoned and the representatives of the Northern unions, which were on strike, came to Brisbane a discussion took place between the representatives of the strikers and representatives of the Government, and a way out was found which did not have the effect of humiliating the men.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: It had the effect of humiliating the Government.

The PREMIER: No. It had the effect that, while it did not humiliate the men, it upheld the principle for which the Government stood.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Opposition dissent.

The PREMIER: What reason should we have to fear to refer a matter of this sort—a question of retrospective pay and pay while on strike—to a gentleman of the capacity and integrity of Mr. Justice Higgins.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: What right had you to do it? It was against your own law.

The PREMIER: It is not a question of right. It is our business to keep this country going. (Hear, hear!) I contend that it was not only within our rights, but within our duty to take the step we took.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: No, it was not.

The PREMIER: Do hon. gentlemen fear the capacity of a gentleman like Mr. Justice Higgins to decide whether retrospective pay should be paid or not?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: We do not fear in the least.

The PREMIER: Do hon. gentlemen opposite deny the right of two parties to a dispute to refer the matter to a third party?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: It can't be done under the Act.

The PREMIER: It is not giving the right of appeal to one party against the will of

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another. It is a question of whether two persons have a right to make an agreement to refer it to the arbitration of the third party. I am satisfied that these men in the North, for some reason or other, were under the impression that they might be led to expect that the pay might be made retrospective to a particular day. They had no grounds, in my opinion, for that belief. They did not allege that they had any grounds against the Government, but they alleged that from some remarks made by the President of the Arbitration Court, Mr. Justice McCawley, during the course of the hearing, they were led to believe that they might get retrospective pay. Upon that they based their claim, and they struck because they did not get it.

Mr. VOWLES: They tried to bully the court, and you are helping them to do it.

The PREMIER: I need hardly say here that the President of the Arbitration Court entirely concurred with the suggestion of the reference of these matters to arbitration, and indeed, he welcomed it.

Mr. VOWLES: You have no machinery for it.

The PREMIER: When I interjected at the time the leader of the Opposition was speaking, I said that that indicated that Mr. Justice McCawley had confidence in his decision.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Is that what you said?

The PREMIER: Yes, and you can refer to "Hansard" for it. I said he had confidence in his decision.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is what you said.

The PREMIER: I am glad to hear the hon. member for Toowoong support me in that. I would not for one moment suggest as to what the result will be when it comes before the tribunal presided over by Mr. Justice Higgins.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Do not enter into explanations.

The PREMIER: It is not a case of explanations, but I believe in having the true facts of what I said brought out and in having no wrong impression go [8 p.m.] forth as to what I said or what I meant. It was agreed that these issues should be referred to the arbitration of Mr. Justice Higgins, provided that he could be procured.

Mr. BARNES: What questions?

The PREMIER: The question of retrospectivity and the question as to whether they should receive payment for the time that they were on strike, and if the claim is so utterly absurd as hon. members suggest, then I imagine that Mr. Justice Higgins will have the capacity to see that and to act according to his judgment.

Mr. BARNES: To get paid for doing wrong is not a good thing.

The PREMIER: After having made that arrangement with the delegates in Brisbane, it was agreed that they should recommend it to their respective unions. They did so accordingly, and Cairns and Mackay accepted it. Townsville, on the other hand, rejected it and refused to take a ballot, and then the Government made that intimation, which I cannot, for the life of me, understand how hon. members on the other side call a surrender. The Government then made an

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intimation to the men in Townsville in a telegram from me dated the 25th August—that is the day that the leader of the Opposition says we backed down—

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That is so.

The PREMIER: This is my telegram—

"I am in receipt of your telegrams, and learn with much regret that your decision is against any ballots on Government proposals. I am convinced that a mistaken course is being pursued, and I urge your committee and members to reconsider the position. The Northern Railway system has now been hung up for three weeks, and the Government is hourly receiving communications from all parts of the North asking to be relieved from the inconvenience and distress which threatens them. It is obvious that the Northern system cannot remain hung up, and it has now become necessary to fix a time during which the Northern railway men will be given an opportunity of resuming their duties on the conditions offered by the Government and recommended to you by your delegates on Tuesday last. I have indicated this to your delegates, who left last night.

"RYAN,
"Premier."

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The conditions were as stated.

The PREMIER: The conditions were that they were to report their intention to resume duty at 9 o'clock on Tuesday morning. If not, they were to cease to be in the employ of the Queensland Government, and that was conveyed to them.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The conditions were retrospectivity and possibility of strike pay.

The PREMIER: No; the proposal was that these issues should be submitted to arbitration. The name of Mr. Justice Higgins was mentioned, because he was the one that both parties desired. He was first mentioned by the men, and the arrangement was made on the condition that he was obtainable. Of course, if we could not secure him, some other arbiter would have to be found. Later, on the 25th, I sent this telegram—you see I had intimated to the delegates on the Friday evening before they went North what the intentions of the Government were—and on Saturday morning I sent that telegram to Mr. Rymer. I had a Cabinet meeting a little later, in order to fix the time at which they might report, and then I sent this telegram—

"Rymer,
"Secretary, Combined Unions,
"Townsville.

"Continuing my telegram of this morning, Government has decided to allow up to 9 a.m. on Tuesday morning for employees of Railway Commissioner now on strike to resume duty. Those employees not complying with this requirement will cease to be in the employ of the Commissioner. It is with great reluctance that the Government has come to the conclusion that this is the only course now open to them, and I trust that your committee and members will see the wisdom of resuming duty before the time mentioned.

"RYAN,
"Premier."

Mr. FOLEY: That is conciliation for you.

The PREMIER: It was thought after the discussion on the matter fixing the time between the Minister for Railways, the Railway Commissioner, and myself that forty-eight hours should be allowed from the time the delegates got to Townsville, because the Great Northern Railway runs out a long way. Forty-eight hours was first considered, but we fixed it at 9 a.m. on Tuesday morning, and at 9 a.m. that morning a telegram was despatched stating that the ballot had been held hurriedly on Monday, and that they would resume work at midnight that night. I think, under the circumstances and the difficulty of communicating with far out places, that they have adopted a reasonable attitude in fixing it at midnight last night. The whole of the Northern men have resumed duty under those conditions, and yet hon. members opposite will tell me that the Government have surrendered.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The whole country is telling you.

The PREMIER: The whole country is not telling me. My last communication was that "it was with great reluctance that the Government has come to the conclusion that this is the only course open to them, and I trust your committee and members will see the wisdom of resuming duty." That was my last word to them. I am glad to say that they took my advice, and they have the satisfaction of knowing what would have happened them if hon. members opposite had been in charge of the Treasury bench. There would have been no conciliation, there would have been no reluctance in giving an intimation of that kind, and if they had not resumed work there would have been free labour and the bludgeon and the baton used upon them. I hope that those men who were on strike in the North will realise that they made a mistake in going on strike.

Mr. VOWLES: And you have to pay them for doing it.

The PREMIER: No, we had not to pay them for doing it. They realise also that this Government carried out its pledges, and carried out its policy that in dealing with the matter it would deal on the lines of industrial conciliation and compulsory arbitration. I do not believe in having a disgruntled, sulky service, as you would have if you used the mailed fist, and which could not have been so successful as the method we adopted. If any other method had been adopted they would have been entirely dissatisfied, and we could not have had them as contented as I trust they will be. I feel sure that all the other unions in Queensland have now seen that this Government is determined to stand by that principle upon which they have been elected.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: And they will all ask for similar conditions.

The PREMIER: We have the satisfaction of knowing that that congress was entirely with us, and I feel sure that it will make a great deal for industrial peace in the community—much more than would have been the case if we had adopted any other course. With regard to their asking for similar terms, I prefer to wait till the decision has been given upon these questions.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Have you any agreement as to the time the Arbitration Court will sit?

The PREMIER: No, we have no agreement as to the time it will sit, but we have an agreement that it will go to arbitration if a judge is procurable, and it is understood in all negotiations that these things have to take place within a reasonable time, whether it is mentioned or not. Now, we are charged during this period with not having taken steps to look after the public in North Queensland, and I would like to point out that instructions were given to the police that they were to keep fully in touch with the North, both in regard to the supply of foodstuffs and the maintenance of law and order. They were also instructed to afford every assistance possible in their power in relieving cases of urgent distress within their respective districts. The Commissioner for Police wired to the various centres in the North in these terms—

"Wire me state foodstuffs in your district at every centre affected by railway strike also as to general conditions quiet or otherwise and keep me informed from time to time by wire if any change. Report on available means of transit to places where food supplies required."

Now, that shows that the Government—of course, the Commissioner reported to the Home Secretary and he to me—were being kept advised of the situation all the time in the different centres with regard to food supplies, with regard to the method of transit, with regard to the places where food could be obtained. We also instructed the Deputy Railway Commissioner in Townsville with regard to the delivery of goods.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Himself?

The PREMIER: No, not himself, but with regard to persons being allowed to take delivery of goods. I am now refuting a suggestion that the strike committee were in control of the railways.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Mr. Rymer said not a person dare go near them.

The PREMIER: If the leader of the Opposition wants Mr. Rymer's view of the case to go to the public, it is not the Government view, because Mr. Rymer is secretary of the strike committee and it is with them that we have been dealing.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He said he had absolute control of you.

The PREMIER: Well, I am quite satisfied that the public will be convinced that no one had control of us. (Hear, hear!) We took our own way, we took our own course all the time. We were pulled neither by our hon. friends opposite nor by the men on strike. We took our own straight course, we came through, and it is because we came through so successfully that we have the Opposition moving this want of confidence motion. (Government cheers.) They condemn everything we did, they condemn the fact that the men have resumed work because they have lost a chance of making political capital. Let me refer to the telegrams I was about to mention. This is a telegram sent on the 9th August, from the Commissioner for Railways to the Deputy Commissioner at Townsville—

"Your wires eighth instant re perishables and goods Townsville, Hughenden, Charters Towers, Cloncurry, and Ayr, have consulted Minister; consignees or

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their agents may take delivery of goods and will be afforded police protection if required."

Other wires were sent; for example, Johanson, contractor, Richmond, wired on 8th August—

"I have two trucks timber in Railway Yards, Richmond. Have I your permission to unload same?"

The Secretary to the Commissioner replied as follows:—

"Your wire re timber, you may take delivery."

A wire was sent, on the 9th August, by the Commissioner to Mr. Pagan at Townsville—

"Draper, chairman Mulgrave Mill, wires urgent asking permission for use of third rail between Gordonvale and Banana to keep Mulgrave Mill going. Have discussed this matter with Minister who considers request reasonable and should be agreed to."

A wire was also sent on the 10th from the Secretary to the Railway Commissioner to Mr. Pagan, at Townsville—

"With reference Commissioner's wire yesterday's date re perishables and goods being taken delivery of by consignees, Wilson, of Eddington, Mackinlay, has wired here and been informed that he has permission to take stores from goods-shed Julia Creek for Daigonally Station and may have police protection if necessary. This for your information."

Hon J. TOLMIE: What about Atherton?

The PREMIER: I am coming to Atherton. The hon. member will be sorry he spoke about Atherton.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

Mr. COOPER: "Fools rush in"—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Every time you open your mouth you put your foot in it.

The PREMIER: These communications are indications of the general action taken by the Government through the police and the Railway Department for the convenience of the public in North Queensland during that particular time. I am asked by the leader of the Opposition, What about Atherton? No complaints reached me that there was any molestation of persons in the Atherton district. The first intimation I got was a telegram from the Prime Minister of Australia in connection with the matter. He had received a telegram from Mr. William Marnane, at Atherton, who has political ambitions up there. He desires to stand against my friend the hon. member for Eacham. (Government laughter.) Let me tell you what he wired to the Prime Minister.

Mr. KIRWAN: Another Liberal organiser.

Mr. STOPFORD: You wanted police protection against a porter and a station-master.

The PREMIER: At midnight on the 23rd August I was got out of bed by a telephone message from the telegraph office, and I got up to hear what it was. It was a telegram from the Prime Minister.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: He knocked off winning the war that night.

Mr. STOPFORD: "Billy" puts his 7 stone into the fight. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: Napoleon Hughes.

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The PREMIER: No, it was midnight on the 23rd August when I got this ring, a very urgent message from the Prime Minister for me in the dead of night—it was sent from Melbourne at eight minutes to 10 o'clock. The telegram began—

"The following wire from Atherton has been received. 'Situation desperate; railways in Cairns district in hands of strike committee since 4th August; farmers arranging to take forcible possession and require military protection. Signed, Marnane, chairman of the executive of the Farmers' Union.' As this is clearly a matter for your police, I am asking you to furnish protection required. Please reply."

Well, I went back to bed, Mr. Speaker. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. BARNES: We quite believe that.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I hope you had not a bad night.

The PREMIER: I did not disturb the Commissioner of Police that night, but in the morning at 9 o'clock, immediately on arriving at the office, I rang up the Commissioner and I advised him of the telegram I had received, and asked him if he had been carrying out my instructions with regard to North Queensland, to keep constantly in touch with the situation and keep me advised. He said he had, and I there and then replied to the Prime Minister as follows; after quoting Mr. Hughes's wire to me—

"I am in receipt of your telegram (as quoted above). Since the commencement of the strike the police in all affected centres have had instructions to keep me advised of all developments, and on inquiry from the Commissioner of Police this morning he advises me that everything in the North is quiet, and he has no knowledge of any threats by farmers or the men on strike. The railways in the Cairns district are in the hands of this Government, and not of the strike committee. In the circumstances I cannot agree to any request to furnish police protection to any body of persons to enable them to carry out the unlawful purpose of forcibly taking possession of Government property. I trust that in your reply to Murnane you will not encourage such a lawless undertaking by suggesting that either military or police protection could be afforded to persons while engaged therein. I am anxiously awaiting your reply."

Well, he replied to me on the 24th—

"I am in receipt of your telegram replying to request of Atherton farmers for police protection, and stating that railways are in the hands of the strikers. I note that you state that the railways are in the hands of the Government and that there is no need of police protection. I am repeating your wire to Atherton accordingly."

(Government laughter.)

Now, it is a regrettable thing that while the strike is in progress such action should have been taken as was taken by Mr. Marnane in that telegram to the Prime Minister. He there threatened that they were going to forcibly take possession of the railway, and then asked the Prime Minister for military protection in doing it; and a similar threat was made from one other centre. It is only

consistent with the attitude that I referred to the other evening—of certain Liberal organisers, or Nationalist organisers, endeavouring to keep the men out on strike.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARNES: That was proved to be wrong.

The PREMIER: It was not proved to be wrong. I may tell you that I still believe it is correct. I believe the statement in the "Cairns Times." I listened to the leader of the Opposition this afternoon reading out a lettergram from the National Political Council to Cairns, and the reply received from Mr. Williams. Well, the whole of the statement was not contained in that lettergram as I heard it read.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY and GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Ah! Ah!

The PREMIER: I would like to see that lettergram. As I listened to it the whole of the statement was not contained in the lettergram.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: They wired the whole of your statement to Cairns.

The PREMIER: Well, you did not read it out.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: No, I did not read it all out.

The PREMIER: Well, you should. I would like to see the whole of that lettergram.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You wrote a column of stuff; I did not spend time reading all that.

The PREMIER: I prefer to believe the statement of the "Cairns Times," particularly when I have it backed up with evidence of this sort. Why should these people in North Queensland, who are strongly opposed to us politically, be sending their telegrams down to the Prime Minister asking for military protection?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Because they were in distress.

The PREMIER: They wanted the policy of our friends opposite carried out. How is it that the police of Queensland, although they are instructed to keep me advised, had no report of such a state of affairs?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You ask the hon. member for Eacham.

The PREMIER: It was simply manufactured to endeavour to make political capital.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: And I don't hesitate to condemn the action of the Prime Minister of Australia in countenancing such a communication for one moment. (Hear, hear!) He should have immediately communicated with me and referred the matter to me. He should have told me the situation with regard to the military. No private individual has the right to demand the use of the military from the Commonwealth Government; they have no right to pass over the Executive Government of the State.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The Executive Government had delegated its powers. (Government dissent.)

The PREMIER: I will read, for the information of hon. members, the section of the Commonwealth Constitution dealing with the matter.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You read section 19 of the Arbitration Act.

The PREMIER: Section 119 of the Commonwealth Constitution is this—

"The Commonwealth shall protect every State against invasion; and on the application of the Executive Government of the State, against domestic violence."

Hon. J. TOLMIE: But if there is no Executive?

The PREMIER: You know that it has to be on the application of the Executive Government of the State.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Yes, but there is no Executive Government. (Government dissent.)

The PREMIER: The Prime Minister should have advised them in the North that if they wanted any protection they should apply to this Executive Government, and should not allow communications of that sort to go on. That is an encouragement to acts of violence. Supposing that a small body of men had taken the desperate course of taking forcible possession of portion of that railway against the will of the Government, what effect would it have had upon the strikers? Would it have tended to settle the dispute?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No! No!

The PREMIER: Might it not have led to a conflict between them, possibly to bloodshed? And yet that sort of thing is allowed to go on. And then the leader of the Opposition says the blame would have been upon the Government.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Of course, it would.

The PREMIER: It would not have been upon this Government, but upon the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARNES: Good came out of it; it forced your hand. (Government laughter.)

The PREMIER: I would never have known anything about it if the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth had not communicated it to me; because I have no doubt he would have regarded it as a very serious action contemplated by the few men in that particular district. Now I wish to place on record my protest against the action of the Commonwealth Government in having allowed it to be implied even that there was any justification whatever for the nature of the communication that was made in respect of a matter which is entirely within the jurisdiction of the State. I have no doubt he cannot prevent people communicating with him; but when they do communicate—particularly communications of that sort—I say it is the duty of the Federal Government to acquaint the State Executive immediately.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He did.

The PREMIER: He did; but what was his communication? He requested me to furnish the police protection required. Required for what? For me to furnish police protection to enable a small body of men to forcibly take possession of the Cairns Railway!

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You did not contemplate such an action?

The PREMIER: I did not. I contemplated I would take such action as would prevent any such forcible possession; and

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as my friend, the Secretary for Public Lands, says, he should have warned them of the seriousness of the step that was being taken.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The unlawful action.

The PREMIER: Well, now, I have shown what the position would have been if they had been the Government and had been in power; what they would have done as regards the men who were on strike.

Now what about the great public of Queensland? I want to know how they look at the situation.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: They will tell you next May.

The PREMIER: I am prepared to meet the public of Queensland next May or tomorrow.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The position would have been this. That if the methods which the hon. the leader of the Opposition has indicated were adopted, that industrial trouble would have spread; it would have affected other parts of Queensland; there would have been a tremendous loss to the community; the whole of the sugar crop of North Queensland, perhaps, would have been lost—and it is valued at about five million pounds; the country would have been brought to a standstill. And what kind of feeling would there have been between the men who were on strike and those on strike in sympathy with them, and the rest of the community? Would it have brought about that harmonious feeling which is so necessary in these times?

Mr. BOOKER: They did not consider that when they went on strike. They penalised these people.

The PREMIER: I don't care what the hon. gentleman opposite may think.

Mr. BOOKER: Of course you don't, or the public at large.

The PREMIER: I am considering the public at large; but these are times when public men in high positions must keep their heads.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That is a thing, at any rate, which hon. gentlemen opposite don't do.

Mr. MURPHY: They must keep their seats. That is one thing about it.

The PREMIER: We have in Queensland to-day the strongest evidence that we have kept our heads.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: And that we have satisfactorily solved a difficult situation—which hon. gentlemen opposite would have been entirely incapable of doing. (Hear, hear!) There is one other matter that is dealt with in the motion. I don't desire to deal with all these heads in detail; it is only a statement and re-statement of them. I have no doubt there must have been a very long caucus held when this particular motion was discussed. The other question is the situation in Southern Queensland with regard to the handling of certain goods for New South Wales.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Who is in charge of Wallangarra?

The PREMIER: Now the root of that trouble lies in New South Wales. The New

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South Wales Government introduced a new system—a card system—very recently to which the men objected; and, as the matter was not settled, it led to a strike. I don't desire to say one word that can be misconstrued with regard to another Government. I don't think it is my place, nor do I think it is right to do so; except to say that war time is hardly the most suitable time for making a new departure, particularly one that may give rise to suspicion—whether justified or not—in the minds of the men to whom that new system is applied. As I have said, the root cause of the trouble lies in [8.30 p.m.] New South Wales, and some few days ago the employees of the Queensland Railways notified the Minister that they would not carry certain goods to or from New South Wales.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Or mails.

The PREMIER: No; certain goods, including certain parcel post mails. That intimation was conveyed to the Commissioner, and the question is: How is that situation to be dealt with? We must not precipitate a difficulty.

Mr. FORSYTH: You must knuckle down every time.

The PREMIER: We must not extend a strike or industrial dislocation more than we can help.

Mr. BOOKER: Obey your bosses.

The PREMIER: And it is for us to take the course which we have taken up to the present. I received a telegram, which I wish to place on record, from the Prime Minister. He wired me from Melbourne, on the 27th instant, as follows:—

“Reported that employees Queensland Railway Commissioner have declared goods carted by New South Wales railway black and refuse to handle same. Shall be glad to know whether this is a fact, and if so what steps you propose to take to ensure that all goods for your State conveyed by New South Wales trains shall be duly delivered to consignees. Reply urgent.”

“W. M. HUGHES.”

I replied to him on the 28th—

“Your telegram received re border traffic. I understand employees of Railway Commissioner have notified their intention not to handle certain goods carried by rail to or from New South Wales. Passenger and mail service, except parcel post, would be continued as usual. As the seat of the industrial trouble lies in New South Wales, I am telegraphing to the Acting Premier, Mr. Fuller, urging him to favourably consider submitting the matter to arbitration with a view to effecting a prompt settlement. As the trouble appears to be extending, I suggest that you could assist by using your influence in the same direction. I would be pleased to learn that you favour such a course.”

“RYAN,

“Premier.”

I wired to Mr. Fuller, quoting the telegram received from and the telegram sent to the Prime Minister, and added—

“I trust that you will be able to take such action as will lead to a prompt settlement, and thereby prevent the extension of the trouble to this State.”

Last night I received this telegram from the Prime Minister—

“Very urgent. Informed Queensland Railway Commissioner instructed by your Government not to accept parcel post mails after to-day until present dispute New South Wales over. Further am informed that goods, merchandise, including passengers’ luggage in brake van to or from New South Wales, will not be carried. Desire direct your immediate attention to section 118, Post and Telegraph Act, which reads as follows :—”

And he sets out certain penalties, including imprisonment for six months—

“Please inform me whether facts are as stated, and if so whether your Government proposes (one) cancel instructions issued by your Government to Railway Commissioner, (two) take such steps as may be necessary carry all mails, passengers’ luggage, and goods and merchandise to or from New South Wales. Reply immediate.

“HUGHES.”

This is my reply—

“Your telegram of yesterday received. You are evidently under a misapprehension as to the position. Minister for Railways was advised by railway employees that after twenty-seventh instant they would not handle or haul any interstate goods or merchandise going to or coming from New South Wales including parcel post mails but not including letter mails and passengers’ luggage. Minister thereupon conferred with Commissioner for Railways. Both formed the opinion that it would be useless for the Commissioner to accept for conveyance anything which he would be unable to carry or take care of through the refusal of the employees either to handle or haul same. All persons interested including Deputy Postmaster-General were notified accordingly. The notification to the Deputy Postmaster-General was made under clause fifteen of the agreement between the Deputy Postmaster-General and the Commissioner for Railways with respect to the carriage of mails. The section of the Post and Telegraph Act Act quoted by you has no application whatever to the situation. The Queensland Government is most anxious to maintain full normal service with respect to passengers mails and goods and is using its best endeavours in that direction while avoiding the precipitation of an industrial upheaval which would in my opinion be most disastrous to the public both of this State and of the Commonwealth.”

I would like to refer to the clause of the agreement between the Railway Department and the Postmaster-General under which this notice was given to the Deputy Postmaster-General. With the permission of the House I could ask to have it taken as read so that it can be incorporated into my speech in “Hansard.” The clause is as follows :—

“Whosoever whether by the act of God or by reason of some other cause beyond the Commissioner’s control or on account of any general or partial strike or lockout of any officers, workmen, servants, or employees either in the service or employment of the Commissioner or in that of any colliery proprietor, coal, or

other merchant or factor, or of any carrier by land or sea, or in that of any stevedore or any contractor, employer, factor, or agent concerned or connected with railway construction or the production, getting, handling, loading, or transporting of coal or other railway stores or materials the Commissioner is or will be substantially delayed, prevented, or impeded in supplying, filling, or rendering either in whole or in part some one or more of the services, matters, or things contracted to be done, supplied, or performed under this agreement, and the Commissioner gives notice in writing to the Postmaster-General of the fact; then and in any and every such case to the extent of the particular service or services or matter or thing likely to be or which is or are so affected and in matters incidental hereto, the Commissioner’s obligations hereunder (anything in these presents to the contrary notwithstanding) shall cease and be suspended from the date named in the notice and so continue (unless the Commissioner by a further notice in writing to the Postmaster-General sooner intimates his ability to resume the same) until after the lapse of such time from the abatement or cesser of the disturbing cause as may necessarily expire before the Commissioner by the exercise of due diligence can reasonably be expected to be in a position to supply, fill, or resume the particular service or services or matter or thing the doing, supplying, or performing of which has been so delayed prevented or impeded. In any such event the Postmaster-General may deduct and retain from the sum or sums payable to the Commissioner, under clause 16 hereof, an amount proportionate to the time during which and to the degree to which the services to be rendered or performed by the Commissioner under this agreement shall remain wholly or partially unrendered or unperformed, and such sum or sums so payable shall be reduced accordingly.”

It will be seen from that that the Commissioner for Railways, in the action which he has taken, has only done something which he ought to do in justice to consignors. They should not be allowed to send goods that perhaps would be left somewhere without being handled and might be lost, and without knowing it. He has given that intimation for that reason. I would like to warn my friends opposite, and some of those outside, who are inclined to screech and howl that we must do something, even if the country is brought to a standstill. You will find that their tune will change if the country is brought to a standstill; and I am using every effort to see that it is not brought to a standstill.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: See that the work is carried on.

The PREMIER: That is all my friend cares, because he thinks that that will lead—and he has sufficient knowledge of the situation to know that it might lead—to the whole of our coalmines, and the whole of our railway service, being idle, and it is a position that I am going to avoid by every means in my power.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You are in absolute subjection.

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The PREMIER: No. I intend to continue my endeavours to have a complete and normal service restored between Queensland and New South Wales. It is my desire to see these mails and goods will be carried to that State.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Of course, you desire it; we do not doubt that.

The PREMIER: But I must be the judge of the methods we adopt in doing it.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I am not going to adopt the methods which would be adopted by my friends opposite.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: How do you know what methods we would adopt?

The PREMIER: We know their methods. They talk about a few railway porters at Wallangarra. They know it is not a question of a few railway porters at Wallangarra at all. It is not only the railway porters at Wallangarra, but all the other unions. What would the people of Queensland, and the Chamber of Commerce which passed resolutions, and who would be the first to suffer if there is an industrial upheaval, say if I take such steps as would precipitate that upheaval, and lead to the state of chaos which we find existing in New South Wales?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: What would they say if you do your duty?

The PREMIER: I will do my duty—I am sent here to do my duty—but I will be the judge of the way in which that duty will be done.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I am answerable to the people of Queensland, and, in deciding upon what I do, I have regard to all the factors that should be taken into consideration, and I am not going to be forced or shoved into a position by the criticism inside or outside this House if I think that course is wrong. I shall continue to use my best efforts to endeavour to put an end to what I regard as an unfortunate position in connection with the traffic between this State and the State of New South Wales, and I hope to be able to bring matters to a successful issue without bringing about the upheaval which I feel certain everyone would deplore.

Mr. COOPER: Except the Opposition.

The PREMIER: Political support bought at the price of such a great loss and suffering to the community I should think would hardly be worth having. I do not think that even the Opposition would like to gain political support at such a great expense as that. But they might want to force me into the position of bringing about an impossible situation, and then step in and take charge of the reins of government.

Now, I think that the action of this Government contrasts most favourably with the action of the late Administration when they had charge of that great industrial upheaval of 1912. We remember the manner in which they handled the situation in 1912. The hon. member for Albert, who spoke so boldly here to-night, was then Home Secretary, and he got away down to Southport. (Loud Government laughter.)

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I was here all the time.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Look how the Minister for Railways is looking at you.

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The PREMIER: I well remember the manner in which we walked backwards and forwards between the Home Secretary and the Minister for Railways on that occasion. When we went to the Minister for Railways, he said, "It is not in my province. It is a matter for the Home Secretary." When we went to the Home Secretary, he said, "It is not a matter for me. It is a matter for the Minister for Railways."

Hon. J. G. APPEL: That is incorrect.

The PREMIER: Last of all, the Commissioner of Police took the matter over out of the hands of the Government. He took control, and went out with his batons and used them on the people.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: What did the country say?

The PREMIER: That is a situation I do not want to see renewed in Queensland. We do not want what happened in 1912 to happen again. It was an unfortunate thing in 1912, but I think it would be much more regrettable, and a much more unfortunate thing, if it happened in 1917, when we are in the middle of this great world's war, when all our efforts should be directed to the one end, and when we want harmony promoted amongst the people. How does our action compare with the situation as it exists now in New South Wales? The New South Wales Government are refusing to submit the matter to arbitration. They do not care how competent the judge is. They will not have arbitration, and they are using the methods suggested by the leader of the Opposition. They are prepared to bring the country to a standstill.

Hon. J. TOLMIE and other OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

The PREMIER: They are prepared to ruin all. They are prepared to win out, and they may win out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: At what price?

The PREMIER: Yes, at what price?

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in referring to the New South Wales strike, seeing that no one else was allowed to do so?

The SPEAKER: I did not prevent any hon. member from referring to the New South Wales strike. I prevented one hon. member from discussing the merits of the card system, because that was distinctly out of order. The hon. member was discussing matters that had nothing to do with the motion now before the House.

On several hon. members interjecting,

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I am not going to take any dictation from the hon. member for Toowong. The hon. member for Toowong has a habit of trying to lead the hon. member for Drayton to disobey my ruling. I just mention that the hon. gentleman has a habit of doing that, but I shall not take any dictation from him in controlling the business of this House. There is no point of order. When the Chief Secretary is out of order, I shall call him to order just the same as I would call any other hon. member to order who transgresses the rules of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was referring to the difference between the methods adopted by this Government, and those adopted by the Government of New South Wales. I was saying that the New South Wales Government may win. They may defeat the men, but how will it affect the men? How will it affect the community? What an absence of harmony there will be! What a simmering of ill-feeling there will be!

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Don't you think that is all bathos?

The PREMIER: No, it is not bathos. The effect will be that there will be ill-feeling the same as existed here after 1912, and which resulted in hon. members opposite and their party being swept away by the people at the poll.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Why, it is just the reverse.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chief Secretary has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. BERTRAM (*Maree*): I beg to move that the Chief Secretary be allowed an extension of time to complete his speech.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I desire to thank hon. members for their indulgence extended to me. I was saying that as a result of the 1912 strike, and the treatment of the strikers by the Government, that Government was swept from office when the people had an opportunity of knowing the true facts of the case. In the election that was held in April, 1912, certain of the metropolitan seats were captured by this party. Later on when the country knew the true facts of the case, the people returned this party with such a majority as you see sitting behind the Government to-night.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I venture to say that our action in connection with the strike in Queensland, and in connection with the present situation prevailing in Queensland, will be responsible to a large extent for the return of this Government to power at the next election. I now propose to—

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Move an amendment.

The PREMIER: I will take the hon. gentleman's advice and move an amendment before I sit down, showing the contrast between this Government and Governments in the Southern States and also late Governments in this State. Before concluding I desire to refer to a matter raised by the leader of the Opposition. In the course of his remarks, he referred to Mr. Justice Higgins. As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, I said it was agreed between the parties that the matter should be referred to Mr. Justice Higgins if he could be procured. The leader of the Opposition now suggests that Mr. Justice Higgins would not be agreeable to act. I would like to place before the House copies of certain telegrams.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I did not say he would not be agreeable to act. I said I did not think he would act.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman does not think he would act. If Mr. Justice

Higgins does not act it will be because of the influence of our friends opposite. They have endeavoured to induce the Commonwealth Government to refuse assent to Mr. Justice Higgins acting. But I am able to tell the people of Queensland to-night that Mr. Justice Higgins himself is willing to act, and is only awaiting the assent of the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. (Hear, hear!) It is just as well, when the leader of the Opposition suggests that these arrangements cannot be carried out, that the people should know exactly the means by which they can be prevented. Who is behind the scenes?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Apparently you are.

The PREMIER: If it should turn out—and I can hardly imagine it possible that such a thing should turn out—that the formal assent of the Commonwealth Government is not given to allow Mr. Justice Higgins to act, we will know who is to blame for that, and the men in the North will know who is to blame for it. I would like to make available certain telegrams that passed in connection with the matter. On the 21st August I sent the following telegram to the Commonwealth Prime Minister:—

“Commonwealth Prime Minister,
“Melbourne.

“Railway strike in North Queensland men's representatives are agreeable to recommend submitting questions in dispute to decision of President of Commonwealth Arbitration Court. Queensland Government also agreeable. Will you be good enough to arrange if he is agreeable. Men to return work pending decision.

“RYAN
“Premier.”

On the same date I sent this telegram to Mr. Justice Higgins:—

“Mr. Justice Higgins,
“President, Arbitration Court,
“Melbourne.

“I have telegraphed Prime Minister as follows: ‘Railway strike in North Queensland. Men's representatives are agreeable to recommend submitting questions in dispute to decision of President of Commonwealth Arbitration Court. Queensland Government also agreeable. Will you be good enough to arrange if he is agreeable. Men to return work pending decision.’ I trust you can agree to act. President Queensland Court concurs in reference.

“RYAN,
“Premier.”

Mr. Justice Higgins replied to me on the following morning:—

“22nd August, 1917.
“Melbourne.

“No communication from Prime Minister yet, but if he sees no objection I desire to help at your request but before deciding must know what are the issues on which I am to decide and does President of State Industrial Court concur with regard thereto; will both sides resume work pending my decision; can both sides give me satisfactory undertaking that work will be continued on the lines of my decision whatever it may be and

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with the same employees; will it be necessary for me to leave my work here and go to Queensland.

“JUSTICE HIGGINS.”

I replied to him on the 23rd as follows:—

“Mr. Justice Higgins,
“President, Federal Arbitration
Court,
“Melbourne.

“Many thanks for your telegram. Hope to be able to communicate definitely later re subject-matter thereof.

“RYAN,
“Premier.”

On the 23rd I got the following telegram from the Prime Minister:—

“Referring your telegram twenty-first I shall be glad to be informed of the facts of the dispute railway men North Queensland. Is it a fact that your State court made award in this case and that these men refused to accept it and went out on strike.

“HUGHES.”

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: You are getting down to it now.

The PREMIER: Yes, I am getting down to it. I replied on the same date as follows:—

“Commonwealth Prime Minister,
“Melbourne.

“Your telegram of even date the issue involved in strike was the question of making an award of the State court retrospective. The men refused to accept the decision of State court on question of retrospectivity but took ballot before striking. Both parties to dispute would abide decision of President of Commonwealth court. The President of the State court entirely concurs in suggested reference to Commonwealth court and welcomes it. I strongly urge you to offer no objection to President of Commonwealth court acting in this matter so that traffic may be resumed immediately on Northern Railway. Please reply prompt urgent.

“RYAN,
“Premier.”

“23/8/17.”

Now note his reply. He answers a question he was not asked. The gist of his reply is that the Commonwealth Government will not intervene. This is his reply, dated 24th August—

“It is clear from your statement of the case that men went on strike because decision of State court did not in one particular please them, thus bringing into contempt State court and Governmental authority, dislocating industry”—

This will be fine reading for the men—

“and causing great inconvenience and loss to large number of citizens, as it is quite evident that these men have no regard either for the law in general awards by court, the authority of Government, or the present life-and-death struggle in which Australia is involved, and are determined to accept arbitration only when award is entirely in their favour. Commonwealth Government is of opinion that it cannot and ought not to intervene.

“HUGHES.”

You will note that I did not ask it to

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intervene; I asked for Mr. Justice Higgins. On the 28th August I again approached Mr. Justice Higgins, and I put the whole matter before him, including the issues. This is my telegram—

“28th August, 1917.

“With further reference to your telegram of 22nd August re dispute between Railway Commissioner and Northern employees, the issues are (*one*) should the award published in the ‘Gazette’ of Friday sixth July nineteen seventeen be made retrospective and if so to what date; (*two*) should those on strike be paid wages or any portion thereof during the time on strike. President of Industrial Court concurs with regard thereto. Work is being resumed pending decision. Undertaking would be given by both sides that work will be continued on lines of your decision whatever it may be and with the same employees. It would be necessary to come to Queensland unless that is an insuperable obstacle to your acting. Queensland Government would defray any expense.”

I then set out the whole of the telegrams that had passed between the Prime Minister and myself, namely my wire to him of the 21st August, his reply of 23rd. idem, my reply to him of same date, and his telegram of the 24th August (quoted above) which so scathingly condemned the men on strike in Queensland. I then proceeded—

“I do not ask Commonwealth Government to intervene, but am really asking you to be good enough to act as both parties to dispute wish it. It would be most unfortunate if anything should now occur to prevent your discharging what I am sure will be a great service to the State. I earnestly trust that you can arrange to act, and that Prime Minister will raise no objection. If you are agreeable to act shall I communicate with Prime Minister or will you?

“RYAN,
“Premier.
“28/8/17.”

His Honour replied on the same evening as follows:—

“Telegram of twenty-eighth received. I am prepared to act as McCawley approves as if an appeal if Prime Minister agrees. By curious coincidence my cases have to be postponed because of Sydney railway trouble. Prefer to sit in Melbourne, but shall not refuse to go north if you say it is essential. I must leave it to you to communicate with Prime Minister.

“JUSTICE HIGGINS.”

Now, I replied to that—

“Many thanks your telegram I shall communicate with Prime Minister asking him to agree.

“RYAN,
“Premier.”

“28th August, 1917.”

I sent this telegram to the Prime Minister last evening—

“Railway strike North Queensland. In reference to your telegram twenty-fourth August I desire to point out that I did not wish Commonwealth Government to intervene. Men have now returned to work awaiting reference to arbitration agreed upon between the parties. I have placed position fully

before Mr. Justice Higgins asking him to agree to act. He replies that he is prepared to act if you agree. He also points out that his cases by a coincidence are postponed through Southern trouble and though he prefers sit in Melbourne he will not refuse to come north. Please advise me of your formal assent to his acting.

“RYAN,
“Premier.

“28th August, 1917.”

I have no reply yet. That is how the position stands, and I only refer to it because the leader of the Opposition has brought it up. I am putting the whole situation so that the public and the men will know if there is any unreasonable refusal—and I think everyone will admit that it will be absolutely unreasonable for the Prime Minister to refuse his permission—that they will know exactly how it happens; that there are some forces at work that do not desire to see industrial peace in Queensland.

Mr. BARNES: You are insinuating wrongly.

The PREMIER: It is not a case of insinuation. It has been brought up by the leader of the Opposition, and I have put the full position before him so that he can see who will be responsible if this proposed arrangement miscarries, and so that the men will see that I have taken every step that was in my power that it might be brought about that Mr. Justice Higgins should act in this case. I do not insinuate anything in regard to the Opposition. I am stating the plain fact with regard to the matter, and it is the first time I have heard it suggested even that Mr. Justice Higgins should not act. Why should I think otherwise when I have these telegrams from him? For what reason should the Prime Minister refuse assent?

Mr. MACARTNEY: We only ask for information, which you refused to give before.

The PREMIER: If you are only asking for information I am only too pleased to give it. The Opposition, it seems to me, have been very lax in endeavouring to get information. They sat down for three weeks and a-half, not declaring themselves one way or another, so that whatever the Government did they would condemn them—they did wrong. I do not think I shall continue the discussion longer. I have intimated that it is my intention to move an amendment which I think will express the real feelings of the majority of members of this House and certainly the real feelings of an overwhelming majority of the people of Queensland. I move the omission of all the words after the word “Government,” with a view of inserting the words—

“possesses the confidence of this House and the community generally for their statesmanlike methods, which are calculated to ensure industrial peace on a sound basis.”

(Government applause and Opposition laughter.)

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): Before the question is put I should certainly like to say a few words on the motion submitted to the House, and also on the amendment put before us by the Premier. The Premier in his speech referred twice [9 p.m.] to comic opera. I do not think we have ever had anything by Gilbert and Sullivan like what we had in the Premier's speech in his endeavour to

justify the attitude of the Government towards the men on strike in the North, particularly his attitude with regard to conciliation and arbitration. It may be convenient to examine the position of the men who have struck, and see what that position is under the Railways Act, and to whom they are responsible as their employer; also to see what attitude the Government have taken up, and how far they have taken over the business which was placed in the hands of the Commissioner, for purposes of their own, and for reasons which the Premier has not explained. We find that section 8 of the Railways Act of 1914 declares that the Commissioner is a corporation sole, and that he shall have and may exercise all the powers, privileges, rights, and remedies of the Crown. To the Commissioner, express power is given to appoint or dismiss employees, and to pay such moneys as Parliament may, from time to time, appropriate for the maintenance and management of the railways. In the Commissioner are vested the railways and other properties used in connection therewith, and all moneys appropriated by Parliament are to be expended by the Commissioner under the direction and control of the Minister. The latter provisions will be found in sections 93 and 94. The Commissioner is responsible to Parliament, and cannot be removed from office except with the consent of both Houses of Parliament. That is the provision of section 10 of the Act. In this debate we have not heard the position of the Commissioner mentioned by the Premier. As a matter of fact, when this trouble arose, it would appear that the functions of the Commissioner for Railways as the employer were entirely assumed by the Government. I should like to know, the members on this side of the House would like to know, and I think the people would like to know, why the business of the management of the railways was taken out of the hands of the officer who was appointed under provisions that made him the officer of Parliament, and solely an officer of Parliament, to whom he is responsible for the management of the railways. For some reason not explained, the Premier and his colleagues have undertaken the duties of the Commissioner in connection with this strike. Never was the Commissioner mentioned until the period when Mr. Hughes pointed out that there was a penalty of six months' imprisonment for the contravention of a Commonwealth Act. Then the Premier says the Minister and the Commissioner consulted, and came to the conclusion that certain goods should not be handled at the border.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Premier read a telegram stating the Commissioner immediately wired instructions to his Deputy Commissioner in the North.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I trust that hon. members will realise the position. All the moneys that are available for the payment of servants of the State are moneys appropriated by Parliament for the financial year, which ends on the 30th June in each year. By the passing of the Industrial Arbitration Act of last year, the rights of Parliament in regard to the appropriation of money for the payment of public servants are more or less surrendered to the Arbitration Court. We have in this case the spectacle of the railway employees asking and endeavouring to compel a judge of the Arbitration Court

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to give them an award dating back to the 19th of February of this year, which would embrace nearly five months of the past financial year, for which no money had been appropriated by Parliament to meet such expenditure. That is a position that has been created by the Industrial Arbitration Act. The Premier stated this afternoon that the Government's attitude in this matter was dictated by their policy of conciliation and arbitration, which is a prominent plank in the Labour platform. Why, conciliation and arbitration have been removed from the Labour platform, and are now embodied in an Act to be found in the statutes of the State. The Act passed last year, with the approval of the Labour party, is a full enactment of that plank of the Labour platform, except that it did not give preference to unionists which has, however, been taken by a side wind. We were told that by the passing of that Act that a judge would be appointed to hear disputes between employers and employees, and to make an award which would be acceptable to both parties, and that henceforth we would have no more industrial troubles. Yet, under that Act, we have had for the first time real industrial trouble in connection with the railway employees of the State. That trouble has arisen under the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, after a hearing before the judge, and after an award had been made which added to the wages of 12,000 employees the magnificent sum of £450,000, commencing from the 1st of July of this year, because the President of the Arbitration Court knew that that was the beginning of the financial year, the period for which Parliament would be asked to make provision during the current session. That was a reasonable position to take up; the position taken up by the men is correspondingly unreasonable. The position taken up by the railway employees in North Queensland in this matter was uncalled for and very inconsiderate. You cannot get away from the fact that these men in North Queensland were law-breakers. And what is the position of the Government in so far as these law-breakers are concerned? They have a responsibility to the public, and yet they have the audacity to claim that they are entitled to commendation for the manner they have dealt with lawbreakers who held up the business of the State to the detriment and loss of the people of Queensland.

That seems to be the position. Now, if it could be doubted that anything could be done that would damn or condemn the system of arbitration as put forward by this Government in the Act of last session, the actions of the Northern railway employees provide a complete and concrete example of its failure. With the Industrial Peace Act, about which our friends said so much in condemnation, we had not even a small percentage of the strikes that have arisen since the passing of this Act, and since this Labour Government came into power. What is the position in the future going to be when an award made by the court can be defeated by the employees entering into an agreement to strike and can compel the Government, if it happens to be a Labour Government, to grant all their demands, whatever they may be. I say that that is a principle that no employer can admit, and it is certainly a principle which no Government can admit in regard

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to State employees. The State employees are included in the purview of the Arbitration Act. It is expressly declared that they are to be subject to all and the same conditions as other employees subject to the Act, and it may be well before I go any farther just to state what the Arbitration Act provides otherwise so far as it may be considered to affect the matter in dispute. It is provided that every decision of the court is to be final and conclusive, and shall not be impeachable for informality or want of form or to be appealed against, reviewed, quashed, or in any way called in question in any court on any account whatsoever. An award shall be binding on all parties to the industrial cause who appear or are represented before the court. Compulsory conferences for purpose of preventing or settling may be called by judge and attendance of all necessary parties enforced. The court may on application of party to award, make order in nature of mandamus or injunctions to compel compliance or to restrain breach or continuance of any breach. No person to whom such order applies shall, after he has received written notice of the same, contravene the same by any act or omission, and incurs a penalty up to £100 for so doing. Persons counselling or procuring offences, or directly or indirectly committing same, or encouraging same, guilty of offence, or any attempt, and incur a penalty up to £100 in case of unions or £10 in case of persons.

Now, an award was made after compulsory conferences which started as far back as February. From time to time between February and the 4th July this matter occupied a very large quantity of the time of the Industrial Court. The award was made on the 4th July, and the Premier read telegrams which followed very shortly after the making of the award. I would like to ask the Government, what step did the Government take to try to maintain the integrity of the Arbitration Act or to enforce the award? What step did they take under the provisions of their own Act, provisions which were laid down on their own lines, word for word, even to endeavour to get these men to observe the award. Did they apply to the Court to enforce the award? Did they apply to the court for a mandamus or an injunction to prevent a breach for the continuance of a breach of the award? Did they ask for a compulsory conference? Did they take any step whatever to enforce the provisions of this Act, which must have been well known to the Government and its advisers? There are not in the speech made by the hon. member one suggestion that the Government tried to enforce that system of arbitration which is a plank of the Labour platform and is now embodied in an Act on the statute-books of this State? And I say that the Government were guilty of gross dereliction of duty. They are guilty of an omission to do that which any ordinary Ministry ought to do to maintain the power of government and the dignity of Government. (Hear, hear!) What is the use, again I say, of the system of arbitration, if the provisions of the Act are not even to be regarded in any particular, much less enforced?

I say I fail to understand the position which the Government have taken up in this matter. The Commissioner for Railways was the employer. The Government could

have stood aside and allowed the Commissioner to negotiate with his own men. They could have allowed the Commissioner to point out to his own men just what the law was, and if necessary they could have come up behind the Commissioner—they could have encouraged the Commissioner to endeavour to invoke the aid of the Arbitration Court to give effect to the award which should have been binding on both parties, but for some reason known to themselves they took the matter entirely out of the hands of the Commissioner and allowed a condition of things to exist in North Queensland for a period of three weeks that should certainly not have been allowed to continue. Instead of the Commissioner going to negotiate with the men, we find the Treasurer leaving Brisbane for the purpose of discussing with them the terms, and if the information I have received is correct, the Treasurer returned to Brisbane full of fight, with an intention to enforce the position of the Government against the strikers in the North, but for some reason or other not explained the attitude which had already been adopted in words by the Premier, was not maintained. It was generally understood that the Premier's words meant that the Government were going to stand by the system of conciliation and arbitration which had been placed on the statute-book. That was generally believed, by the public, and it was certainly the opinion of the Opposition. The Premier shifts his ground when he goes back on that plank and ignores the Act and the condition which that Act contains. (Hear, hear!)

Now, the hon. member says that the strike has been satisfactorily settled. I suppose there is no man in this Chamber who is not pleased to think that communications in North Queensland have been restored, and business is going on as usual. No one would desire the continuance of strike conditions longer than could be prevented, but such things can happen at too great a cost, and I say the example that has been set by the Northern strike is such as will have an exceedingly far-reaching consequence in connection with the industrial life of Queensland. The position of the Government in the future, to my mind, will more or less cease to be the proper position of a Government. They will not only be subordinate to the decision of the Arbitration Court, but they will be subordinated to the further demands which the men have, by the action of the Government, been encouraged to make in defiance of any award which may be hereafter made. The hon. member can say if he likes that the people are satisfied. He has made that statement to-night, but never did the hon. member make a greater mistake. The people of this State realise what government is, they realise what government should be and they fail to recognise in the action of the Government the maintenance of its proper position; they recognise that the Government have handed the country over to a small section of the community. They have handed the Government over to the representatives of a class. They referred the matter to what has been called a trade union congress—a congress called apparently at the expense of the Government, the members of which were paid by the Government and which was asked to take a hand in the decision of a matter which might very well, or should in the

ordinary conditions of things have rested with the Government themselves.

At 9.20 p.m.,

The Chairman of Committees relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Now, it has been suggested that the Opposition have sat quietly in this matter. It is quite right to say that the Opposition have sat quiet in the matter; but the Opposition had the announcement of the Premier of his insistence upon the integrity of the award, and the provisions of the Arbitration Act. And the Opposition also had this—the novelty of a Labour Government occupying the Government benches at a time like this. It was fair, in the minds of many people, that an opportunity should be given to a Labour Government, just to see how they would enforce the principles laid down by the Premier. If the Premier had succeeded in enforcing that principle out and out, perhaps the matter of a delay of a week or two might not have been too big a price to pay. It was a fair thing to give the Government a show. The Government have been given an unhampered opportunity of dealing with the matter without inconvenient, exciting, or irritating criticism, and what has been the result? The big words of the Premier, who stands here to-night talking about his strength! You would think, to hear his voice, that he was strong; but he proved that, notwithstanding the strength of his earlier announcements, he had no strength at all; and at the last moment has practically conceded to these men all that they have asked.

Mr. GILLIES: You sound very flat after it, anyhow.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That may be; it is not always the loudest voice that has the most in it. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Premier has not proved the possession of the strength with which he set out; and I am sorry to say that the Government sits there this evening humiliated. And Queensland is humiliated at the position which has been created by the Government. Remarks have been made in connection with the judges. I don't want to say anything whatever disrespectful either of the judge of the Arbitration Court or of Mr. Justice Higgins. As things have gone so far I trust that Mr. Justice Higgins will take the matter on, if the Government is going to see the thing through. Nothing that this party, I take it, will say will operate to prevent Mr. Justice Higgins assuming the duties which the Government have asked him to undertake. I think it an unfortunate thing, however—I think it is probably the most unfortunate thing in the whole business—that the Government have gone outside the conditions of their own Act and have put themselves in the position of having to ask Mr. Justice Higgins to come up and settle a dispute for which the fullest machinery and the most final and definite scheme are contained in our own Arbitration Act. Of course, if Mr. Justice Higgins sees that the judge of the Queensland Arbitration Court is justified in the belief which the Premier has referred to—I mean "confidence in his decision"—and refuses the unwarrantable claim of the men, then so much harm will not be done. No doubt the men will have received a lesson. If, on the other hand, Mr. Justice Higgins

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should decide that it is a fair thing to give that retrospective pay—amounting, as it does, to, perhaps, a couple of hundred thousand pounds—it will be a very serious thing for Queensland, and it will be a still more severe blow to the system of arbitration. When you come to think of it, is there not something ludicrous in submitting to Mr. Justice Higgins the question of whether the men—acting in the illegal way in which they have done in the North, in defiance of the conditions of the award granted to them under the conditions I have stated—is it not ridiculous to leave to Mr. Justice Higgins the question as to whether they should or should not be paid for the time during which they have been defying the law? I ask any man—I don't care what his politics may be—is it a reasonable thing that an employee who has refused to carry out his part of the agreement should have any chance whatever of being paid for the period during which he not only has not worked, but has brought untold loss and suffering, perhaps, to a very large number of other people? We know that a large number of other employees have been knocked out of employment by reason of that strike. Are they to be paid or not to be paid? Are those railway men who, in defiance of their duties, who have had good Government employ for a large number of years, who were treated considerably, who possessed privileges over and above other employees in other services; are they who, in defiance of their obligations, broke the law, to be paid, while other workers who are not in such favourable position go without? The whole situation provides a situation which is absolutely ludicrous, and goes far to upset the whole idea of the true relationship of employer and employee. I am not going to take up more time in connection with the matter. I recognise that I will be more or less covering the ground which was covered by the leader of the Opposition this afternoon, and by other speakers. But I cannot help saying that the man who would stand up and justify the position that the Government stands in will hardly say that he represents the true interests of the whole of the people of this State. He could hardly say that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No man in this House can say that.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He could hardly say that he is carrying out the government of the country as it ought to be carried out. He could hardly say that he is acting really in the interests of the working man himself. If the Arbitration Act provides any real advantages for the working man, those advantages lie in the maintenance of that principle which is covered by the Act in its most thorough detail. It is not by allowing the Act to be broken in every quarter, by failing to enforce its provisions, by allowing the men—in spite of the final nature of the award—not only to refuse to accept the award, but to hold up the highways of the State and prevent the Commissioner for Railways carrying out those duties which he, as a public carrier, is bound to carry out that the interest of the worker is to be conserved. It is not by that method that the success of the Arbitration Act is to be obtained. Now, there is an aspect in connection with the border traffic which might possibly suggest the wisdom of too much not being

said. I don't wish, at any rate, to be accused of saying anything which might lead to an extension of trouble. But I say this: that we here could not listen to what was said to-night as to the position of the Railway Commissioner in regard to the carriage of goods and parcel post from Wallangarra to other parts of Queensland, without feeling that there is something very extraordinary in the relationship existing between employer and employee at the present time. To think that these men who are working at Wallangarra can claim the full remuneration which is being given to them by the Commissioner; the full consideration which they get as Government employees, both present and prospective; and at the same time refuse to carry out the very duties for which they are receiving that pay, suggests to me a very extraordinary position. I suggest to the Government that if the Government have any idea whatever of trying to get back to that position which they ought to be in in regard to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the sooner they put an end to the discreditable conditions that are existing in connection with the interstate traffic of this State the better.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): I would like to say a few words on the question before the House before it comes to a division. Hon. members who have already spoken have explained the position very fully. It appears to me that the country would be satisfied with the position if the conditions laid down were satisfactory. I am sure we are all glad that the men have gone back to work, and that the railways are again running, but what we complain about are the conditions under which the men have gone back to work. No one wants a strike, as it inflicts a great deal of hardship on all sections of the community, and the people who have nothing to do with the strike are those that suffer most, but the workmen who go out on strike do not take that into consideration.

The Arbitration Act we have in [9.30 p.m.] this State is one of the most drastic in Australia, and yet we find that in spite of that Act, which was approved of by the men themselves, when it does not suit them they will not accept the award of the Arbitration Court. If the men will not accept the award of the court, we might as well wipe out the court altogether. It will not make the slightest difference in connection with strikes whether we have an Arbitration Court or not, because the men say they can get what they want with or without the court. The arrangement has been made to refer the matter to Mr. Justice Higgins. It is quite certain, from what the Prime Minister has said, that the President of the Federal Arbitration Court has confidence in his own decision, and the inference I draw from that is that he does not think that Mr. Justice Higgins will alter the award or view it otherwise than as a just and equitable one. If that is so, what is the good of Mr. Justice Higgins taking the matter up. If he agrees that the men are not entitled to retrospective pay, or to be paid while they were on strike, and that the award is a just and fair one, what will happen then? Have the men said that they are willing to accept the decision of Mr. Justice Higgins, no matter what it may be? I have never heard anyone say that they have so agreed. I understand that the men have not agreed

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to that. What they have agreed to is to allow the matter to go to arbitration before Mr. Justice Higgins.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; both sides are willing to abide by it.

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr. Justice Higgins wanted that guarantee before he would act.

Mr. FORSYTH: You cannot compel the men to abide by it. I think the Government, instead of waiting for three weeks, should have taken the action they took last Monday within a week and delivered the ultimatum to the men. Will any one say that the judge of the Arbitration Court has not given the men a liberal award.

Mr. COLLINS: It appears very liberal, owing to the niggardly way your Government in the past have treated them.

Mr. FORSYTH: One of the arguments used by the Minister for Works, when he went to Townsville, was that arbitration was a cardinal principle of the Labour platform, and he urged the men not to flout the award, but to accept the decision of the judge. The second difficulty, Mr. Theodore said, was that of finance. He explained to the men that the Railway Department were losing money at the present time, and did his level best to get the men into a reasonable frame of mind, but he could not convince them, and he came back unsuccessful. The men have brought the court into utter contempt, and they have humiliated the judge who has treated them fairly and equitably, and particularly well so far as wages are concerned. The judge when appealed to said he saw no reason to change the decision he had given in the original award, and the men went out on strike. The Government by their action in this matter has established a precedent which may affect not only the Railway men but every other union. Any Government which will pay men for the time when they are on strike do not deserve the confidence of the people. I never heard of such a thing in connection with arbitration before. I can understand men striking on account of a grievance in connection with wages, but the condition which they insist on having referred to arbitration, that they must be paid while on strike, is one that no Government should consent to. If Mr. Justice Higgins agreed to give the men not only retrospective pay, but also wages during the time they were out on strike, it would be the worst precedent ever made, because every union which goes out on strike in future will claim to be paid while they are out on strike.

Mr. COLLINS: It may have a tendency to stop strikes, to make the employers more reasonable.

Mr. FORSYTH: We have established the machinery of the Arbitration Court, under which the judge takes evidence, and then gives his award, and it is the duty of the employees to accept that award. As a matter of fact, they flouted the Arbitration Court on this occasion and they humiliated the judge, and we might just as well wipe out the Arbitration Court altogether. The judge says distinctly that he has gone into the question of the award, and although he has been asked to vary the award he will not do it. He is satisfied with his decision. He

thinks he has done a fair thing by the men, and the question now arises why they cannot accept it.

Mr. STOPFORD: Your party tried to get Judge Macnaughton to upset Judge Dickson's award.

Colonel RANKIN: Your Treasurer wanted it, too.

Mr. FORSYTH: In regard to the Dickson award, I never heard anyone in this House apply to the Government to do something to upset that award until they knew that under the conditions prevailing it would ruin the industry.

Mr. GILLIES: You never would have got the increased price of raw sugar only for that award.

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. gentleman talks a lot of bunkum. He knows that when that particular award was made it was impossible for the sugar industry to be carried on with the price of raw sugar at £18 per ton.

Mr. GILLIES: I know it could be carried on.

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. gentleman and other hon. members on that side who knew all about it did not raise a finger to help the canegrowers at all. It was not until the whole business was brought before the Prime Minister that he agreed to do what is happening now, so that the men could get a fair living out of it. With regard to arbitration, it looks as if the Government, for the sake of peace, and for the sake of stopping industrial strife, are prepared to do anything and give the men anything. No matter how unreasonable it may be, the Government are prepared to do anything for them. They do not care if it costs the country hundreds of thousands of pounds. They know they are getting near an election and they cannot afford to lose the votes of these men, therefore the country can go to rack and ruin. It will cost the country hundreds of thousands of pounds, but they do not care two straws so long as they retain their seats. I believe in the principle that every man should get a fair wage.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes, so long as you are allowed to fix what in your opinion is a fair wage.

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. gentleman forgets that we have an Industrial Arbitration Court which fixes these things. The men have power to go before that Industrial Court, and an award is given as to what the wages may be. It appears to me that when one considers the magnificent advance in wages that these men got from Mr. Justice McCawley, and when one also learns from the Press the great loss on our railways last year amounting to £742,000, when we remember also the Government have granted £450,000 extra in wages, I think the men have done very well indeed. On top of this the men ask for retrospective pay. How does the Government propose to pay these amounts? I do not think they know themselves. The Government will find it difficult to find the £450,000 granted to the men under the award. I am quoting the opinion of an hon. member opposite. It has already appeared in print that the Government are in colossal financial difficulties in connection with these matters, and that was why the Government wanted the men to go back to

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work. The Premier made a remark about the want of gratitude on the part of the Opposition in connection with this matter. We kept quiet and did not show our hands, but the hon. gentleman knew that every single member of the Opposition was behind him so long as he conducted the case on constitutional lines and looked after the interests of the general community. The hon. gentleman knew all that. He knew that the Opposition did not worry him in connection with bringing this matter before the House so long as we thought he was carrying on the business of the country in a proper way. Whenever we found that he was going to refer it again to arbitration and that he was going to flout his own court; when we found that the men said they were entitled to strike pay, that they could go out on strike and get paid for it, we thought it was time to say we did not agree with the hon. gentleman. If these demands are granted it will cost the country another £250,000.

Mr. GILLIES: Is it a fair thing to prejudice the case?

Mr. FORSYTH: It is all very well to say that we do not want strikes. No one wants strikes. We want to see the interests of the country carried on and the country developed. If we are going to say that the strike must not take place no matter what the sacrifice, I am against that kind of thing. If you are going to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds just to prevent men from going on strike, then I am against it. If we are going to give men increases and allow them to claim pay for going on strike, where is it going to end? You are building a great big wall against yourselves in connection with this matter, because anyone who goes out on strike in future will know that he can claim his pay while he is on strike. In future these men, knowing how placid the Government are, and that they are like a piece of putty in the hands of these men, knowing that these men are their masters, they will raise up fresh grievances. As a matter of fact, the present Government is neither more nor less than the executive of the Trades Hall.

Mr. COLLINS: You can say the same thing about the Premier of Great Britain.

Mr. FORSYTH: The Government are the executive of the Trades Hall, and that should not be. It is the duty of the Government not only to look after the interests of one section, but of all sections, while they are in the position of a Government. Just now they are only acting for one class at the expense of the other. We all know what has happened. We all know at the present time the trouble we are in. We know that there is a strike on in New South Wales. The Government of New South Wales did not knuckle down the same as this Government. There was some trouble about the introduction of some system, which is not really what the men think it is at all. At any rate, the Government of New South Wales would not knuckle down to the men there. The Government there are controlling the affairs of the country, and while they are there they are going to keep that control. The Queensland Government, though, knuckled down, and said, "What do you want?" The Government here practically say, "We will not have a strike; just say what you want and you will get it." The Government were sent there to rule the

country, and they should do so, and they should not let any outside body take the control of government out of their hands. The people of Victoria and New South Wales said that, while they have a Government in power, they are going to try and do it, but here, instead of the Government trying to do it, they knuckled down to the various unions, and that is a position of affairs that should not exist. We are as anxious as anybody to see that no strike takes place, particularly just now. As a matter of fact, the Government have completely surrendered, and that is a position that no Government should take up. I notice that at the beginning of the strike, as reported in the "Courier" of the 1st of this month, the Minister for Railways said—

"Unless the Government abided by the decision of the Arbitration Court, that body would be useless as a tribunal for the settlement of disputes. He stated further that the outcome of this sort of work is to kill arbitration altogether."

He said he believed in the principle of abiding by the award of the Arbitration Court, and that is the reason why the Opposition kept quiet. So far as the Premier is concerned, and so far as the Treasurer is concerned, and so far as the Minister for Railways is concerned, they stated that they had made up their minds to abide by the decisions of the Arbitration Court, and while they did that they were on safe lines, as they would not allow the men to take the business of the country out of their hands. The Treasurer, at Townsville, on the 6th August, said—

"There were two outstanding difficulties. One, that the Government stands for industrial arbitration, and he recognises it will receive a serious blow if, without giving it a trial, the award is swept away because it does not meet with the complete satisfaction of all employees."

The other difficulty, as I have mentioned, was the financial difficulty. He said we are going to lose £1,000,000 this year, and he thought that the men, seeing that they had been well treated, would have recognised the financial difficulties the Government were in. Those were the arguments he used, but the men do not care a single straw who finds the money so long as they get it. The Premier himself said the men were unreasonable. As a matter of fact, the Minister for Railways wired the men, and he did his level best to try and get the men, for the sake of peace and quietness, to go back to work, and he was willing to go up himself and try and arrange the matter. As a matter of fact, he sent them two wires, asking the men to reconsider the matter, and for goodness' sake go back to work and keep the railways going; but the men would not do it. All I can say is that the Government made a mistake in not endeavouring to see that the award of the Arbitration Court is carried out. I certainly am absolutely against one of the conditions for going back, and that is that the men who go on strike should be paid while on strike. If that is one of the conditions, then I say it is a most ridiculous and a most contemptible one, and I think a large majority of the people of Queensland—we know a majority of members of this House will vote for the amendment—but I certainly think that a large majority of the

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people of Queensland are absolutely against the policy of the Government in this matter, and I think the time is not far distant when they will be able to give a decision on the question.

Colonel RANKIN (*Burrum*): I think, perhaps, one of the most serious aspects of this important matter has been, to some extent, lost sight of in the discussion that has taken place. To my mind, the most serious matter in regard to the action of the Government is that it sounds the death-knell to arbitration. (Hear, hear!) We have seen within the last few months one of the foremost planks of the Labour platform shattered to atoms by the referenda in May last, and now, through the action of the Government, we have plank No. 2 of the Labour platform practically going the same way. There is no doubt at all that the attitude of the Government in regard to the strike in the North has practically sounded the death-knell of arbitration. After all, what is the value of the Arbitration Court if its awards are not carried out? It is of no value at all. I listened very attentively to the Premier, and while he certainly spoke with great sympathy for the strikers in the North, he seemed to forget that there were other interests in the country which deserved some consideration. After all, what does the whole question amount to? It amounts to this: that not only have the Government been guilty of condoning an offence and sympathising with law-breakers, but they have practically set aside the interests of the great body of the people in the interests of a particular class. I do not think it is at all difficult to find out the reason for this attitude of the Government. When we look round and see the industrial unrest that has taken place in this State since the advent of the present Administration, and which still obtains throughout the State, we can easily see the reason for it in the fact that sitting behind the Treasury bench are the parents of this industrial unrest—the organisers of those unions who are responsible for the difficulty at the present time. Those are the men who, in days gone by, brought into being this very power which now threatens the existence of the State. That is the position. Those men who preached the gospel of discontent—

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear! We did that well.

Colonel RANKIN: Those men who are sitting behind the Government to-day find that they have brought into being an instrument which threatens to turn round and annihilate them. We could not expect that any action different to what has been taken could be taken by such an Administration. What care they if the farming interests suffer? What care they if the farmers' produce is allowed to rot on the railway stations? What concern is it to them so long as that class which they claim to represent get their way? No reasonable man would try to justify the attitude of strikers at this time, and if we cannot justify the attitude of the strikers, still less can we justify the attitude of a spineless Government who, rather than face the consequences of doing the right thing, were quaking to give way. One could not help but feel, when the Hon. the Premier was speaking, that he was all the time taking up the position of a suppliant. It was just so much like, "Please, Mr. Striker, we will be good boys; we will do this." Was that the attitude of a strong man? Was that a

position which the head of any responsible Government should take up with a section of their own employees?

Mr. COLLINS: What about Lloyd George and the Welsh miners?

Colonel RANKIN: So far as the miners in the Burrum are concerned, they have been the most contented lot of men throughout the length and breadth of Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: I said what about Lloyd George and the Welsh miners?

Colonel RANKIN: I am not concerned about Lloyd George and the Welshmen. I say that the action of the Government with regard to these strikers is an action of which any respectable Government would feel heartily ashamed. The Government, whatever may be their politics, are

[10 p.m.] charged with the duty of conserving the interests of the whole of the community, not the interest of one class only, but in this case they followed the easy path and yielded to the men, when as a Government and as a public carrier, and as an Administration charged with the function of carrying out the laws of the land, they should have seen that the railway services were maintained. They have manifestly failed in their duty to the public. Did not those men in the North break the law, and are not the men at Wallangarra breaking the law? The men in the North undoubtedly did, and why were they not dealt with in the ordinary way? The Government would not have acted in the same manner if employers had been concerned. When a so-called strike took place in a sugar district the other day, the Premier immediately wired to Mr. Hughes to take action under the War Precautions Act and compel those employers to carry on. Did the hon. gentleman dream of asking the Federal Government to take action under the War Precautions Act in this case and deal with those men in the North? No. He took the easy course. He was dealing with public funds, and it did not matter to him if he added £500,000 to the expenditure on the railways so long as he retained the support of those people. I submit that the Government as public carriers had no right to allow a section of men to hold up supplies in the way those railway employees did in the North. The apology—I can call it by no other name—the apology made by the Premier for his action was simply that he desired to promote conciliation. The fact is that he really conceded what the men wanted, and so we find that the arbitration and conciliation that we have heard so much about has failed the very first time it has been put into operation as far as the railway men are concerned. This plank in the Labour platform, like the other plank to which I referred, was found to be rotten the very first time it was put into operation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Like your Cane Prices Boards Bill.

Colonel RANKIN: The hon. gentleman refers to my Cane Prices Boards Bill, but if he will only compare that Bill with the measure introduced by the Government he will find that it is superior to the Government measure in many respects.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then why did you drop it?

Colonel RANKIN: I dropped it because I could not carry it. I think we have ample evidence of sympathy on the part of the

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Government with the strikers. We have not to go any further than the communications that passed between the Premier and the strike leaders in the North to find evidence of that. Instead of taking up the attitude they should have taken up, and saying to the railway men, "You applied for an award; the court has given an award which increases the public expenditure by about £500,000 sterling, and you must abide by that award, which is the spirit of conciliation and arbitration," the Government took a very different course. If the men failed to accept the award, the Government should have seen that the railway services were carried on in some other way. If a man makes an agreement to do a certain thing, he should carry out that agreement. We have passed a Wages Bill in which provision is made for punishing men if they fail to carry out their agreements. Yet here is a case in which the men refuse to carry out their agreement and the Government do nothing simply because the strike is the result of organising work done by members sitting behind the Government. A strong man would have said, "You have had your opportunity, you asked us to pass a certain measure, we have passed that measure and shaped and moulded it in the manner you wished because we are your mouthpiece, the Opposition could not cross a 't' or dot an 'i' in that measure, and you must now abide by its provisions."

Mr. GLEDSON: A strange admission for the Opposition to make.

Colonel RANKIN: Members on the other side of the House invariably vote with the Government, no matter what their individual opinions may be. Why? Because they cannot afford to be independent. So far as the Industrial and Arbitration Act is concerned, they actually had the power to mould it as they wished, and yet their own men who asked for it have turned round and flouted it on the first award they have got. The action of the Premier in the matter was not the action of a strong man, nor was it the action which would have been taken by a strong Government. The Government of the day, whatever their politics may be, should safeguard the interests and rights of every class in the community.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is what we have done.

Colonel RANKIN: The Government had not done that. Have they considered the interests of the farming community in this strike?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Yes.

Colonel RANKIN: How have they showed any consideration for the cane farmers in the North? And how have they regarded the interests of other sections of the community? In no instance have they had regard to any public convenience except where it concerned the strikers in the North. We have been twitted on this side with having remained silent while the strike was on. But why did we remain silent? We remained silent because we considered it was not wise or fair that we should do anything to harass the Government while they were carrying out along constitutional lines what they believed to be the best way of handling a difficult problem. We have purposely refrained from making their position more difficult, and now we are accused of supineness, and of doing nothing, and of being afraid to do anything. Well, we are not afraid to do something, and that charge will not be levelled against us again, because

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we charge the Government now with being in sympathy, and of associating themselves, with the industrial unrest in another State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Colonel RANKIN: On that account we have a right to see what this Government are doing. The fight in New South Wales is said to be over some card system, but it is possible that that is not the real cause of the trouble, and I shall read a telegram which was published in the "Courier" the other day to show that that was not the real cause of the industrial unrest there—

"The Municipal Employees' Union last night carried the following motion: 'That we congratulate the strikers upon their splendid exhibition of working-class solidarity, and pledge ourselves to assist them in resisting the introduction of the card system. Further, as the card system is only one of many methods of speeding up the working in plants of production, and as some of these methods are already in operation in Australia, and as the workers will not be safe until they have overthrown the capitalist system, we urge the workers to unite in one giant class-conscious union, not only to defend the existing rights, but to abolish capitalism, and inaugurate an industrial republic.'"

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Colonel RANKIN: One hon. member opposite says "Hear, hear." Now we understand the position. The real reason for the trouble in New South Wales is not any card system, but because they want to establish an industrial republic and to do away with capitalism; and the hon. member who has just said "Hear, hear" on the other side has signified his approval of those sentiments. It is well that the people of Queensland should know that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in debating the New South Wales industrial trouble on the motion that is now before the House?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He is only doing what the Premier did.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He is reading extract matter which had nothing to do with the question before the House.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The Speaker ruled that the Premier was in order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think that the hon. member will not be out of order.

Colonel RANKIN: I have no desire to get out of order. This is too serious a matter to be lightly dealt with. We are practically asked to condone the action of the strikers. If we, as an Opposition, remained silent at the present time, we should be just as guilty as the Government are of condoning an offence against the law of the land. The New South Wales Government are standing to their guns in a constitutional way. They are carrying out the services, to a limited extent it may be, nevertheless they are carrying them out, and they are quite able to do it in their own way without the assistance or the advice of the Premier of Queensland, as probably the hon. gentleman himself will find out when he sees Mr. Fuller's reply to-morrow, if that gentleman does reply to him. However, that

is by the way. I do not think that Mr. Fuller requires any advice from him. Having pointed out quite clearly what is the trend of the administration of the opposite side, let us see how it is going to affect the future of this State, because, after all, it has a very great bearing upon that. When we went to the country last we saw placed before us a platform upon which was inscribed in large print, "The cure for industrial unrest." We are now having a sample of that. The Government were returned to power, with all the machinery that they prophesied at that time was going to put an end to industrial unrest, and we are now having an example of how that machinery is working. As the hon. member for Toowong pointed out, instead of giving us industrial peace, we have been right from the jump in a state of industrial turmoil. Now, I submit that, if there is one thing that we must have if this State is to progress, if property is to be safeguarded, and if our industries are to flourish, it must be something like industrial peace, and we cannot hope to have that under this Government.

Mr. PAYNE: Were there no strikes under the Denham Government?

Colonel RANKIN: There were strikes under the Denham Government. During the last year that Government were in office there were seventeen strikes in Queensland; during the last year of the Ryan Administration there were no less than sixty-four strikes. After all their splendid Industrial Arbitration Act!

Mr. COOPER: When was that Act passed? It was not law last year.

Colonel RANKIN: That is the result under the industrial legislation of this Government. And when one comes to look at the personnel of hon. members opposite, one is not surprised at this result. We see members over there who may claim to be the parents of this legislation. I hope they are proud of their child and of its results as exemplified in the Northern strike. While we have such turmoil in the industrial world as we have just seen in this State, and as we still see in New South Wales, we can never hope to have anything in the nature of a prosperous State. If there is one thing more than another that I think we must have if we are going to prosper, and going to develop, it is industrial peace and I submit that this Government, in this regard, at the present juncture, have not shown that stability—any of that statesmanship quality to which the Premier referred in his closing remarks, and which we ought to expect. They have proved supine; they have given way to the strikers on every occasion, they have flouted their own awards, they have practically—as I said in my opening remarks—sounded the death-knell of arbitration. (Hear, hear!) After what they have done, no longer can we claim that we see a solution of the problem, no longer can any Labour man go on the platform and say, as the Premier said in the Barcardine speech, that here is a means by which industrial peace can be obtained. In the hands of hon. members opposite it has been tried and found wanting, not on account of the inherent weakness of the Act, not because of the unfairness of the award, but because it was not backed up by a Government of sufficient strength, of sufficient power, of sufficient strong mindedness to give effect to the award when they were called upon to do it.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I think that the Premier was creating a false impression—willingly or otherwise—when he accused the Opposition of waiting till the trouble was patched up before it took a stand—a definite stand on this matter. It is well known to the Premier, if not to his party, what position the Opposition were adopting. We were prepared to stand by the Government and assist them in every detail, so long as they stood for law and order. Last Thursday—the last sitting day of the House that week—we discovered that the Government were going back on the stand they promised to take, that was, to stand by the Arbitration Act, and the leader of the Opposition wrote a letter to the Premier, a copy of which was published in the Press, in which he told him definitely that they were always prepared to stand by him so long as he stood for law and order, but that if he departed from that, then the Opposition would not be a party to what followed. Tuesday last—yesterday—was the next sitting day, and so soon as the opportunity presented itself, the leader of the Opposition obtained from the Speaker the necessary permission, and gave notice of this want of confidence motion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is a poor apology.

Mr. VOWLES: There is no apology so far as I am concerned, and the hon. member who interjects knows the facts as well as anybody.

Mr. COOPER: The leader in the "Courier" shook you up.

Mr. VOWLES: We were not forced by any journal to take any stand. The Opposition moved at their own time; they moved only when they knew the Government were going back on their proposal. I am not concerned about what the "Courier" or the "Standard" or any other paper says about me.

We had before us last session a measure known as the Industrial Arbitration Bill. It was one of the measures that the last election was fought on. It was to take the place of the Industrial Peace Act. When the measure was going through there were two things which the Opposition asked, pleaded to have inserted in it. One was that a secret ballot be taken under it, before a strike, and the other was that there should be a right of appeal to the Full Court of Queensland from the decisions of the judges. Both of those matters were turned down by the hon. member who was in charge, but how glad would he be to-day if he had availed himself of the suggestions of the Opposition and embodied those principles in the Bill? Had that happened, the whole of this trouble would have been avoided, but wiser counsels did not prevail on that occasion. It was suggested to-night that the Opposition asked that when the Dickson award was given, the other judge, Judge Macnaughton, should interfere. All that was asked was that the Minister himself should take advantage of two sections in the Act and intervene, but he pointed out another section under which he said it was not his duty to intervene, but that the parties should apply for a rehearing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They should apply for a variation.

Mr. VOWLES: There was no analogy between that matter and this which we are discussing. In this case the matter was

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brought before the court by the railway men, and there might have been a right of appeal from the award had the hon. member in charge of the Bill allowed us to put that amendment in it. But the Arbitration Act says that the decision of the judge shall be final—a law framed by this particular Government, to my mind, the tools of the unions and the Trades Hall, bringing here legislation hatched with the brand of the Trades Hall on it, and passing it here as a matter of form as their executive; and when we find that that Bill was brought here at their behest, and when we find them refusing to acknowledge their own judges, and when we find their own members agreeing to allow them to flout their own law, then I say that the time of responsible Government is rapidly passing.

So far as that award is concerned, what is proposed to be done now? The men, after being out for three weeks, have gone back to work reluctantly, because a sop has been offered to them, to lawbreakers—because they were on strike—to men who defied the laws of the Government, who should maintain law and order, but who offered them an inducement to go back and observe the law. That inducement is the opportunity of having portion of their case reheard—so far as retrospectivity is concerned—and also as to whether these lawbreakers are to be paid by the taxpayers of Queensland their wages for the time when they were breaking the laws. These very men, who robbed the railways of something like £100,000, are asking that they should be paid £30,000—I think it is—for the time they have been out. The Government are only empowered to pay for services rendered, and they cannot make illegal payments, even if Mr. Justice Higgins says they should, if they are not for services rendered.

Of course, we know the principle is already established. We know that this Government have, without the knowledge of the public, paid back pay to railway men for breaches of the law in the past in connection with strikes. We know that there is the establishment of a precedent so far as retrospective pay is concerned, by the attempt of the Government to pass legislation by which the water and sewerage men were to get back pay. They were not able to pass it through this House, but the men, knowing that the Government had tried to force private individuals to pay higher rates and give back pay, thought that the time was ripe to try to squeeze the Government, row that they had them down, and make the law-abiding part of the community pay wages they had never earned. What guarantee have we that the men will accept the decision of Mr. Justice Higgins when he gives it? They have already declined to accept the decision of a judge appointed by their own Government [10.30 p.m.] under their own legislation—legislation which was supposed to be final and binding on all the parties concerned. What guarantee have we got that, if Mr. Justice Higgins says that, in his opinion, the men should not receive retrospective pay, and that it would be an immoral thing to pay them while on strike, they will not go on strike again? This is only the beginning of these troubles. If you look at page 391 of "Hansard" for this session—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You will not be in order in quoting it.

[*Mr. Vowles.*

Mr. VOWLES: I do not intend to quote it, but from the report of the speech of the hon. member for Mount Morgan you will see that the hon. member wanted to show how valueless legal preference to unionists is to an organised body of men. The hon. member said—

"Any award of a court granting preference to unionists is only of so much value to the body that gets it, in accordance with their organised strength to enforce a proper interpretation."

Does not that mean that might is right; that as long as the men like to stand to that principle and demand it—whether the thing be legal or illegal—they can do it by force of numbers? The gentleman who occupies the position of vice-president of the Australian Workers' Union gives that out, as a dictum to his organisation; that as far as the Mount Morgan men were concerned it did not matter to them what the decision of the court was; they were strong enough to demand what they wanted. What is the result? Acting on his advice, no doubt, it appears to be the feeling throughout Labour circles that when an award does not suit them they can disorganise the whole of the trade in the North; that they can make things so uncomfortable that the general public, sooner than suffer the inconvenience, would be a party to giving them their demands. Here we have the spectacle to-night of the Premier making an apology for his action. We heard a confession from him of what has taken place, the history of the strike, and were told what part he and his Ministry played—a spineless Ministry who, just like the Germans, were prepared to take peace at any price. He has told us, in effect, that if he did not do as the men suggested, if he did not bring about some conciliatory or peaceful method of settling the dispute, that would be the end of the Northern electorates as far as his representation was concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He did not say so.

Mr. VOWLES: In effect, I say. We were told by the Premier that as far as that article about Williams in the Cairns "Post" was concerned, he was prepared to believe it. But the statement of Rymer, to the effect that they had control of the Northern railways, he would not accept. We know that a system of picketing has been going on in connection with the railways. We saw a sample of that in Brisbane during the big strike. It simply means that it is an organised form of coercion. As to whether the railways were or were not in the hands of the mob, I would like to quote from the Cairns "Times" of the 18th August. Under the heading of "Strike of N. Q. Railway Workers" it says—

"At the mass meeting of the strikers in the Austral Theatre on Wednesday, a wire from Mr. Theodore was read asking the strikers to appoint a delegate to the Trade Unions Congress in Brisbane, commencing next Thursday."

That is only by the way. The part I want to refer to is this—

"A wire received from the Malanda pickets recommended that 2 tons of flour in wagons there be released, as the

case warranted it, on conditions that the merchants make their own arrangements for delivery of same."

How can the Premier, in the face of that record of the meeting of the strike committee in Cairns, say that the railways were not in the hands of the mob or the union? That is a case of peaceful picketing, and where the goods were allowed out. A permit was allowed similar to the permit which was allowed in Brisbane by the strike committee. The committee decided that it was a genuine case, and released the goods which were in the custody of the Railway Commissioner. I wonder what the politics of those gentlemen are. The Premier allowed certain persons to get their goods as a concession. What are their politics, and who are they? We know nothing of them. We know of hundreds of people who could not send away their cream, and perishable articles were destroyed, and families were hung up because adequate supplies could not be obtained. We know that travellers from Camooweal to Hughenden, and in other places, were hung up and could not get away, and we know that men were terrorised and intimidated by the same peaceful pickets, who the Premier said were in charge of the Railway Department.

Mr. KIRWAN: At any rate, they did not use batons on the people, like your party did in 1912.

Mr. VOWLES: I am glad that the hon. member for Brisbane admits that that is correct. That is one of the glorious things about the whole trouble. There was no lawlessness, and the reason why there was no lawlessness was not because there was not a desire for it, but because the men knew that there was another power superior to the Queensland Government and that if they committed any breach of the law they came within the War Precautions Act and would be dealt with. What a thing it is for this spineless Government to be in the position it is to-day with their own servants who refuse to carry out the instructions of the department! Are these men refusing to do their duty because they are in sympathy with something that is going on in New South Wales? Are they going to be paid out of the public purse for services they are not rendering? As far as the Northern strike is concerned, if Mr. Justice Higgins—he has no locus standi; I suppose he is only a private judge—if he thinks that the Government should pay these law-breakers—

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: He is a man of experience.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not deny his experience, but he has no locus standi. If the men are paid, why, in all equity, should not other men who have been forced out of employment by the unions—men who are engaged by private individuals—be paid strike pay, too?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What about the producers who have lost their staff?

Mr. VOWLES: The producers are the last men the Government will worry about. The only man they will worry about is the good old unionist who keeps them in their job, the man whose delegates they are here. The Premier prostituted the position that he

occupies almost on the first occasion that he appeared in this House, in connection with the Meatworks Act, when he went at the behest of the slaughtermen of Brisbane and was dictated to by them at the Trades Hall and told what he had to do. Since then, having placed himself in that invidious position in allowing himself to be dominated and dictated to, these men know they have got in the thin edge of the wedge, and they know that they have got the Premier and his confederates in that position that they will sit on them and jump on them at the finish.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Yes, and the Minister for Works knows it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I know that this is all piffle. (Government laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman knows that what I say is true. He does not like it, because he knows that it is true, and it hurts. (Government laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You have made a pitifully weak case.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not at all concerned whether I made a pitifully weak case or not. I have expressed my views on it, and I will say a little more. So far as the railways are concerned, we know that the railway men of the South were out of sympathy with the men in the North; we know that the whole of the delegates in Brisbane were out of sympathy with the men on strike in the North. We know that the Premier was out of sympathy with them. If what they have done is contrary to all reason, what earthly claim can these men have on the consolidated revenue, when they have defied the law—defied the Legislature itself?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Whatever case they have, they will have to make it out before the Arbitration Court.

Mr. VOWLES: Hon. members opposite talk about the spirit of conciliation. The spirit of conciliation is all right until you get to a finality. If there is a deadlock, then conciliation should prevail; but once a decision is given—particularly under this Act—it is final.

Mr. GILLIES: What then?

Mr. VOWLES: There are two ways of meeting the case. One is to legislate to meet the case. But if you are not prepared to accept the responsibilities, so far as the position arises, there is another position open to an honest Government, and that is to hand in their gun.

At 10.25 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. VOWLES: We remember that the public conveniences were dislocated, the law was defied, and there was mob rule.

Mr. COLLINS: Where?

Mr. VOWLES: No doubt in the electorate of the hon. member. We saw the hon. member and his colleagues thinking and thinking and worrying and wondering what was going to happen, and wondering how the cat was going to jump. They thought they were going to be put in a still more servile position, but the Government thought they would give them one more opportunity of saving

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their position. Last week hon. members were in a different frame of mind to what they are to-night.

Mr. COLLINS: Some of the leaders in the "Courier" shook you up.

Mr. VOWLES: There is a good deal of sense in what the "Courier" said. If hon. members opposite would only read the "Courier" articles and take them to heart they would do them good. Following his usual tactics the Premier, when he is cornered, has turned round, as he has done on other occasions, and instead of him meeting the resolution put before the House, he moves another resolution which will be the means of proclaiming him and his Government as a popular one throughout the State. Anybody associated with politics knows that this is a party House, and it does not matter whether the Government are right or wrong hon. gentlemen sitting behind the Government will never depart from the Premier. The Government goes on all the time, and their servile following go on all the time. Whether they are in agreement or not they will vote just the same and support their Premier's motion, and, naturally, because they have double the strength of the Opposition, the motion will be carried. They will go away with cheers to-night saying, "Once more we have proclaimed ourselves jolly good fellows." When the general public get the information which has been given to-night by the Premier they will know how to judge the Government. Question after question has been asked of the Government relative to the strike, but we never got any information. If this motion has done nothing else but getting the information from the Premier then it has done a lot of good. (Hear, hear!) It is just as well that the general public should read the hollow speech of the Premier. When the business men read it, and when the general public look through "Hansard," and see the criticisms of the Opposition and the miserable confession of the Premier, they will judge the Government truly and well, and they will show the Premier and his party their opinion of them when next they are called upon to face the electors.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The Premier in dealing with the motion moved by the leader of the Opposition accused this side of waiting for three weeks before any criticisms were made. The motion of the leader of the Opposition contained nine charges against the Government. The Premier treated the motion as lightly as it was possible from his point of view, and consequently took upon himself to ignore the question which had been put by the leader of the Opposition. What has brought us to the position in which we find ourselves in Queensland to-day? The Premier decided that the railway employees should have the right to go to the Arbitration Court, and a judge, who in every decision which he has given has shown himself in sympathy with the wage-earner, is entrusted with the matter. The judge gave his decision and gave increases in the rates of wages and a reduction of hours. One would have expected that the men would have been satisfied, but they decided to go further. They said it was no good to them unless they got retrospective payment. Some of the men went so far as to say that the judge when he was in the North actually promised them

the retrospective pay. Since then I am pleased to see that that has been denied by the secretary of the Union in North Queensland. The Government has since permitted the case to again be put before the judge as respecting retrospective payment. I take it that they were standing behind the Commissioner for Railways when he allowed his officers to go into court and contend that it was not right and not in the interests of the taxpayers of Queensland that retrospective payment should be granted, and the judge after full consideration decided that it could not be accepted. We find that the next thing is a strike. I challenge the Government to prove that the strike has been in accordance with the provision of the Arbitration Act, and I challenge the Government to lay on the table of the House the necessary requisitions to the registrar for a ballot to be taken and for the fourteen days' notice to be given. In that respect the conditions required by the Act have not been complied with. Then, again, we had the Premier in the early stages of the crisis pointing out how the men were wrong. He directed the Minister for Works to go to Townsville to try and show to the men that they were in the wrong, but in spite of him there was only one thing that they would agree to and that was retrospective pay. Then we find at a later date the Government began to play the Southern men against the Northern men and they turned dog on their decision of May, 1916. I have here a decision of the Government come to in May, 1916.

Mr. COLLINS: What are you quoting from?

Mr. ROBERTS: The "Toowoomba Chronicle" of 23rd July, and if it is any advantage to the hon. member I may say that the same thing appears word for word in the "Daily Standard"—

"Mr. Adamson, who was then Minister for Railways, pointed out that at a Cabinet meeting held on 23rd May it was decided that by preference to unionists it was meant preference to men who had started, and that preference to unionists did not mean power to compel but liberty to persuade."

That was the policy of the Government in the years 1916 and 1917. They played the Southern men against the Northern men by promising them preference to unionists, and then they began to engineer to break up the position that had been brought about in North Queensland. A conference followed, and we had not only the Premier and the Minister for Works, but all the Southern delegates at that conference, pleading with the men to adopt the Government's proposals, and the furthest that they could induce the Northern men to go was to make a bargain, and we find that the bargain is not only that the question of retrospective pay shall be submitted to a judge, but also the question as to whether the men shall be paid for the time they were on strike. Then the Premier comes along this evening and contends that the men in the North had not control of the Government. I contend that the motion is in every way correct; that as far as the railways are concerned the employees are controlling the Government. We have heard a reference to-night as to the position of the Commissioner for Railways in connection with the strike. We generally get any amount of information through the Press of Brisbane as to what the Commissioner for Railways is doing, but the only utterance

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that I can find from the Commissioner all the time that the strike was on is the copy of two letters which he sent to the men in the North.

The PREMIER: There is just time to catch our trains.

Mr. ROBERTS: I regret the reference that has been made to trains. I have been here all the afternoon, and I have listened to hon. members who have spoken. I raised no objection to the Premier getting an extension of time, and I am certainly going to paddle along to-night. (Hear, hear!) I regret if I put hon. members to any inconvenience, but I propose to get along in my own way, subject to your correction, Mr. Speaker. I was pointing out that it was a remarkable thing that the only utterances that we have had as far as the Commissioner for Railways is concerned is those letters to the Northern men, where he urges them to reconsider the position and go back to work, and we would not have had those letters published had it not been for the letter from the Deputy Commissioner at Townsville, in which he pointed out to the Commissioner in Brisbane that he understood correspondence was being sent, not through him as Deputy Commissioner, but direct to the men. Then we hear the Premier taking exception to the men in North Queensland who have something to lose directing their correspondence to the Prime Minister of Australia. I was giving some consideration yesterday to the way in which the Premier worded the several telegrams that he sent South in the last day or two, and when I look at the reply of Mr. Reimers, secretary to the strike committee in Townsville, to the Commissioner for Railways, I find the wording which has been the context of the Premier's replies to the South. Mr. Reimers suggested to the Commissioner for Railways that he should use his influence to secure payment of the amounts involved. I notice that whatever the Premier thinks of the position in North Queensland, the "Daily Standard," at the commencement of the strike, pointed this out—

"The question at issue in the Townsville district is whether the men have a grievance acute enough to call for a strike. On the evidence before us, it must be said that they have not."

There, at any rate, is sufficient to show that as far as the Government is concerned, when the Premier made the statement that the Northern men were acting wrongly, he was supported by their Press. We have heard something said about the men in North Queensland, and how they controlled the railways, and I am going to read something in connection with the matter. I have here a

[11 p.m.] cutting from the "Brisbane Courier" of the 20th August, which contains the report of a speech made by a man of the name of Anthony Ogden, who gave very bad advice to the men on strike. Mr. Ogden said—

"It was not advisable, however, to turn over the present conditions unless they had something to put in their place. It did not matter whether they had arbitration or collective agreements so long as they had the militant support of their members. The employees should have the right to say how long they should work, how much they would do, how much they should get for it, and whom they should work with. He was

not afraid of that getting into the Press. It was not for Judge McCawley to decide the question; it was for the men to decide it."

Here is the part to which I wish to direct special attention—

"If there was a train to-morrow, let Mr. Pagan be the driver and Mr. Brown (traffic manager) the guard. If they had perfect order in the strike, it did not matter if they threw over the Arbitration Court."

In view of that statement, I am more than surprised at the Premier proposing an amendment in which he claims that the "statesmanlike methods of the Government are calculated to insure industrial peace on a sound basis." Is the position in connection with the railway traffic likely to insure industrial peace? The Darling Downs Bacon Factory proposed to send a certain quantity of bacon and hams to Sydney, and they were told by the traffic manager that it was no good loading those goods, as they could not be sent forward because the men had decided not to handle goods going to the South. Mr. McGrath, the district traffic manager, admitted to the secretary of the bacon factory that he had his instructions from Brisbane, so that we may assume that the Minister for Railways had a knowledge of the position. Yet the hon. gentleman told us by interjection that the Government are still controlling the railways of Queensland. I should like to know what chance the present occupants of the Treasury bench have of running a train if they wanted to carry on the usual business of the State. They can only run trains in accordance with the instructions of the Queensland Railway Union. Orders on the railways are not issued by the Commissioner for Railways or his officers, but are dictated by the Queensland Railway Union.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. ROBERTS: Well, that is my opinion, and I hold that the Government are doing an injustice to the State of New South Wales by helping the men on strike in that State.

Mr. BAYLEY (*Pittsworth*): It has been said by a number of members on the Government side of the House, that the Opposition are simply trying to make political capital by supporting the motion brought forward by the leader of the Opposition. I do not agree with that statement. Never in the history of Queensland has there been greater reason for bringing forward such a motion, because never has there been a Government in Queensland who have been guilty of such neglect of duty to the country, and so absolutely bereft of all sense of duty and honourable dignity. Members of the Opposition have given every possible help to the Government. Time after time questions have been put to the Premier asking for information on the subject, and with what result? We have been told that the present is not an opportune time for answering the questions.

At 11.9 p.m.,

The PREMIER: I move—That the question be now put.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Gag again.

The PREMIER: I was asked three times by Opposition members to put on the gag.

Hon. T. J. Ryan.]

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 39.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lennon
„ Barber	„ Lloyd
„ Bertram	„ May
„ Collins	„ McLachlan
„ Cooper	„ McMinn
„ Coyne	„ McPhail
„ Fihelly	„ O'Sullivan
„ Foley	„ Payne
„ Forde	„ Pollock
„ Free	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Ryan, T. J.
„ Gledson	„ Smith
„ Hardacre	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, W.	„ Theodore
„ Hunter	„ Weir
„ Huxham	„ Wellington
„ Jones	„ Wilson
„ Kirwan	„ Winstanley
„ Land	

Tellers: Mr. McMinn and Mr. Smith.

NOES, 22.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Macartney
„ Armstrong	„ Moore
„ Barnes	„ Petrie
„ Bayley	Colonel Rankin
„ Bebbington	Mr. Roberts
„ Bell	„ Somerset
„ Booker	„ Stevens
„ Bridges	„ Stodart
„ Grayson	„ Swayne
„ Gunn	„ Tolmie
„ Hodge	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Moore.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Dunstan. No—Mr. Murphy.
Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. T. J. Ryan's amendment*) stand part of the question—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 22.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Macartney
„ Armstrong	„ Moore
„ Barnes	„ Petrie
„ Bayley	„ Rankin
„ Bebbington	„ Roberts
„ Bell	„ Somerset
„ Booker	„ Stevens
„ Bridges	„ Stodart
„ Grayson	„ Swayne
„ Gunn	„ Tolmie
„ Hodge	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Roberts and Mr. Stevens.

NOES, 39.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lennon
„ Barber	„ Lloyd
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„ Fihelly	„ O'Sullivan
„ Foley	„ Payne
„ Forde	„ Pollock
„ Free	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Ryan, T. J.
„ Gledson	„ Smith
„ Hardacre	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, W.	„ Theodore
„ Hunter	„ Weir
„ Huxham	„ Wellington
„ Jones	„ Wilson
„ Kirwan	„ Winstanley
„ Land	

Tellers: Mr. Cooper and Mr. McPhail.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Murphy. No—Mr. Dunstan.
Resolved in the negative.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted, be so inserted—put and passed.

Question—That the question, as amended, be agreed to—put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-two minutes past 11 o'clock.